What factors influence the evolution of beginning teachers' reading programmes?

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Abstract

What influences the evolution of junior school reading programmes in the classrooms of beginning teachers?

Of all the classroom skills required of beginning teachers, those contributing to the implementation of an effective instructional reading programme perhaps represent some of the most complex and sophisticated challenges that will be encountered. Add to this the critical importance to young children of successfully learning to read and the very obvious picture of reading progress revealed by modern assessment practices, and the result is an aspect of teaching that can assume a position of significant focus. This is especially true for teachers working with junior school children.

This study investigated the current practices of three junior school teachers during their first two years teaching, how these practices have evolved over time and identifies the factors that have influenced each teacher. Participants' stories were gathered during individual interviews to establish current practices and these were compared with a typical sample of classroom reading instruction that had been captured on video prior to the initial interviews. Each teacher also participated in an individual follow up interview during which they were able to observe the sample video excerpt and comment reflectively upon their practice in the light of their observations.

This study found that developing effective junior school reading programmes generated considerable angst for these beginning teachers. While they were able to draw upon pre-service preparation when articulating their intentions, the transition from the abstractions of theory to the realities of classroom practice challenged their teaching skills in this fledgling stage of their career. Despite an apparent commitment to guided reading as emphasized in pre-service literacy courses, each participant implemented round robin reading as their initial teaching strategy. In order to implement reading pedagogy as advocated within their pre-service experiences, the emergence of a professional conscience appears to have been critical.

The way that teachers' understanding of literacy acquisition consolidates is greatly influenced by their practical classroom experiences and the personal capacity that they bring to the teaching role. The findings of this study support Berliner (1994) and Huberman (1989) because each of the teachers could be placed on a trajectory of teacher development. However stage related views of professional development do not fully reflect the complexity of individuals combined with the uniqueness of their contexts. The broader perspective highlighted in the work of Nias (1989) provided a framework more accommodating of the realities encountered during this study.

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Chapter 1: Introduction

Literacy acquisition is a key social skill. To function independently members of society need to be familiar with diverse multi-literate mediums and the need to be linguistically literate to read and write, is critical. New Zealand society is based on an assumption that its members are competent literacy users. Pitches, Thompson, and Watson (2002), note that recent studies have illustrated that while many New Zealanders are competent literacy users some groups of people struggle with their journey to be literate. In recent years government initiatives have focused on establishing recommendations from the New Zealand Literacy Taskforce (1999) which address an expectation that primary teachers have the necessary professional skills to provide appropriate support for all learners (Ministry of Education, March 1999). Learning to be an effective teacher of literacy is a journey during which teachers discover the difference between being a 'user' and 'teacher' of literacy then seek to implement these discoveries in their classrooms.

This study focuses on three beginning teachers' reflections on their transition from pres-service to a junior school classroom. It explores their perspectives on their developing understanding of what it means to implement a guided reading programme in a New Zealand junior classroom.

Research Question
What factors influence the evolution of beginning teachers' reading programmes?

Definition of Terms

Linguistic Literacy	Print based literacy including writing and reading.
Multi-Literacy	Broad literacy encompassing the complexity of oral, written and visual mediums. An example is the ability to interact with computer programmes.

Reading Programme	A classroom reading programme that incorporates shared, guided, and independent reading approaches.
Reading Session	A daily segment of the reading programme.
Guided Reading	Achievement based group teaching where the teacher supports learners so they are able to read an instructional text (90-94% accuracy). With their own copy of the text, each child is processing the story using strategies to have a meaningful reading experience.
The Others	Children working independently from the teacher.
Beginning Teacher	A graduate teacher having completed between two and five terms classroom teaching.
Tutor Teacher	An experienced teacher with responsibility for implementing an induction and guidance programme to support a beginning teacher's transition into the classroom.
Junior School	Years one, two and three of the primary school.
Running Record	A procedure used to monitor reading achievement. Reading is recorded and scored to find an accuracy level and self-correction rate. Analysis of errors and self-corrections determines the reading strategies and behaviours utilised by the reader. Running records are used to assist teachers identify children's reading needs.
Colourwheel	See Appendix 1.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

Literacy Issues

Effective teaching to support reading acquisition

A common theme of literacy acquisition is the need to optimise the quality of classroom teaching instruction (Allington, 2002; Medwell, Wray, Poulson & Fox 1998; McNaughton, 2001; Ministry of Education, 1997, 2003a; Wray, Medwell, Fox & Poulson 2000). Underpinning this is the belief that 'reading failure is best prevented by good first teaching' (Ministry of Education, 1997, p5.). Defining exactly what constitutes 'good teaching' has been the subject of multiple socio-economic, cultural, and political tensions. These impact on the wider social world and filter through this to classroom literacy teaching. An example of this is the transition tensions that are currently evident as educators explore how 'multi literacies' should feature in primary classrooms (Gee, 2005).

Many social factors influence literacy. Mitchell, Cameron, and Wylie (2002) in their study of school wide literacy development commented on the tremendous sense of responsibility felt by teachers to aid learners particularly in low decile schools where children could be faced with compounding social and economic obstacles. Despite the social issues that impact on children and schools, public perception is that schools and parents are jointly responsible for ensuring that the next generation develops the skills to be functionally literate.

Brophy (2001) bases a definition of good teaching on the relationship between classroom processes and student achievement. According to this model good reading teaching produces high reading levels/ages. While children's achievement levels are significant, local (McNaughton, 2001; Ministry of Education, 1997; 2003a; Pitches et al, 2002) and international (Allington, 2002; Cambourne, 2000; Medwell et al, 1998) literature on what represents effective literacy teaching centres on teacher understandings and behaviours together with the ability to engage learners. Children's motivation and engagement are therefore central to teaching.

Research suggests that effective literacy teachers encourage and support learners by promoting high levels of task engagement. Wray et al (2000) echo findings by Wharton-MacDonald, Pressley, and Hampston (1998), and Brophy and Good (1986), that quality instruction is dependent on classroom organization, and tasks that are based on children's academic needs. Consequently when children's engagement on tasks is focused the opportunities for learning are increased. Such teaching is characterised by strong purposeful interactions and driven by explicit teaching points. McNaughton concludes "What follows from this is that specific teaching acts, the questions and prompts and directives and comments need to be consistent, contingent and used with clear intent" (2001, p17). Wray et al highlight the significance of teacher responsiveness within such a model: "appropriate pace, interaction with children, monitoring of children's work and feedback all appear to be features in ensuring high levels of task engagement" (2000, p3). Such teacher behaviours serve to demand and focus children's attention increasing the likelihood of purposeful engagement and maximising teaching and learning opportunities.

Therefore not only do teachers need to know children well, but also the stages of literacy acquisition which learners pass through. Medwell et al (1998) in a report to the Teacher Training Agency of England noted that teachers with sound understandings of language were able to use their knowledge to effectively identify and address the literacy needs of children. How such knowledge develops is of particular relevance to the present study. Academic English content knowledge, from teachers' own undergraduate study, was significant for teachers working at and above key stage 2. In contrast early stages of literacy acquisition require a more sophisticated and specialist knowledge of literacy development, consequently teachers working at key stage 1 (New Zealand junior stages) were often dependent on teacher training content for developing their understandings regardless of their own personal study histories.

The need for teaching and learning points to be presented holistically for learners was repeatedly outlined as a key aspect of effective literacy teaching (Ministry of Education, 2003; Taylor et al, 2002; Wray et al, 2000). When specific skills are explicitly taught in

context, learners' experience 'instructional density' which involves scaffolding connections between layers of understanding contained at word, sentence and text levels (Pressley et al 2001;Wray et al, 2000). Such multi-layered processing creates greater depth of understanding and fosters an ability to reflect upon explicit and implicit meanings. A context driven approach therefore provides an enriched experience.

Teacher expectation underpins all teaching and learning. Rubie, Hattie and Hamilton (2003) believe that the attitudes and expectations of teachers result in a self-fulfilling prophecy. In other words learners' literacy outcomes mirror teacher expectations. In Rubie et al's research particular reference was made to groups of children who develop literacy skills at a slower rate in response to lower teacher expectations. It was concluded that realistic equitable expectations of literacy learning are critical for maximising learner achievements. Clearly a teacher's knowledge of literacy stages and processes is central to this aim.

So how do teachers become effective facilitators of reading development? The literature suggests that the combination of experience and observation is crucial. Expertise in teaching reading ultimately emerges from the realities of classroom literacy experience. Despite the idiosyncratic nature of teaching episodes, it is the interpretation of consistent patterns and similarities within children's behaviours that provides teachers with their own developmental expectations. Goodman (cited in Rhodes & Nathenson-Mejia, 1999) draws these issues together by focusing on the instinctual qualities that insightful experienced classroom teachers develop. "Teachers who observe the development of language and knowledge in children's settings become aware of the important milestones in children's development that tests cannot reveal" (1999, p52). It is the recognition of children's developmental stages and the creation of a classroom environment and programme that nurtures this progression that demonstrates increased teacher competency (Berliner, 1994).

Teacher development

While expertise evolves over time it should not be confused with experience (Berliner, 1994, Clay,1985). Johnston (1999) highlights the importance of close and careful observation by commenting that "unless teachers understand (literacy) patterns and how and where to look for them, they simply will not see them" (1999, p47). The progression from novice to expert draws together experiences and understandings from past and present, both inside and outside the educational spectrum. Therefore heightened teacher awareness both of teaching procedures and the trajectory of stages children pass through as they develop literacy skills are critical for teachers' pedagogical growth.

There are diverse and at times competing lenses through which to view teacher development (Berliner, 1994; Huberman, 1989:;Levin 2003; Nias, 1989; Sikes, 1985). Personal issues such as age, gender, personality and philosophy blend with professional beliefs and experiences. These need to be positioned against the cultural setting within which teachers operate. The result is the complicated and at times contradictory picture that reflects the unique individual context that each teacher experiences. Expertise is contextual (Berliner, 1994). As teachers change classroom contexts so does their ability to engage in the craft of teaching.

Research by Sikes (1985) supported by Levinson's framework of 'seasonally' based life cycle stages, rests on the blend of professional and personal factors that can influence age related teaching development. Sikes' model outlines beginning teachers aged 21-28 largely occupied with accepting and coping with the realities of teaching. Classroom issues such as discipline and motivation of children require significant input and consume energy for teachers of this age. Critical incidents arise which result in teachers at this stage synthesising school culture, with a personal and public philosophical stance to ensure professional survival. However Sikes' model needs to be balanced with awareness that there is an increasingly wide age range of people entering the teaching profession bringing a variety of life experiences to their role in the classroom.

Similarly Huberman (1989) views the trajectory of teacher development by corresponding teachers' age with years of experience. Resulting themes focus on psychological and sociological influences at given points across a teaching life cycle moving from the teaching 'entry' point through stages of 'stablisation' then 'diversification and change' toward a period of 'stock taking and interrogation' and finally 'serenity and affective distance'. Issues that are raised, experienced then resolved at each stage form the basis of career choices. As with Sikes (1985) the focus is limited to teachers' perspectives and does not specifically address any pedagogical maturation.

Focusing on teaching within a life stage framework provides a valuable perspective on how teaching issues are accommodated across a career but implies that awareness of critical 'triggers' are dependent on cognitive age related maturation rather than any pedagogical growth. Berliner (1994) offers a theoretical model on the development of teaching skills from novice to expert stage. Based upon length of teaching experience this model outlines the distinctive features of four progressive stages leading up to the fifth 'expert stage.' Berliner cautions that not all teachers will reach the final expert status. Berliner's 'expert teachers' (1994) have synthesised their observations and understandings to produce fluid effortless teaching performance. They demonstrate an intuitive grasp of situations and when challenged demonstrate reliance on deliberate analytic processing. Influenced by their professional history, the expert teacher has intense emotional engagement in teaching. Unlike Berliner's other four teaching stages (novice, advanced beginner, competent, and proficient) expert teachers demonstrate habitual procedures and responses and are often characterised by the sense of responsibility they feel for learners' progress.

At two/three years classroom teaching experience Berliners' Advanced Beginner has developed strategic knowledge. The melding of experience and verbal (and theoretical) knowledge results in teaching behaviours increasingly appropriate for the teaching setting. Hence 'followship' dominates. Teachers are driven by the desire to blend personal and professional knowledge with the expectations of the setting. However deeper understandings of teaching and learning are not yet developed so advanced

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beginners have no sense of what is important. Another characteristic also is a lack of responsibility for teaching actions and their implications for learners. Thus self-reflection is superficial.

Unlike Berliner, who sees teacher development as based on the accommodation of variables at each stage, Huberman's model of the professional life cycle of teachers (1989), is based upon the growth arising from dissonance experienced within a stage. For instance Huberman's entry stage applies to teachers with between one and three years classroom experience (between the ages of 21 and 25) and is then followed by a period of stabilisation (possible ages 22-28). Themes of survival and discovery characterise career entry and may occur in parallel "with the excitement and challenge of the discovery stage serving to pull beginning teachers through the survival stage" (Huberman cited in Levin, 2003, p266). The stabilisation phase sees the emergence of commitment to teaching (often resulting from job stability) and associated feelings of responsibility, independence and mastery. "One is now a teacher, both in one's own eyes and in the eyes of others" (Huberman, 1989, p 350 cited in Levin, 2003, p267).

Psychological, philosophical and sociological influences converge as Nias' (1989) describes "teacher development as who a person becomes as a teacher and the importance of the affective, cognitive and practical tasks of teaching" (cited in Levin, 2003, p 264). Teachers' self-identity in relation to their teaching context is a central theme across Nias' model. Coming from an ethnographic base Nias explores how it feels to be a teacher balancing the dilemmas, contradictions and paradoxes that underpin the reality of the profession, highlighting how one's sense of self both creates and impacts upon teachers' development at any given point within their career.

Influences on the Beginning Teacher

The literature relating to beginning teachers draws attention largely through descriptive investigations (Caree,1995; Maloch, Flint, Elridge, Oven, Fine & Bryant-Shankin 2003; Medwell, 1998) to the numerous tensions faced by teachers in the passage from preservice training to teaching. "Each new teacher enters the classroom more or less as a

stranger in a strange land. The suitcases he or she carries are filled with articles from the old country, the familiar land just left" (Copa,1991, cited Carre 1995, p191). General agreement centres on the complexity surrounding the synthesis of theory and practice for beginning teachers. Pearson, 2001 (cited in Maloch et al, 2003, p432), notes the tradition of laying social ills on teachers has widened to teacher educators. United States based research in this area focuses on the differing preservice training options available noting programme factors that highlight 'excellent reading instruction and reading achievement' (Anders, Hoffman & Duffy 2000, Maloch, 2003).

Professional development of beginning teachers corresponds with increasing awareness of learners and how the teachers' actions affect the learning environment according to Ryan (1986, cited in Levin, 2003 p262). He sees beginning teachers as progressing through four sequential stages: fantasy, reality, master of craft and impact. Movement through these stages increases awareness and 'self' is established in relation to teaching.

Ryan's fantasy stage can be likened to the view of teaching held by a young child 'playing school' characterised by the teacher's authoritative control and the subsequent adulation from children. From this perspective the pre service teacher "knows how it is to be a student, understands the needs of students , and is going to be liked and respected by his/her students." (Littleton & Littleton, 2005, p2). This stage lasts throughout pre service training and usually ends within a few days of a beginning teacher entering their first classroom.

Feelings about ones self as a teacher develop through the reality phases of survival and disenchantment. Shock at the realities associated with time, expectations of school management, parents and curriculum requirements demand a survival approach which is then followed by feelings of blame. "Quite often, unable to accept the fact that s/he is incapable of directing a group of students, the novice shifts the blame to the 'dumb' students, and the administrator that doesn't know what it's like in the classroom, poor training from a university that is out-of-touch with the 'real world', or an excessively bureaucratic system." (Littleton & Littleton, 2005, p3). Ryan believes that competence

emerges as the beginning teacher learns some 'tricks of the trade', develops a 'thicker skin', and to balance their professional and personal life. The complexity of teaching still challenges the beginning teacher but this is coupled with a decrease in negativity and feeling of optimism resulting from increased feelings of control. Often a simple human event such as a thank you card from a child or parent acts as a catalyst giving a sense of recognition and worthiness propelling the beginning teacher toward developing confidence and a stronger commitment to teaching.

Beginning teachers' emotional states influence their teaching persona. Ria, Seve, Saury, Theureau and Durand (2003), outline that teachers' emotional states infiltrate classroom actions. Prior teaching experiences leave an emotional imprint which affects the "adaptive intelligibility" (Ria, et al, 2003, p229), a beginning teacher brings to the classroom. Therefore feelings from pre-service experiences may influence confidence and responsiveness to classroom dynamics.

Since emotions are the basis for action, learning to recognise and respond to the emotional states evoked when teaching is a critical aspect of learning to teach. Beginning teaching awareness of ones own emotional state and responding to maintain a personal emotional equilibrium is a key psychological task. Ria et al highlight that during face to face contact with children, teachers "try not to let internal disturbance invade and betray them" (Ria, et al, 2003. p229), to communicate a sense of being in control. If feeling in control is realised by being in control then "unpleasant emotions can constitute situations favourable for learning to teach effectively" (Ria et al, 2003, p231).

A synthesis of literature related to learning-to-teach between 1987 and 1990 by Kagan (1992, cited in Levin, 2003, p269), concluded that the beginning teacher has two essential issues to resolve; classroom management and knowledge of self in the teacher role.

The present study aimed to consider the factors that influenced the development of beginning teachers specifically in the contexts of their evolving reading programmes and

relates the findings to the literature that has been summarised.

Chapter 3: Research Design

The Role of Narrative

What is a storytelling?

Embedded within a story are the understandings, values, and perspectives of the storyteller and the participants within the story. These assimilate into the meaning that the author is attempting to convey. Stories are a vehicle for making sense of the world we live in. While in theory they are windows into the views of others, in practice stories represent a dialogue in which the author's meanings can only be interpreted from a listener's perspective. The need to make sense of events and 'tell it the way it really was' leads to the composition of stories that attempt to communicate 'knowing' into 'telling'. Storytelling acts as a vehicle for communicating significant concepts. Witherell and Noddings (1991, p.279) comment: "what is only dimly perceived at the level of principle may become vivid and affectively powerful in the concrete". Accessibility to a concept increases when it is placed in a framework of familiar ideas and experience; consequently storytelling creates a connection between the abstractions of theory toward the realities of personal experience.

Locating a story

The stories within biographical accounts provide ways that people can make meaning from their experiences. Acting both as mirrors and windows stories offer insights creating reflective spaces that offer potential for growth (Livo & Reitz, 1986). Bruner (cited in Witherell and Noddings, 1991) viewed storytelling as another human mode of thought making explicit connections between experiences, knowledge and action. Other literature supports this noting narrative as an instinctual human activity capturing structure and coherency from seemingly chaotic shapeless experiences (Jalongo and Isenberg, 1995; Livo and Rietz, 1986; Tappen and Brown,1991).

Clandinin and Connelly (1999) note that stories are told on particular landscapes and that the relationship of the author to the landscape is significant in the storytelling that unfolds. The culture and climate of a landscape determines whether a story is recounted,

retold/relived, or deconstructed and if so the nature of the perspectives that are brought to these processes. The passage of time allows for deconstruction, retelling/reliving of experiences where events, their meanings, and the complexities of the context can be explored with new insight. Changing contexts may provide new or deeper insights into a story; similarly personal growth can impact on perspectives, and alternatively a story may simply be recounted and accepted by the group with the perspectives of a past set of circumstances. Thus the 'text' of an oral story may be read in multiple ways at any one time and over time (Mezirow, 1990).

Similarly the discourse used within a story offers key insights into the understandings of the storyteller. Bruner (1987) when discussing the construction of four narrators from the 'shared landscape' of Goodhertz family, notes that the differing discourse (linguistic choices, time order in telling, and emerging themes) were used by narrators. Bruner's research suggested that ways of telling and conceptualising become 'recipes' for life. These guide a narrator's future in addition to their perception of past events (Bruner, 1987, Convery, 1999; Livo & Reitz, 1986). Consequently "a life is inseparable from a life as told" (Bruner 1987, p36).

Clandinin and Connelly (1998) highlight the importance of moving beyond recounting stories to a more sophisticated re-experiencing of 'retelling' and 'reliving'. They saw these processes as more educative practices that provide imaginative possibilities. "People's lives are composed over time: stories are lived and told, retold and relived. For us, education is interwoven with living and the possibility of retelling our life stories" (Clandinin & Connelly, 1998, p.203).

Stories therefore are a mechanism in which the past has the potential to inform the future. A constructivist approach to storytelling lends itself to the creation of understandings to live by in the future from the meanings gathered from past experiences and shared through the retelling, reliving, and deconstructing processes associated with the dialogue of narrative.

Self and story

Determining whether 'truth' can be extrapolated from narrative, is dependent on definitions of 'truth' and 'accuracy' found credible by the audience. Livo and Reitz comment that "Reconfiguration of the memory of an event into the shape of "story" helps us to better remember the event, even though 'story' may change the memory by imposing its own shape upon it" (1986, p5). Clearly in uncovering and discovering one's sense of 'self' contrasting truths are possible. Insights into 'self' offered by narrative are powerful; not only do storytellers relive an experience to make sense of events but also provide an opportunity to offer explanation and justification for personal actions (Convery,1999; Livo & Rietz, 1986). Narrative offers a vehicle for developing and portraying a preferred self-image. Therefore narrative creates rather than reveals self (Bruner 1987; Convery, 1999; Livo & Rietz, 1986) as "mental talk is largely performative – that is, it does not mirror nor map an independent reality but is a functioning element in social process itself" (Gergen, 1989, cited in Convery, 1999, p137).

Narrative has a place in qualitative research because of its ability to illuminate perspectives, values, ideals, and understandings. "The author by imposing a narrative form and plot on a sequence of 'real events', gives to those events the meaning value, and formal coherence that only stories possess" (Witherell & Noddings 1991, p.178). Stories are a tool that people use to communicate the meaning that they make of events in their attempts to gain collective understanding. Underpinning this is a view that reality is socially and personally constructed.

Rather than just idle talk, a story offers authenticity, reinterpretation and response, each of which offers an opportunity for professional growth. This investigation is a response to interest in teachers' perspectives of their own professional development. There is widespread acknowledgement of how personal reflections can deepen understanding of the past, which in turn informs future practice. Stories provided a vehicle for this study which aimed to identify the factors that influenced the evolution of beginning teachers junior reading programmes.

Methodology

An exploration of the factors that influence beginning teachers' reading programmes needs to be grounded in a methodology that acknowledges the uniqueness of each participant's experience. Narrative analysis allows participants' stories to be heard and situated within each school environment. Kramp (2004) describes two approaches to narrative. The first, analysis of narratives, deconstructs narratives to identify themes with findings then presented to allow movement from "the particular and the shared or common elements" (deMarrais & Lapan, 2004, p 121). The second, narrative analysis, constructs narratives to bring "order and meaningfulness that is not apparent in the data themselves" (Pollinghorne cited in deMarrais & Lapan, 2004, p 121). Kramp notes that these methods are complementary and may be used together to provide a "rich analysis of the stories your research participants shared with you in their interviews" (deMarrais & Lapan, 2004, p 121).

In this study rather than create a single 'story' for each participant, recalled 'episodes' of an experience described have been considered a story. For example a participant's telling about teaching a guided reading lesson is one 'story' and the same participant's talk about communication with parents is another separate 'story'. For each participant many 'stories' have been gathered and represented.

Overview of Data Gathering Procedure

To explore the research question it was decided that the writer study three beginning teachers (working with year 2/3 classes) in their 'real world' teaching contexts initially using video observation, followed by two interviews. The first, a short semi-structured ethnographic interview and the second stimulated recall using selected video excerpts.

A stationary video camera, was supplied and positioned in each participant's classroom over four consecutive days. Each day participants were videoed taking a reading session with the camera trained on the teacher's working space. In all cases this was the area from which reading groups were taught. One segment containing instructional reading

was randomly chosen from one of the four days recorded. This was analysed and used to stimulate the teacher's story during the second interview.

Interview one was conducted with each participant only after the videoing sequence had been completed. Participants were given a copy of the interview questions and prompts (Appendix 2) at least one day prior to the first interview. The interview was then conducted in a quiet location within their school. Interview questions began with the prompt 'tell me about' inviting the participant to recall particulars of this experience and contextualising these in a specific time and place (Kramp, 2004, p114). It was intended that participant empowerment would result, offering the opportunity for rich data and the generation of greater understandings.

All the video data for each participant was viewed and one excerpt was then randomly selected for analysis. Within each day there was variance, between participants, in the number of reading groups taught. One group was identified and used to stimulate recall in interview two. Interview two was conducted within each participant's school in a quiet location with a video player. The selected video footage was shown. During this time participants' reactions and comments where observed. These were recorded after leaving each school setting. The stimulated recall procedure was selected to provide insights into how beginning teachers explain their reading lessons and give a further opportunity for participant interpretation.

In accordance with ethnographic methodology the design of interview two emerged in response to emerging elements from the stories gathered from interview one and selected video footage. Each participant had a personalised series of questions for interview two (Appendix 3). These focused on relevant initial themes from their data pool.

Relevant artefacts were gathered at the time of the interviews; for example copies of teacher planning, texts, or resources that may be referred to during the interview process.

Following data gathering process, each participant was forwarded a copy of his or her interview transcripts to read, make comment on, and return. A copy of each participant's video footage was also provided. These provided an opportunity for participants to contribute their own interpretation to the field-notes and ensure that the research process remains true to the narrative principle of beginning and ending with the storyteller (Kramp, 2004).

A researcher journal was kept of the data gathering process making retrospective notes after each interview based on observations throughout each stage of the procedure. During the analysis stage of the process emerging ideas and understandings were either recorded in this journal or on memos.

Confidentiality and Anonymity

Transcriptions of data were kept on a computer file with password entry known only to the researcher. A back up disk, audiotapes of interviews and field notes were kept secure in her home study. Access to information was limited to the writer, thesis supervisors, and the transcriber.

Participants were assured of confidentiality of all information given and anonymity throughout the process. Names of individuals and schools have been changed accordingly. Participants were free to withdraw from the study at any time.

From this point the study is described in the first person. As a novice researcher, I felt most comfortable presenting the literature review and method sections in the third person but wish to add my own voice to the main body of the study.

Meet the Participants

This study involved three beginning teachers working within the wider Christchurch area. The participants were purposively selected. I accessed Ministry of Education records of Christchurch College of Education graduates with start dates from January 2005 and January 2004. I also contacted colleagues in pre-service and in-service primary education

in order to identify potential participants. It proved challenging to locate beginning teachers working with year 2/3 classes. I located Dave through a chance conversation with the principal of his school. Janelle was located after cold calling her school principal, and Jodie was the first contact I made on a list of names given to me by an in-service advisor.

Initially school principals were approached to verify a potential participants' willingness to be involved in the research. As the 'gate keeper' of a beginning teacher's professional development, a principal will act to preserve teachers' professional safety. Contacting the principal created a 'distance' that allowed potential participants to refuse if they were unwilling to work with me on the project. It was pleasing that each subject approached consented.

Introducing 'Dave'

I first meet Dave in October 2004 after a chance conversation with his principal resulted in him becoming the first participant in this project. Dave was a mature beginning teacher in his mid to late twenties with a wife and two preschool children. He was nearing the end of his second year teaching at an integrated catholic school. Located near a busy shopping complex, this five-teacher school has a strong multicultural population including learners from European/Pakeha, Maori, Samoan, Tongan, Korean, Chinese, Vietnamese, and Egyptian backgrounds. The school's website notes that supporting learners acquisition of the English language is an area of focus which runs alongside the philosophical aim of the school to provide a caring Christian environment in which the development of the whole person - spiritual, moral, intellectual, social, emotional and physical can be fostered.

Dave has an easy manner. He communicated warmth and inclusiveness inviting me to participate in staff prayers and introducing me to other staff and to the visiting overseer from the Catholic Education Office who was conducting a Religious Education review in the school the same week I videoed in Dave's classroom. Having taught in an integrated school this was familiar territory for me. I sensed my responsiveness to the school's

culture contributed to the positive relationship that was formed. Friendly and personable Dave communicated a relaxed attitude toward my project. Informal contact from Dave has continued long after my data gathering ceased.

Dave worked in a small classroom space that had a retractable wall partition at one end. This separated an open plan teaching space into two smaller classroom areas which were currently being used as single cell classrooms. Dave's classroom layout faced away from the movable partition and focused on a class altar featuring a bible, flowers, candles, and a small statue of Mary. Alongside this was the class teaching space that incorporated a large mat area and a portable whiteboard. The room contained several computers positioned against a side wall and a well stocked library area which included an author study display. A large box of reading games was located on the opposite wall. The walls were decorated with examples of children's work.

Introducing Janelle

The principal of Janelle's school had two beginning teachers suitable for this study and approached Janelle inviting her to participate. Janelle taught at a large Christchurch school situated in an affluent suburb on the outskirts of the city. This school has experienced considerable roll growth in recent years according to its website and aims to encourage children to achieve their best academically, socially and physically. A large proportion of the children move beyond the local community for their secondary education and the principal noted that dealing with strong parental involvement and interest was a feature of this community.

I spoke to Janelle over the phone about her involvement in the study and immediately felt the sense of confidence she communicated. Meeting Janelle a few days later reinforced this view. She was an active member of the staff arranging the end of year social function and involved in the corporate life of her syndicate. Janelle conveyed a busy efficiency together with her willingness to be involved.

Janelle's class worked in a relocatable room to one side of the main junior school block. The classroom environment had a busy, yet warm and inviting atmosphere.

The walls and strings running across the room were laden with children's work. Captions, written either by Janelle or children, accompanied the range of colourful displays. The main teaching area was under the wall length whiteboard which dominated one end of the classroom. The whiteboard was used as a noticeboard recording the day's events and organisational information needed for children working independently. Large comfy cushions were strewn across the mat area and children used these during group lessons with Janelle.

Introducing Jo

After being approached by her principal, Jo volunteered to be part of this study. She taught at a ten-teacher school in the northwest suburbs of Christchurch. Jo was one of two beginning teachers teaching year 2/3. According to the school's website it has a decile 9 rating and is characterised by a strong family atmosphere. Children in her class have written descriptions of Jo to accompany an illustration on the class web page. One pupil, Sandra describes Jo as having 'long black hair and always likes to wear long skirts. She used to coach basketball and now she coaches touch rugby' and another child, Sean, writes Jo has 'three turtles in her classroom.'

Although she volunteered for this study, Jo was hesitant and appeared nervous when I first met her. We talked around the parameters of the study both on the phone and before the data gathering began. As the data gathering began Jo relaxed and opened up leaving me with the impression that she valued the opportunity to reflect on her reading.

Jo's classroom was part of the main block of the junior school. It shared toilet and cloakroom facilities with another class at the same level. A large airy room, Jo's class communicated order. Entering the classroom for the first time I noticed desks grouped together in blocks of six. Each desk had a pair of children's slippers neatly placed underneath. The classroom was intricately decorated with children's work carefully displayed. A large fish tank, containing turtles was at the back of the classroom and the

soft but insistent click from the oxygen filter was a permanent feature of the environment. The class mat area was positioned near Jo's desk at the front of the room.

Pre-service commonalities

Each of the participants in this study was a graduate of the Christchurch College of Education both Janelle and Dave having completed a Bachelor of Teaching and Learning. A component of this degree is EN 263, a 200 level course devoted to junior school literacy programmes. In contrast, Jo completed a Graduate Diploma of Teaching. RE 232, the reading course within this qualification, dealt with reading in a more general manner. EN 263 contains a practical task that closely mirrors the process of planning for reading in the junior classroom. Students are required to score and analyse a class set of running records, group the class into four achievement based groups for guided reading and then take one of the groups and plan a needs-based guided reading lesson. The year that Jo completed RE 232 this exercise was included as a practical lecture activity. Interestingly, none of the participants made any reference to this task, despite its close links with their initial experiences in their first junior classroom.

Philippa: Walking the Tightrope

My interest into the journey that beginning teachers take as they start to teach reading in their junior classrooms stems from my professional background in junior literacy. I have taught for several years in the junior school and am familiar with the complexities of teaching reading at this level. As an Assistant Principal I have encouraged and supported at least eight beginning teachers through the transition from pre-service into their own classroom. This awareness has also been strengthened by the contract roles I have had developing professional support material for junior school literacy programmes. I am currently employed by the Christchurch College of Education working with the Literacy Curriculum Centre and Professional Studies and Practice. My role centres on delivering pre-service courses in literacy and I am also involved in teaching Professional Studies and supporting students while they are on practicum in schools.

While I was not personally acquainted with any of the participants before the study, it is reasonable to assume that all participants knew who I was and what my professional role entailed. Upon first meeting, the participants Janelle, Jo and Dave, each recognised me and initiated conversation with questions such as 'How's life at College?'

Entering this study I had a concern that prospective participants may confuse my professional role with my role as a researcher. 'Judging' reading programmes was not my agenda, but I was aware that participants might have been concerned about this. Ultimately, I concluded that my personality and professional reputation must stand for themselves and that they would be proven by participants' willingness to be involved in the first place.

Prior to data gathering with the participants, I prepared myself with an initial bracketing interview (Kramp, 2004), conducted by a colleague. This interview attempted to highlight the assumptions and beliefs that I may have brought to the study. My colleague interviewed me using the Interview One guidelines I had prepared (Appendix 2). This enabled me to relive my own experiences as a beginning teacher and tell my story.

Two main themes emerged from my analysis of the bracketing interview. Recalling events from my own beginning teaching drew my attention to challenges of managing the children who were working independently so I could withdraw reading groups and how, as a beginning teacher, I struggled to find a resolution to this.

> "I can remember having a lot of angst about activities that children were doing. I know that occupying the others was a big issue for me. I can remember having a group of boys – a group of about 4 or 5 boys who obviously were getting away on me a bit and I can remember putting quite a lot of thought into the ways that I could separate them and direct them to particular tasks. I think that as time went on I probably started with quite a loose arrangement – here's the browsing box and here's this and here's that but I think that I tightened up in my planning as time went on. I would be much more specific about what I wanted them to do

with a much clearer idea and I think I would give them more with more instructions so rather than – a bland example of that would be rather than paint a picture about a story, it would be choose the most exciting part of the story and then I want you to paint a picture about it and then I want you to write two sentences about it" (p.121-133).

Gratitude emerges for the experienced teachers in my syndicate who guided and supported me. I recall Belinda, Maureen and in particular Jenny, the teacher next door who shared her knowledge of literacy and her wisdom about teaching reading with me:

"Then I can remember going and seeing Jenny and thinking that why on earth didn't I just go into the room next door because I got more from her observing her lessons and her reading programme and talking about the things which she did and then talking about what was happening in my classroom" (p. 149-153).

"I can remember when I was taking more and more time as I became aware of the processes of learning to read, being more and more careful about text selection. I guess I was modelling myself on her because she would agonize over which books to give, in which order and the needs of the kids in the group and I can remember spending lots of time after school talking with her about so and so is doing such and such and I think I might need to whatever. She would just gently mould and talk to me – it wasn't like she was deliberately mentoring me but in hindsight she was a huge mentor because in the business of her collecting her own books she would be talking to me about why she was getting this book for this group and I would be talking about behaviours that particular kids would be exhibiting and she would be making suggestions about things that I could do or books that might be suitable or saying don't move them too quickly onto those Ready-to-Reads because the language structure is more complex but you need to do those because that consolidates them at a particular level" (p.160-174).

I have been surprised by the degree of reflection on my own initial teaching experiences this process has generated. While my own career in literacy has involved management as an Assistant Principal, writing and acting as a consultant for Learning Media, and planning and implementing pre-service courses, I recall vividly being initially overwhelmed by the complexity of implementing a reading programme, and am aware of how little I knew about the stages of literacy acquisition in my first years' teaching. While interacting with the data I have felt empathy for the situations participants describe. I recalled my own experiences and remember similar feelings of uncertainty, bewilderment, and blame. I feel that for beginning teachers, the journey to learn about teaching reading is challenging but in my experience professionally satisfying.

Engaging in the bracketing interview allowed me to refocus on my beginning teacher experience. I entered each research site bringing multiple roles, 'the lecturer', 'the experienced teacher', 'the novice researcher' but with recent recollections of the 'beginning teacher'. It was 'Philippa- the beginning teacher' who I tried to draw on when responding to comments and questions. I found myself offering insights into my own experience of beginning as this exchange with Jo highlights:

P: Yes I can remember feeling a lot like that when I began teaching as well and I started at the Year 2 level. I was feeling quite overcome if you like, by the complexity that reading involves. Because managing your reading groups and having the other groups is very very different from your other curriculum areas.

Jo: Um…that's right. It's the only one where you are probably doing go one on one with one group of people and the whole rest of the class is doing other things. Everything else is with whole equal groups and you can sort of oversee everything.

P: Yes it is complex and I think that is partly where my idea for doing all this came from is that I can remember finding it quite traumatic and being

traumatised about it and setting up your reading programme being one of the things that you are just continually thinking, well I am continually thinking you need guidance, so I agree (JH1.415-427).

In this example the persona I am drawing on is that of a beginning teacher rather than college lecturer or experienced junior teacher or even observer. It appeared that the ability to relate and empathize with the participants contributed to the conversational tone that characterised the interviews. At times I felt that prompts were more appropriate than conversation in keeping participants focused on 'their' story. At times this reaction could be inconsequential as my following response to Janelle shows

P: "Oh wonderful! That sounded really good. Who do you talk to about your reading programme?" (JT1. 275).

However the 'experienced other' persona is inevitably present. While my goal not to judge was tempered by reliving my own beginning experiences, I found myself unable to avoid giving reassurance when I felt it was needed. In the following exchange I respond to Jo about the challenges she is facing:

Jo: "It is just survival sometimes!! Ha, Ha

P: I think you are right. I think sometimes it is survival and I think often you feel like you are surviving and if you don't actually take time to stop and look around and think, you know, I am actually doing a really good job here. I am actually going really well. But I guess in a way you are feeling the impact.

Jo: Yes, that's probably right. So hopefully it will continue to get better" (JH1. 467-475).

The bracketing interview allowed me a structured way of reflection. To stop and recall my own stories supported my attempts to walk alongside the participants sharing rather than simply observing their challenges and triumphs.

Reviewing the data during the analysis phase of the project involved multiple readings of all transcripts. Themes emerged and a process of sifting, collating, confirming and reviewing these ideas followed. Eventually three dominant themes were identified and targeted for deeper exploration as I sought to tell participants stories.

Stories representing participants' interpretation of what it means to learn to read are presented in the following chapter. The professional learning environment of each participant is then explored in chapter 6, with the focus then turning in chapter 7 to how these two factors influence the emergence of each participants' professional conscience about teaching reading.

Chapter 4: Interpretation of Learning to Read

From Theory to Practice

Guiding children through the emergent and early stages of literacy acquisition requires knowledge of learners' ability in relation to the process of learning to read (Ministry of Education, 2003b). Teachers are most effective in their teaching of reading when their understandings of learning to read are "grounded in theory and research" (Ministry of Education, 2005, p8). Beginning teachers in this study told stories about their journey in teaching reading. Their stories frequently included the terminology of literacy and contained the jargon, terms and phrases introduced in pre-service experiences. Participants spoke confidently about reading using the meta-language of literacy in an easy confident manner. All participants used the discourse of teaching reading across interview and informal discussion, but such 'teacher speak' does not necessarily equate with practical classroom understanding. Jo comments:

> "I knew my own theory and sort of things like that but I just didn't know how to set up a reading programme. I didn't know what to do when I came in and I didn't know that I needed to be doing these sorts of things"(JH1. 368-370).

Setting up the classroom is usually the first practical task beginning teachers' address before their first term teaching. While secondary to 'teaching', the physical layout impacts on how a reading programme will operate. Most junior school reading programmes involve the teacher withdrawing ability based groups of children for guided reading while the remainder of the class are independently engaged in purposeful literacy based activities. The teacher works with a reading group while being positioned to monitor the 'others'. Before the reading programme is fully operational, teachers make a myriad of decisions such as the number of reading groups, how often these will work with the teacher, and the nature of the independent activities. These draw on pedagogical and personal understandings about what constitutes 'effective practice' and are the significant first steps in the evolution of beginning teachers' reading programmes.

Medwell et al (1998) highlighted that junior school beginning teachers are dependent on their pre-service experiences for the development of pedagogical understandings that are outside the realm of their personal study history. Participants in this study recall the classroom based pre-service professional practices in junior classrooms as being a major influence in their understandings of what it means to learn and therefore to teach reading.

The 'sorts of things' that Jo is referring to (JH1. 368-370 outlined above) include selecting relevant teaching points for each reading group, purposeful selection of each group's reading material, and dealing with parents (JH1. 271-359). Dave echoes this point by seeking assistance from another teacher for the 'nuts and bolts' of his reading programme (D1. 173). These statements are interesting in that they encapsulate some of the key tasks of teaching reading. It would appear that while Jo 'knew' what a reading programme should include, and while her reference to a philosophical position communicates her view of the importance of theory, she had yet to 'realise' these understandings. Similarly despite Dave's use of relevant discourse he needed to confirm what the theory should look like in action.

Unlike most other curriculum areas, specific assessment methods are available to evaluate children's reading progress. Running Records (Clay, 2000) and the Retelling procedure (together with a range of literacy assessment tools for example PM Benchmarks, PROBE, STAR), mean that teachers can track and monitor the use of reading strategies, and comprehension. Possibly this measurement is instrumental in the development of participants' feelings of 'accountability' for children's reading progress and was a force behind the development of a professional conscience for teaching reading.

Janelle (JT2. 310-320) describes the accountability for teaching children to read in terms of a 'massive consequence'. When asked to elaborate on what the consequence was she commented:

"You know that I haven't taught the children enough so when they get moved on next year all of the teachers that are teaching at my same level are managing to get through all this because you know they are experienced and they can just do it all. And I guess I think that I am holding the children back – I'd hate to hold the children back" (JT2. 316-320).

This highlights the visibility of children's reading achievement. Perhaps reading's visibility is one of the reasons that teaching reading challenges the beginning teachers in this project?

The implementation of the reading programme is the practical face of learning to read. Decisions about how the children will be grouped, when and how the teacher will work with each group, and what children will be doing when not working with the teacher all stem from a teachers' beliefs about learning to read. Knowing which strategies and behaviours support reading acquisition is a critical part of the teaching and learning process and drives how a programme is established. Developmentally appropriate reading skills need to be identified and taught to support children's reading development.

The information gained from Running Records provides information about individual children but needs to be assimilated across a group of learners in order to form the basis of teaching decisions for achievement based reading groups. Synthesis of understandings about individuals into practical teaching decisions for a reading group can be complex and is therefore a challenge for beginning teachers.

The decision about what to 'teach' was confronted by Janelle whose search for 'answers' may have meant she initially disregarded the value of the information she had gathered about the children

"...what do I actually teach them? Here I am, I've done my running records, I've grouped the children accordingly – great... – but now I want to teach them – how do I know what they need to be taught other than what I have analysed. So I may

know they need to look at middle sounds of words or they need to look at the beginnings or they've left off the ends -that their strategies aren't quite there. But what at that level do they need to know?" (JT1. 133-143).

Janelle resolved this issue when given a set of planning sheets outlining skills and strategies relevant at levels beyond the colourwheel. Similarly perplexed Jo sought advice using the Reading Recovery teacher in her school as a support person to discuss skills and strategies used by individual children and to monitor her grouping and teaching decisions.

"She (Reading Recovery teacher) is looking at the deeper features; she is not looking at their scores she has been really good at making sure they are in the right groups and also where I should be aiming to get them because I wasn't quite sure where my targets were…" (JH2. 163-166).

" I have been doing my own analysis and then I will take it to her if I have got any that are sort of borderline and I am not quite sure what to do with"
(JH2. 193-195)

Janelle's search for planning assistance may highlight awareness that the process of learning to read follows a progression. The recognition of this 'pattern' in context may as yet be outside her professional experience but both she and Jo were finding ways to access the broad 'sequence' of skill and strategy development in literacy acquisition. In turning to an experienced colleague Jo was 'tapping into' this teacher's professional knowledge as a 'check' against her own tentative conclusions.

Difficulties which focused on 'what to teach' highlight the complexity of the reading process. Throughout the data gathering phases of this project all participants regularly referred to their junior school professional practice experiences. These classroom based opportunities initially appeared more relevant and meaningful to the participants than preservice coursework. This is evident from Dave's comments:

"I have also gone back to the stuff from College a lot that we got given. Um... I found that when I started out I basically decided I was going to do it the way that I had seen it been done in a classroom and sort of put all my notes in the box over here.......But when I found that that wasn't really working as I had hoped it would, I thought OK there must be something in that box that will give me the answers" (D1. 335-345).

Questioning the relevance of pre-service courses can be linked to Ryan's (1986) Model of Beginning Teacher Development. Ryan notes that in the initial 'fantasy' stage of teacher development

"Whether the fantasies are pleasant or anxious, pre-service teachers often do not think about their future careers in a careful, analytical manner. One reason why pre-service teachers find education courses irrelevant is that these courses often have little to do with what is going on in their fantasy lives"(Ryan, 1986, p11, cited in Levin, B, 2003, p261).

According to Ryan's model, it could be that as Dave moved from the 'fantasy' stage to the 'reality' and 'master of craft' stages pre-service course material appeared more meaningful. However the relevance of what constitutes pre-service education in literacy acquisition and how beginning teachers perceive this during and after their transition into junior school classrooms is beyond the scope of this project.

'Taking' a Group

All participants stressed the importance of the teacher spending 'quality time' with each reading group and integral to enabling this to occur were decisions about the structure of the reading programme. Concerns addressed how many groups the class should be divided into, decisions about the composition of groups, how many times a week each group would be 'seen' by the teacher, and what the 'others' in the class would be doing while the teacher worked with a particular group. All these practical programming issues

needed to be resolved first to allow the teacher's attention to move to individual reading groups and consider what would occur when working with them.

Successful resolution of practical programming issues enabled the beginning teacher to focus on their role as the teacher when working with a group. In this ideal scenario all children working independently were meaningfully engaged reducing the teachers' need for reactive management which would interrupt the group with which they were working. Insights drawn from anecdotal observations and reading assessment were aligned with an emerging understanding of the reading process so 'teaching and learning' became the focus of the group. In order for this interaction to begin relevant teaching points needed to be identified which were related to children's reading development and presented in a manner that motivated and encouraged children in reading.

Practical programming issues consumed many participants' stories but when asked to reflect on what they did with a group and how that had changed since they first started teaching, participants understandings of the reading process and the purpose of guided reading became evident. It was also noticeable that with greater classroom experience their focus had repositioned from the practical issues to those of teaching and learning.

The following section focuses on each participant in turn to see how they perceive themselves as they take guided reading and how they believed that this had changed since they started teaching. This reveals their understandings about the processes involved in literacy acquisition at this point in their career and also signals growth in their awareness of how deliberate acts of teaching may impact on children's learning.

Dave:Two Years Teaching
At the end of his second year teaching Dave was dealing with the practical complexity of managing a junior reading programme. Dave talked about having spent time developing a range of options for those children working independently (including an author study, a class library, computer games and worksheets), he balanced taking a group for guided

reading with ensuring that independent 'others' remained on task and using an appropriate noise level to allow him to hear the group with which he was working.

Group reading commenced with children bringing their chairs to the teaching space at the front of the room and forming a circle inclusive of Dave and such that he was facing outward able to monitor the rest of the class. Dave preselected a reading text for each group and aimed to read through any relevant teacher notes provided as preparation for his group lesson. He usually selected "two or three things that I want to concentrate on" (D1. 263). The video footage showed him checking these points as each group converged in the teaching space.

Dave describes the process he works through with each group as follows:
> "I'll maybe read the first page out loud just to set it up for them, check some understanding at the end of that to see that they understand what's being read and maybe invite someone else in the group to read and start on the next page. Maybe have a couple more questions and if there is a bigger theme that the story is about......then I'll ask the children to read part of it themselves and then I'll say to them 'I'll ask you some questions' and while they are doing that, that is an opportunity to go around to see how the other groups are getting on and make sure they are OK. Then I'll come back and just have couple of questions about that that page and depending on how time is going, I may invite another couple of children to do a bit of reading out loud or else, if I am a wee bit pushed for time, then they will go back to their desks and finish off themselves" (D1 261-278).

'Hearing' the children read forms a large part of Dave's group reading programme. When invited to tell how his group instruction had changed Dave noted

> "......at the beginning of the year I did have little bit more of round the circle reading things and that was not to put kids under pressure or anything but it was so that I knew that they would actually sit there and follow the quip about with what we're doing....because otherwise, they are sort of gazing all around and they

will not look at us so I would just switch off, sort of thing…But once we had that under control and the children got used to just sitting and following the book and communicating about the ideas in the book, then we have been able to move away from that" (D1. 194-208).

Dave had 21 children in his Yr 2 class. He had divided the class into four reading groups (based on achievement levels and social considerations) and worked with three groups on each day of his programme. Time pressures had been part of Dave's decision to centralise the focused 'teaching' to a whole class lesson at the start of the reading programme before working with the day's reading groups. He felt that this compartmentalised his deliberate teaching and allowed him to focus on text meaning when working with the each group.

> "But the time was becoming a factor and so I try and compress what we are doing into a shorter span and yet get the same quality out of it. So I have got rid of that altogether and we now do it as a whole class rather than as a group"
> (D2. 128-130).

Dave believed that class teaching of specific word study points such as "blends, popular words and antonyms and synonyms" (D2. 151-152) provided a base that children could bring to the group reading lesson.

> "But now I have found it good because it has meant that we have each been able to get on with wording the book and with talking about the ideas in the book and not getting hung up on the, or being held back by the, I guess decoding the words and things" (D2. 156-159).

Janelle:Ten Months Teaching

Nearing the end of her first year teaching, Janelle speaks with the confidence of an experienced teacher. Despite concerns she expresses about the uncertainties of setting up and maintaining her reading programme, she communicates a strong sense of purpose and is reflective about decisions made during the year. Based on the reading abilities within her class, Janelle takes three reading groups for a 15minute lesson each day.

"I have got five, five groups and what that means for me now is I can see my two, I guess you'd call them lower end, groups three times a week and I can see my three groups that are reading well and above their reading age twice a week" (JT1. 36-39).

Janelle's reflections on her first year teaching reading are characterised by a sense of commitment to structure and routine which she describes as a 'regimented timeframe" (JT2. 178). Outlining how she introduced group reading early in term one Janelle spoke of the classroom tone she established:

"I'd have been sitting up. The children wouldn't have had cushions – they wouldn't have been relaxing around the floor they would have been sitting in set little seats" (JT1. 57-58).

While she withdraws a guided reading group the remainder of the class follow a range of independent literacy tasks. These include a range of reading activities (poetry cards, big books), word study practice (for example adjectives or sentence structure), instruction cards (focusing on cartoon drawing, previously origami), magazines and comics, and specific response activities to texts. In addition to their guided reading programme with Janelle, one reading group works on an individualised Rainbow Reading Programme.

Janelle credits her class with the motivation to work independently and believes that all children are engaged when working independently:

"I know that at the start of the year they were definitely on task. I have my doubts now that all are 'as on task' as they were then because of that free choice but I think that the majority of the children in that class are so highly motivated that they are all getting something out of it" (JT2. 187-190).

The video footage for this project highlighted that Janelle was able to withdraw a group for guided reading with few interruptions demonstrating the ability of this class to work independently.

When asked to describe taking a group for reading at the beginning of the year Janelle focused on her need to hear each child in the group read aloud. She appeared to use this approach in the initial stages of the year as a means of developing her knowledge about each child's reading ability.

Janelle "that would have been me just choosing a child and making sure that every child had a chance to read but it would have been one child reading out loud and every other child following along probably.

P   So you would have made your focus on hearing them read?

Janelle Yes and just seeing where they were at and what they were doing, especially at the start of the year when I had very little idea of what I was going to do other than keeping running records to identify what their needs actually were.

P   I think I am hearing you say that part of that was getting to know the kids and know what their abilities were and you needed to listen to them read to do that especially to identify their needs.

Janelle Yeah" (JT2. 82-96).

Allowing each child to read a page at a time (series reading around a group known as 'Round Robin Reading' or 'Oral Circle Reading) appears to have provided Janelle with a vehicle for broadening her understandings of what skills and strategies each child used. This theme again emerged in the second interview when Janelle reflected on how she had worked with a group earlier in the year. "…probably more round-robin reading too with

that group because at that stage I hadn't quite adjusted to that group's abilities I guess" (JT2. 62-63).

There is evidence that during the year Janelle became increasingly aware of the reading environment she was creating and the children's response to it. Adaptations to the independent component of her programme were made, not because it wasn't "running along" (JT2. 275) rather because "it wasn't exciting and it wasn't interesting." (JT2.276). Similarly Janelle's approach to working with reading groups has changed over the year with an increased emphasis on 'capturing the teaching moments' that the texts provided. Janelle describes her initial guided reading lessons:

> "Oh well, I had a plan and I had books regimented and I didn't use the teachable moments and I stuck to my focus for the week. By gosh we were going to do that focus" (JT2. 175-177).

This rigidity has softened to include "child directives" (JT2. 60) and a willingness to utilise any teachable moments that arise while working with a group. Yet this is still dependant on the needs of each group as the following extract outlines;

Janelle "Sometimes we will have pre-read the section of reading first. Otherwise it.. decoding focus for the day will be. I never plan that – I just jump on whatever is teachable at the time. Like today um... one of the girls didn't realise that she actually needed the word light within the word slightly so she had actually paused - so that was that today - we just pulled that out. I've tended to stop planning that because I find it lends itself better when it just, you know, teach as needed.

P   And so do you always pull out something?

Janelle I always try and make sure I have got at least one or two focuses for decoding so they're using those strategies. With the littler groups – the lower groups – I try and make sure that the focus is – I have already chosen it – and I have chosen it

from their running records or what I have seen the week before so that is the difference. At the moment we have gone past the word attack. We know to read on – we know to sound out and we know to look at the pictures – we are actually going on to now what does it look like? What should it look like? If that is the sound I have made. What would we expect to see there? And it doesn't make sense because sometimes we are reading on. So that - I actually pick focuses for, I guess, the lower groups. For the higher groups I use it as it comes" (JT1. 222-242).

Throughout the year Janelle has developed an increasingly sophisticated approach to working with each reading group. Her recent focus has been broadening her professional understanding of literacy skills, strategies, and understandings encountered by readers at the higher end of the colourwheel and beyond. She has been seeking ways to extend children's reading skills once fluency has been achieved. This has led Janelle to focus her group teaching on developing comprehension, and specific word level information. She outlined the following 'process' as her preferred overview for teaching reading groups.

"So we do prediction, prior knowledge, then we do some reading but we may look at like the contents page with an index first or some sort of thing. We read - retell, I'll ask the questions for comprehension. I try and ask some different level of questioning so we get to the higher order thinking – um and then after we have finished reading, I will try and do some sort of word study or decoding activity. So it may be that we look at some long/short vowels it may be that we look at the magic E. It could be anything like that – that I pull on and we do. So generally on the white board beside me, just a couple of short scribbles and we just look at a couple of different options" (JT1. 488-496).

Janelle's understanding of the reading process impacts on the teaching decisions she makes for each of her reading groups. She is selecting needs based teaching points for her lessons which are relevant to identified reading needs for each group. Her starting point in this process is the use of data from Running Records. While analysis of Running

Records gives Janelle an overview of children's strategy use (meaning, structural and visual information) and behaviours that children use when decoding text, she aims to balance accuracy rates with levels of comprehension found in the ability to retell text.

In the following example Janelle outlines her need to balance high accuracy rates with low levels of comprehension. Retelling confirmed her decision to focus on comprehension during guided reading.

Janelle "Because the children are reading so far above their age, like I've got one child that is reading below her age – the rest are at least a year above. They don't always understand what they are reading or the vocab that they are reading so we have to have moved away from those reading strategies to talk about what we are reading and the vocab because they will read along and not even realise that they don't understand what they are reading.

P   So you see your job as really checking the comprehension and monitoring comprehension as much as anything with those capable readers?

Janelle Because when I did the running records because of its value, the one thing I found was that no one given comprehension could do retelling. They could read amazingly well but to me that is not – I didn't really conform on the running record with the chart if you like….because they hadn't advanced. They could read but they certainly couldn't comprehend every time. I started this round of running records again today and I have noticed a huge difference with those middle groups any way, the two I have done today" (JT1. 413-429).

The process of text selection for each group is complex and time consuming. Janelle balances what she knows of each group's reading development with the texts available "It is anecdotal so I will sit there and I may have seen what was going on the week before and I will think oh – that didn't work so this is what we need to work on. Or I will look at the book and think this lends itself really well to this and

that's where we are heading so we will use that book and we'll do that focus for this week. I tend to choose a focus that is a big overall focus and then I have the reading skills that just take place within it" (JT1. 164-168).

It takes Janelle an hour at the weekend and approximately twenty minutes each day before school to select books and plan the exact structure of each guided reading lesson (JT1. 501-522).

Underpinning Janelle's stories about teaching reading appears to be a co-constructive philosophy. It is evident that she primarily aims to engage children with text.

"I don't really know if I like the word 'guided' I mean you are guiding them towards an outcome or a learning experience but I think I like the idea that you try to construct the learning so that a guided reading session for me now actually means that we sit together and we look at what we need to do or where our learning sort of is a bit lax if you like and that we need to plug that gap. So your guided reading is actually to examine and enjoy the book and me tagging on the learning and putting it into place" (JT2. 617-623).

Jo : One Year and One Week Teaching
Just starting her second year teaching, Jo has 32 year 2 children in her class that have been divided into eight achievement groups for reading. The syndicate she works within runs an interchange reading programme so Jo teaches the four highest reading groups in her class and children reading below purple level on the colourwheel move to other teachers. Interchange dictates Jo's timetable and children move between classrooms as required.

Initially Jo prepared a worksheet response activity for each group to complete independently but found this resulted in interruptions while she was working with others in addition to placing pressure on her to mark and give feedback on the children's completed work. (JH1 69-88) She has subsequently altered her independent programme and has developed an activity rotation. Each day a different 'process' operates for

example Monday; circuit, Tuesday; word study, Wednesday; blend worksheet and Thursday; text response and free choice reading. Within each day the children must work through a range of teacher determined 'must do' activities then are able to move onto optional 'can do' tasks (JH1. 109-126).

Jo withdraws her group for guided reading to the mat area positioned so she is able to monitor all other class members. The video footage of Jo's class revealed no interruptions while she was working with a group and a quiet focused atmosphere. Jo spent a considerable length of time explaining independent requirements and setting expectations for behaviour, which may have contributed, to this. However despite the ordered environment Jo has concerns about her management of independent class members:

> "I would just love to know actually how other teachers cope with all these children and how they do with groups. My biggest thing is the management of the rest of the class, those are the things that I find quite tricky and also sometimes you just want them to do quiet work" (JH1. 409-411).

Jo notices an increased complexity associated with managing her reading programme in relation to other curriculum areas:

> "It's the only one (reading) where you are probably doing go one on one with one group of people and the whole rest of the class is doing other things. Everything else is with whole equal groups and you can sort of oversee everything"
> (JH1. 420-422).

On initial contact with a reading group, Jo checks over each child's reading log and will take time to write comments in each child's home-school notebook (JH1. 178-195). While she is doing this the children are expected to reread the previous day's text.

> "I will introduce the book – I will try and just capture them, get them excited, get them more than they are expecting from what is happening. We might do some predictions. So basically we will look at what is in the title, what is happening on the cover just to get them excited......I will get the children to open up the books and then we will look to see whether they are right with some of the things that they thought. We might flick to the pictures just depending what it is. We might

flick through and do the story just by looking at the pictures so that they think what is happening so that they can know where they are going and then we will start reading. I might get the children, depending on what level I am working with, they might read the book and tell me what is happening. At the end of the page I might have a question for them to find out – how many or what was X feeling or something so we will go through it and we will basically go through it like that. I might get someone to read one page and the rest of us will follow along. I might get them to all read out loud and try and make our voice expressive" (JH1. 200-213).

When outlining how she works with a reading group, Jo tells of an approach that has evolved over the past year. Like Janelle she started her first year focused on the importance of hearing each child read.

"I wanted to hear all the children read so I went through the whole mistake of doing your turn, your turn and your turn. And sliding along and later on I just sort of thought - I was trying to reflect on what I was doing – I thought oh, this completely wrong I, everything I learnt at college said not to do this, but I just fell into the trap of doing that" (JH2. 30-34).

"the problem was that I did really want to hear them all read, so that is just how I started doing it. There were other ways of hearing them read but I just hadn't quite found that yet, or hadn't done it– that was probably it" (JH2. 40-43).

The need to 'hear' children read aloud arose from Jo's desire to understand children's abilities and to ensure that she had them correctly placed within reading groups. It would appear that Jo is 'hearing' to confirm her assessment. She describes 'benchmarks' (the Price Milburn Benchmark kit which provides running record and retelling material to assess early reading skills), and the desire to monitor the choices she had made about individual children and group composition based on her use of this material

"I did it (Round Robin Reading) more because I had to set up the groups, so I wanted to make sure that I hadn't made any big obvious mistakes with that. I

actually think it is the thing that you needed to hear children read all the time. It was probably more to make sure that I was hearing the children read and that they were in their right ability based grouping. Even though I had done the bench marks I just wanted to make sure that I had done the bench marks right and also so then I could just have this feeling that I had heard the children read. It was very different from what I am doing now" (JH2. 47-54).

Jo reflects that procedure was more about 'listening than teaching' (JH2. 83-86) with her focus being directed at 'getting through' her six reading groups in a daily session "I would have just been listening to them read and then "Right next group!" (JH2. 86). Jo describes a realisation that quality time with each reading group was one of two triggers that caused her to review how she worked with groups. Another was an observation made by her tutor teacher, Ginnie.

> "She said 'Oh Jo do you know that without even realising sometimes you are actually getting children reading like this and reading like going round'" (JH2. 60-62).

Consequently Jo stopped trying to see six reading groups each day (JH2. 73-74) and reorganised her programme reducing the number of groups taught each day by seeing the two most able groups alternative days.

Jo describes her current approach to guided reading as dependant on reading level. With her groups at Silver and Gold of the colourwheel (see Appendix 1) she is focusing on developing critical thinking skills with a particular focus on 'what if opinions' (JH1. 235-237). This contrasts with groups operating further down the colourwheel where her focus is on developing specific reading behaviours

> "We are basically just going over lots more strategies, talking about words. Talking about ways of reading the story" (JH1. 260-262).
> "But just things like it might be grammar, it might be things like punctuation, knowing that when you come to a comma what you are doing and just things like we put a ring around things like exclamation marks and um...just where we know that another person is saying it. We know how they can tell if a new person is

saying something and what the character might be feeling when they are saying something in a particular way. So it is not huge, normally it is very brief" (JH1. 271-276).

Teaching points are either specifically planned or arise incidentally when working with groups (JH1. 281-291). Jo describes a variable approach to text selection

"it also just depends on how much time I have at the end of the week, what books I am going to grab. Sometimes I am just following along and sometimes I will pre-evaluate" (JH1.324-331).

Over the past year Jo has felt increasingly focused on the children as individuals. She is mindful of where each child is 'at' and contemplates the complexity of balancing individual needs, group needs and issues of manageability,

"Yes it's like that exactly every time I do a running record or I am doing something with it, I feel I have put this person out, like they are not quite here or they are not quite there but unfortunately I can only have this many groups. I have sort of got to put them back again or put them up so that is really tricky" (JH1.433-436).

She attributes this to a growing appreciation for the steps involved in literacy acquisition.

"I do find that I sort of know more where they are at now. Not just group wise but you can sort of feel where each child" (JH2 394-395).

After a year of teaching in a year 2 class Jo is developing and consolidating her practical experience of taking reading groups. Perhaps her awareness of individual abilities can be partially attributed to increased familiarity with reading levels, texts associated with those levels and developing a practical knowledge of the reading skills and strategies characteristic of various points of literacy acquisition.

When describing her current approach to guided reading, Jo tells of the children she works with and how they have responded to the shifts she has made in her teaching approach;

"Last year it was dead quiet at reading time I had everybody quiet so I could focus on my group but I think they (the group she is working with) are enjoying the

reading more so they are a bit more relaxed and open to share responses and their values and what they are thinking. I think I have just been able to connect with individuals just a little bit more which has made everything a lot easier. So just having confidence now and knowing not to panic if something happens. You know you just have to be a bit more relaxed about things and it does make it a lot more enjoyable" (JH2. 437-444).

Jo summarised her journey of teaching guided reading to date with the following;
"Before it was just the children reading to me and me listening but now I feel there is a bit more of a balance happening with reading and that it is happening all the time, it is not just in that little bit (of the programme)....one of the biggest things I have learnt is that guided reading is a 'come with' process so children are liable in terms of what they are doing" (JH2. 430- 436).

The 'Guided Reading' Procedure

The 'Guided Reading' procedure, as outlined by the New Zealand Ministry of Education (2003), is designed to lead children toward gaining independence in reading. The teacher's role is described as providing "strategic instruction in decoding, making meaning and thinking critically" (Ministry of Education, 2003b, p96). To maximise the effectiveness of the procedure careful consideration is required of how instructional reading texts used with each group are selected, introduced, read and discussed with the children. The teacher performs a delicate balancing role modelling, supporting and ensuring that relevant teaching points are deliberately addressed as he/she interacts with each group. Texts used for guided reading are at each group's instructional reading level (determined at between 90-94% accuracy on a running record). At this level children should meet a new text with confidence that there will be many text features that support their reading of the text and a few (developmentally appropriate) challenges selected to expand on their reading ability.

The intricacy of the guided reading procedure lies in the challenges each text presents. Texts are selected based on a match between challenges (at a lexicon or comprehension

level) and the needs of the children in the group. Teachers understanding of the stages of literacy acquisition and the needs of the children within each group determine their ability to select texts, target deliberate teaching points and respond to additional points that may emerge while working with the group.

Within each guided reading lesson children take responsibility for reading the text, (either aloud in the emergence of literacy acquisition or silently as they progress through the early and fluent stages). Text is broken down into 'chunks' with a brief discussion between each chunk to sustain comprehension. "During the reading, as they monitor each group member of the group, the teacher can encourage the students by prompting them to use the strategies that they have learned. The teacher may move alongside a student to check how they are processing the text" (Ministry of Education, 2003b, p98).

While achievement based grouping for reading is widespread in junior school classrooms, it is not always implemented in accordance with the Ministry of Education guidelines for the guided reading procedure. 'Oral circle reading' or 'Round robin reading' are reading group procedures that rest on hearing each child in the group read. The following caution appears in "Effective Literacy Practice in Years 1 to 4" the guide to junior school literacy practice in New Zealand and defines these practices:

> " 'Round robin' reading, where each student takes a turn at reading aloud, is never appropriate in guided reading. It prevents each student from processing the text and constructing meaning independently, distracts and bores other children, and obscures meaning" (Ministry of Education, 2003b, p98).

The necessity of this statement in a professional handbook suggests widespread misinterpretation of guided reading within New Zealand schools.

Round Robin Reading

At some point in their introduction to the classroom each of the participants described using round robin reading as a method for hearing children read. They all acknowledged that the procedure they were using wasn't the 'guided reading' procedure but that round robin reading did serve the function of allowing them to 'hear' each child read. Hearing

children read is the common thread. The reflections of Jo and Janelle indicate that their need to hear children read may be underpinned by uncertainty about what to teach children. Dave saw 'hearing' children read as a means of assessing comprehension of the text.

While pre-service training may address stages of acquisition and the reading process, Ryan's model of beginning teacher development (1986) suggests that the fantasy stage participants lived in while completing pre-service training may not allow room for the practical implications associated with 'guided reading, 'the reading process', and 'stages of literacy acquisition'. The timing of this transfer of understanding is significant. Despite professional practice experiences recalled by all participants, it was only with the onset of the reality stage (Ryan, 1986) in the first weeks of teaching when "beginning teachers find themselves continuously adjusting and readjusting their plans and ideas about students and they are trying to solve a multitude of problems they encounter" (cited in Levin, 2003, p261), that beginning teachers start the process of reconciling their theoretical understandings to inform their personal classroom practice.

Difficulties faced by all of the participants included knowing how to set up the programme and what to teach. One of greatest concerns expressed by participants as they reflected on their transition into teaching reading was managing the classroom programme. Management linked to group teaching because in order to manage the class, ability/achievement groups were required. Similarly, in order to take reading groups effective management of independent 'others' was necessary. Nuthall observes "Beginning teachers' preoccupation with classroom management leads them to focus on the surface features of the classrooms of experienced teachers. They long to imitate the ease and fluency with which the experienced teacher manages her or his class" (Nuthall, 2001, p20). Implementing a reading programme and 'taking' reading groups is one of the socio-cultural rituals (Nuthall, 2001) of teaching in the junior school. If the guided reading programme is the "central role in leading students towards independence in reading" (Ministry of Education, 2003, p96) then ritualising reading falls short of effective reading teaching .

Round robin reading may have therefore served a function by allowing each participant to complete the 'ritual' of conducting reading groups, and 'hear' children read. This may develop in these beginning teachers a sense of where children were 'at' in their ability to read. By learning about the children in their own class the participants enhanced their professional knowledge about reading acquisition. The consequent gain in understandings about learning to read has the potential to be realised by increasing effectiveness in planning and implementing guided reading.

Participants' practical classroom experience and the desire to purposefully plan for each group's emerging needs were triggered by their emerging professional conscience. Accepting professional responsibility for teaching the children in the class to read appears to ignite participants' motivation to develop their skills to meet this end.

It could be that round robin reading can be a 'transitional' activity in the process of learning to effectively teach reading. By providing a vehicle for teachers to 'hear' children read this approach may help beginning teachers learn more about their children's reading abilities. This in turn could add to their professional knowledge about the reading process and the stages of literacy acquisition.

Chapter 5: The Professional Learning Environment

Having examined each participant's perceptions about reading acquisition by exploring what occurs as they implement a guided reading lesson in their classroom, attention now turns to the wider school learning environment and how this impacts on participants' developing understandings about learning to read. 'Learning environment' in this instance refers to the school setting and how the school's culture supports each beginning teachers' continued professional growth as they master how to teach reading. Each learning environment expresses attitudes and values about the teaching profession and may enhance and support the staff attitude to learning. In a school situation where structures and systems are established to encourage professional development, value is placed upon consolidating understandings and continued learning is therefore prioritised.

Similarly, the personal experiences and attitudes beginning teachers bring to their school context influence the ways that they are socialised into the teaching profession and utilise opportunities for professional growth. There is a degree of complexity being both a learner and a teacher within the same context and individual responses to this differ. The autonomy of classroom teaching requires that beginning teachers demonstrate self-motivation and independence to fully maximise the opportunities for professional development offered by their school context.

Beginning Teaching in New Zealand

In New Zealand, schools employing a beginning teacher accept a legal and ethical "obligation and challenge to assist and guide this teacher to develop professionally and to achieve full registration" (Ministry of Education, 2004, p6). Schools are required to plan and implement an advice and guidance programme, based on the Satisfactory Teacher Dimensions stipulated by the New Zealand Teachers Council, to support teachers during their first two years in the classroom. The aim of the induction programme is to develop and increase "professional knowledge and competencies as an effective classroom teacher" (Ministry of Education, 2004, p18) and ensure a smooth transition into the

profession. This is achieved when teachers are accepted for full teacher registration upon demonstration of the New Zealand Teachers Council Professional Standards.

Beginning teachers are allocated a 'tutor teacher' to oversee the school based induction process. Acting as a guide and mentor, the tutor teacher aims to support beginning teacher's transition into the classroom by offering practical support with the challenges of establishing and implementing the classroom programme. Ministry of Education funding is allocated to support this process (5 hours per week in the first year of teaching, and 2.5hours per week in the second year) and in many schools the tutor teacher responsibility is allocated management units (that may influence salary). The staffing allowance may be used at the schools discretion to support the induction process. Beginning teachers are also supported externally with professional development courses run by local advisory services. Individual courses run for beginning teachers focusing on junior, middle and senior school programmes. Many schools may choose to send beginning teachers on these.

Tutor Teachers

The first year teaching is widely acknowledged as challenging (Huberman, 1993; Nias, 1989; Ryan, 1986). One of the reasons for this may be the apprenticeship model of professional practice experiences during pre-service that results in "the practices and beliefs of experienced teachers are taken as the ideal to be imitated. Beginning teachers' preoccupation with classroom management leads them to focus on the surface features of experienced teachers. They long to imitate the ease and fluency with which the experienced teacher manages her or his class" (Nuthall, 2001, p20). Experienced teachers act as 'tutor teachers' planning and implementing beginning teachers' induction. The induction programme strives toward strengthening pedagogical understandings and developing management 'ease and fluency' through specific mentoring and guidance. While beginning teachers personal networks provide support, this mandated school based system follows on from pre-service training. Renwick (2001, cited Ministry of Education, 2004, p8) concludes, "Provisionally registered teachers get support from many sources, including family, friends and other staff, but the support they receive from their

tutor/supervising teacher is of critical importance. Most new teachers are very positive about the support they receive from their tutor/supervising teacher."

As would be expected in New Zealand schools Janelle, Dave and Jo each had a tutor teacher and the relevant funding assigned to support their induction. During the first interview each participant was invited to reflect on whom they spoke to about their reading programme. Probing comments related to any professional support gained, and with whom they shared success and challenges associated with their reading programme. As participants told of their professional journey in teaching reading, gratitude was expressed toward the support they had received from tutor teachers and other key colleagues.

Jo: not one, not two, not three, but four!

Jo frequently referred to her tutor teacher, Ginnie, as one of two key support people she turned to within her school. Ginnie was an experienced teacher and had established the class reading programme that Jo inherited. When I first visited Jo at her school, she made a point of introducing Ginnie to me as the person who 'taught me all I know'. I observed a warm easy professional friendship which Jo describes as having built and consolidated over the year they have worked together

> "I am feeling more and more now that I can go to Ginnie and Heather and ask them certain questions whereas I felt before that it was a bit scary to go and ask those things. Just the friendship is building and you know that is important to be there. Well it was always there but last year I nervous about going to ask them" (JH2. 471-476).

Heather is the school's Reading Recovery teacher and another of Jo's support people. Jo has frequently sought advice and specific advice and feedback from Heather about her reading programme. This has included confirmation of Jo's analysis of running records, discussion about composition of reading groups and advice about appropriate teaching points.

As Jo told of her trepidation when she first started teaching (JH1. 336-338), Ginnie emerged as a stabilising influence by leaving an established reading programme as a starting point. In her tutor teacher capacity, Ginnie has observed and given Jo specific and honest professional feedback including highlighting that she was conducting round robin reading rather than the guided reading procedure. It would follow that Ginnie has played a significant role across all curriculum areas in Jo's transition to the classroom.

In addition to Ginnie and Heather, Jo credits Julie, a junior school advisor with responsibility for beginning teachers, with giving helpful professional guidance. Jo has accessed a small, but specialist, band of experienced teachers to support her. She describes their differing functions in her professional journey as follows:

> "Ginnie definitely just not actually with the group (reading groups). Like in just showing me how to um… like she basically said oh, just running along this circle (round robin reading) she said there are different ways of doing that. She just made me more aware that that is what I sometimes do. Heather has been really good for, once I have done my testing (running records), just to run it by her where she thinks I should be. She is looking at the deeper features; she is not looking at their scores she has been really good at making sure they are in the right groups and also where I should be aiming to get them. Because I wasn't quite sure what my targets were, so she has been really good for that. I went to Julie in terms of I didn't know what to do with the rest of the class (providing purposeful independent activities) – I wasn't quite sure. Because I was seeing all these groups initially and it was a bit of a shambles with the rest of the class. She was really good at helping me. Like on this day you could do circuits or you could be doing graphs, or this or this" (JH2. 162-171).

At the start of Jo's fourth term teaching another beginning teacher joined her school's staff. Lucy had trained with the same pre-service provider as Jo, although had completed a three-year degree qualification in contrast to Jo's 15-month post graduate diploma. Jo noted significant collegial benefits since Lucy's arrival. Jo told of the comfort she found

from having a colleague to discuss what she felt may have been 'trivial and obvious points' to more experienced colleagues.

P: And now you are not just another beginning teacher in this school so is there someone else in a similar position to you or in the position you were in this time last year?

Jo: Just having the support – knowing that there are people to help you and knowing that you now can help others. Yes it is good. Also this school has been really good at propping up the younger staff – they have got other teachers that we go to. They have got teachers that we go to and say oh I am having problems with this, what do you think I should do?

P: So that is sort of separate, you have got Ginnie and Heather and you have had Julie but you've also got, I guess what you are saying is a group of peers as well.

Jo: Yes. I go to Ginnie with like really important questions and I'll go to another student and say my goodness this is what is happening – what shall I do? Just things that you think maybe that is a bit silly to ask but then you'll ask other people that are in the same group as me and she will do the same. I am feeling more and more now that I can go to Ginnie and Heather and ask them certain questions whereas I felt before that it was a bit scary to go and ask those things" (JH2. 455-474).

After one year teaching, Jo has established a professional network of at least four members to support her developing pedagogy about teaching junior school reading. As highlighted she accesses professional support selectively in response to a specific purpose. These sources of support provide Jo with a series of professional 'reference groups'.

Reference Groups

Reference groups according to Shibutani (cited in Nias, 1989, p46) are a social mechanism highlighting the communication channels in which individuals participate and establish relationships with those they identify with. In schools reference groups form to provide support for members. Such groups provide a sense of identity and belonging and

provide emotional security for members as outlined by Ria et al (2005). Reference groups can be either internal or external to the school environment and serve differing functions. For example Jo and Lucy form a reference group. They are both beginning teachers and mutually benefit from their alliance/friendship. Jo has also established another 'junior reading' reference group in which Ginnie, Heather and Julie are members.

Jo's 'junior reading' reference group has a professional function. Within this group Jo is the apprentice. She is receiving practical guidance and support about teaching reading. Embedded within this are the differing pedagogical attitudes and values of experienced group members that will influence Jo's developing understandings about teaching reading. This can be exemplified by Ginnie's feedback guiding Jo away from round robin reading and toward the guided reading procedure. Therefore Ginnie is scaffolding a more sophisticated step in Jo's ability to teach reading.

Without direct guidance from a tutor teacher or the existence of professional reference groups beginning teachers have only pre-service professional practice and their personal educational experiences to draw on for. Relevant professional practice experience may seem distant as Janelle found when recalling junior school experiences from her first year of pre-service training (JT2. 416-429), or similarly irrelevant to the 'real world' context as Jo found when comparing her last professional practice with her current context (JH2. 462-468). The physical landscape of schools means that teachers are often isolated in single cell classrooms without any visual reinforcement of 'what other teachers do'. Lortie (1975, cited in Nias1986, p10) highlights that as all teachers have been pupils "many have been influenced by their own teachers in ways they do not even perceive." This suggests that a beginning teacher may well seek professional support from recollections of their own years as a pupil receiving primary education.

Consequently, in the absence of a committed tutor teacher, a potential challenge faced by beginning teachers may be locating appropriate professional role models. Nias found teachers in this situation relied upon "inference, extrapolation and imagination" (Nias, 1986, p10) to develop their understandings of teacher behaviour. With ineffective

induction procedures, Jennifer Nias' (1986), found in English schools, unofficial mentoring occurred. In these situations beginning teachers received support from middle-aged, experienced teachers who adopted the role of a 'professional parent.' These experienced teachers displayed an ability to "anticipate when help would be needed and provide it quickly and sympathetically" (Nias, 1986, p13). While the professional parent support is formalised through the tutor teacher role in New Zealand, the professional parent may still exist in addition to, or in the absence of an effective, tutor teacher and induction programme. While Jo had strong support from her tutor teacher, Ginnie, her relationship with Heather appears to like that of a professional parent. Heather, without any obligation to do so, offered specific feedback on the more technical aspects of running records and grouping decisions

> "also just talking with Heather on reading recovery so that just sort of seconds whatever I am doing so she confirms what I have decided" (JTH2. 323-324).

The 'safe' learning environment

Jo experienced professional support from a variety of sources; consequently her opportunities to learn more about how to teach reading were maximised. Sound interpersonal relationships appear to have developed over her first year teaching and she communicates a sense of confidence in what she is trying to achieve in the classroom and how she has been encouraged and guided in her endeavours. The following comment highlights the professional security that she feels and communicates how she perceives herself as learning to teach reading:

> "So just having confidence now and knowing not to panic if something happens. You know you just have to be a bit more relaxed about things and it does make it a lot more enjoyable. I am really enjoying it and it is good being here with so much support so you don't need to feel like you are on your own. When you are just starting you feel like you are on your own but now you know that there are so many people out there and you just have to ask for help and they are good" (JH2. 442-476).

Janelle: valuing professional support

Janelle recalls the importance of her tutor teacher, Mary, during the initial stages of her first year teaching. After winning her teaching position, Janelle describes the panic she felt after being given a sheet containing her class list and their reading ages as a basis for her reading programme (JT2. 114-118). Janelle's first meeting with Mary appears to have alleviated some of her anxiety about practical issues:

> "And so it was working through I guess the main questions and overcoming those bit by bit. Like I said the first one, the practical side of it what was everyone else doing, that came from my Tutor teacher. And that came I guess - this all started when I first met her and had a big planning meeting" (JT2. 124- 128).

However the relationship with her tutor teacher appears to be characterised by a professional distance. Janelle felt an expectation from Mary to be independent

P: "So the assumption was that you had the skills and you could just throw it all together. Do you think that that came from like the hierarchy within the school, the tutor teacher and just all those people?

Janelle: Yes the tutor teacher probably more so because they just don't drip-feed you. She was one of these people where you to do it yourself and you critique it afterwards, which on hindsight is really excellent" (JT2. 582-588).

The expectation of independence may be a deliberate stance, or simply a reality of time restraints and pressures on Mary. While Janelle felt Mary was initially supportive, practical guidance appears to have faded and the nature of the induction programme changed since Mary has acquired additional management responsibilities within the school. Janelle's search for guidance and specific direction caused her frustration (JT2. 568-573) however she has found support from other junior school staff members.

Jo: "First term I relied a lot on the tutor teacher now I haven't. That tutor teacher now has another role as a DP now so that wasn't at the start. So I haven't actually spoken to her that much about it (her reading programme)."

P   "Yes. So that person is busier and you have found another support person who targets your needs" (JT1. 318-323).

Like Jo, Janelle has built an additional reference group for discussing issues about her reading programme. Her 'professional parents' are a junior school colleague (Montessori trained), from whom Janelle accesses knowledge of phonological information, and her 'release teacher'. (The teacher paid to support Janelle's induction programme). When the release teacher is teaching the class, Janelle asks her opinion on specific children's reading.

> "Sometimes I get her to listen to a group specifically on a Wednesday and pull out how I can teach to the problem I have identified …..Um sometimes I get her just to listen to the group to see if what I am doing is O.K. If the focuses that I have chosen are appropriate" (JT1. 331-338).

Janelle's other key reference group has been the professional development opportunities offered by the advisory. She recalls feedback from a school advisor as pivotal in her deliberate decision to relax and enjoy her teaching:

> "Yes and then it was the advisor coming in and unbeknown to me she was observing the class as well, what was going on behind my back (children independently engaged) as well as the actual reading lesson I did (guided reading) because we did two extended reading lessons. So each lesson was about twenty-five minutes long to try and get everything she was wanting to see and everything I wanted her to see and I got this huge feedback and it was excellent. I guess it was a change in that she sort of gave me permission I guess to have fun. Permission to stop what I am doing and just enjoy and take that moment….everything is so regimented you have to get through this, this, this and this" (JT2. 294-306).

Similarly Janelle also found the advisory led courses for beginning teachers worthwhile professional development.

> "Beginning teacher course – there is lots and lots of talk about reading programmes so I found that course probably was one of the most helpful places it gave practical examples and it just showed you what everyone else was doing. So you get all these different examples of how people were doing their reading

programme which you can't from tutor teachers and other people in your school. So it was really good" (JT1. 278-286).

Professional development 'external' to her school provided Janelle with 'answers' in the form of specific suggestions. These seem to have resolved Janelle's need to find the 'right way'. Possibly the ambiguity of her school's expectations, followed by the diversity of ideas offered by beginning teachers on these courses sparked Janelle's willingness to 'give it a go'.

Janelle found opportunities to observe other teachers in her school helpful. Using release time from her induction programme, she was able to access role models to emulate, and confirm decisions she had made about her reading programme:

> "I am observing teachers and we are all doing things very similar things obviously which I wouldn't have known in term one if that is actually the case…. that was probably the best thing to reassure me that I wasn't failing. Because that is what I needed at that time" (JT2. 600-607).

Confirmation of her practice has lead to increased confidence and a sense of satisfaction in the decisions Janelle is making about teaching reading.

Dave: Independence versus Isolation

Working as part of a small three-teacher syndicate, Dave's tutor teacher, Alison, taught New Entrants in the classroom next door. Alison was familiar with the children in Dave's class as she had taught them previously. Dave recalls discussion he found valuable that centred on how to deal with specific children's classroom behaviour and reading ability:

> "I've got the tutor teacher in place who is the new entrant teacher and that was really valuable last year because she knew all the children because she had taught them last year, so if I would say, you know, how did you deal with Fred when he will never do this….you know he can't concentrate or whatever it might be she would already have strategies that she would say ' why don't you give this a go?' So that was really valuable. Um…I've talked to the teacher above as well and just found out what she does because I am conscious of getting the kids to the next level (D1. 327-334).

His concern for 'getting the children to the next level' meant that Dave approached the other teacher in the syndicate, Louise, for inspiration. While Alison ran an individualised reading programme, Louise organised her class in achievement based reading groups and acted as a role model for Dave who was aware from his pre-service professional placement experiences of what his junior reading programme should 'look' like (D1. 40-51).

> "That's also known from talking to the next teacher up and saying to her how does your programme work? What are the nuts and bolts of what she does? Hers involves a lot of choice with children choosing the books that they want to read and to take home and so I thought well that's something that I need to build into my programme as well" (D1. 172-176).

Like Jo and Janelle, Dave had a teacher who released him for the .2 component of his induction programme. This teacher provided a model for teaching guided reading groups

> "There's another teacher who I had as my release teacher last year who, when she would come in and do reading groups, she would take a couple of groups a day and she felt it was a better way to do it, to do two groups who have quite a decent length session with the really guided reading and so then the children will be getting two sessions a week basically. And that they were good lessons and quality sessions" (D2. 331-336).

Although Dave had three teachers, familiar with junior school literacy, within close proximity, discussion about his reading programme appears only to have been in passing. Professional relationships with these staff members did not feature in Dave's stories about teaching reading, however strong links were observed to exist with the principal and deputy principal who both taught in the senior school (field notes November 2004). While Dave refers to his tutor teacher, he is not specific about any guidance given. It appears that the mandated procedures were in place for Dave, and that reference groups for teaching reading were formed but the relationships within these were not developed at this point.

Dave has a relaxed easy approach toward the professional development opportunities offered by his school although he made no mention of attending the beginning teachers' courses run by the advisory. Dave acknowledges that he completed his pre-service training with a view that junior school teaching was 'not for me' (D1. 394)

> "And then when I got out here I thought I need to up skill a wee bit but as things worked out I didn't sort of have the opportunity to go and do that. Um…but I don't think that has been a disadvantage because that it has meant instead of someone saying this is what you can do. It has meant I have actually had to go and find it all out myself" (D1. 400-404).

Dave's independent attitude to professional development in teaching reading is triggered by his desire for children to make progress (D1.358). Independently attempting to review his programme he returned to his pre-service notes and Ministry of Education reading support material, and discussed his programme with Alison.

> "But when I found that that wasn't really working as I had hoped it would, I thought OK there must be something in that box that will give me the answers. So I went back through those notes and also just some of the support materials that you get issued by the Ministry and things and trialled a few different things and as I was going through that, which was probably over 4 or 5 weeks that I was trying these different things, I was also talking to my tutor teacher about it as well and so I was able to find out something that works for me and works for the kids too" (D1. 342-350).

Dave specifically mentions the 'Guided Reading' video (D1. 373-375) and 'Effective Literacy Practice' both recent Ministry of Education publications distributed to schools as resources which he found helpful:

> "This came out last year (holding 'Effective Literacy Practice', Ministry of Education, 2003b) and – yeah it was very helpful….. sort of tips and practical things and ideas, so that was good. But that is probably it – I had intended in my first year, when I had the release time to go on more professional development, because I hadn't anticipated being teaching in a Junior School when I had finished

at College. So I hadn't gone to any optional Junior School things – I thought that's not for me! (D1. 387-394).

A theme of professional loneliness emerges from Dave's story. The autonomy of teaching, a positive when the reading programme is running successfully, could also be perceived as isolation when professional support is required. The isolation imposed by the architecture of single cell classrooms can mean that teaching is both private and lonely as Dave discusses.

> "Yes but as time goes on it is good to have, you know you do sort of want a bit more adult interaction sometimes. So that is why I really look forward to days when I have parent helpers coming in because then there is someone that you can, not necessarily stop what you are doing and have a chat with, but just there is a feeling of you know we are in here together and we are helping each other out sort of thing. So that is good but there is – after that initial sort thing of I've made it – this is my room sort of thing. I wouldn't say it gets lonely – because the kids certainly keep you busy" (D2. 278- 285).

Nias, (1989, p151) discusses the isolation felt by men in teaching and notes that being the youngest staff member by several years may compound these feelings. Dave was the only male teacher on his schools' staff, and one of two younger staff members (the other was the deputy principal). It would appear that Dave's most significant reference group consisted of the principal and deputy principal (both female) who taught in the senior school. While gender isolation may contribute to Dave's situation, it is possible that there wasn't a junior school role model or professional parent with whom Dave could share ideas and emulate.

Dave commented that the process of this project provided him with an opportunity to reflect and consider how he was teaching guided reading groups within his reading programme.

> "I think I was going to say that it has been really good just from my point of view to have you filming and be able to watch it myself because often you are in here

on your own – you are the only adult in the room – so there is no-one else to tell you how you are going or give feed-back and you have observations occasionally from senior teachers and things but just to be able to watch yourself in action, you know - it is a real eye opener. So even just today I have picked up a couple of things that I think that is something I am going to look at a bit more closely" (D2. 252-260).

Simply inviting Dave to talk about how he teaches reading may have influenced his professional journey.

Expectations: External and Internal

Professional support is available to beginning teachers in New Zealand schools. However beginning teachers appear to be at the mercy of the way schools interpret guidelines and procedures. The school culture is significant as is each beginning teacher's personal attitude to asking for or accepting help in order to access it. Without positive role models and appropriate professional support demonstrating effective literacy practices, it is difficult for beginning teachers to expand their understandings about teaching reading and instead they remain reliant on their personal resourcefulness.

Literature on teacher development is littered with descriptors of desirable qualities admired about the profession. ' Competence' (Berliner, 1988), 'personal commitment' (Huberman, 1989), 'initiative' (Nias, 1986) are all merits implying energy and responsiveness. The development of a professional conscience is the catalyst for the desire to 'take action' to continue learning about professional issues such as teaching reading.

If a beginning teacher's sense of commitment to teaching is such that they are compelled to reflect on and explore what they are doing in the classroom, they have moved beyond 'acting' like a teacher to 'feeling' like a teacher, and ultimately being a teacher. Nias (1989) notes that many teachers describe themselves as on a 'crusade' or as a 'missionary' communicating a sense of being motivated by contributing 'something worthwhile' through their teaching. Such a view aligns itself with the development of a

personal commitment to teaching that is evident in Huberman's second stage of teacher development, stablisation. Experience and commitment can result in the consolidation of pedagogical understandings. As Jo comments professional understanding merges piece by piece:

> "It's not like you need know everything at the start so it has been quite good; just going to courses you pick up new ideas and it's probably quite good because if I had all these things at the start I'd just think oh! What am I going to do? But slowly just one by one a new idea coming in it sort of helped improve the reading programme I think" (JH1. 391-394).

Chapter 6: Emergence of a Professional Conscience

Huberman (1989) considers teacher discovery arises out of classroom survival and may support beginning teachers as teaching ability 'stabilises'. 'Taking action' is also required for professional sustainability. In this manner the process of professional discovery works in a positive way contributing to teachers' confidence and skill. A key component of 'discovering' what it means to be an effective teacher of literacy arises from each teacher's awareness of the place literacy holds in children's life. A professional conscience associated with the teaching of literacy skills is a consequence of such understanding.

The transition from pre-service into the classroom probably challenges all beginning teachers. It represents the need to put theory into practice and as Jo, Dave, and Janelle's stories have told, this is not an easy task. Yet underpinning each story has been a commitment to literacy teaching and an implicit acknowledgement of its importance for children. The following chapter explores how Jo, Dave, and Janelle felt about establishing their reading programmes and how these experiences impacted on their emerging 'professional conscience' for teaching literacy.

Expectations Communicated from School:

For all participants the initial interaction with the school was significant. This interaction communicated a sense of how the environment operated and set the tone for the transition from pre-service 'student' to beginning 'teacher'. Reflecting on this first contact the participants spoke from the perspective of a pre-service paradigm looking for 'guidelines and requirements'. While eager to begin Janelle, Jo and Dave recalled feeling hesitant about their own ability to design a reading programme independently and looked to others within the school for direction.

As early as the 'setting up' of their classroom and the initial outline planning of their reading programmes before the start of the school year, Janelle and Dave began to feel the freedom of their school's professional culture. Rather than feeling empowered by this

professional freedom both Janelle and Dave recall immediate feeling of anxiety about the ambiguity of the task. Janelle recalls looking for specific guidelines to determine how her programme should operate;

> "There was nothing written down on what I should or shouldn't have in the programme. But it was all just the matter of setting up what I thought they wanted to have and I found that really hard. I find to have set guidelines you know that you'll have literacy between this and this hour and you'll teach this many groups and these will be your focuses for the year. Well no problem but I had nothing like that" (JT2. 568-573).

Similarly Dave recollected his expectation that information about the reading programme would be available.

> "When I started here I hadn't been left anything from the previous teacher so I had to come up from scratch with what I felt would be the best way to do it" (D1. 32-34).

In the absence of being told 'the right answer' each looked to their professional knowledge base for inspiration. This professional awareness grew from their school's expectations. Despite personal doubts about their ability, they were now qualified teachers and they were required to complete the 'tasks' of planning and implementing a junior reading programme. Janelle and Dave told of feeling surprised that their professional knowledge was called on so 'early' in their teaching.

Drawing on Nias' (1989) exploration of how it feels to be a teacher it is possible to conclude in the search for such fundamental guidance neither Janelle nor Dave 'felt' that they were teachers at their initial contact with schools and when first setting up their programmes. They communicated surprise at having the freedom to set up their reading programmes independently, however a preoccupation with 'self' is common in beginning teachers (Levin 2003) and as their recollections demonstrate neither Janelle nor Dave initially perceived themselves as 'teachers' nor felt fully ready to accept the responsibilities of being a teacher.

In contrast to Janelle and Dave, Jo commenced her teaching position at the beginning of term two. Unlike the other participants, her class had been operating for a term. Jo communicated a sense of control and order about her transition into the classroom informally commenting that she 'took over' the existing reading programme, rather than 'set up' any structure. She notes the support offered by her tutor teacher, from whom she was taking over responsibility for the class, throughout this process.

Jo: "Well my Tutor Teacher and I we sort of worked through what I can do and what is manageable and so like we worked together and she took my class in the first term and so we sort of continued on when I came in on the second term and so that was basically set up last year and I have just worked on and kept on doing it from then" (JH1. 52-56).

The high level of practical support, enabled by the nature of this context, may have initially negated any concerns or anxiety felt by Jo.

The lack of direct and controlled guidance experienced by Janelle and Dave is one of the working conditions most valued by teachers. Nias (1980, cited in Nias, 1989, p16) comments "teachers often learn to depend upon their own knowledge, interests and preferences in making pedagogic and curriculum decisions. Indeed this freedom from external constraint and collegial influence is, for some teachers, one of the main attractions of the job." The autonomy offered by teaching is seen by Janelle in a considered light after teaching for ten months. She highlights awareness that children's progress is a central issue in learning to reading.

> "To begin with I would have liked drip feeding, but the school itself I don't know it seems to be individualised in this school so you can do it how you like and what I can gather from doing the interviews it is definitely getting the right results" (JT2. 592-596).

The construction of the reading programme communicated to all three beginning teachers the professional culture within the school. Jo's more directed experience established a tone of 'this is how we do things around here' from her tutor teacher. The timing of her entry into the school may have also contributed to this feeling. Jo spoke after the

interview of a college lecturer encouraging her to apply for a job at the school because she would 'fit into' the environment. It is possible that a philosophical 'match' between Jo and her school eased her initial transition from student to teacher. A year into her teaching Jo now feels inhibited by the reading interchange programme that exists within her school.

> "Ideally I would just like to have just my class during the reading group but it just hasn't quite worked like that. I know that the rest of the classes within the school, they have the same sort of thing happening, but I find it is a little bit disruptive" (JT1. 452-458).

Is it possible that the structures that supported her now restrain her ability to experiment with programme organization and grouping decisions within her reading programme?

Awareness of Parental Expectations

Few messages emerge from the literature about how beginning teachers feel toward the parents of the children in their classes. There is a preoccupation with classroom related concerns from the perspective of beginning teachers (Huberman 1989; Nias 1989; Ryan, 1986), personal career development (Sikes1985; Huberman, 1989) and the development of pedagogical expertise (Berliner, 1986; Levin 2003). The New Zealand context makes parental expectation a relevant issue as the ideology of New Zealand's primary education is characterised by open communication between parents and teachers particularly in junior classes. This includes significant degrees of parental involvement.

Parents often spend time in junior classrooms before and after the school day; they listen to children's 'take home' reading out of school hours, and are invited into classrooms as parent helpers. These entrenched practices in junior classrooms are endorsed through Ministry of Education literacy support publications (Ministry of Education 2002) and recent research advocating a strengthening of the links and the creation of partnerships between home and school (McNaughton 1999). Such practices have gained momentum and raised parents' expectations for information. The educational reforms of the late 1980's 'Tomorrows Schools' served to endorse 'participatory democracy and community empowerment' (Roberts, 2003, p 498).

While Jo had support in the form of an established reading programme to follow, she appears to have had more concerns about parents than Janelle and Dave. Parents asked questions about her reading programme presumably grounded in desire for their children to make sound academic progress or concern about their change of teacher. The consequent pressure felt by Jo indicated an awareness of the teacher's professional responsibility to implement an effective classroom reading programme;

> "I think they were just curious because I had come out of college and they wanted to know what I do, and what my basic reading is. They all wanted to know if their children were in the top reading group – yes just wanting to know that. So that was a bit of a tricky thing in general. So I didn't have all the answers for things. I didn't try to have the answers but I did want to make sure that I wasn't preventing them from moving on. Yes they had apparently been reading so great the year before – so that I was a little bit nervous ......"(JH1. 346-351).

Dave and Janelle, by contrast, felt more secure in their interactions with parents. They comment on minor incidents but these reinforce, rather than undermine, confidence in their teaching. Dave considers the impression he wishes to make.

> "you have parents in here a lot and I think it is important that when they are flicking through the kids' books, which I have told them they are welcome to do, that they can see that it is up-to-date with marking and all that sort of thing" (D1. 509-513).

Janelle (JT2. 219-220) describes parents seeking guidance on recommended book lists to support the classroom programme at parent interviews. Such interaction clearly highlights parents' respect of her professional knowledge. Both stories highlight an appreciation for the rights of parents being involved in their children's learning journey.

Expectations of Others

Berliner (1994) notes that the behaviour of novice teachers is relatively inflexible, and characterised by their interpretation of rules and procedures. Expertise gained from teaching experience results in a resolution that there is no one 'right' way to teaching issues. All participants looked externally for support when challenged to independently develop workable organization and routines on which to base their reading programmes. There was an expectation that professional 'others' should provide answers. These included within the school, from their pre-service experiences, or professional literature. Referring to classroom management, Janelle expresses angst at her dilemma about how to engage children working independently while withdrawing a guided reading group.

> "oh goodness what (to) do with the people that aren't in that reading group, what
> do they do? No-one had said to me at college the basic things what they could
> do" (JT1. 127-129).

Pre-service courses provide this guidance but bridging the abstractions of the lecture and classroom realities is a component of beginning teachers' transition into teaching (Berliner, 1994). Anxiety caused by this process lead at times to dissatisfaction and blame.

While expert teachers have 'intuitive grasp of a situation and a non-analytic and non-deliberative sense of the appropriate response to make' (Berliner, 1994, p110), such habitual behaviours can only develop over time. Effective planning for reading groups requires sound understanding of both reading process and the stages of literacy acquisition. Janelle's ability to plan for reading groups at differing levels was supported by using professional reference material, where available, to identify appropriate teaching points and lessen her planning burden.

> " – as soon as I got up into my gold, silver (reading levels)– to the children that
> are reading at sapphire, there was no support structures for what a child at that
> level should be aiming towards. So that is what I found very hard and since I
> have had those planning sheets it has made it heaps easier and so for my planning
> I can focus too for each of those children in those groups" (JT1. 154-159).

Sikes (cited in Ball and Goodson,1985, p30) notes "In order to survive they (beginning teachers) have to learn the skills, the craft technology of teaching. But first, if they are to succeed they have to come to terms with the reality of the situation." Janelle's (as with Dave and Jo's) use of relevant professional development material highlights a survival strategy that allows them an external professional lifeline. Such support provided by a non-interactive 'other' supports their journey toward professional independence.

Expectations of Self

Janelle, Jo and Dave each felt pressured by the transition into the classroom. They acted upon the need to draw pre-service experiences and personal resources together to survive. Ryan (1986) noted that this survival stage is for beginning teachers is "one of the biggest challenges in their personal and professional lives" (cited in Levin, 2003, p262), the impact of this time continuing to be felt into their long-term teaching career. Huberman's (1989) model explores themes of survival and discovery during the first three years of classroom teaching (entry stage). These points often work in tandem "with the excitement and challenge of the discovery stage serving to pull beginning teachers through the survival stage" (Levin, 2003, p267).

While initially expectations were externally directed, participants' expectations of themselves as teachers began to emerge. Feeling the need to spend quality time with each reading group exemplified this. Like Jo and Janelle, Dave felt that daily contact with the children was a critical aspect of teaching reading.

> "but I also thought that if I am going to build up a picture of the kids and need to work on things with them then I need to spend the time with them each day" (D2. 236-238).

While all felt a responsibility to work with as many groups as possible during each reading session, this impacted on the structure of the class programme and often resulted in clock watching and time pressures. The decision about how many groups to work with each day had multiple consequences for the whole reading programme.

The need to 'take action' in order to survive is underpinned by the beginning teacher's view of what surviving as an effective junior school reading teacher 'looks like' and their ability to replicate this process. This 'capacity building' requires the personal motivation to pull together their range of professional experiences and is therefore an internal process. As Jo's comments highlight, reflection on her last professional practicum associate teacher as a model was a critical part of her survival.

> "She was my last associate. She modelled some really good things. So basically when I started I thought, right, this is all I knew so I did exactly what she did. But it wasn't perfect so when Ginnie (tutor teacher) came in she said 'Oh you need to be doing this, this and this' so I probably could have done with a lot more of just observing reading groups, seeing what is happening" (JH1. 280-384).

However her prior experiences still needed to be positioned against the realities of her current teaching situation.

> "In my last Section there were 16 Year 2 children and it was perfect. Everyone could have such a really good time" (JH1. 462-464).

Acting in a mentor role Ginnie, (Jo's tutor teacher) gave specific direction relevant to the class of 30 children. Such support bridges the gap created between professional experiences and the realities of Jo's first class.

Similarly Dave was challenged by the realities of managing a reading programme. He observed that during his pre-service training he had not anticipated teaching in the junior school but taken the job when it was offered. Despite professional experiences in the junior classroom, Dave initially struggled with time-management of the reading programme. He sought to overcome this by focusing any direct teaching at the whole class and then using the reading groups as a vehicle for hearing children read. He discusses taking groups;

> "But the time was becoming a factor and so I try and compress what we are doing into a shorter span and yet get the same quality out of it. So I have got rid of that (focusing on identified teaching points) altogether and we now do it as a whole class rather than as a group" (D2. 128-130).

In reaching this conclusion Dave appears to have an understanding of what the junior reading programme 'looks like' (teachers working with ability based reading groups) but has still to refine his understanding of the purpose behind this action. The 'ritual' of taking reading is part of his schema rather than strong pedagogical convictions for the process (Nuthall, 2001).

Being a Teacher

An awakening of the understanding of the relationship between teacher actions and children's learning signals a step toward the mastery of the craft of teaching. Ryan (1986) believes that mastery can begin to develop in some people within the first few months of beginning teaching whereas Sikes (1985) sees this as a process of trial and error, and Berliner (1994) emerging only with experience. Tentative steps toward the process of mastering the teaching of the reading process start with an understanding of what skills and strategies children need to use to be effective readers. Implicit within this is acknowledgment of the need to communicate these to children. There are times when the teacher's understandings on a concept need similar development. Janelle saw the need to 'take action' to raise her performance to match self-expectations. When invited to discuss how she attained the knowledge required for deliberate teaching with groups of children, Janelle noted a need for developing her own knowledge

> "I identified last week I know that I don't know enough phonological patterns and that's where I have gone to Joss (another teacher in the school). So generally if I see it as a need and find I'm weak and that the children need it I'll go and find information. Like we were doing long and short vowels last week – I actually realised I didn't have enough examples, I just couldn't come up with them. I also wasn't overly sure of my rules that I was giving the children. so I've got a few books that I'll go back to and if that fails, I'll ask someone, but generally I've got books now that I know where to go" (JT1. 345-356).

The reality of existing in a survival state can invoke feelings of blame ' nobody told me what to do', or leaning on others in the school community (such as a tutor teacher) both symptoms of the stress felt. Maybe survival for these beginning teachers is a developing

realisation that any answers can be found 'within' the professional and personal tools brought to the classroom. 'Answers' (professional choices) require careful sifting of professional knowledge, positioning this within the classroom context, and the consideration of the ongoing emergence of learners' needs. This process results in professional decisions regarding how children's needs are responded to.

Emergence of a professional conscience

Concern for others tends to characterise teachers self-belief. While this may not be a reason for entering the profession, teachers find themselves "motivated by the job into wanting to work hard for something" (Nias, 1989, p33) with a growing sense of teaching's worth. As participants reflect it is possible to gain a sense of how they accept responsibility for their classes learning over time. Their recollections centre less on personal reactions and feelings about events at the beginning of their first year teaching to professional concerns about challenges and issues facing them about teaching and learning. For instance memories of establishing the programme focused on personal feelings compared with later emphasis on manageability, selection of independent tasks, and identification of teaching points.

The importance placed on literacy acquisition in the junior school probably contributes to the development of beginning teachers' professional conscience in reading. While Jo's syndicate operated an interchange programme, Dave notes the influence of his school's prioritising and how that impacted on his daily timetable.

> "So that (the reading programme) is the priority of the morning and so we tend to fit other things around the reading programme rather than squeezing the reading programme to fit other things in" (D1. 25-27).

An emerging sense of commitment toward teaching children to read appeared to fuel participants' desire to achieve high professional standards and encourage the development of their knowledge and expertise. Although a significant silence in stories was concern about individual children, each participant felt pressure associated with reading progress of the class.

Jo   "It is OH MY Goodness! – I have got all this responsibility with these children – I need to do something" (JH2. 140-141).

Janelle "I guess I think that I am holding the children back – I'd hate to hold the children back" (JT2. 319-320).

Dave   "I was finding that the children weren't progressing overly well. Oh no, that sounds a bit harsh probably. I wasn't seeing a lot of improvement over the term. I was seeing that would move up maybe one level or maybe a couple of levels when I felt that they could do more" (D1. 357-360).

In the fledgling stages of their career successful beginning teachers demonstrate tenacity in developing their professional repertoire. Janelle demonstrates this describing how her reading programme has evolved;

> "I have tried a number of things that haven't worked but I have tried heaps of things that have like that main group reading – I mean I am really a pushy teacher" (JT. 338-340).

While their emerging professional conscience can spark increased commitment to teaching, distinction needs to be made between maintaining high professional standards and 'over-involvement'. For some career teachers teaching becomes a vocation that can satisfy interests and needs to the point that the demands of the role allow little time outside the boundaries of their occupational lives (Nias,1989). Striking the appropriate balance is itself a challenge.

Chapter 7: Implications: What could these stories be saying?

Despite contexts, values and beliefs about the teaching of reading that may differ, Janelle, Dave and Jo have spoken about similar successes and challenges when telling of their journey into teaching junior reading in New Zealand classrooms. They have spoken with a collective voice on issues that, if explored further, may have implications for preparing beginning teachers to teach reading.

There is a validity contained in this collective voice because it provides the beginning teachers' perspective. While literature gives direction to what constitutes effective literacy teaching (Medwell et al, 1998; Ministry of Education, 2003; Pressley et al, 2001), and models of teacher development (Berliner, 1994; Huberman, 1989; Nias, 1989; Sikes, 1985; Ryan 1986), I have been unable to locate the voices of beginning teachers communicating their understandings and feelings about the process of learning to teach reading in New Zealand. Beginning teachers bring a crucial perspective as to what it means to learn to teach children to read.

Pre-service Preparation

The effectiveness of pre-service preparation for the teaching of reading was not the focus of this study, however messages containing implications for pre-service programmes were evident. Professional practice placements in schools were highly valued by each participant. All participants described how they used these experiences as models upon which their own programmes were established. Exposure to and full participation in effective literacy programmes while on professional practice is therefore critical.

All participants recounted the challenges associated with drawing theory and practice together as they independently sought to establish an effective reading programme when presented with the realities of their teaching situation. Practical programming issues such as identifying children's literacy needs, managing the complexity of multiple groups, and planning for independent learning opportunities caused angst. The presence of these issues described as challenges by each of the beginning teachers is significant because all

must be resolved before a teacher's attention can really begin to focus on teaching guided reading lessons with a group.

Participants repeatedly told of feeling uncertain about the practicalities of designing and implementing programming. Janelle and Dave both experienced pressure because of their school's expectations that they would be able to establish programmes independently. Clearly pre-service literacy programmes require further emphasis on planning and implementing reading programmes that allow for children to be meaningful engaged in literacy tasks to allow the withdrawal of reading groups.

A quality guided reading programme is founded upon a well-managed learning environment. Several of the issues listed above represent challenges to a teacher's ability to manage children's behaviour. Organisational structures developed to enable group teaching place additional pressures on teachers' management skills. The challenges associated with the management of groups are frequently underestimated. This important aspect of teaching may need to be explored more directly within pre-service courses. It appears that in the real world of the classroom, the finer points of implementing guided reading are soon overwhelmed by the need to maintain control of the whole situation.

Bridging the divide between theory and practice is an area for further exploration and contemplation. The relevance of what constitutes pre-service education in literacy acquisition and how beginning teachers perceive this during and after their transition into the junior school classroom is an issue for future consideration.

The Place of Round Robin Reading
Acceptance of the importance of literacy is the first step in the process of effective reading teaching. Learning to teach reading requires knowledge of the stages of literacy acquisition. The evidence from this study suggests that hearing children supported this development for Janelle, Dave and Jo. Participants all acknowledged finding value from listening to children 'read around the group' and used round robin reading over varying

periods of time as they consolidated their knowledge of either the children in their class, or understandings of the reading process.

If round robin reading were proved to be a practice used by teachers in the process of learning to teach guided reading effectively then there are implications for teaching reading in junior school classrooms. The participants' experiences stand in contrast to the prevailing guided reading procedure as advocated the New Zealand Ministry of Education (2003b, 2005) which is based upon a child centred perspective without acknowledging that initially teachers need to hear children read. From the teachers' perspective the practice of hearing children read reveals otherwise concealed steps within the reading process.

Acknowledging round robin reading as a phase in teacher development may result in lowering expectations of teachers. While ongoing pedagogical consolidation is understandable and acceptable, care must be taken not to undermine expectations surrounding the teaching of guided reading. Round robin reading lowers the standard by reducing the teaching of reading to 'hearing each child read' and undervaluing the instructional density of the guided silent reading approach.

However there may be a middle ground position in this issue. When working with a group should the teacher listen to one child's reading during times when the remainder of the group is independently reading a segment of text, an opportunity for the development of professional insight is preserved. Critical to this is the manner in which children read. Many children working on the colourwheel read aloud automatically. Rather than singling a child out to read publicly, the natural tendency of children to read aloud to themselves provides the teacher with the opportunity to be an inconspicuous observer. Actively encouraging teachers to make use of these reading aloud 'windows' will strengthen teachers' professional understandings.

Professional Conscience

All participants indicated that while pre-service programmes provided them with a background understanding, it was accepting responsibility for their own class, and individual children, that activated their professional conscience for the teaching of reading. Evidence from this study suggests that professional conscience for reading emerges from feeling responsibility for and a commitment to the children in the class, a desire to 'move children up a level', and perhaps this occurs because children's reading achievement is such a highly 'visible' aspect of teaching. A teacher's desire for professional development in reading coincides with the emergence of a professional conscience in this area.

Professional Networks

The importance of professional interaction was an emerging theme across all participants. The internal motivation and desire to further develop professionally was a key indicator of a reading programme that evolved over time. The interaction from a professional network provided the teacher with professional direction and was accompanied by an internal drive to ensure children progressed as readers. It is impossible to pinpoint whether a supportive environment alone was instrumental in this process because the capacity to make use of networking opportunities is a personal characteristic. Teachers need both motivation and willingness to reveal oneself as a teacher. Therefore professional conscience may drive the establishment of, and benefits from, a professional network.

Limitations of the Sample

Only three participants were accessed in this study, and it is impossible to extrapolate beyond these participants, however there are areas for further consideration that have emerged from the participants' collective voice.

The methodology was chosen that would allow for participants' voices to be heard. While the bracketing interview conducted as part of my preparation provided an opportunity to reflect on my personal experience as a beginning teacher, the relationship between that

context and the beliefs I hold about literacy are inevitably present. Interview transcripts and video footage have been returned to participants within the research process and amendments made at their request. However the stories that each tells are filtered by my 'reading' and representation of each story that was told. While my own beliefs inevitably flavour the final report, it was the perspective of Janelle, Dave and Jo that I aimed to represent.

Chapter 8: A Final Thought

At the end of this research process I am left with a strong sense that stories are windows into the worlds of others. I felt that participants enjoyed the opportunity to tell 'their' stories about teaching reading in the world of their classroom. As previously outlined rather than just idle talk, a story offers authenticity, reinterpretation and response each of which provides an opportunity for professional growth. Dave describes how the stimulated recall of the second interview has been a positive experience for him. He signals highlighted awareness of his teaching:

Dave   "I think I was going to say that it has been really good just from my point of view to have you filming and be able to watch it myself because often you are in here on your own – you are the only adult in the room – so there is no-one else to tell you how you are going or give feed-back and you have observations occasionally from senior teachers and things but just to be able to watch yourself in action, you know - it is a real eye opener. So even just today I have picked up a couple of things that I think that is something I am going to look at a bit more closely" (D2. 252-260).

Similarly Jo comments how stopping to 'look at' her reading programme has been beneficial:

Jo: "I was just going to thank you for that. It is actually just so nice to be aware of what you are doing and then just to watch on the screen and think oh - just to see you are asking all those questions you don't realise you are. You are just like a robot sometimes.

P: So you think you found it beneficial.

Jo: Oh, I really found it good and just watching that- there are things I probably wouldn't do.

P: Anything in particular?

Jo: I probably felt that sometimes I could have let them flow a wee bit more. I said right next page…stop talk. Next page… stop talk. I could probably have just let those who had finished explore a bit further rather than keeping them all at the same pace. I mean you have to do that sometimes" (JH2. 497-513).

While the aim of this study has been to explore the factors that influence the evolution of three beginning teachers' reading programmes, the opportunity to tell their stories has invited personal and professional reflection that Dave and Jo have valued. Returning to Copa's notion of a journey "Each new teacher enters the classroom more or less as a stranger in a strange land. The suitcases he or she carries are filled with articles from the old country, the familiar land just left." (1991 cited Carre 1995, p191.). The opportunity to tell of their journey supported beginning teachers examination and utilisation of articles from their repertoire of understandings about reading more effectively. Professional growth should always be celebrated and a positive by product of this study may be the personal insights that Janelle, Dave, Jo and I have gained from this process.

Recently I was working with my colleagues planning the literacy final lecture pre service students before graduation. It was suggested that we organise a strong guest speaker to reinforce the importance of effective literacy teaching as a 'grand finale'. Reflecting on Jo, Janelle and Dave's journeys into teaching literacy, my hesitation to the speaker was centred on a strengthened belief that the development of professional conscience is a component of each teacher's unique journey grounded in teaching context. A professional conscience for the teaching of reading cannot be 'taught' rather it can only be learnt in ones own classroom.

Appendix 1

The Colourwheel

The 'Ready to Read' series of reading material published by the New Zealand Ministry of Education is graded according to levels of difficulty. Referred to as 'The Colourwheel' numerous texts are available at each colour band. The colour bands are sequentially ordered with each change in colour representing an increase in text complexity. More refined that 'reading ages', this system is a guide for classroom teachers working with junior school children with reading ages between five and eight years.

As the Ready to Read series is distributed to all New Zealand primary schools, the colourwheel is a well known system for grading texts. It is common for schools to order their reading material according to the colourwheel adding texts brought from other publishers. Texts are often ordered sequentially in colour bands so teachers can easily access material from desired levels.

Characteristics of each of the colour band levels form literacy benchmarks of achievement for children to master as they move thorough the colour sequence. . The Ready to Read Teacher Support Material (Ministry of Education 2002) gives examples of texts at each colour band and explores the support and challenges incorporated into each text at each level. .

The 'colour wheel' has an associated meta-language that is frequently used by junior school teachers. All participants in this study refer to the colourwheel or the colour bands within this system as they tell about their reading programmes.

Appendix 2

Interview One (All Participants)

Tell me about...

1. ...the way reading fits into your weekly timetable?

2. ...the way you set up your reading programme? Who/what influenced this?

    (school policy, tutor teacher guidance, influences for professional practice, understandings from preservice training)

3. what I would see if I was standing by the door looking into your classroom at reading time/

    *What would you be doing?

    *What would the children be doing?

    *Where would people be?

    *What kinds of interactions would be occurring?

4. the way your reading programme has changed during the year?

    *What has changed?

    (grouping, independent activities, additional support, reading levels)

    *Why?

5. what you do when you take a reading group...

    *Where do you position yourself?

    *What 'procedure' do you work through?

    *How do you interact with the children in the group?

    *What do you look for?

    *Do you interact with the 'others'?

6. the people you talk to about your reading programme?

    *Professional support

    *Sharing successes and challenges

(*Tags are possible directions rather than specific questions)

Appendix 2 continued

Interview Two: Dave

Watch video segment first......

Describe what you were doing/thinking/feeling when you were working with this group...

If we were watching a video of you teaching a guided reading lesson early last year how would it have been different from what we've just seen?

What factors have influenced the changes you have when working with a group?

What does the term 'guided reading 'mean to you at this point in your career?
Has this changed since you began teaching?

Appendix 2 continued

Interview 2: Janelle

Watch video segment first……Day 2 Planets (1: 58-2:06)

Describe what you were doing/thinking/feeling when you were working with this group…

If we were to watch a video of you teaching a guided lesson early this year how would it have been different from what we have just seen?

In our first interview you mentioned a 'first term panic' that prompted you to view reading programmes operated by other teachers in the school. Can you describe to me what triggered those feelings of panic and what that time was like for you?

How have your college courses and professional practice experiences impacted on the way you take guided reading?

You mentioned that the children in your class are good readers…why do you think they are?

How many children are in the class?

Reading Focus on planning guide. How long does this focus last for?

In our first interview you mentioned looking for professional support material to guide you working with children at gold level and beyond. A teacher gave you some planning sheets how have you used those?

What does the term 'guided reading' mean to you at this point in your career? Do you think this has changed since you began teaching?

Appendix 2 continued

Interview 2: Jo

Watch video segment first

Describe what you were doing/thinking/feeling when you were working with this group...

If we were to watch a video of you teaching a guided lesson in May last year how would it have been different from what we have just seen?

On Friday you mentioned that when you first arrived here you didn't know how to set up a reading programme. Looking back what were the things that you needed to know......

G, H and J have all been literacy support people you have worked with over the year. What kinds of things have they given you feedback and support with?

In our first interview you describe how when you first started teaching the parents wanted to know about your reading programme. What that time was like for you? Can you describe to me a particular conversation you had with a parent? What kind of interaction do you have with parents now? (Has that changed over time?)

What does the term 'guided reading' mean to you at this point in your career? Do you think this has changed in the past year?

Appendix 3

Christchurch College of Education

PO Box 31-065

CHRISTCHURCH

Wednesday 9 June 2004

Dear_____

As part of my Masters' in Teaching and Learning degree (MTchLn), I am conducting research into what factors influence the evolution of a beginning teacher's reading programme.

As discussed in our recent telephone conversation, participant involvement in this project will consist of a video observation of your reading session over four consecutive teaching days, this will be followed by an taped interview and finally a further taped interview during which we view and discuss a segment of video footage. You will be forwarded a copy of our interview transcript to read, and should you choose comment on.

It is envisaged that each interview will take no longer than 45 minutes. I would take responsibility for setting up and activating the video within your classroom.

Access to data gathered will be limited to my thesis supervisors (Valda Cordes and Graeme Ferguson) and any typist/transcriber used. Transcriptions of data will be kept on a computer file with password entry. All data will be disposed of after three years.

Participants involved in my study will be protected by an assurance that identifiable information will not be included in the written report. Protection of your privacy will remain paramount throughout the project. Participants are free to withdraw from the study at any time. Should this occur all data attributed to you would be destroyed.

Any concerns about the project may be conveyed to myself, my supervisors (Valda Cordes and Graeme Ferguson) or alternatively:

The Chair of the Ethical Clearance Committee

Christchurch College of Education

PO Box 31-065

CHRISTCHURCH

Phone: 03 348 2059

If you are willing to participate, please complete the attached consent form. A copy will be supplied for your records.

Yours sincerely

Philippa Buckley

Lecturer

School of Primary Teacher Education

PO Box 31-065

CHRISTCHURCH

Ph 343 7780 extn 8280

Or direct dial 345 8280

Email: philippa.buckley@cce.ac.nz

Participant Consent Form

I have had the purposes of the study outlined to me.

I agree to participate in two interviews (of not more than 45 minutes each) and to have my reading programme videotaped over four consecutive teaching days.

I agree to provide information to the researcher and that at all times my confidentiality and anonymity will be preserved.

I understand that participation is voluntary and I can withdraw from the study at any time.

If I have any queries or concerns about the project I will contact the researcher (Philippa Buckley), her supervisors (Valda Cordes or Graeme Ferguson) or the Chair of the Ethical Clearance Committee.

The Chair of the Ethical Clearance Committee
Christchurch College of Education
PO Box 31-065
CHRISTCHURCH
Phone: 03 348 2059

Name:_____

Signature:_____

Date:_____

Christchurch College of Education

PO Box 31-065

CHRISTCHURCH

Principal

(School)

(School Address)

Wednesday 9 June 2004

Dear_____

As part of my Masters' in Teaching and Learning degree (MTchLn), I am conducting research into what factors influence the evolution of a beginning teacher's reading programme.

As discussed in our recent telephone conversation, I have invited _____ a beginning teacher on your staff to be a participant in my study. The aim of this project is to identify the factors that influence the evolution of beginning teachers reading programmes.

Participant involvement in this project will consist of a video observation of your reading session over four consecutive teaching days, this will be followed by an taped interview and finally a further taped interview during which we view and discuss a segment of video footage. Participants will be forwarded a copy of our interview transcript to read, and if they choose comment on.

It is envisaged that each interview will take no longer than 45 minutes. I would take responsibility for setting up and activating the video within the classroom.

The focus of the study is on the teacher rather than the children. Anything the children say or do will only be noted in response to the teacher. While the use of a video may influence some children, the aim is to minimally impact on the classroom programme.

Participants involved in my study will be protected by an assurance that identifiable information will not be included in the written report. Protection of privacy will remain paramount throughout the project. Participants are free to withdraw from the study at any time. Should this occur all data attributed to the participant would be destroyed.

Any concerns about the project may be conveyed to myself, my supervisors (Valda Cordes and Graeme Ferguson) or alternatively:
The Chair of the Ethical Clearance Committee
Christchurch College of Education
PO Box 31-065
CHRISTCHURCH
Phone: 03 348 2059

Yours sincerely

Philippa Buckley

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