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The continuity of literacy development: Kindergarten to year 1

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THE CONTINUITY OF LITERACY DEVELOPMENT: KINDERGARTEN TO YEAR 1

BY LENNIE BARBLETT

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

Honours in Education

at the Faculty of Education, Edith Cowan University

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USE OF THESIS

The Use of Thesis statement is not included in this version of the thesis.

ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study was to investigate the continuity of strategies and provisions that teachers use to develop children's literacy in kindergarten and Year 1. In two metropolitan Ministry of Education districts, 27 kindergarten and 25 Year 1 teachers completed a questionnaire concerning issues relating to literacy development in these two educational settings. From this population four teachers were interviewed to investigate areas of interest that arose from the questionnaire. The results showed that kindergarten and Year 1 teachers differed in the selection of strategies and provisions to promote literacy in young children. There was a clear delineation between the Year 1 and kindergarten teachers when ranking the importance of play as a literacy strategy in early childhood settings. The differences found in surveyed teachers' practices between kindergarten and Year 1 may lead to discontinuous literacy experiences for children moving from one year level to the other. Further research could pinpoint the areas of discontinuity by participant observation of literacy experiences in these two settings.

DECLARATION

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

Signature:
Date: ..12.8.93.....

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

1.1 BACKGROUND AND SIGNIFICANCE

To be literate in our society has become of vital importance. Effective literacy skills are critical if individuals are to operate successfully in the wider community. Development in areas of vocational training, higher education and participation in a society influenced by increasing technology relies on a sound base in literacy. Primary and secondary schools are charged with establishing and supporting sound programmes in literacy for all pupils. This charge has been recently highlighted in the "Common and Agreed National Goals for Schooling in Australia" (1989).

Year 1 is the child's first year of compulsory schooling in Western Australia, and there has been a long standing tradition of literacy instruction beginning in earnest at this point. It is in this year that society expects that young children will be taught to read and write (Renwick, 1984; Holdaway, 1979). Reading and writing have been traditionally viewed as the central elements of literacy although there is clear recognition that oral language is the basis of reading and writing development. Until recently the Year 1 curriculum included components of reading, writing and oral language as separate curriculum documents which were taught as specific subjects with distinct skills. Some educationalists now call for an integrated approach to teaching language and literacy. That is, speaking, listening, reading and writing are interrelated and should be taught concurrently (Sulzby & Teale, 1989). Many modern definitions of literacy, therefore, stress the importance of the interplay of reading and writing

with listening and speaking. For example, the Australian Language and Literacy Council (1991, p.5) defines effective literacy as "the integration of speaking, listening and critical thinking with reading and writing". This approach has been adopted in Western Australia with the recent introduction of the English Language K-7 Syllabus (1989).

This change in curriculum materials, both in Australia and overseas, has been largely due to a push in the last decade and a half for a new perspective on the literacy acquisition of young children. This new perspective on reading and writing development has been termed "emergent literacy" (Clay, 1976). Sulzby (1989, p.84) defines emergent literacy as "the reading and writing behaviours that precede and develop into conventional literacy". Emergent literacy has developed from the belief that in literate societies, children are in the process of becoming literate from a very young age (Sulzby & Teale, 1991). In Western Australia, in keeping with current research and theory, increased attention has been given to planning for literacy development in the kindergarten year. (In this thesis, pre-school and pre-primary will both be referred to, using the generic term "Kindergarten". For further details about the distinction between pre-school and pre-primary, see Section 1.4).

Along with the emergent literacy perspective has come the recognition that developmentally appropriate practices need to be in place for the most effective education of young children. In brief, young children learn in different ways from the ways that older children learn and this must be taken into account if early literacy instruction at school is to be effective (National Association for the Education of Young Children, 1986; Elkind, 1986; Kamii, 1985). It is vital therefore that instruction in literacy for young

children matches their development. Developmental techniques, historically used in the kindergarten, have been advocated for inclusion into the junior primary years of schooling by the Collins Report (Victoria, 1991).

Another Government Paper with significant implications for continuity is the Beazley Commission report into schooling in Western Australia (1985) which led to a close examination of a number of important issues in primary and secondary education. From the report came a number of recommendations that called for increased attention to be given to literacy learning in the junior primary years. This coincided in 1985 with the Early Literacy Inservice Course (E.L.I.C.) which concentrated on disseminating new information about literacy instruction for young children, to practising teachers. It was at this time that the Western Australian Ministry of Education withdrew support for the "Guide to Reading Readiness" which highlighted discrete skill training for instruction in reading and writing. Adding to these changes recently, have been the introduction of First Steps materials (1991, 1992), the launch of the new English Language K-7 Syllabus (1989), and changes in teacher training, which have seen literacy instruction in a state of flux.

It is in these early years that a firm foundation is formed on which to build in later years. This was clearly revealed in the recent White Paper on "Language and Literacy" (August 1991, p.5), which stated:

Evidence suggests that if children are not making appropriate literacy progress by the end of their third year of primary school, it is likely that they may not make up the gap through the rest of their schooling.

This underlines the necessity for effective literacy instruction at the beginning of a child's school career. The Australian Language and Literacy Council (August, 1991), clearly highlighted the importance of the early years in schooling and called for investigations into literacy development across the years. Indeed, in 1991-92, \$6.7M was allocated for projects in this area and the Schools' Council issued five key discussion papers on aspects of the early years of schooling.

Paramount to the issue of literacy development is the way in which teachers manage children's learning as they move from kindergarten to Year 1. This has become of increasing importance as the majority of children in Western societies attend an educational provision before they start their compulsory schooling. Studies of continuity and transition across these years (for example: Cleave, Jowett & Bate, 1982; Pratt, 1983; Renwick, 1984; Tayler, 1987) highlight the importance of programmes and procedures on young children's learning. Continuity and transition from home to kindergarten to Year 1 was the topic of a paper published by a working party commissioned by the Beazley Report (1985), with regard to recommendations 62, 63 and 64. This paper (August, 1985) highlighted the importance of continuity especially in the area of literacy and called for the re-examination of early literacy instruction in kindergarten and Year 1. This was, in Western Australia, the beginning of an official acknowledgement of the redefinition of literacy learning. The English Language K-7 Syllabus (1989) presents an articulated approach across kindergarten and into the primary years for the development of literacy and stresses the importance of the continuity of teaching strategies and provisions.

Given the shift in attention from reading, writing, speaking and listening as separate strands, to an

integrated curriculum, the recognition of the importance of pre-school in the development of literacy, and the significance of using developmentally appropriate practice, an examination of current literacy provisions and strategies in kindergarten and Year 1 is necessary. There is a structural division in the literature between early childhood and primary education, perhaps because of the separate pre-service preparation for these teachers. The new interest in 5-year-old schooling in Western Australia and recommendations in Victoria for continuity between care, pre-school and early school, provide the context in which this study developed.

Literacy can be seen therefore, as an essential prerequisite for participation in an increasingly technological society. The important charge of developing students' literacy has been the task of the schools. The changing face of literacy research has led to a focus on the early years of schooling especially in kindergarten. The need to develop literacy success from the beginning of primary schooling is important and is dependent on the smooth transition from kindergarten to Year 1. This smooth transition is aided by the continuity of provisions and strategies teachers use to enhance learning for young children.

1.2 PURPOSE OF THE STUDY

The purpose of this study is to investigate the continuity of the provisions and strategies used by kindergarten and Year 1 teachers to promote literacy. Given two different pre-service preparations (early childhood and primary), teachers in kindergarten and Year 1 may have different ideas of what counts as important in the development of literacy. This in turn may affect the strategies and provisions used by teachers across these years. However, the new Ministry of Education materials (1989, 1991, 1992) present a

uniform approach to the development of literacy and stress the importance of continuity of teaching strategies and provisions. Previously the kindergarten year was overlooked as an educational base from which to promote literacy. It was held that the teaching of reading and writing began in Year 1 with formal instruction. With a reconceptualisation of the acquisition of literacy in young children increased focus has been placed on literacy development in the kindergarten following on to Year 1. Given the recently changed agenda for developing children's literacy skills, there is a clear mandate for examining the present arrangements for literacy development in kindergarten and Year 1 and the extent of continuity between the two.

1.3 RESEARCH QUESTIONS

This study is designed to investigate the following four research questions:

1. What provisions and strategies do kindergarten and Year 1 teachers choose to enhance literacy development ?
2. How do kindergarten and Year 1 teachers differ in selecting strategies which develop literacy at this level ?
3. What impact have recent syllabus changes and Ministry materials had on teachers' literacy programming in kindergarten and Year 1 ?
4. To what degree is there continuity/discontinuity in provision and strategies selected by teachers to develop literacy in kindergarten and Year 1 ?

1.4 DEFINITION OF TERMS

The definitions in this section have been generated from the literature and are further expanded in the literature review in Chapter 2. The major terms used within the body of this thesis are defined below.

CONTINUITY

The Concise Oxford Dictionary defines continuity as a "state of being continuous, an unbroken succession and a logical sequence" (p.204). For the purposes of this study, continuity refers to a continuous, logical sequence of provisions and strategies applied by teachers working with young children in Pre-primary and Year 1.

DISCONTINUITY

For the purpose of this study, discontinuity is defined as, when continuity, as defined above, does not exist or is broken.

EMERGENT LITERACY

"The reading and writing behaviours that precede and develop into conventional literacy." (Sulzby, 1989, p.84).

KINDERGARTEN

The generic term used to define classes for four-and-five-year-old children attending Pre-school and Pre-primary centres.

LANGUAGE

"A system by which knowledge, ideas and culture are transmitted, received and clarified; a means by which we learn, a vehicle for communication that can be either spoken or written." (English Language K-7 Syllabus, 1989, p.49).

LITERACY

For the purpose of this study literacy will be defined as the mastery of reading and writing. It is noted, however, that reading and writing are components of language and as such cannot be totally divorced from speaking and listening.

PRE-PRIMARY

This term is applied to the kindergarten year of Primary schools that cater for four-and-five-year-old children. The Pre-primary year comes under the auspices of the Primary Principal and offers sessional education. The Pre-primary centres used in this study offer sessional programmes.

PRE-SCHOOL

This term is applied to other Ministry of Education kindergarten provisions. The Pre-school year comes under the auspices of the District Superintendent and offers sessional education for four-and-five-year-old children. The Pre-schools used in this study offer sessional programmes.

PROGRAMME

This term is used to refer to the educational content planned by the teacher for a particular period of time and includes both formal and informal sessions and informal activity times. Programmes are drawn up to cover content for a period of time deemed manageable by the teacher. This may be one or several weeks. The daily schedule is seen to be that part of the programme which sets out the particular activities available on a stated day. (Tayler, 1987).

PROVISIONS

This term is applied to the planning and preparation done by the teacher implementing the programme. Matters related to time allocation, materials selection, language rationale, grouping procedures, transition between classes and student aspects (e.g. students with Non-English Speaking Backgrounds) make up the provisions by teachers for literacy experiences.

STRATEGIES

This term is applied to the techniques used by teachers to promote literacy.

TRANSITION

The period in which the children move from the kindergarten year to the Year 1 class.

WHOLE LANGUAGE

An approach to teaching literacy which involves translating whole language philosophy and theory into a pedagogy or teaching strategies. It requires consideration both of the content that is taught and the manner in which it is taught in terms of the specific social and cultural circumstances of students, their families, and their communities. (Westby, 1992; Bloome, Harris & Ludlum, 1991; Sawyer, 1991).

YEAR 1

The first year of primary school. Children in Western Australian schools would normally be turning six years of age during Year 1.

1.5 STRUCTURE OF THESIS

Chapter 2 contains a review of current literature and research. The conceptual framework is outlined and discussed in Chapter 3. In Chapter 4 the research design, sampling procedures, instruments and procedures are described. The results and discussion are presented together in Chapter 5 where the research questions are addressed. Finally, Chapter 6 is devoted to the summary of the study in which conclusions are drawn and the implications of the study for educational practice and for further research are discussed.

CHAPTER 2

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

2.1 INTRODUCTION

In this review of literature, pertinent aspects that relate to the theoretical framework are identified. It is shown that research to date has identified emergent literacy in kindergarten and Year 1 but has not investigated the continuity of strategies and provisions used to promote emergent literacy in these years. Furthermore, there has been little research which investigates the strategies and provisions used to promote literacy across kindergarten and Year 1. Relevant research areas from which this study has evolved are discussed.

2.2 LANGUAGE AND LITERACY DEVELOPMENT

Literacy and language have not only been the focus of educationalists (e.g., Bruner, 1983) but also psychologists (e.g., Goody, 1977), child development experts (e.g., Elkind, 1986; Cazden, 1981), and linguists (e.g., Halliday, 1976; Chaffe, 1985). Different theories of language development, such as behaviourist (e.g., Skinner, 1975), nativist (e.g., Chomsky, 1974), and interactionist (e.g., McCormack & Schellenbusch, 1984), are reflected in the work of the writers in each discipline. In short, the topics of literacy and language are not new and have been investigated in some depth across all disciplines. However, literacy and language as topics in education have undergone a considerable paradigm shift during the last half of the 20th century. The language development paradigm has shifted from "attention to vocabulary and

articulation development in the 1950s, to sentence (syntax) in the 1960s, to meaning (semantics) in the 1970s, to language use (pragmatics) in the 1980s, and to discourse in the 1990s" (Westby, 1992). It was the work of the linguist Halliday (1973) that added momentum to this shift as he reassessed the way in which young children learnt language. It brought forward an orientation toward the child as an active constructor of concepts. That is, "Learning language is learning how to mean" (Halliday, 1973, p.24).

This perspective of the child being an active constructor, was applied to reading and writing development. First, Smith (1971) and then Goodman (1976) applied this to reading which they saw as a "natural language process involving the reader in linguistic, cognitive and social strategies in order to process print directly for meaning" (Hall, 1987, p.25). However, Smith (1971) and Goodman (1976) took the idea a step further. They applied this belief not only to adult literate behaviour but also to the way young children approach learning to read and write. That is, children expect print to make sense (Hall, 1987).

Along with this paradigm shift of language development has come great changes in school curricula. Randall writes that we "have still not agreed on what English in the primary curriculum comprises" (Randall, 1972, p.2). Although this comment was made 20 years ago it still holds true for today as this discussion of what is to be included in the language curriculum, and perhaps how it should be taught, is still raised in the literature (Westby, 1992). The skills-based approach asserted that literacy can be broken down into a number of discrete skills, such as decoding. These skills could be taught in isolation and, once mastered, the student was deemed literate. From the language development paradigm shift evolved a new approach to literacy development. The

whole language approach, in contrast to the skills-based approach, asserts that language should not be fragmented into skills. Rather, language, including literacy, is learned by using language to accomplish goals in meaningful contexts (Froese, 1990).

That literacy is significantly related to oral language is apparent through the work of Halliday, Smith, Goodman and others. Oral language nurtures children's literate abilities, and literate language influences oral language abilities (Kroll & Vann, 1981). The whole language approach attempts to apply the transactional process observed in oral language learning to the process of literacy acquisition (Westby, 1992). Oral language and listening typically provide the base from which reading and writing develop (Teale, 1986). Children, therefore, have experienced the intermingling of these language processes. Study in an American kindergarten revealed that children who had been read to frequently, were using identifiable syntactical and lexical knowledge when making up their own text for picture books (Purcell-Gates, 1988, 1989). In brief, the literature stresses that speaking, listening, reading and writing are four general language areas that develop concurrently (Sulzby & Teale, 1989; Martinez & Teale, 1985; Lipson & Wixson, 1991).

In the past, the view was held that listening typically preceded speaking, speaking preceded reading, and reading preceded writing (Sulzby & Teale, 1991). Language arts therefore, was broken down into discrete subjects with particular skills and knowledge passed to the pupil. Recently, speaking, reading, writing and listening have been grouped together under the banner of language development (First Steps, 1992). Reading and writing can be seen therefore as elements of language development, but nevertheless, they will be referred to as the central components of literacy in this study.

Changes in the school curricula have been more pronounced over the last 20 years than at any other time in history (Randall, 1972). Teachers, however, remain the same, so that theory is bounding ahead of practice (Randall, 1972). In view of recent changes a definition of literacy has been adopted that is most likely to be understood by practising teachers.

Research indicates that an integrated language approach is most desirable in teaching literacy (Holdaway, 1979; Sulzby & Teale, 1989). This is because children are developing competencies in all aspects of literate behaviour simultaneously (Lipson & Wixson, 1991). The First Steps Oral Language component (1992, p.vi) published by the Ministry of Education in Western Australia, states:

Language development cannot be divided into discrete components. Reading, writing, speaking and listening are interrelated.

2.3 EMERGENT LITERACY

The emergent literacy perspective is a reconceptualization of early reading and writing development. The term "emergent" was first used by Marie Clay in 1966 (cited in Holdaway, 1979) and since then it has come to replace notions of "readiness". Emergent literacy challenges the view that children entering school for the first time must pass through a series of highly structured activities in order to begin to read and write. The idea of emergent literacy [although it was not termed this] first appeared in the literature in 1898 in an article written by Aredell (Hall, 1987). This was a radical view which went against accepted traditional beliefs and practices. It was not until the work of Marie Clay (1966) in New

Zealand, Kenneth Goodman (1976) in America and Canada, and Frank Smith (1971) in America, that this perspective began to gain credence. Since then, these views have been developed and sustained by a wide body of multi-disciplinary research (Hall, 1987).

It is now widely held that literacy development begins in infancy (Teale, 1985; Goodman & Goodman, 1979). Educators today, prefer the term "emergent" because it views literacy as a continuous process developing over time. Children in our society are immersed from the time of their birth in a culture embedded in print. An emergent perspective identifies children's early years as a period of high activity rather than an inactive one, waiting to unfold (Lipson & Wixson, 1991). Adams (1990) believes there is no single point when literacy begins. Reading research reported by Sulzby & Teale (1989) shows that children by the age of two or three can identify print in the environment. Furthermore, many children are read to and therefore experience print and the genres of written language. Studies show the positive connections between story reading to young children and their enhanced literacy development at age five or six (Pratt & Garton, 1985; Wells, 1981).

Investigation into early writing development by Clay (1975); Sulzby (1985); Genishi and Dyson (1982) has shown a similarity in stages. Although called different terms in the literature, these forms graduate from scribbling, mock handwriting, acceptable letters to invented spelling and then conventional writing (Barclay, 1990). Allen, Clark, Cook, Crane, Fallon, Hoffman, Jennings & Sours (1989) reported similar patterns of development in their longitudinal study of writing conducted in an American kindergarten where the children can be as young as three. They included documentation from other sources which reinforced their findings. It was concluded that kindergarten and Year 1

children can write and re-read when asked, and emergent writing/reading behaviours can be interpreted by teachers and researchers. It can be seen therefore that reading and writing can and do begin before school and the beginning of formal instruction in this area.

The emergent literacy perspective has led to further research into the environments and attitudes which promote literacy development (Schickendanz, et al. 1989; Allen & Mason, 1989). Literacy acts should be real, and occur in "contexts which support, facilitate enquiry, respect performance and provide opportunities for engagement" (Hall, 1987, p.10). It is the children who are fortunate enough to experience literacy acts who are labelled "at risk" by teachers (Heller, 1990). Unlike other work on the topic of literacy, the emergent literacy perspective addresses two central issues, namely the nature of the child's contribution and the social environment and interplay between the two (Sulzby & Teale, 1991). Reading and writing are not solitary activities. They are social events that take place in settings where relationships between individuals evolve (Heller, 1990). At school and kindergarten the settings offer a more formal social context for reading and writing, to which the child must adapt. It is important therefore that literacy events occur in supportive environments and are relevant to the child.

2.4 DEVELOPMENTAL LEARNING AND EMERGENT LITERACY

Early childhood literature highlights the developmental nature of young children's learning, where theories of exploration and play are stressed. The child's development is a sequential progression resulting from interaction with the environment (Garton & Pratt, 1989). Dependent upon the nature of each interaction, learning occurs in small steps which build on existing

foundations. Much of this research tackles the understanding of young children's literacy acquisition and comes from developmental frameworks based on Piaget (1962) and Vygotsky (1962) (for example, Clay, 1976; Ferrerio & Teberosky, 1983; Goodman, 1983; Sulzby, 1985). Teale and others (Mehan, 1981), challenge the Piagetian orientations, as they view literacy learning as an interactive process involving both learning and teaching (Heller, 1990). This makes the home and school environments and literate significant others crucial to a child's literacy development. In these environments, literate others can model literate behaviours and social interaction will encourage active involvement by participants in literacy events.

Prior to entry to kindergarten, children have initiated much of their own learning, although interactions with parents and significant others have also played an important role. Roskos (1988, p.564) coined the phrase "literacy event" which is a "set of reading and writing routines embedded within common events in a modern industrial culture such as banking, mailing, phoning, shopping". Interactive meaningful literacy events are an essential part of children's growth in literacy. In these "literacy events" children encounter written language in books and other forms and develop hypotheses and interpretations. These interpretations change over time as children interact with others. This illustrates the developmental nature of learning.

The emergent literacy perspective places reading and writing in a developmental framework. Sulzby (1985, 1988) found in a longitudinal study of American children aged two to six, developmental properties in the speech of these children reading their favourite story-books. The longitudinal assessment of these acts saw individual children move from strategies of labelling or oral recount through to conventional reading. It is evident

therefore, that children can develop reading and writing behaviours before they enter school. Despite this fact, Durkin (1987) reported that in America, Year 1 classrooms were organised as if children came to school without any knowledge of literacy.

In the literature there are authors who have designed lists of what emergent readers and writers know (Heller, 1990). If one places emergent literacy into a developmental context, then such a list cannot be seen as static. Furthermore, if the individual nature of developmental learning is to be taken into account then children will develop literacy at different rates. Lack of literacy knowledge at this age does not necessarily imply a deficit in the child or his or her pre-school environment (Clay, 1991). Teachers therefore will have to take into account the differing levels of literacy that may be evident amongst their class members. Included in the First Steps materials are guides to place children's literacy behaviours on developmental continua (for example, Reading Developmental Continuum, 1992, see Appendix No.2). As indicators of physical growth can be monitored, so can indicators of literacy and language growth. Developmental continua have been designed in the areas of reading, writing, spelling and oral language. The continua were developed from extensive research into the development of literacy in English-speaking children (Reading Continuum, 1992). The introduction to the continua stresses the developmental nature of young children's learning.

Most children in our society will not learn to read and write conventionally on their own but will need the support of a teacher. If we believe that young children learn developmentally, then some teaching styles may facilitate learning and promote independent development and some may impede further independent learning. Children's use of independent learning strategies

indicate that they are learning how to learn (Cullen, 1989). Self-initiated literacy events may be more meaningful to the child than teacher-directed activity with specific goal orientations not clear to the child. Activities that are not relevant and meaningful to the child may lead to frustration and loss of confidence and satisfaction (Shepherd & Smith, 1988; Cullen, 1988; Elkind, 1986). Teachers must consider, therefore, how the child actively contributes to literacy learning and what children already know.

2.5 PLAY AND EMERGENT LITERACY

Play is an important, unpressured medium through which young children learn. It is a well researched topic in the literature (Pelligrini, 1980). Play provides for all aspects of child development in the affective, cognitive and psycho-motor domains (Schickendanz, Chay, Gopin, Sheng & Wild, 1990). Play has been assigned a significant place in the early childhood environment. Piaget (1962) and Vygotsky (1962) both stressed the importance of play in a young child's development. Piaget (1962) believed that through play the child assimilates new information and consolidates it with past experience. Vygotsky (1962) theorised that play allowed the child to pass the immediate stimulus and so learn to use symbolic, abstract levels of thought.

Research on play and its effect on literacy development was undertaken by Evelyn Jacob (1984), who through participant observation viewed 29 Puerto Rican children at home during their holidays between kindergarten and Year 1. She found that play was an extremely important context for the development of literacy, for half of their literacy activities occurred during play. Socio-dramatic play is one type of play which can promote a child's knowledge of the functions and uses of

literacy - an important emergent literacy understanding (Sulzby & Teale, 1989). Jacobs observed "literacy behaviour activities" where girls acted out social behaviours associated with literacy, displaying knowledge of behaviours involved in using shopping lists, prescriptions and money. The report concluded with a very important point that "cultures may vary in the degree to which they encourage and support play as a context for learning literacy skills" (Jacob, 1984, p.80). This was also found to be true by Tutolo (1983) who carried out a study of 55 teachers in Italy. He found that play was a vital part of emergent literacy programmes. In fact there was no distinction made between "work" and "play".

Play has been a traditional strategy used in kindergarten environments, enabling continuity from home to kindergarten. The kindergarten setting is traditionally structured so that literacy events occur in a play environment. In the recent years of more focused attention on the early years of learning, particularly in kindergarten and Year 1, there has been a downward push of a more formal primary curriculum, particularly in America. Advocates of a developmental learning approach using play as a teaching strategy express grave concern at the "earlier the better" mentality (Elkind, 1986). Formal instruction and formal testing of literacy development in and even before kindergarten has become the hallmark of some American educational regions (Elkind, 1986). Nevertheless, research verifies and highlights the significance of play in young children's learning. Furthermore, if children are introduced to formal literacy tasks too early, failure in these tasks can be detrimental to further learning (Shepherd & Smith, 1988; Elkind, 1986).

2.6 STRATEGIES

Teaching a child to read and write has long been seen as a key function of the school. That most children will learn to read and write under a teacher's instruction is not questioned. What is questioned however, are the strategies and provisions a teacher will use to move children towards literacy attainment. The literature outlines a great debate between whole language approaches and skills-based approaches to literacy development.

Skills-based approaches to literacy instruction operate on the assumption that instruction should be withheld until the child is "ready" (Sulzby & Teale, 1986). Teachers are taught that readiness is an objectively measurable state which indicates when the child is able to commence formal reading. Readiness tests are used worldwide but have been used increasingly as kindergarten screening tests in the United States. The increased use of these types of tests has prompted warnings from the International Reading Association (1986) and the National Association for the Education of Young Children (1986). Both associations are concerned with the inappropriate testing of young children and call for developmental appropriateness in educational programmes, especially in the area of literacy, for young children.

In a skills-based approach, to ensure that a child is "ready" to read, the whole class may be taken through a set of activities to enhance auditory and visual perception, figure-ground differentiation and sequencing. Skills-based methods use an "atomistic" framework, where reading is separated into constituent parts and instruction given in small pieces (Lipson & Wixson, 1991). Writing within this framework is taught separately once the reading process has been

established. This orientation was officially sanctioned by the Education Department of Western Australia until 1985 in their "Primary Readiness for Formal Learning" (1978). In Western Australia, literacy instruction in many schools began in earnest in Year 1 with a structured readiness programme. To encourage children to read and write in the kindergarten was considered inappropriate and pre-emptive of the primary curriculum.

Advocates of the "whole language" approach condemn these practices where children spend considerable time practising repetitive skills such as visual discrimination, because the value for early reading is not apparent. Skills-based methods often fail to take into account children's active involvement in the learning process. There is also no recognition of the literacy development which occurred before Year 1. The literature questions the need for "readiness" programmes and points out that such activities have little relationship to the actual process of reading. These programmes are also inappropriate when reading is placed within the context of whole language (Holdaway, 1979; Clark, 1976; Clay, 1976).

The "whole language" approach is a "view of literacy, literacy learning and teaching that is driven by Key assumptions about how students learn" (Tierney, Readance & Dishner, 1990, p.26). The task of learning becomes more difficult for the child the more we move away from how children learn naturally (Goodman & Goodman, 1982). The emergent literacy perspective becomes a baseline for this approach, as great respect is given to the child as an active learner and to the belief that literacy development begins from a very early age. Whole language programmes reject "part to whole" views of literacy development, insisting that real writing and real reading start from the learner's point of literacy. Teachers support learning and assist children

in developing and fulfilling their own objectives (Goodman, 1992).

Skills-based and "whole language" approaches bring with them recommendations of the strategies which teachers should use for the promotion of literacy in young children. In skills-based approaches, literacy experiences are totally regulated events in which children are bound to specific teacher-oriented experiences. Certain strategies are employed by teachers using this orientation. These strategies are primarily teacher-directed (such as direct instruction and drill). It is acknowledged that teachers using skills-based approaches may use other strategies, but the dominant strategies in the literature for this approach seem to be drill and direct instruction. The major purpose of these strategies is to practise, through repetition, the skills and knowledge teachers consider important for literacy learners. Skills-based approaches place reading at the fore-front of literacy instruction, so these strategies are favoured by teachers using traditional bottom-up reading models (Lipson & Wixson, 1991). Here the focus is on the recognition of letters, sounds and words.

Teaching primarily by direct instruction does not allow young children time to experiment or play with literacy in an instructional setting. It does not take into account social context which highlights the purpose for literacy learning. Direct instruction and drill deny the active participation in, and control of, literacy events by the child. Failure in this situation can foster in the child a perceived lack of control which may lead to learned helplessness where the child believes all events which happen are beyond his or her control. Some research indicates that if children have made little progress in learning to read and write it is because they have not yet discovered the purposes of

reading and writing, or the enjoyment to be gained from these activities (Wells, 1986; Emmitt & Pollock, 1991).

A "whole language" approach regards the adult or teacher as a facilitator and planner who is able to structure the environment so that literacy events occur. This perspective places the responsibility for literacy information, its access and use, as a shared responsibility between the teacher and child. A whole language approach seeks to develop critical thinking skills, not just the ability to read and write (Westby, 1992). The primary strategies employed by teachers using this approach include language experience, group discussion, guided discovery, modelling, shared book and play. Language experience is concerned with showing children how they can apply their already gained skills of listening and speaking to reading and writing. Group discussion and guided discovery are concerned with the teacher acting as facilitator or reference point to guide children to develop literacy. Modelling is highlighted in the literature as a very important strategy to develop literacy in young children. As the teacher models literate behaviours the child can learn amongst other things, the value and the pleasure to be gained from learning to read and write. Modelling can be perceived as a teacher directed strategy, but in a whole language context, the teacher is trying to draw attention to the literacy process rather than content to be learnt in a directed manner. In a whole language context, literacy development is placed in a sharing social context. This is also true of the shared book strategy (Holdaway, 1979). These strategies are used to promote literacy learning across the curriculum, reading and writing for a purpose.

Within the debate about whole language or skills-based approaches to literacy development the role of phonics is considered (Adams, 1990). Advocates of a whole

language approach do not disregard the fact that phonemic awareness is important to reading and writing, but argue that strategies for learning letter/sound correspondences must be appropriate for children. However, the debate still rages with the authors of "Becoming a Nation of Readers" (Anderson, Hiebert, Scott & Wilkinson, 1985) who proclaim that direct instruction in phonics has been demonstrated in the research literature, to be essential to the reading process.

A central theme of this discussion has been the most appropriate strategies to enhance literacy development in young children. It would be true to say that not every teacher will employ exactly the same strategies in the same situations even if they adhere to the same approach. Noting also the difference in age of children in kindergarten and Year 1, teachers may need to employ different strategies to promote literacy at varying developmental levels. That is, what is appropriate at the kindergarten level may not be appropriate for Year 1 children at a different stage of development and vice-versa. Teachers may modify or change their strategies as they grow in experience and are influenced by school policy, inservice programmes or curriculum materials. These factors may lead to an eclectic approach to teaching literacy to young children. Whatever the approach taken, it is important that teachers employ strategies which take into account the child's stage of development.

2.7 PROVISIONS

Provisions (as defined in Section 1.4) for literacy development differ between and within Year 1 and kindergarten in Western Australia. This comes about because of the different settings which constitute the learning environment. A short discussion of these differing provisions follows.

Traditionally, the timetable for literacy development in Year 1 was divided into blocks of time so that specific attention could be given to the separate subjects of reading, writing, spelling and oral language. More recently, with the introduction of the K-7 English Language Syllabus (1989) suggested timetabling for reading and writing, integrated with speaking and listening has been banded together under the heading of language arts. Kindergartens have a history of making provision in their timetables for long periods of uninterrupted time where the curriculum is integrated and various activities are set out in the learning environment. Young children need time to explore and investigate fully, literacy events that occur (Sheperd & Smith, 1988). The Working Party Addressing Continuity (1985) recommended that timetables be made more flexible in Year 1 also.

Grouping for teaching or "instructional management" is another provision teachers need to consider (Heller, 1991). Research indicates that flexible grouping is the most desirable for teaching children (Hallinan, 1984). Whole group, small group or individual instruction are the most commonly used. Instructional management can also be affected by the adult/child ratio and the setting-out of the environment. Reading and writing centres can be popular places for children to work independently or with their peers (Heller, 1991).

The materials and resources used in kindergarten and Year 1 settings differ widely in Western Australia. The traditional play based philosophy of the kindergarten has resulted in the acquisition of resources which focus on learning through "hands on" concrete materials. The Year 1 classrooms on the other hand, have not been as well equipped with concrete materials to date because of space and time limitations and curriculum orientation. Gradually more funds are being allocated to provide

Year 1 children with more concrete learning materials. The classroom environment can itself be termed a resource. For example, the emergent literacy perspective reinforced in the First Steps materials, emphasises the use of environmental print. Immersing the children in a print rich environment provides examples of language; in particular, "how it looks, how it works and how it is used" (First Steps, Writing Developmental Continuum, 1991, p.5).

The individual needs of students in literacy development must also be provided for by the teacher. Students from non-English Speaking backgrounds (N.E.S.B.) will need extra provision in learning to read and write English. In addition, differing student factors such as specific learning difficulties for example, need to be taken into consideration.

Thus literary provisions differ in and between kindergarten and Year 1, and aspects such as timetable, grouping, resources, children with special needs and transition arrangements, need to be considered by teachers in developing literacy.

4.8 TEACHER PRE-SERVICE TRAINING

In Western Australia there have been different staffing practices in the kindergarten and early primary years. Early childhood teachers have normally been appointed to kindergarten classes and primary teachers to Year 1 and beyond. The teaching practices applied in kindergartens and primary schools have grown from different philosophical and historical roots. Kindergarten teachers have been imbued with a pre-school philosophy grounded in intrinsic, experiential and developmental ideals, centred on the whole child (Froebel, 1912). Primary teachers on the other hand, have been prepared

with models which give greater emphasis to the subject matter, content and a more formal teaching agenda drawn from a cognitively structured basis.

These different pre-service programmes for teachers have added a further dimension to the issue of continuity of learning for young children as they move from kindergarten into the first primary year. On the one hand, Year 1 teachers normally have had generalist primary preparation which has not given major emphasis to the way very young children think and learn or to optimum ways of working with this age group.

Hence, in an environment where the approach of early literacy teaching and learning has shifted away from traditional formal programmes towards more integrated play-based programmes for children in kindergarten and Year 1, teachers with a different pre-service training may differ in their approach. This can be seen in a study of Western Australian Year 1 teachers carried out by Tayler & Pratt (1985). They found that only 6% of Year 1 teachers selected a compromise approach, linking content across subjects and allowing some free choice for the child in an educational setting.

2.9. CONTINUITY AND TRANSITION

In Western Australia, the start of compulsory school is Year 1, but this is not the beginning of children's education outside the home. However, it is in Year 1 that children expect to learn to read and write (Renwick, 1984; Goodnow, 1984). The ease of transition between home, pre-school and school and the continuity of experience children have, plays a vital role in a child's literacy learning. This issue is discussed at length in the Working Party Addressing Continuity (1985) commissioned as a result of the Beazley Commission

(1984). This report warned of discontinuity between kindergarten and Year 1 teaching programmes. The kindergarten programme was viewed as child-centred while the Year 1 programme was seen as more content/subject based, leading to clear expectations of levels of competency by the end of the year. The working party into continuity found that discontinuity involved in the sudden shift from informality in the kindergarten to the formality of Year 1 could lead to a disruption in learning or at the very worst, failure. Continuity in learning would be greatly enhanced if all children in kindergarten and Year 1 had the "opportunity to participate in relevant learning experiences appropriate to their own level of functioning" (Working Party Addressing Continuity, 1985, p.7).

Research into the continuity between kindergarten and school is small, which is surprising because it is a transition made by most children in Western cultures. There is more research into the transition from home to kindergarten (e.g., Lewis, 1984; Willes, 1981, 1983; Mehan, 1979), primary to secondary (Garton, 1987; Mitman, 1981), and secondary to tertiary institutions. Studies into kindergarten-school transition show glaring inconsistencies in continuity (Tayler, 1987; Renwick, 1984; Cleave, Jowett and Bate, 1982). Cleave, et al. (1982) found in their study of different British pre-school and school provisions that teaching style, staffing levels, timetable, physical environment, class numbers and resources affected children's smooth transition from one educational setting to the next. These differences can also be found between kindergarten and Year 1 in Western Australia. Timetabling was one of the biggest differences between these two educational settings found by the Working Party Addressing Continuity (1985). They recommended that the Year 1 timetable be more flexible and allow longer time allocations as it is inappropriate to interrupt young

children's learning for the purposes of keeping to a schedule.

The importance of continuity in young children's learning cannot be overlooked. It is concerned with ensuring children's ongoing experiences are linked in meaningful ways (Working Party Addressing Continuity, 1985). A lack of continuity will lead to a long and difficult period of transition from kindergarten to Year 1. Discontinuity can lead some children to experience difficulties and can engender problems as they try to adjust to a new situation. To establish a firm foundation from which a young child continues to grow and build upon is essential. The shift to formal learning early in Year 1 rests on the assumption that, following a brief readiness period, most children will be at a similar level and therefore able to cope with formal instruction (Working Party Addressing Continuity, 1985, p.6). However, this is not always the case and the discontinuity of the sudden shift to formality can lead some children to fail.

In summary, the research highlights many inconsistencies that can be found across the two early childhood settings. These changes can lead to stress in the child which can detrimentally affect learning (Pratt & Garton, 1989). However, it must be noted that for some children a measure of discontinuity can promote learning (Silvern, 1988; Goodnow, 1981).

Nevertheless, it is absolutely vital that the continuity from kindergarten to Year 1 be ensured so that a firm foundation is built from the start for successful primary schooling. It must be remembered that if children do not make appropriate literacy progress by Year 3 then this gap may not be made up in the rest of their schooling (Australian Language and Literacy Council, 1991).

2.10 SUMMARY

In summary, a central concern in the literature in this area is a re-examination of the sequence and process of the development of literacy in young children. Recent paradigm shifts in language development have clouded the definition of literacy in the literature. Dependent upon the approach taken teachers may define literacy differently, but the literature has shown that the key elements of literacy, reading and writing cannot be divorced from speaking and listening. This re-examination of literacy recognises the child as an active participant in the literacy process. Emergent literacy is a term used to describe the reading and writing development of young children. This emergent perspective views literacy as a continuous developing process that begins in infancy. Major means of promoting literacy in young children have changed in recent years. These changes correspond to paradigm shifts in regard to language. A whole language approach to literacy is argued as appropriate to young children's needs in this area. Traditional approaches derived from a skills-based paradigm have received less attention and endorsement in the literature of the 1980s and 1990s. The strategies that teachers use to promote literacy in young children may vary according to the teaching approach taken and the pre-service training received. Play and independent learning strategies are stressed internationally as developmentally appropriate ways to promote literacy in young children. Provisions differ between and within kindergarten and Year 1 classes. The continuity of literacy development between kindergarten and Year 1 is an area that has not been extensively researched. It is timely to investigate teachers' literacy practices in these two years given gaps between theory, research and practice, and the paradigm shifts which have taken place in regard to language in recent years. An influx of new Ministry materials and the

agreed importance of laying sound foundations of reading and writing in young children makes analysis of current practice necessary.

The following section outlines the conceptual framework for the study.

CHAPTER 3

CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

3.1 INTRODUCTION

The conceptual framework for this study is shown in Figure 1, which is based on the assumption that the teachers' views about literacy development will determine the strategies and provisions they implement. If the strategies and provisions of kindergarten teachers match those of Year 1 teachers, then continuity between kindergarten and Year 1 will be enhanced. If they do not, then discontinuity may result in difficulties for young learners.

3.2 TEACHERS' VIEWS

The review of literature presented in Chapter 2 highlighted factors which affect the strategies and provisions a teacher applies to foster literacy development. It is acknowledged that parents' and others' contacts with children, and children's experiences prior to and outside school affect literacy development. However the focus of interest here is the teachers' selections of the provisions and strategies they use to support children's literacy development in kindergarten and school settings.

Teachers' selections of provisions and strategies are influenced by their views about literacy development and are shaped by a number of factors as shown in Figure 1. As discussed in the literature review the teachers' pre-service training will influence their philosophy of teaching young children. The differing provisions for teacher training in Western Australia, may result in the

Figure 1

Graphic representation of the Conceptual Framework

TEACHERS' VIEWS ABOUT LITERACY DEVELOPMENT

- Pre-Service Training
- Philosophy about teaching young children
- Expectations - parents, other teachers
- Emergent Literacy Understandings
- Language Policies
- Access to Ministry Materials (eg: First Steps, K-7 English Syllabus)
- Inservice (eg: contact with colleagues)
- Approach (eg: Whole language/skills-based)

Strategies

- Shared Book
- Conferencing
- Modelling
- Direct instruction of content or skills
- Group discussion
- Drill
- Play (eg: dramatic play)
- Language Experience
- Guided Discovery

Provisions

- Timetable
- Adult/Child Ratio
- Group/Individual Instruction
- Resources (eg: equipment, materials)
- Student Aspects (eg: N.E.S.B.)
- K - 1 Transition arrangements

Continuity of Literacy Development

use of a developmental, play-based paradigm, or a curriculum, subject-oriented paradigm of teaching. Furthermore, the teachers' expectations of themselves and the role they decide to take in the promotion of literacy experiences will affect their views. Expectations on the part of the parents, the next Year Level teacher and the children themselves can have a bearing on this matter. The parents, teachers and the children to some extent, expect that a certain level of literacy will be reached at the end of Year 1 (Renwick, 1984).

The emergent literacy perspective, as discussed in the literature review, has been highlighted in Ministry of Education materials in Western Australia for the last few years only. This could mean, therefore, that unless teachers have had another source of knowledge, the emergent literacy perspective may be very new. To those who teach literacy traditionally, it presents a new approach where children have input into their own learning. Such teachers may find the notion of emergent literacy particularly threatening as it takes away their elevated status as literacy "instructors" (Hall, 1987). Teachers' emergent literacy understandings will be shaped by the way teachers believe young children learn. The importance of developmentally appropriate ways to enhance young children's literacy development has been emphasised in the literature. The English Language K-7 Syllabus (1989) reinforces calls for developmentally appropriate practices to be used across the kindergarten and junior primary years when teaching all aspects of language.

Each primary school has its own language policy where the guidelines for teaching literacy and language are set out. This may have an influence in formulating Pre-primary and Year 1 teachers' views about literacy development. Recently teachers have been bombarded with

new language curriculum materials not only from the Ministry of Education but also from publishers intent on promoting their wares in the literacy area. The syllabus is accessible to all, but the First Steps materials have not been disseminated in the same way. Introduction of First Steps materials has been gradual and more directed by school interest in this area. Intensive professional development sessions for teachers are part of the First Steps dissemination process. However, teacher professional development on the new English Language K-7 Syllabus (1989) was not available to all teachers, so there may be some confusion as to how to implement the syllabus. Professional development programmes for teachers (teacher inservices) are a valuable way of disseminating information but they are only available to teachers according to resources available their district offices. These may vary substantially.

Teachers' views of literacy development will be reflected in the approaches they take. A "whole language" approach as opposed to more skills-based approaches has been discussed in the literature review. In summary, "whole language" emphasises the active participation of children in gaining meaning from print so that "real" reading and "real" writing may take place, whereas skills-based approaches on the other hand, emphasise instructional procedures which isolate skills into differing and discrete parts of reading and writing.

3.3 STRATEGIES

The strategies a teacher selects to develop literacy are usually influenced by the literacy views they hold and the provisions that they make. The strategies listed in the conceptual framework (see Figure 1) have been

obtained from the literature in this area and through consultation with experienced Year 1 and kindergarten teachers.

For example, the shared book strategy is one which is highlighted in the First Steps materials. Large books are used to make children aware of print and genres of written language. These books generally have repetitive or rhyming text so that children can "read" along (Holdaway, 1979). Shared reading and writing with children are recommended in First Steps materials (Writing Developmental Continuum, 1991).

Conferencing is a strategy for literacy development which makes use of a conference between the teacher and the child. In the conference the teacher and the child discuss different aspects of a literacy event. This strategy is mainly used as part of the writing process.

Modelling is a strategy which is prominent in the early childhood literature. The emergent literacy perspective highlights the importance of children appreciating the social relevance of learning to read and write. This can be done through the strategy of modelling or demonstration. Observation of models during literacy events is a natural learning strategy which young children have used before they enter school. All teachers model to the students in their class whether it is implicit or explicit and as such teachers could place different connotations upon the word "modelling". However in a whole language context modelling is considered an important strategy for developing literacy and highlighted in the First Steps literature (1991).

Drill and direct instruction are teacher-centred strategies which require teacher-directed responses from the children. These strategies are used mainly for the transmission of direct skills and content which can then

be objectively measured. For example, drill and direct instruction can be used in skills-based approaches for learning letter/sound correspondences.

Group discussion and guided discovery are strategies where the teacher acts as a facilitator to guide learning. Language experience is another strategy recommended by the "whole language" approach. It emphasises the relevance of literacy acts where children are actively involved in the event. The child's first-hand experience is important in creating a learning episode for literacy development.

Play has been discussed at length in Section 2.5. It is a natural learning strategy for young children as they explore their environment and the elements within. Structuring the learning environment so that play incorporating objects ensures literacy events is the way a teacher applies play as a strategy.

3.4 PROVISIONS

The provisions teachers decide upon are influenced by their views of literacy development and larger issues pertaining to school structure. The primary school timetable will be also influenced by whole school routines such as recess and lunch periods. The kindergarten timetable is more flexible with breaks taken as the teacher decides they are needed. With regard to literacy development, children in Year 1 may be moved to or from activities by the teacher who is maintaining a school schedule. This means that, at times, children will be disturbed from meaningful literacy events because of time constraints. In the kindergarten, longer periods of uninterrupted time are made available more easily and children can explore literacy events.

The adult/child ratio normally differs considerably between Year 1 and kindergarten. The Ministry of Education in Western Australia staffs kindergartens with classes of 27 children (maximum) with one teacher and one teaching assistant. Year 1 classes of 30 children (maximum) are staffed with one teacher and in some instances some part-time teaching assistance is available. Parental involvement in the kindergarten is invited so that in most sessions there would be three adults in the room. Year 1 teachers differ in the use of parents in the classroom. However, normally one assumes only one adult in the classroom.

Grouping for literacy development or classroom management is influenced by teachers' views about literacy. The teacher may arrange for the whole class group, small groups or for individual instruction for literacy development. Teachers may fuse one, some, or all of these groupings.

The resources a teacher selects will depend largely on what is available for use and the strategy selected. This in turn has been influenced by the literacy views the teacher holds. Resource selection will also be influenced by aspects such as class size and differing student needs. Types of resources used may differ between kindergarten and Year 1.

Student aspects will also have a bearing on the provisions made. For example, children from non-English speaking backgrounds have to be catered for during literacy development. Teachers have to be aware of differing student needs so that all students are catered for according to their needs.

The transition arrangements made by teachers for children moving from kindergarten to Year 1 are also important. These arrangements can assist in ensuring

continuity of experience for young children. Kindergarten and Year 1 teachers make their own arrangements, either working together or individually.

3.5 SUMMARY

In summary, there are many factors which influence the continuity of literacy development between kindergarten and Year 1 and teachers' views about literacy development are therefore shaped by a variety of matters. Teachers' views in turn influence the strategies selected and the provisions made for literacy development. If teachers' (K-1) views about literacy development are similar then the strategies and provisions implemented should be of a similar nature thus fostering the continuity of literacy development across kindergarten and Year 1. If however, there is a disparity between these different aspects, then discontinuous learning experience for young children could follow.

CHAPTER 4

METHODOLOGY

4.1 RESEARCH DESIGN

This study used a combination of qualitative and quantitative research techniques. A questionnaire was followed by selected interviews. These two methods of investigation are complementary. The questionnaire on the one hand was used to gather teachers' views on the strategies and provisions set up for literacy development. Interviewing selected teachers in the field on the other hand, allowed questions or issues resulting from the questionnaire responses to be explored more deeply. Interviews also permitted teachers to express or expand on views they considered important in considering this topic.

The literature shows a wide range of beliefs about the perceptions of qualitative versus quantitative research designs. These range from the view that two approaches are totally incompatible (e.g. Lincoln & Guba, 1985) to the premise that one model may be better suited to certain research questions, to finally, the position that in many cases a combination of the two is superior to either one on its own (Reichardt & Cook, 1979). Indeed a combination of qualitative and quantitative methods has increasingly been used to give a fine-grained analysis of research questions (Garton, Simon & Croll, 1980). Indeed, Sulzby and Teale (1991, p.729) report that in the field of emergent literacy research "reports often focus upon the development of new means of analysis rather than being able to depend upon a body of widely accepted measurement tools". Fielding and Fielding (1987) used a combination of these two methods in their research on Police career paths.

They reported that the combination of questionnaire and interview allowed the researcher to expose aspects of the problems that only one technique may overlook.

4.2 SAMPLE

4.2.1 Pilot Study Sample

The pilot sample comprised 20 kindergarten teachers and 20 Year 1 teachers working in a Ministry of Education metropolitan district of low socio-economic status. These teachers were given the questionnaire to complete (see Appendix 3). Of the 40 questionnaires distributed 23 were returned: responses from the Year 1 teachers and responses from the kindergarten teachers. The response rate was 57.5%.

4.2.2 Main Study Sample

The research sample consisted of 10 pre-school teachers, 10 Pre-primary teachers and 21 Year 1 teachers. Pre-school and Pre-primary teachers are grouped together and referred to as kindergarten teachers in this thesis. This convenience sample of 41 teachers was located in a different metropolitan teaching district from those in the pilot phase. The subjects included in the major study comprised the total population of kindergarten and Year 1 teachers in this district, of high socio-economic status.

The questionnaire was distributed to the 41 for completion. Of the 41 questionnaires distributed, 29 were returned; responses from the kindergarten teachers and responses from the Year 1 teachers. The response rate was 75%.

4.2.3 Total Study Sample

For reasons discussed in Section 4.3.1, the two samples were combined for the final data analysis, giving a total sample of 52. From the questionnaire responses from the major phase of the study, 4 teachers were selected for interviews. The teachers selected were 1 Pre-school teacher, 1 Pre-primary teacher and 2 Year 1 teachers. Both pairs of kindergarten and Year 1 teachers were connected by school association or structure. In brief, the kindergarten teachers taught the children who would normally continue their education with the Year 1 teachers interviewed. This enabled direct questioning of all teachers regarding their approaches to the continuity of literacy development.

A Pre-school teacher and a Pre-primary teacher were selected because they represent the different Western Australian Ministry of Education provisions for the kindergarten year. The teachers have all had at least seven years experience in Pre-school or Primary education, so they have had time to consolidate use of different strategies and provisions. They would also be in a position to comment on changes in the field of literacy development as it pertains to practising teachers. From the questionnaire responses, it was evident that these four teachers were typical of teachers who responded. Table 1 summarizes data describing the teachers who were interviewed.

Table 1
Summary of Teachers Interviewed

Teacher	Interview	Year Level	Years Teaching Experience
Teacher 1	Interview 1	Pre-school teacher	8
Teacher 2	Interview 2	Year 1 teacher	20
Teacher 3	Interview 3	Pre-primary teacher	9
Teacher 4	Interview 4	Year 1 teacher	8

4.3 INSTRUMENTS AND PROCEDURE

4.3.1 Questionnaire

The questionnaire (Appendix 3) was designed to take account of all factors which were included in the conceptual framework which was, in turn, developed from extensive reading in this area. Each section of the questionnaire corresponds to one of the areas contained in the conceptual framework shown in Figure 1. The items in Section 1 of the questionnaire relate to the teachers' views about literacy. Factors such as pre-service training, literacy understandings and teaching philosophy are included in this section. This section is the largest, containing 19 items. Section 2, containing 6 items, relates to the provisions made by the teacher. Factors such as the arrangement of the timetable, the number of adults in the classroom and groupings for instruction are considered here. The third section relates to the strategies used by teachers to enhance literacy. The main focus of this section is to establish a ranking of strategies used by teachers in kindergarten and Year 1. The strategies listed in this section were decided upon from the literature and extensive discussion with practising kindergarten and Year 1 teachers. The term "programme" was used in this section even though teachers are now not required to document their planning this way. It was evident, however, after consultation with teachers in the field that teachers in the main still use this term. For this reason it was included. In the pilot study, teachers were asked to make any changes to the questionnaire they deemed necessary in order to represent their choices clearly. No changes were indicated, so the same list was used in the main research study.

To formulate a questionnaire which is reliable and valid requires critical thinking by more than one person

(Deschamp & Tognilini, 1988). For that reason drafts of the questionnaire were shown to educational research specialists for feedback. The comments received were centred around the setting out and the length of the questionnaire. Changes were made to the questionnaire so that the questions were set out in a more logical order and only questions directly related to the study were included. Then the Questionnaire Pre-distribution Checklist (as outlined by Deschamp & Tognilini, 1988) was consulted to ensure optimum effectiveness.

In order to send the questionnaires to the teachers employed by the Ministry of Education the permission of their District Superintendents was gained. Covering letters (see Appendices 4 & 5) asking Principals (where applicable) to pass the questionnaires to the relevant teachers were attached to the questionnaires. Stamped self-addressed envelopes were also attached so that the teachers did not have to hand the questionnaire back through the Principal. In this way answers could be given in confidence. This same procedure was implemented for both the pilot and research samples.

The questionnaire was piloted with 20 kindergarten and 20 Year 1 teachers in a metropolitan Ministry of Education district. This district was selected because it was accessible and First Steps materials had been exposed there. The pilot study was conducted to establish the validity of the questionnaire. It also enabled a pretest of instrument analysis procedures.

A covering letter for teachers answering the questionnaire (see Appendix 4) asked for comments or an indication of teachers' understanding of the questions. All the comments received were positive. Comments which did accompany the completed questionnaires indicated that none of the items were confusing or difficult to comprehend. From the pilot study two small changes were

made to Items 20 and 24 and the questions were changed in their setting out to make the computation of results easier. The pilot study therefore assisted in ensuring the validity of the questionnaire. It was decided, in view of the slightness of the changes, to add the pilot data to the data collected from the main study. Given the nature of responses from the pilot survey and it not needing to be modified, the same questionnaire was used. After viewing the two data sets and finding no great aberration, they were merged to constitute a larger study sample.

4.3.2 Interviews

After collating the questionnaire data, particular issues became apparent. The issues arose from questions that either showed a significant disparity between kindergarten and Year 1 teachers or were central to the study's line of inquiry. Issues which needed more depth of inquiry included:

- a) the changes (if any) teachers had made in their programme in relation to providing for literacy development;
- b) the types of strategies used;
- c) the grouping arrangements made for literacy development;
- d) the role of play in relation to literacy development;
- e) parents' and teachers' expectations of literacy development;

- f) use of the new Syllabus and the First Steps materials; and
- g) the perceived importance of continuity of literacy experiences between kindergarten and Year 1.

A semi-structured interview schedule was designed based on the responses of the questionnaire. The data was scrutinised for common patterns, unusual answers and any points to probe further. The points to probe further have been identified previously in this section. Questions for a semi-structured interview were generated from these aspects of the questionnaire responses. (See Appendix 6 for Interview Schedule). This was an appropriate technique because it allowed teachers to bring in any other issues pertaining to literacy development which they may have seen as important. Interview questions were proposed from the questionnaire responses and were used to keep the teachers on the topic.

4.3.3 Data Collection

The pilot questionnaire was sent out in the middle of the third term of the school year. The same questionnaire was distributed to the main research sample at the beginning of the fourth term. After the recommended two week period for returning the questionnaire, the remaining schools were contacted by telephone in order to retrieve the completed questionnaire. Some teachers replied that they did not want to complete the questionnaire and were not contacted again. The others were reminded to return the questionnaire as quickly as possible. Two teachers asked for a second copy of the questionnaire as they had mislaid their first.

The four interviews were conducted in the classrooms of the teachers. This was done so that the teachers were made more at ease and the context of the classroom could be used by the teachers to prompt thinking and help describe procedures and choices. All teachers gave permission for the interviews to be taped. The interviews were conducted for about 20 minutes each. Before commencing the interviews the researcher highlighted the general areas of questioning so that the teachers could express agreement regarding parameters and could anticipate focus areas.

4.4 ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS

The confidentiality of all participants was assured on questionnaire materials and prior to each interview. (No names were used). All information was collated under numbers. The cover letter of the questionnaire pointed out to teachers that they were not obliged to participate in the study.

Permission of the teachers participating in the interviews to have their responses taped was sought and granted prior to proceeding with taping. The teachers were told that the tape could be turned off at any time during the interview. No names were used in the interviews and the teachers were assured of the confidentiality of their discussions.

4.5 LIMITATIONS AND ASSUMPTIONS

4.5.1 Assumptions

There are several assumptions in this study, namely:

- (a) that teachers make a difference to a child's education. Children's literacy development is enhanced by teachers and the class experiences they shape. Higher levels of literacy development are realized with this assistance from the teacher.
- (b) that open honest responses to the questionnaire and interviews are given. Teachers are recording their own beliefs and are not bound in any way to give answers they feel are expected of them.
- (c) that the provisions and strategies selected by teachers impact on children's literacy development. Teaching strategies will promote literacy development and the provisions are arranged to support this presentation.

4.5.2 Limitations

A limitation in this study is that teachers' responses to questionnaires and interviews may generate different results from those given if the researcher were to observe the application of strategies directly in the classroom. The strategies may be more or less effective in different classes according to the timing and situation in which a particular strategy is selected and applied. The composition of the classes (in terms of student background and class size, for example) may affect teachers' choice of strategies and provisions. Therefore, variation must be expected unless classes are matched for common characteristics. Because of these factors the results of this study cannot be generalised to the wider population. Furthermore, because paradigm shifts are evident in the literature on the development of literacy, teachers may hold different views on what constitutes literacy. These views, in turn, may focus teachers' responses to questions in different ways.

CHAPTER 5

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

5.1 INTRODUCTION

The presentation and discussion of data collected during the investigation is the focus of this chapter. Outcomes and discussions are presented by grouping the first two questions and then addressing the others in turn. To clarify the content and direction of the various sections of the chapter, the research questions under investigation and presented in Chapter 1 have been repeated here.

The first two questions addressed are:

1. What provisions and strategies do kindergarten and Year 1 teachers choose to enhance literacy development ?
2. How do kindergarten and Year 1 teachers differ in selecting strategies which develop literacy at these levels ?

To answer these two questions fully, the results and discussion are divided into two sections. The first section (5.2) addresses the provisions reported to be in place in the kindergarten and Year 1 classes surveyed. The second section (5.3) discusses the strategies kindergarten and Year 1 teachers reported using and the differences which arose between the two groups.

The third section (5.4) addresses question 3, namely: "What impact have recent syllabus changes and Ministry materials had on teachers' literacy programming in kindergarten and Year 1 ?"

The final section (5.5) addresses question 4, namely:
"To what degree is there continuity/discontinuity in provision and strategies selected by teachers to develop literacy in kindergarten and Year 1 ?"

Data collected in kindergarten and Year 1 are contrasted in order to focus on the degree of continuity apparent in the development of literacy at these two levels.

5.2 PROVISIONS

5.2.1 Timetable

In both kindergarten and Year 1 the teacher is responsible for allocating time in his or her teaching schedule. The major difference between the two is that Year 1 teachers must comply with the whole school timetable periods (e.g., recess, lunch, assembly) but are free to allocate time outside of these periods. The kindergarten timetable is more flexible with only start and finish times clearly delineated.

As described earlier (in section 2.7), the traditional timetable for literacy in Year 1 featured separate time allocations for reading, writing, spelling and oral language. The kindergarten curriculum, on the other hand, historically has employed an integrated approach to promote young children's learning. However, until recently literacy was an area in the kindergarten language curriculum that was not given much attention. Literacy learning in the kindergarten was seen as pre-emptive of the Primary curriculum. The English Language K-7 Syllabus (1989) presents a unified language arts approach of which literacy is an integrated part. The syllabus promotes the teaching of listening, speaking, reading and writing concurrently across an integrated curriculum.

Given these changes of direction, it was interesting to find that six out of 25 Year 1 teachers (24%) affirmed that they still taught literacy as separate subject areas. The 27 kindergarten teachers surveyed, all reported that they used an integrated approach, that is literacy within language arts.

There was considerable uniformity amongst kindergarten and Year 1 teachers in the allocation of special time to "beginning" literacy. (Questionnaire, Section 1 (4)). Indeed, 17 Year 1 teachers (68%) and 17 kindergarten teachers (70%) set aside special time in the timetable for beginning literacy. The emergent literacy perspective reinforced in First Steps materials (1992) places reading and writing on developmental continua (see Appendices 1 and 2). It was noted therefore that teachers in both years reported setting special time aside to "begin" literacy. However, the term "beginning" literacy may be interpreted differently by teachers surveyed. The notion of "beginning" literacy will take different connotations depending on the teacher's literacy approach. This issue of "beginning" literacy was pursued further in the interviews of the kindergarten teachers. Both groups of teachers remarked that in "beginning" literacy they used literacy events for a whole class experience at mat time. The kindergarten teacher in Interview 1 said she allocated these times to promote additional literacy events through shared book experiences.

It became evident that teachers place different connotations on the word "beginning". The questionnaire asked teachers if they timetabled whole class reading readiness. (Section 3 (26)). Of the teachers surveyed, 16 (9 Year 1, 7 Kindergarten) did implement a whole class reading readiness programme. For these teachers, this programme could be the "beginning" of literacy time allocation. From the questionnaire responses it is

unclear what exactly whole class reading readiness involves. The teachers in the interviews reported that they did not use whole class reading readiness. This could be an area of further research using participant observation. The Primary Guide to Formal Learning which recommended reading readiness programmes was withdrawn by the Ministry in 1985.

5.2.2. Resources

Resources used for literacy development by kindergarten and Year 1 teachers were found to differ widely, not only across kindergartens and across Year 1s, but also between kindergarten and year 1 classrooms. On visiting each classroom to conduct the interviews, disparity was found not only in the amount of resources but how they were set out for children to use. The kindergartens had many activity centres, with child-height shelves laden with games, books, puzzles and manipulative materials (see Appendix 7 for kindergarten floor plan). The Year 1 resources for literacy development were kept in cupboards or boxes and were not readily available for independent use (see Appendix 8 for Year 1 floor plan). The kindergartens used many different types of resources set up in different contexts. For example, reading and writing corners were evident and literacy resources, namely writing and reading implements, were included in the dramatic play environment. In the Year 1 classrooms, activity corners were not evident and literacy resources were confined to desk locations.

One of the main differences in resources between these years was the use of desks in Year 1. It became apparent in the interviews of Year 1 teachers that the physical environment or lack of space was a pressing concern. (This issue will be discussed when addressing Question 4).

Resources in terms of staffing were also found to differ and are discussed in section 5.5.3.5. As a result of the interviews it became clear that "resourcefulness" of the teacher in the class would influence provisions. The teacher's repertoire of ideas and programme delivery could affect the resources used and thus further inquiry in this area is warranted.

5.2.3 Grouping and Student Aspects

Use of similar groupings for literacy development (with regard to literacy experiences) were found across both years. Whole group, small group and individual patterns were the reported choice of the majority of teachers at some time. Flexible grouping for teaching is considered to be most beneficial as it will cater for all children's differing needs (Hallinan, 1984).

A difference was found however in the way the groups were formed. Year 1 teachers' responses included the reference to ability grouping for literacy. The issue of "ability" for grouping was not mentioned in the kindergarten responses. An explanation for this difference may stem from different philosophical bases operating at these levels. For example, a developmental paradigm would emphasise the individual nature of children's literacy learning.

There was a similarity in the way kindergarten and Year 1 teachers reported catering for students' differing needs. The written responses by teachers could be grouped into two areas. The first type of response highlighted the use of individual programmes and small group work to meet individual needs, whereas the second catered for the individual within a whole group framework. The 27 teachers who fell into the first area indicated that the use of individual and small group work allowed them to spend more time

assisting children in need. A teacher in this category wrote "I work with them individually or in small groups of children with similar needs". The 18 teachers who fell into the second category, advocated this approach because it reduced the loss of self-esteem for the individual. Most of the 18 responses advocated that all children have differing needs and whole group activities should cater for the individual. One teacher wrote "I work with individuals within the whole class framework, this way children's self-esteem is always maintained".

5.2.4 Adult-Child Ratio

The ratio of the number of adults to children in kindergarten and Year 1 differed greatly. The Kindergarten teachers interviewed reported that three adults (one teacher, one teaching assistant and one parent helper) were normally present in the classroom with 27 children. The Year 1 teacher was normally the only adult in the room with 30 children. The Year 1 teachers interviewed reported access to a part-time teaching assistant for approximately 8-10 hours a week. The assistant, however, was not always deployed to work in the classroom interacting with the children. Rather, teachers also reported that the assistants photocopied worksheets and prepared activities in another room. The Year 1 teachers also had access to parent assistance, which they both chose to use in the morning before school started. Both the Year 1 teachers had specialist teachers for music and art/craft with whom they left their class.

The adult/child ratio outlined for kindergarten and Year 1 classes revealed great disparity. Given these data, children may move from an environment of three adults with whom there are frequent opportunities for one-to-one interaction to a class with only one adult.

In the latter environment individual attention is far less likely. The opportunities for literacy events which are child initiated but adult supported may occur more frequently in the kindergarten setting because of this factor. Adult modelling of literate behaviours and the relevance of reading and writing for children could be promoted extensively given more adults in the room and a shared agenda for developing literacy.

5.2.5 Transition Arrangements

The provisions for transition arrangements between kindergarten and Year 1 were addressed in the interviews. Transition arrangements were viewed as vital in the Working Party Addressing Continuity (1985) to ensure continuity from kindergarten to Year 1. This area of investigation met with mixed reactions from kindergarten and Year 1 teachers. The kindergarten teachers interviewed reported identical transition arrangements. They used the primary school library once a week to familiarize the children with the library staff and school facilities. The Year 1 teachers reported identical transition arrangements. Both teachers had a Year 1 open morning for all future Year 1 children to attend. In each case the kindergarten teacher was not included in this event. These meagre transition arrangements, one of the Year 1 teachers remarked, occurred because of personality differences between the teachers of these years. Lack of time to visit the kindergarten on invitation from the teacher was cited as a problem by the other Year 1 teacher.

Transition arrangements were clearly called for in the Working Party Addressing Continuity (1985). This document lists several strategies Year 1 and kindergarten teachers can use to enhance continuity between the years. Sharing of philosophy, goals and objectives for teaching young children and sharing

resources were two examples given. This document called for kindergarten and Year 1 teachers to work together to help ease the transition of children moving from kindergarten to Year 1. It would appear that this call to date has gone unheeded in the areas surveyed.

5.2.6 Summary

In summary, the provisions made by kindergarten and Year 1 teachers differ in some aspects. The most considerable differences between kindergarten and Year 1 were found in the allocation and use of resources, the timetable, and the adult/child ratio. Lack of space and concrete resources in the Year 1 classrooms would hinder independent exploration of literacy by children in these settings. The flexible use of time for literacy was not as evident in reports by Year 1 teachers on their use of time. The opportunities for one-to-one adult/child interaction clearly decreases in Year 1 classes where different staff allocations pertain giving smaller adult child ratios in one setting over another.

The transition arrangements which kindergarten and Year 1 teachers reported were similar only in respect of a lack of co-ordinated planning. Yet, transition arrangements are reported in the literature as most important if continuity between kindergarten and Year 1 is to be ensured.

5.3 STRATEGIES USED TO ENHANCE LITERACY

5.3.1 Introduction

In developing literacy most children in Western societies will be assisted by a teacher. Teachers implement strategies to enhance the literacy learning of children. The strategies chosen are influenced by the

literacy views teachers hold and the provisions they have set in classes. In this section, the investigation of data related to strategies used by kindergarten and Year 1 teachers to enhance literacy are presented and then discussed. The results are summarized in Table 2.

The kindergarten and Year 1 teachers were asked to indicate from a given list those strategies which they employed to promote literacy.

This list of strategies was compiled by extensive reading and consultation with practising teachers. The results support the notion that teachers use a variety of strategies to enhance literacy acquisition. It must be noted that at times it may be perfectly valid (if not desirable) for Year 1 teachers to place a higher emphasis on some strategies in relation to kindergarten teachers, and vice versa. The children are of different ages and perhaps different stages along the continuum of their literacy development and thus may have valid, differing needs.

Table 2
Strategies Used to Enhance Literacy

Strategies	Responses	
	Used by K Teachers	Used by Year 1 Teachers
	(N = 27)	(N = 25)
Shared book	26 (96%)	23 (92%)
Conferencing	6 (22%)	21 (84%)
Modelling	24 (88%)	24 (96%)
Group Discussion	27 (100%)	22 (88%)
Direct Instruction	14 (52%)	21 (84%)
Drill	1 (3.7%)	16 (64%)
Guided Discovery	23 (92%)	18 (72%)
Language Experience	27 (100%)	24 (96%)
Play	27 (100%)	20 (80%)

All teachers were asked to rank these strategies in order from the most important (one) to the least important (nine). The rankings for each strategy were then compared between kindergarten and Year 1 using the Mann-Whitney-Wilcoxon Test. This is a non-parametric version of the independent samples "T" test. The non-parametric version of the "T" test was used because the data are ranked. The Wilcoxon-Mann-Whitney test compares the medians of the two groups and yields a "W" statistic which is shown in Table 3.

Table 3

Ranking of Strategies in Order of Importance by Teachers

Strategy	Medians		W
	K (N = 27)	Year 1 (N = 25)	
Play	1.0	7.5	350.0 **
Direct Instruction	8.0	6.0	753.0 *
Drill	9.0	7.0	783.5 *
Shared book	4.0	2.0	780.5 *
Conferencing	7.0	5.0	782.0 *
Modelling	4.0	2.5	732.0
Group Discussion	4.0	4.75	540.0
Guided Discovery	5.0	5.0	632.0
Language Experience	2.0	3.0	607.0

* p .01

** p .0001

5.3.2 Play

Table 3 indicates that the importance of play as a strategy differed significantly between kindergarten and Year 1 teachers. It was ranked as the most important strategy used by kindergarten teachers but as the least important strategy used by Year 1 teachers. The different pre-service training kindergarten and Year 1 teachers receive may account for this. All kindergarten teachers in the sample had an Early Childhood qualification. It is likely that this training may have emphasized a developmental paradigm. Play is promoted as the most significant strategy for young children's learning in this developmental framework. The importance of play as an unpressured medium which allows the child to be an active participant in the construction of literacy events has been discussed in Section 2.5.

This apparent difference in the importance of play as a strategy between kindergarten and Year 1 teachers was pursued in the interviews. The Year 1 teacher in Interview 4 reported that play-based activities were used one afternoon a week in Term 1. These activities were pre-planned and directed by adults. The activities only occurred in Term 1 because other class commitments became more pressing as the year progressed. Both kindergarten teachers ranked play as the most important strategy. They spoke of structuring the environment and the activities so that children interacted with others in literacy events.

All teachers surveyed were asked if they used creative play environments for literacy development. The kindergarten teachers all responded affirmatively. Of the 23 Year 1 teachers who answered this question, 17 responded affirmatively (68%) and six negatively (24%). When interviewing the two Year 1 teachers both, thought

creative play environments important, but commented on the lack of space and resources for creative play. The kindergarten teachers interviewed were enthusiastic about the literacy development that went on in children's dramatic play.

The literature presents a growing body of research on the value of young children's play and literacy (Jacob, 1984; Schickendanz, et al., 1990). Thus, from an emergent literacy perspective, play is a valuable strategy to use with young children, yet it is a medium under-utilized in these Year 1 classrooms.

5.3.3 Drill and Direct Instruction

Direct instruction and drill were less favoured as strategies to develop literacy by both groups of teachers (see Table 3). However, the Year 1 teachers, ranked drill and direct instruction above play. Drill and direct instruction are teacher-oriented strategies where children respond only as directed. These strategies may clash with an emergent literacy perspective, as they do not consider the child as an equal active participant in literacy development. International associations (National Association for the Education of Young Children, 1985; International Reading Association, 1985) have issued warnings about the use of strategies that are not developmentally appropriate for young children. Direct instruction and drill do not take into account young children's natural learning styles. These strategies are not put forward by the Ministry of Education in the English Language K-7 Syllabus (1989) or First Steps materials (1992) for literacy development in kindergarten or Year 1.

The strategies of drill and direct instruction have a long history of usage within skills-based approaches.

Both these strategies emphasise the transference of a selected body of knowledge and skills from the teacher. As long as reading and writing are skill and content tested in Year 1 then perhaps these strategies will always be employed.

5.3.4 Shared Book

In Table 3, a significant difference is indicated between kindergarten and Year 1 teachers in ranking shared book as an important strategy. Year 1 teachers viewed it as one of the most important strategies for literacy development. The use of "big books" (Holdaway, 1979) was highlighted in the Early Literacy Inservice Course. This inservice course was mentioned by both year 1 teachers as greatly influencing their views and strategies used for teaching literacy. Shared book is a strategy highlighted by First Steps (Reading Continuum, 1992).

One kindergarten teacher interviewed reported that she used the shared book strategy with "big books" obtained from the school. Both kindergarten teachers interviewed spoke of reading daily to their class, which is in essence, sharing books. The shared book strategy to the kindergarten teachers appeared to be only applicable when using big books. Big books are often bought as part of reading schemes, with accompanying small reading books, so there may be some confusion in definition when referring to "shared book" as a literacy strategy.

5.3.5 Modelling

Modelling as a strategy was not ranked significantly differently by kindergarten and Year 1 teachers. Most kindergarten teachers 24 (89%) and Year 1 teachers 24

(96%) reported that they used this strategy. Modelling literate behaviours reinforces the purpose of reading and writing, an important literacy understanding for young children (Wells, 1981). This strategy is emphasized in the First Steps Reading and Writing Developmental Continua (1991, 1992).

5.3.6 Conferencing

Conferencing is a strategy mainly used in young children's writing endeavours. It was found to be ranked in importance significantly differently in Table 3, across the years in focus. Twenty-four Year 1 teachers (96%) responded they used conferencing as a strategy. Of the 27 kindergarten teachers, only six (22%) confirmed that they used this strategy. Writing development progresses from scribbles to conventional print which has been discussed in Section 2.4. It may be the case that kindergarten teachers believe as a result of their training, that conferencing is only used with children who write conventionally. This may account for the disparity in the ranking of importance of this strategy, or that teachers emphasise different strategies for different age groups, dependent on their needs.

5.3.7 Other Strategies

The strategies ranked not significantly different in importance were modelling, group discussion, guided discovery and language experience between Year 1 and kindergarten teachers. These strategies are emphasised in the "whole language" approach and reinforced in the early childhood literature on developmentally appropriate practices. The kindergarten teachers ranked language experience as the second most important

strategy. Language experience allows for the active participation of young children, which is an important focus of early childhood programmes.

5.3.8 Summary

In summary, the results indicate that teachers in the kindergarten and Year 1 years in this study differed greatly in the amount of importance they awarded to play as a strategy. In the kindergarten setting, the child-centred, explorational aspects of play in developing literacy are traditionally valued. In the next year of the child's education, the value of play is overshadowed by strategies such as modelling. In fact in Year 1, play was relegated to the position of least importance. Indeed the strategies the Year 1 teachers indicated as most important, were the direct antithesis in approach to that of play. Yet, play, ranked as least important by Year 1 teachers complements the strategies of language experience, modelling and shared book which were viewed as valuable.

Over the last five years great changes in the field of literacy development have been advocated for the early years of school. The English Language K-7 Syllabus (1989) introduced a change of approach and with this came recommended changes in strategies employed. The more traditional strategies, however, appear to linger on in the Year 1 classes surveyed, overshadowing the strategy of play. A potential reason for these teachers not embracing play as a significant strategy may stem from the division of work and play often witnessed in the primary school, although the teachers did think play was important but that space and resources made for difficulties. Indeed, the views of Jacob (1984) and Tutolo (1983) on this "work" and "play" delineation are discussed in the literature review. The Continuity

Working Party document found that parents also delineated work and play when discussing differences of kindergarten and Year 1. Until changes are made, for example to primary pre-service training to emphasise the importance of play, these differences may be sustained.

5.4 IMPACT OF SYLLABUS CHANGES AND MINISTRY MATERIALS

This section focuses on data pertaining to Question 3, namely:

"What impact have recent syllabus changes and Ministry materials had on influencing teachers' literacy programming in kindergarten and Year 1?"

In 1984 the Ministry of Education (W.A.) withdrew its support for the "Primary Readiness for Formal Learning" guide. This guide had reinforced traditional approaches to teaching reading and writing. It called for the skills of visual discrimination and figure-ground representation to be developed before reading and writing instruction could begin. The Beazley Commission Report (1985) called for a working party to investigate early literacy teaching methods and the continuity of children's learning in moving from kindergarten to Year 1. In 1990, the Ministry of Education (W.A.) launched a new English Language K-7 Syllabus (1989) reinforcing a "whole language" approach. This syllabus calls for a uniform approach to be used between kindergarten and Year 1. This, coupled with First Steps materials which concentrate on language arts in the early years of school, may have changed the emphasis of literacy development.

These changes may have had great impact on programming for literacy development in the classes surveyed. Forty-two out of 52 teachers reported that they had

changed the way they programmed for literacy development in the last five years. Of the 10 remaining teachers (7 kindergarten and 3 Year 1), five reported that they had not been teaching five years so they were current with the latest teaching methodology. Eighty percent of teachers indicated change confirming that the response to change has been marked. Perhaps First Steps intensive teacher professional development has been a strategy that has assisted in implementing change.

Changes were also reported to have occurred in the areas of programme format, language approach, thematic planning and altered grouping for instruction. A few teachers indicated that they had made other changes, such as developing an integrated programme or focussing on children's interests more.

Table 4
Changes Made to Literacy Programmes by
Kindergarten and Year 1 Teachers

Respondents N = 42		
Area of Change	Kindergarten	Year 1
Programme Format	8 (19%)	15 (36%)
Language Approach	11 (26%)	15 (36%)
Thematic Planning	7 (16%)	13 (31%)
Altered Grouping for Instruction	3 (7%)	11 (26%)
Other	4 (9.5%)	2 (4.7%)

Table 4 indicates that the Year 1 teachers reported more changes than the kindergarten teachers. Teachers were able to select as many areas of change as deemed appropriate for them. There is a considerable

difference in altered grouping for instruction between kindergarten and Year 1. Tayler (1987) found that kindergarten and Year 1 teachers used different grouping procedures. However, this study has found (Section 5.2) that kindergarten and Year 1 teachers made the same provision for grouping. It must be noted, however, that different adult/child ratios in these two years will have an impact on children's experiences within the grouping arrangements.

Planning programmes thematically was a change made by 50% of the Year 1 teachers surveyed. It must be noted here that teachers may interpret the term "thematically" differently and therefore not mean the same thing. The "whole language" approach lends itself to a thematically planned integrated approach. Furthermore, planning thematically allows children's interests to be integrated across the curriculum.

It is interesting to speculate on reasons for these changes. Since 71% of respondents reported they used the English Language Syllabus K-7 (1989), this may account for some of the shift in orientation. Teachers surveyed were also asked if they used any other syllabus for programming literacy development. Affirmation of this was reported by 24 teachers. The Social Studies and Science syllabi were noted as examples. Two Year 1 teachers indicated that they still used the Reading K-7 Notes (1983). Other commercial materials were reported, the most common being reading schemes and the associated teacher's manual.

The issue of use of the syllabus materials was pursued in the interviews. The Year 1 teacher in Interview 4 (see Table 1, page 43) indicated a reluctance to discuss the new syllabus, she said she had glanced at it, but concluded that she was already carrying out its contents before its introduction. This teacher mentioned that

the Early Literacy Inservice course had greatly influenced her programming. The other Year 1 teacher knew the syllabus well as she had worked as a First Steps collaborative teacher. She also remarked that the Early Literacy Inservice course had influenced a lot of the changes she had made in literacy programming. This teacher had been teaching Junior Primary for over 15 years. She remarked that her literacy methods had changed dramatically over this time. The teacher reported she had moved away from using sheets of visual discrimination activities to encouraging "reading" and "writing" from the very first day.

The kindergarten teachers both reported that they had studied the relevant sections. The kindergarten teacher in Interview 1 said she used the syllabus more as a checklist for her programming than a guide.

The pilot sample had been exposed for a longer period of time to the First Steps materials than teachers in the main study sample. In the pilot sample out of 23 respondents, 21 had been exposed to First Steps. Only one teacher of the 21 did not use First Steps materials in her literacy programming. In the combined sample 32 out of 52 have been exposed to First Steps.

Of the teachers familiar with First Steps materials there were mixed views of which part of the materials they found most useful. The First Steps modules are divided as follows:

- a) developmental profiles;
- b) programming ideas; and
- c) continua.

Teachers were asked to rank these in terms of the most useful in programming. The results are summarized in Table 5.

Table 5
Teachers' Rankings of Usefulness of First Steps Materials

First Steps Materials	Rankings N = 32		
	<u>1</u>	<u>2</u>	<u>3</u>
Developmental Profiles	10	9	10
Programming Ideas	12	12	7
Continuua	10	9	11

Table 5 indicates that the teachers surveyed had no major preference because First Steps materials appear to be ranked equally useful.

5.4.1 Summary

In summary, great changes were reported regarding the way teachers programmed for literacy development. Recent syllabus changes and Ministry materials (such as First Steps and the Early Literacy Inservice course) appear to have had considerable influence on teachers' thinking.

5.5 CONTINUITY

The final research question is; "To what degree is there continuity/discontinuity in provisions and strategies selected by teachers to develop literacy in kindergarten and Year 1"?

The degree to which there is continuity/discontinuity in literacy development from kindergarten to Year 1 is influenced by a number of factors. The factors considered in this study are set out in the conceptual framework (see Figure 1, page 34) and will be the basis of the discussion in this section.

5.5.1 Teachers' Views About Literacy Development

The study has exposed several reported differences in the provisions and strategies used by these kindergarten and Year 1 teachers to enhance literacy (see Section 5.1). These differences may lead to a discontinuous learning experience for the child moving from kindergarten to Year 1. Questions must be asked therefore, to ascertain where the apparent differences may originate. The conceptual framework (see Figure 1, page 34) was based on the premise that teachers' views about literacy development led them to implement particular strategies and provisions. Therefore, the differences reported in strategies and provisions may relate to differences in teacher's views about literacy development.

5.5.1.1 Pre-Service Training

Pre-service training is likely to be the first formal theoretical input teachers receive on literacy development. It has been noted (see Section 2.8) that primary and early childhood education are based upon different teaching paradigms. Primary teacher training is a general teaching preparation, with children six to twelve years being the focus. The early childhood pre-service preparation is based on implementation of developmentally appropriate practices centred on the child, from age three to eight years. The different emphasis in pre-service training could result in teachers interpreting the same syllabus in different ways.

In Western Australia, kindergarten and Year 1 teachers have usually had different pre-service training (Early childhood and Primary respectively). The differences in

training may be further emphasised by teachers being placed in educational settings according to their qualifications. The findings are summarised in Table 6 of the surveyed teachers' qualifications and subsequent educational placement. In this question a few teachers indicated two answers, and their higher degree was the answer used.

In Table 6 the delineation between primary and early childhood qualifications in the sample surveyed is presented. Teachers with an early childhood qualification are eligible to teach kindergarten to Primary Year 3. However, only one of the 27 Early Childhood teachers surveyed was working in a Year 1 class. Teachers with a primary qualification are eligible to teach Years 1 to 7 in the Primary school. Table 6 shows that one teacher with a primary qualification is currently teaching kindergarten.

It is not surprising to find therefore teachers' literacy views across these years may differ given different pre-service training. These differences could be emphasised and may be continued by the placement of teachers with different qualifications into kindergarten and Year 1.

Table 6

Teachers Qualifications and Staffing Arrangements

N = 52

Educational Setting	Diploma of Teaching (E.C.E)	Diploma of Teaching (Primary)	Bachelor of Arts (Primary)	Other
kindergarten	23	1		3
Year 1	1	19	4	1

5.5.1.2 Philosophy

Linked to pre-service training is the development of a teacher's philosophy. The differing paradigms may influence the way a teacher believes young children learn. This in turn, is likely to affect a teacher's views about literacy development and the strategies and provisions implemented.

When I visited the four classrooms to conduct the interviews, it appeared that the classroom organization reflected the teacher's philosophy about how children learn. The Year 1 classrooms were set up with groups of desks facing the front blackboard (see Appendix 8). The learning environment was set out in such a way that teacher direction for activities was assumed. The resources were in adult height cupboards or in closed cupboards. The point of focus in the classrooms was the front blackboards, again at adult height. In the kindergartens visited, all activities were set out on tables and in activity corners. There was no single point of reference.

Differences with regard to teaching philosophy were highlighted by room arrangements. Given the environments, the Year 1 classroom teachers appeared to have a role linked to directing a child's learning. In the kindergarten environment, however, the settings suggested that teachers had a different role. Activities were set out for self-choice and concrete experiences. If children move from an environment where self-choice and self-motivation are highly regarded to an environment of limited choice and teacher choice, then a discontinuous learning experience may follow.

Teachers interviewed were asked about the importance of common teaching philosophy for the purpose of continuity. One kindergarten teacher said that she

would like to see "more Year 1 teachers adopt an Early Childhood philosophy and not get so stuck on the primary school rush. If they haven't got any similarities (philosophy) then the children are in for a hell of a shock". One Year 1 teacher interviewed said she would like to see more sharing of philosophies "so we can get a common path".

5.5.1.3 Emergent Literary Understandings

Influencing teachers' views about literacy development are teachers' understandings of emergent literacy. To give some insight into their emergent literacy understandings teachers were asked to define literacy development. This was asked, to assess if their views of literacy corresponded with those espoused in the current literature or if Randall's (1972) premise of current research bounding ahead of practice was still pertinent in the 1990s. The written responses were grouped together according to convergence around particular themes. Two main groups of definitions became apparent. The first group of 20 teachers defined literacy, mentioning the integration of reading and writing with speaking and listening. In the second group of 14 teachers, literacy was centred only on reading and writing. The findings are summarized in Table 7.

From Table 7 it can be seen that over half of the Year 1 teachers surveyed (54%) view literacy as reading and writing. Nevertheless the English Language K-7 Syllabus (1989) and First Steps materials (1991, 1992) emphasise the integration of reading and writing with speaking and listening. It appears from Table 7 that a number of Year 1 teachers have kept a traditional definition of literacy. That is, that literacy is only focused on reading and writing.

Table 7
Definitions of Literacy

	Reading, & Writing	Reading, Writing, Speaking, Listening	Language & Communica- tion skills	Auditory Visual discrim- ination	Other
K (N=22)	2 (9%)	12 (54%)	5 (22%)	1 (4%)	2 (9%)
Year 1 (N=22)	12 (54%)	8 (36%)	1 (24)	1 (4%)	
<u>Totals</u>	14	20	6	2	

More than half of the kindergarten teachers (54%) highlight an "integrated" definition of literacy. An integrated definition is emphasised as most beneficial in the literature (Lipson & Wixson, 1991).

To investigate teachers' emergent literacy understandings, subjects were asked about their major considerations in planning for literacy development. The answers were again grouped according to dominant themes. The largest group of 22 responses indicated that the child's developmental level was the most important consideration. This group consisted of 15 kindergarten teachers (56%) and 7 Year 1 teachers (28%). This may be accounted for by the developmental paradigm of First Steps materials (1991, 1992). First Steps materials (1991, 1992) suggest the teacher place each child on developmental continua (see Appendices 1 and 2), and enhance development from this point.

Considerations for planning for literacy development, such as enjoyment, relevance, family background and resources were reported. It was shown that Year 1 and kindergarten teachers' considerations for planning for literacy development were quite varied. Year 1 teachers' considerations did not come together in a coherent group of themes. This may have been because the question "What is your major consideration when planning for literacy development?" relied on descriptive answers and was too open. However, a striking difference in the answers to these questions was found between kindergarten and Year 1 teachers, namely that kindergarten teachers' answers repeatedly contained the words "developmental levels", "enjoyment", "immersion" and "relevance", while, as stated previously, a common theme did not weave itself through the Year 1 teachers' answers.

5.5.1.4 Expectations

Teachers' expectations of the children they teach may influence their literacy views. In the survey, teachers were asked about their expectations and answers were grouped according to common characteristics. Year 1 teachers' expectations came together more comprehensively. Of the 25 Year 1 teachers surveyed 13 (52%) expected all children in their class to read and write, at different times of the year. One Year 1 teacher wrote, "I expect all the children in my class will read and write to a satisfactory standard by the end of the year and to enjoy all the activities". This teacher had underlined the "all" in her comment.

Twenty out of 25 Year 1 teachers (i.e., 80%), expected progress in writing and reading from the children in their class. Although the definition of literacy may be construed differently, as can the constitution of

"reading" and "writing", the answers provide a window into teachers' thinking. It must be noted that teachers expected progress in this area.

Teachers' expectations of the children in their class with regard to literacy clearly differed between kindergarten and Year 1. The most striking difference reported was the expectation that all children would read and write in Year 1. This may affect teachers' views about literacy development and divides Year 1 and kindergarten teachers, in this case, perhaps because of different ages and stages of development of children in these two years.

Even though teachers' expectations of children's literacy development were found to differ, the way kindergarten and Year 1 teachers appraise literacy development at the end of kindergarten and beginning of Year 1, were generally found to be along the same lines. Of the 52 teachers surveyed, 8 Year 1 teachers and 3 kindergarten teachers tested literacy development. One Year 1 teacher reported using such tests as the "Oral Language Screening Test" (in Week 4) and the "Narrogin Screening Test" at the end of First Term. Five kindergarten teachers reported they did not appraise a child's literacy development. The other 39 teachers used a variety of appraisal techniques such as checklists, gathering work samples, and observation. These three techniques are emphasised in the First Steps materials (1991, 1992) and are promoted for use of appraisal in the literature and by international early childhood organisations (N.A.E.Y.C., 1987, Teale, 1989).

Teachers in the study indicated that parents' expectations did not influence their teaching behaviour. However, the Year 1 teacher in Interview 4 (see Table 1, page 43) spoke before the interview about finishing reports. She said that she was preparing to

talk to parents who she knew were going to be disappointed in their child's literacy development. Teachers may be indirectly influenced by the parents' expectations of the children in their class. Intermingled with this are the expectations of other teachers in the next year to which the children move. Teachers were asked if the expectations of the teacher to whom the class would move, influenced their literacy programme. Of the 52 teachers surveyed, 42 reported that the next teacher's expectations did not affect their literacy programme and 10 reported that it did.

5.5.1.5 Language Policy

Language policies are in place in schools to assist with the continuity of language learning through the years. One Year 1 teacher, in Interview 2 (see Table 1) said that in her experience language policies were ignored by many teachers. She said that the policy in her school was based on "whole language" yet the Year 2 teacher taught literacy traditionally. Even if there is a different school policy the teachers had their own rights to teach the way they want, she reported. Both the kindergarten teachers interviewed reported that they were not involved in the implementation of the school language policy and that it did not influence their literacy approach.

Of the 46 teachers who answered this question, 28 teachers (54%) reported the language policy influenced their programme. The group of 18 teachers (35%) who reported that it did not influence them were made up of 13 kindergarten and five Year 1 teachers. This disparity may be accounted for, as the kindergarten has only recently become a focus for attention for the literacy component of the language development. Five kindergarten teachers reported that they could not

answer this question as they were not attached to primary schools nor did they have their own language policy. However, these responses may indicate issues of professional distance, by kindergarten teachers in particular, regarding school policies. Further investigation of teachers' perceived responsibilities with respect to school policy is warranted.

5.5.1.6 Ministry Materials

The recent Ministry of Education materials were reported as having an impact on these teachers' literacy programmes (see Section 5.3). First Steps may have, to a varying degree, influenced teachers' views about literacy. Access to First Steps (1991, 1992) materials in the main study sample was not as widespread as in the pilot study sample. At the time of this research the access was being extended to more teachers in the main study region. First Steps has been introduced with extensive inservicing and provision of a collaborative teacher. Collaborative teachers allow the release of teachers from their teaching duties to attend First Steps inservices.

The teachers were asked where they developed most of their literacy teaching techniques. The results are summarised in Table 8. Teachers could indicate more than one response.

In Table 8 experience in the field was the response given by most teachers when asked where they developed their literacy teaching techniques. Inservices, was given as the second most popular answer. Teachers also reported they had included the Early Literacy Inservice course under this heading. All responses given for other, were based around reading relating to the topic. For example, one teacher gave Sloan and Latham's text, "Teaching Reading Is ..." (1981) as an example.

Table 8

Where Teachers Developed Literacy Teaching Techniques

	Kindergarten	Year 1	Total
College or University	8	5	13
Inservices	14	13	27
Curriculum documents	1	5	6
Experience in the field	20	22	42
Other		6	6

5.5.1.7 Language Approach

The language approach used may influence the teachers' views about literacy development. The teachers surveyed identified changes to the language approach they used, over the last five years (see Section 5.3). The language approaches reported in use by teachers are summarized in Table 9.

Table 9

Language Approaches Used

Approach	No of K Teachers (N=26)	No of Year 1 Teachers (N=25)
Whole Language	17 (65%)	8 (32%)
Traditional	0	1 (4%)
Eclectic	9 (34%)	16 (64%)

As can be seen from Table 9, kindergarten teachers are the largest number of teachers using the "whole language" approach. Most Year 1 teachers in Table 9, use an eclectic approach, for example, a mixture of whole language and "skills-based" approaches.

5.5.1.8 Summary

In summary, teachers' views on literacy development are influenced by a number of factors. The qualifications of kindergarten and Year 1 teachers and their reported teaching philosophies appear to generate a different focus on literacy development. Differences were found between the emergent literacy understandings and expectations held by teachers across these years. The school language policy that could reinforce the continuity of literacy learning between kindergarten and Year 1 was not taken into regard by the teachers interviewed. The new Ministry materials herald a beginning in influencing literacy views and amalgamating them under the banner of "whole language". This approach calls for the continuity of teaching across the years. This approach, however, is only gradually filtering into Year 1 classrooms as teachers hold on to some parts of the skills-based methods. From these differing views (particularly striking in teaching philosophy) there may be discontinuity in the teaching strategies and provisions implemented by teachers in kindergarten and Year 1.

5.5.2 Strategies

Teacher views about literacy may be reflected in the strategies selected and implemented. If teacher's views about literacy are similar in kindergarten and Year 1 then continuity is more likely as similar strategies will be implemented.

Kindergarten teachers ranked play consistently as their most important teaching strategy. Year 1 teachers, on the other hand, ranked it as their least important strategy (see Table 3, page 59). Drill and direct instruction, skills-based teaching methods are ranked higher than play in Year 1. Conferencing was another strategy used significantly differently between kindergarten and Year 1. The ranking of other teaching strategies based on the "whole language" approach did not differ significantly in emphasis between kindergarten and Year 1 (see Section 5.3).

As teaching strategies, drill and direct instruction are on the opposite end of the teaching continuum to play. As play is predominately used in kindergarten, the absence of this strategy may cause a measure of discontinuity in literacy development for a child moving from kindergarten to Year 1. Similarly, the differences inherent in these strategies regarding teacher direction and child choice could add up to a discontinuous experience.

Play as a strategy is reinforced across kindergarten and Year 1 in First Steps Materials. From this investigation it would appear that it has not gained wide use in Year 1 where the differing connotations of "work" and "play" are perhaps more defined. The importance of play as a teaching strategy is reinforced in the Early Childhood pre-service training but perhaps not given the same treatment in the Primary pre-service training.

First Steps (1991, 1992) materials and the English Language Syllabus K-7 (1989) are documents which promote strategies which develop literacy in a whole language framework. Moving from the informal to formal settings and experiencing the strategies used in these different environments could reinforce discontinuity of learning

experiences for children. It can be seen in this investigation that, as yet, changes in strategies across these years have not altered sufficiently to be closely connected or offer a degree of continuity.

5.5.3 Provisions

This investigation reveals that there are disparities in the provisions made for literacy development between kindergarten and Year 1. These disparities were revealed through questionnaire responses but further investigated in the interviews with teachers. These results and subsequent discussion are the focus of this section.

5.5.3.1 Resources

The most obvious contrast between these two years were the resources and the way they are set out to be used (see Appendices 7 & 8). The Year 1 teachers in both interviews complained of limited resources. One teacher said the reading books were shared between two Year 1 classes, which made planning difficult. The other Year 1 teacher said that lack of resources was her biggest complaint. Interviewed in the Pre-primary Centre, the Year 1 teacher said that she was "sick of all the talk of continuity when the differences in provisions made it impossible". The teacher waved her hands around the room and commented on the differences even in the size of the classroom. A play area was out of the question as she said "I couldn't even fit all my children seated on the mat".

The kindergartens were particularly spacious when compared to the Year 1 rooms. They were well resourced and the room was set up with a number of activity corners (see Appendix 6). The kindergarten teachers

also mentioned that they were aware of the disparity of resources and space limitations in the Year 1 classes.

Continuity is affected by the types of resources used. The kindergartens were stocked with games, puzzles and manipulative equipment. The table activities were centred around a number of creative areas. The Year 1 resources focused on reading books, shared books and reading scheme activity sheets. The Year 1 teacher interviewed said she would like to see more games and manipulative resources available in Year 1. The dissimilarity of resources was particularly evident and could aid in the discontinuity in planning for literacy experiences across these two years.

5.5.3.2 Adult/Child Ratio

The adult/child ratio is also not normally equal in kindergarten and Year 1. More adults in the kindergarten can lead to increased number of literacy events and interaction between adult and child. It also allows for adult participation in smaller group work and individual attention to children when needed. Discontinuity may result when children expect immediate adult attention when, it has to be divided on a ratio of 1 to 30 (in Year 1) instead of 3 to 27 (in kindergarten).

5.5.3.3 Timetable

The timetable was another provision which differed between kindergarten and Year 1. The continuity Working Party document (1985) recommended that Year 1 timetables become more flexible. The Year 1 teachers in this study still had their teaching schedule punctuated with whole school routines (e.g., lunch time). They must also allow for other subjects now always integrated across the curriculum.

5.5.3.4 Transition Arrangements

The kindergarten and Year 1 transition arrangements were not an integrated area of focus for the teachers interviewed. This was an area of concern which required re-assessment by the Continuity Working Party (1985). It was surprising that this area had not been comprehensively addressed as the majority of teachers in kindergarten and Year 1 considered the continuity between kindergarten and Year 1 to be a very important issue. Only one teacher out of 52 reported that continuity was not an important issue. However, this investigation has revealed that teachers do not make any special transition arrangements to ease the continuity of literacy development. Considering the importance placed on this issue by teachers, it seems inconsistent that transition arrangements are not made. The Continuity Document (1985) listed a number of strategies kindergarten and Year 1 teachers could use to implement transition arrangements. Teachers interviewed reported that such transition strategies have not been put into place.

5.5.3.5 Grouping

The grouping for literacy development and the provisions for students' differing needs did not differ across these years. The discussion of these provisions is in section 5.2.3.

5.5.3.6 Summary

In summary, the provision for literacy development therefore is a source of discontinuity between kindergarten and Year 1. The disparity in the distribution of resources for this age level was

evident. The environments for teaching were set out totally differently, and this implied different interaction levels from children. The discontinuity is also reinforced by the difference in the number of adults and children in these classes. The kindergarten allows for more child/adult interaction. Furthermore, the transition arrangement from kindergarten to Year 1 is an area that is apparently neglected by both years. It is evident that teachers place great importance on the continuity from kindergarten to Year 1 but don't move to ensure it, particularly with respect to literacy development. The different provisions may affect the continuity of literacy development from kindergarten to Year 1.

CHAPTER 6

CONCLUSION

6.1 SUMMARY

The aim of this study was to investigate the strategies and provisions for literacy development from kindergarten to Year 1. This investigation supported the premise that there is a lack of continuity in literacy development between kindergarten and Year 1. Inconsistencies between these years influence the strategies and provisions implemented to promote literacy. Investigations showed that kindergarten and Year 1 teachers' literacy views were in striking contrast in some areas. Different teaching qualifications were reinforced by placement of predominately primary qualified teachers in Year 1 and early childhood qualified teachers in kindergarten classes. This teacher demarkation due to qualifications may contribute to the differences found in the strategies teachers use to develop literacy in these years.

Language approach was perhaps one of the major influences that served to make literacy development discontinuous. The kindergarten teachers in this study predominately reported use of a whole language approach. Year 1 teachers mainly reported using an eclectic approach which employed some more formal skills-based strategies. The different use of play as a strategy was a particular source of discontinuity across the two educational settings.

A disparity of provisions between these two years was also evident. This disparity highlighted the differing amount of resources both in materials and human terms.

Along with the physical space and timetable limitations occurring in Year 1, discontinuous literacy development may follow.

As reported in section 4.5 interpretation of results in this investigation is limited by the nature of the questionnaire and interview analysed, namely reports by teachers and their literacy practices in kindergarten and Year 1. It is assumed however that teachers answered honestly and directly about their literacy practices.

In summary, this investigation has shown that teachers report a differing emphasis on literacy teaching strategies for the promotion of literacy development in young children. These differences, coupled with varied provisions may lead to discontinuous literacy experience for children moving from kindergarten to Year 1.

6.2 IMPLICATIONS FOR FURTHER RESEARCH

As mentioned previously, the unit of research has been the teacher and all data has been collected from teachers. Teachers' literacy practices within the classroom need further investigation. Observation of teachers in their classrooms may validate their claims and could be matched to their programmes or literacy plans. If observations of kindergarten and Year 1 teachers were undertaken critical dimensions of literacy development across these years may be exposed.

These observations could be done longitudinally, to assess particular experiences of selected children moving from kindergarten to Year 1. By using the child as the unit of analysis an investigation could be carried out to assess the continuity of literacy development.

Early childhood teachers as yet have not been predominately placed in Year 1 classes although they are eligible to teach to primary Year 3. It would be beneficial to observe the measure of continuity or discontinuity experienced by children who have been taught by early childhood teachers in kindergarten and Year 1 and compare this to children who move from early childhood qualified teachers in kindergarten to primary qualified teachers in Year 1.

6.3 IMPLICATIONS FOR EDUCATIONAL RESEARCH

The findings of this investigation highlight the discontinuity of certain aspects of literacy development. There is a need for arrangements to be made to support the continuity of literacy development between kindergarten and Year 1. Continuity appears to be necessary in order to lay a firm foundation from which literacy can grow. The new Ministry materials are being used to highlight developmentally appropriate strategies to use with young children, reinforcing a whole language approach.

An anomaly whereby teachers with different pre-service training were teaching children only a year apart in age was apparent in this study. To try and ensure a measure of continuity of experience, teachers with specialist qualifications to work with young children may produce better outcomes than teachers with general qualifications to work with children across the primary years.

The transition arrangements in regard to literacy development have been neglected by both kindergarten and Year 1 teachers in this study. Seven years ago, the Continuity Working Party (1985) called for kindergarten and Year 1 teachers to strengthen their working

relationships. This call would seem to have gone unheeded, yet the majority of teachers believed continuity between kindergarten and Year 1 was particularly important. A system of sharing resources could be implemented to try and balance the disparity that exists between kindergarten and Year 1. Not only could resources be shared, but a continuity kit could be produced,, containing ideas for kindergarten and Year 1 teachers to enhance continuity measures, incorporating literacy development.

Whatever procedures are applied or adopted to enhance continuity of literacy development across these years, further research into the dynamics which take place within literacy events at these levels is needed. This research may unlock the particular skills most beneficial to teachers as they seek to match strategies and provisions to the needs of the children with whom they work.

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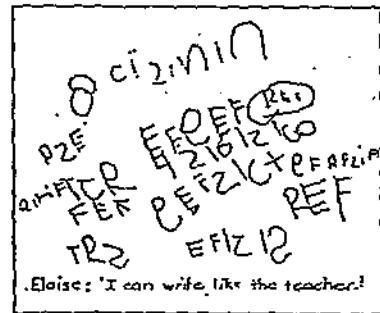
Overview of Writing Developmental Continuum

Teachers can identify a child's phase of development by observing that the child is exhibiting all key indicators of that phase. It should be noted, however, that many children will also display indicators from other phases.

First Steps

Role Play Writing

Children are beginning to come to terms with a new aspect of language, that of written symbols. They experiment with marks on paper with the intention of communicating a message or emulating adult writing.



Key Indicators

The writer:

- assigns a message to own symbols
- uses known letters or approximations of letters to represent written language
- shows beginning awareness of directionality, i.e. points to where writing begins
- is aware that print carries a message
- understands that writing and drawing are different

Experimental Writing

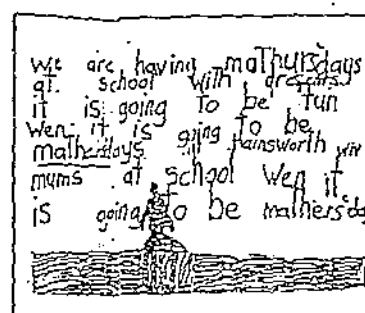
Children are aware that speech can be written down and that written messages remain constant. They understand the left to right organisation of print and experiment with writing letters and words.



- uses writing to convey meaning
- reads back own writing
- experiments with familiar forms of writing
- writes using simplified oral language structures
- realises that print contains a constant message
- uses left to right and top to bottom orientation of print
- demonstrates one to one correspondence between written and spoken word

Early Writing

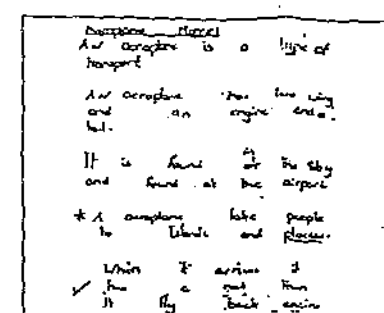
Writers have a sense of sentence and use a limited range of words which are personally significant. They may only be able to deal with one or two elements of writing at one time e.g. spelling but not punctuation.



- uses a small range of familiar text forms
- is beginning to use written language structures. Has a sense of sentence, i.e. writes complete sentences with or without punctuation
- writes a limited range of words which are personally significant
- is beginning to develop editing skills
- attempts to use some punctuation
- re-reads own writing to maintain word sequence

Conventional Writing

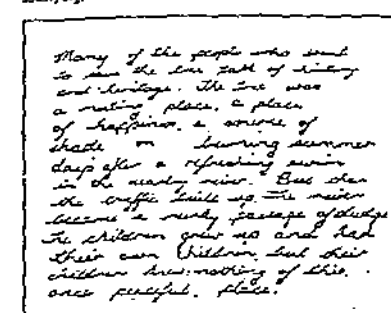
Writers are familiar with most aspects of the writing process and are able to use common forms to suit different purposes. Their control of whole text structure, punctuation and spelling may vary according to the complexity of the writing task.



- uses text forms to suit purpose and audience
- uses simple, compound and extended sentences
- writes a topic sentence and includes relevant information to develop a paragraph
- is beginning to select vocabulary according to the demands of audience and purpose
- edits and proof reads own writing after composing
- re-reads and revises while composing
- punctuates simple sentences correctly

Advanced Writing

Writers have developed a personal style of writing and are able to manipulate forms of writing to suit their purposes. They have control over spelling and punctuation. They choose from a wide vocabulary and their writing is cohesive, coherent and satisfying.



- selects form to suit purpose and audience, demonstrating control over external elements
- demonstrates ability to view writing from reader's perspective
- uses a variety of simple, compound and complex sentences appropriate to text form
- uses a wide range of words that clearly and precisely convey meaning in a particular form
- edits own work independently during and after composing
- demonstrates accurate use of punctuation
- reflects on and critically evaluates own writing

Role Play Writing Phase

Major Teaching Emphases

Teachers should:

- model good English language usage
- model writing every day in a variety of contexts
- allow children time every day to explore writing and reading with peers and adults
- share real reading and writing experiences
- demonstrate that writing is purposeful and has an intended audience
- focus on language structures and features through stories and poems
- encourage children to talk about environmental print
- demonstrate that written messages remain constant
- demonstrate that writing communicates a message
- focus on the way print works (print concepts and conventions)
- encourage children to experiment with writing
- focus on alphabetic knowledge (letter names)
- help children develop a basic concept of a word
- use correct terminology, e.g. letters, sounds, words.

Experimental Writing Phase

Major Teaching Emphases

Teachers should:

- model good English language usage
- model writing every day and talk about processes and language being used
- allow children time every day to explore writing and reading with peers and adults
- share real reading and writing experiences
- model different forms of text and explain the purpose and intended audience
- make links between speaking, listening, reading and writing across the curriculum
- help children build lists of high frequency words from their reading and writing
- demonstrate the one to one correspondence of written and spoken words
- encourage children to talk about their experiences and sequence their ideas logically
- demonstrate that written messages remain constant
- help child relate written symbols to the sounds they represent
- encourage children to experiment with writing
- provide children with opportunities to write each day
- help children to sequence words into their component sounds
- help children with letter formations.

Early Writing Phase

Major Teaching Emphases

Teachers should:

- model good English language usage
- model writing and talk about the process and language being used
- provide opportunities for children to write every day
- share real writing and reading experiences
- develop an awareness that writing is purposeful
- talk about the differences between oral and written language
- read, write and discuss a range of different forms of writing for different purposes and audiences
- teach planning strategies
- teach revision skills
- teach strategies for learning to spell new words
- continue to help children develop word banks using topic or theme words
- allow time for children to explore writing and reading independently
- allow time for sharing children's writing
- provide a variety of audiences for writing
- accept and value children's writing efforts
- encourage children to experiment with the organisation of the printed word
- emphasise the process of writing rather than the product
- involve children in a variety of language games
- encourage the use of a range of dictionaries and other word sources.

Conventional Writing Phase

Major Teaching Emphases

Teachers should:

- model good English language usage
- provide opportunities for children to write every day
- model writing every day and talk about the process and language being used
- teach children to plan and write both narrative and informational texts
- help children to adapt their writing to suit the intended purpose and to explore alternative ways of expressing ideas
- provide examples which show the structure of oral and written texts and talk about ways to improve written texts
- teach children a purposeful use of organisational markers such as topic sentences, paragraphs and headings
- show how sentences are linked to form a cohesive paragraph
- show how paragraphs are linked to form a whole text
- encourage the use of a variety of linking words
- encourage children to take responsibility for their own learning
- teach revising, editing and proof reading skills
- discuss and foster 'personal voice' and individual style in writing
- provide meaningful contexts to analyse and teach forms of text
- integrate writing with reading and oral language through the various subject areas
- help children increase their oral and written vocabulary
- teach strategies for learning to spell new words
- teach children the conventions of language (punctuation, grammar and spelling) in context
- encourage children to increase their personal word stock.

Advanced Writing Phase

Major Teaching Emphases

Teachers should:

- model writing
- provide opportunities for students to analyse, evaluate and structure an extensive variety of forms of text, both narrative and informational
- provide opportunities for students to write and manipulate forms of text for a variety of purposes and audiences
- encourage students to reflect on their own writing
- encourage students to analyse their writing critically
- encourage students to read widely and reflect on what is read
- encourage students to discuss authors' writing styles and the ways in which authors position or manipulate readers
- extend students' knowledge of correct use of writing conventions
- teach students to analyse mass media
- discuss and foster a sense of 'personal voice', e.g. individual style, tone, rhythm, vocabulary
- increase students' exposure to language which enables them to talk about language
- continue reading aloud to enable students an appreciation of poetic, rhythmic and nuances of language
- provide opportunities to develop, refine and use new vocabulary.
- Particularly necessary for ESL students. Entries in bold are considered critical to children's further development.



OVERVIEW OF READING DEVELOPMENTAL CONTINUUM

Teachers can identify a child's phase of development by observing that the child is exhibiting all key indicators of that phase. It should be noted, however, that most children will also display indicators from other phases.

Phases

ROLE PLAY

In this phase, readers display reading-like behaviour as they recognise sounds for themselves. They show a natural interest in books and the language of print.

Key Indicators

- displays reading-like behaviour
- realises that print carries a message but may read the writing differently each time
- focuses on the meaning of a story
- uses pictorial cues
- uses prior knowledge of context and personal experience

Major Teaching Emphases

- Read to children every day and encourage children to re-read the stories.
- Select books that provide children with a wide range of literary experiences:
 - Nursery Rhymes (sounds and patterns of language)
 - Folk tales (develop a sense of story)
 - Contemporary stories (social themes, phrases and emotional use of words).
- Establish a language-rich environment (present print in natural and meaningful contexts).
- Draw attention to environmental print.
- Model reading behaviours that you want the children to learn.
- Allow children to select books (or you to read).
- Re-read old favourites.
- Read from an enlarged text (big book) so children can follow the print as you read.
- Provide a picture book and books with limited text for children to read to themselves and 'read' to others.
- Talk about books with children.
- Discuss particular features of books, e.g. title, illustrations.
- Encourage children to respond to stories by talking about how they feel and describing what they might have done if they were a character in the story.

EXPERIMENTAL

In this phase, a reader uses memory of familiar texts to match some spoken words with written words. The reader makes the first connection between a sound and a letter or group of letters.

- is beginning to match some spoken words with written words
- realises that print contains a continuous message
- recognises some words and letters in context
- is focused entirely on meaning for meaning
- possesses no prior knowledge of context and personal experience

Major Teaching Emphases

- Establish a language-rich environment. Present print in natural and meaningful contexts.
- Draw attention to environmental print.
- Read to children every day and encourage children to re-read stories heard. Select books which provide children with a wide range of literary experiences.
- Ensure that children have the opportunity to select their own books to read independently every day.
- Provide opportunities for children to re-read stories. Include stories from whole class shared reading and independent reading.
- Provide opportunities for individual conferences where children discuss aspects of their reading.
- Develop children's ability to predict through questioning and discussion before, during and after reading.
- Encourage children to share experiences related to their reading.
- Read from an enlarged text (big book) and encourage children to join in.
- Model strategies such as substituting, re-reading and self-correcting during shared book sessions.
- Model strategies for tracking unknown words, e.g. identifying similar word beginnings, using a word pattern, chunking.
- Support the development of a basic sight vocabulary by:
 - selecting resources that use many of these words in a natural way
 - encouraging children to re-read favourite books
 - writing the children's own language in language experience stories and then using this text to focus on basic sight words
 - use of cards to focus on high frequency words
 - developing class word banks containing high frequency words
- Provide opportunities for children to demonstrate understanding of a text through activities such as:
 - substituting answers by reading from the text
 - sequencing text
 - developing a story map
 - making comparisons with other texts
 - identifying the main ideas of a story and providing some supporting information
 - identifying character traits
- Provide opportunities for children to write every day.
- Encourage children to reflect on personal reading strategies.

EARLY

In this phase, children may read a story and deliberately use the focus on reading strategy to make meaning. The reader is becoming more confident in using strategies to comprehend and identify words. They are able to select their reading in different types of text. Readers in this phase enjoy challenges, e.g. 'I'm going to read this hard book. I like the look of hard words.'

- recognises a word in a variety of contexts
- recognises some basic sight words
- may read word-by-word or letter-by-letter when reading
- recognises some words and letters in context
- may have no beginning letters and is reading out loud word identifications

Major Teaching Emphases

- Establish a language-rich environment. Present print in natural and meaningful contexts.
- Read to children every day and encourage children to re-read stories heard. Select books which provide children with a wide range of literary experiences.
- Ensure that children have the opportunity to select their own books to read independently every day.
- Provide opportunities for children to re-read stories. Include stories from whole class shared reading and independent reading.
- Provide opportunities for individual conferences where children discuss aspects of their reading.
- Develop children's ability to predict through questioning and discussion before, during and after reading.
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 - use of cards to focus on high frequency words
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 - substituting answers by reading from the text
 - sequencing text
 - developing a story map
 - making comparisons with other texts
 - identifying the main ideas of a story and providing some supporting information
 - identifying character traits
- Provide opportunities for children to write every day.
- Encourage children to reflect on personal reading strategies.

TRANSITIONAL

In this phase, the reader is beginning to use a range of reading strategies to make meaning. The reader is becoming more confident in using strategies to comprehend and identify words. They are able to select their reading in different types of text. Readers in this phase enjoy challenges, e.g. 'I'm going to read this hard book. I like the look of hard words.'

- shows an increasing ability to construct meaning by using reading strategies (e.g.):
 - personal experience
 - background knowledge
 - text structure
 - word identification
 - vocabulary
- is becoming more efficient in using a variety of strategies for constructing meaning
- is becoming more efficient in using a variety of word identification strategies
- may use strategies to identify words (the integration of all the above systems is developing: graphophonic, syntactic, semantic)

Major Teaching Emphases

- Establish a language-rich environment. Present print in natural and meaningful contexts.
- Ensure that children have the opportunity to select their own books to read independently every day.
- Provide opportunities for individual conferences where children discuss aspects of their reading.
- Present children with a wide range of reading materials.
- Ensure that children are reading in a variety of contexts for different purposes.
- Read literature that conceptually extends children's literary experience.
- Read to children every day from a variety of forms of text.
- Use literature to focus on aspects of language use and text structure.
- Model and discuss use of prior knowledge on:
 - the text topic
 - language use
 - text structure
 - word use of print
- Model and discuss prediction and confirmation strategies.
- Model and discuss word identification strategies:
 - use of graphic and phonetic knowledge
 - sounding out
 - blending
 - sight word knowledge
 - letter and word patterns
- Model and discuss use of context cues to identify words:
 - sentence patterns
 - sentence cues
 - text structure
- Provide opportunities for children to demonstrate understanding of text through activities such as:
 - making comparisons with other texts
 - identifying the main ideas of a story and providing supporting detail
 - identifying cause and effect - predicting outcomes
 - identifying characters or traits from textual evidence
 - analysing plot
 - interpreting symbolic or meta-phorical meaning
- Provide opportunities for children to write every day, selecting different forms for different purposes.
- Focus on the use of print conventions during shared book, proof reading and editing activities.
- Provide opportunities for rewriting more complex stories. Include stories from whole class shared reading and independent reading.

INDEPENDENT READING

In this phase, a reader competently interprets a range of texts to make meaning. A reader is purposeful and efficient. The reader is only aware of the reading strategies being employed when encountering difficult text or reading for a specific purpose. Readers have greater ability to make connections between what they know and understand, and what is new.

- reads and comprehends text that is more abstract and presented from personal experience
- is able to identify and appreciate several points of view
- can read a text to find the main idea and key information
- interprets reading systems
- uses a range of strategies automatically when constructing meaning from text
- applies appropriate strategies for different reading purposes

Major Teaching Emphases

- Establish a language-rich environment. Present print in natural and meaningful contexts.
- Establish an individualised reading program.
- Ensure that children have the opportunity to read independently every day.
- Provide opportunities for individual conferences where children discuss aspects of their reading.
- Teach children to:
 - articulate their difficulties
 - discuss the questions they asked of the text and any questions that weren't answered
 - discuss how they solved problems
 - become interested in their own strategies
- Present children with a wide range of reading materials.
- Read to children every day from a variety of forms of text.
- Make a teaching purpose explicit to children so they understand the point of what they are being asked to do.
- Teach children how to monitor the effectiveness of reading strategies.
- Model and discuss appropriate use of diagrams to help readers extract and organise important information.
- Provide opportunities for children to examine and discuss sample texts so they are able to identify a range of different text structures in both narrative and expository texts.
- Provide opportunities for children to play around with the genres of writing as a way of showing and reinforcing mastery and control of the genres or conventions played with.
- Teach children how to identify important information in texts.
- Encourage children to critically respond to and reflect on texts.
- Teach children how to identify and support different points of view in texts.
- Model and discuss how to support conclusions drawn from a text by citing evidence from the text and quoting external references.
- Teach children how to:
 - Analyse topics/questions
 - Generate self-questions
 - Select appropriate literature and compile reference list
 - Summarise and take notes
 - Organise responses for reporting
 - Compile bibliographies
- Help children to become not only active readers and performers of texts but also creators of their own texts.
- Encourage children to re-write all kinds of texts for different audiences, e.g. re-write the plot of an expository text book on Science for readers younger than those it was written for.
- Help children to become more conscious of the craft of writing and practise achieving the same kinds of effects in their own writing.
- Develop the children's ability to read from a writer's viewpoint and to write from a reader's viewpoint.
- Encourage children to evaluate their own learning from the reading (and writing) activities developed in the reading program.

ADVANCED READING

In this phase, readers are confident and efficient in their control and use of appropriate reading strategies. They can critically reflect on and respond to texts by providing different levels of interpretation and points of view. They can discuss texts and make explicit their understanding of texts.

Advanced readers will display all of the behaviours described in this phase of the continuum.

Major Teaching Emphases

- Organise a substantial wide-reading program with the purposes and guidelines made perfectly explicit to and negotiated with students.
- Negotiate the reading curriculum with students so that they understand clearly the purposes of all the activities they are asked to engage in.
- Provide access to a wide range of reading materials. Include more complex text structures.
- Develop and monitor individualised reading programs.
- Encourage readers to negotiate and evaluate the effectiveness of personal reading strategies.
- Encourage readers to discuss their ability to construct meaning in different texts.
- Model and discuss appropriate use of diagrams to help readers extract and organise important information.
- Provide opportunities for readers to critically respond to and reflect on text, i.e.
 - critically recognise and analyse bias and propaganda
 - compare and contrast different points of view
- Model and discuss supporting personal conclusions drawn from text and by using outside references.
- Continue development of research skills over a range of narrative and expository texts.
- Emphasise writing through reading. Integrate reading and writing programs. Help students to read from a writer's viewpoint and write from a reader's viewpoint.
- Provide opportunities for readers to analyse and compare the structure of texts (narrative, plot, characterisation).
- Provide opportunities for readers to analyse author 'styles' and writing craft.
- Study literary criticism, theory and models.
- Involve students actively in performance and presentation of texts and then provide opportunities for them to reflect on what they have learned from these activities.
- Involve students in planning the activities for their own group work on texts; that is, students can occasionally/often be asked to:
 - work out the issues to be explored in a text
 - devise the assignments for the work, both written assignments and performance/production assignments
- Encourage students to keep a reading journal and provide clear guidelines and specifications for the activities to be carried out.

QUESTIONNAIRE

1. Qualifications that you hold Please tick

- Diploma of teaching (E.C.E.)
- Diploma of teaching (Primary)
- Bachelor of Arts (Education)
- other, please specify. _____

2. Where would you say that you developed most of your literacy teaching techniques?

- college or university
- inservices
- curriculum documents
- experience in the field
- other _____

3. Please define what literacy development means to you.

4. Do you allocate special time to beginning literacy development?

YES
NO

5. Do you teach reading, writing, spelling and oral language as separate subject areas?

YES
NO

6. Would you say that you had changed the way you programme for literacy development in the last five years?

YES
NO

7. If yes, in what way?

- a) different programme format
- b) different language approach
- c) thematic planning
- d) altered group instruction
- e) other, please explain

8. Do you use the new K-7 English syllabus when programming for literacy development?

YES
NO

9. Do you use any other syllabus when programming for literacy development?

YES
NO

10. If not, what is your main resource for programming?

11. Do you have access to First Steps materials?

YES
NO

12. If yes, do you use First Steps materials in your language arts programme?

YES
NO

13. Which First Steps materials do you find useful?
Rank in order (1, 2, 3) of priority to you.

- a) developmental profiles
- b) programming ideas
- c) continuums

14. How much would you say your literacy programme is influenced by parental expectations?

- not at all
- some
- very much

15. How much would you say that the school language arts policy influenced your language arts programme?

- not at all
- some
- very much

16. Do the expectations of the teacher to whom your class will go next year influence your literacy programmes?

YES
NO

If so, in what way? _____

17. When do your students begin to "write" their own stories or messages in your class?

- from day one
- in 1st Term
- in 2nd Term
- in 3rd Term
- in 4th Term

18. What is your major consideration when planning for literacy development?
(Please fill in)

19. Please comment briefly on your expectations of a child in your class with regard to their literacy development. (Please fill in)

SECTION II Provision

20. For the year you teach, do you appraise a child's literacy skills?

Year 1 teachers: a) Year 1 on entry
K teachers: b) K at end of year

YES	NO
YES	NO

21. If so, how do you make this appraisal?

- a) early entry test
- b) observation
- c) checklist
- d) work samples
- e) other, please specify _____

22. Which category best describes your class during pre-planned literacy development times?

- a whole group
- small groups
- individually
- all of the above

23. Do you use creative play environments as part of your literacy development programme?

YES
NO

24. How important do you think the continuity of literacy development is from K to Year 1?

- not important
- important
- very important

25. Briefly describe how you cater for differing student needs, if at all?
(Please fill in)

SECTION III Strategies

26. Do you implement whole class readiness for reading programme at the beginning of Year 1 or at the end of K?

YES
NO

27. What approach would best describe your language programme?

- whole language
- traditional
- eclectic

28. Which of these strategies would you employ in implementing your language programme?

- shared book
- conferencing
- modelling
- group discussion
- direct instruction
- drill
- guided discovery
- language experience
- play

29. Please rank the above list in order of importance that you view these strategies in your language programme. (rank 1 - 9)

- shared book
- conferencing
- modelling
- group discussion
- direct instruction
- drill
- guided discovery
- language experience
- play

PILOT STUDY COVER LETTER

[REDACTED]

10th September, 1992.

Dear Colleagues,

I am a teacher completing her Bachelor of Education with Honours. For part of my course I have to design and implement a research study. I have elected to study "The Continuity of literacy development from K to Year One."

This area interests me as a teacher in the field because there have been so many changes in the teaching of literacy skills to young children. This coupled with a change of syllabus and many new commercial resources has seen a great change in teaching strategies in K and Year One. With the questionnaire I have designed I am endeavouring to find out what is happening in K and Year One classrooms in 1992.

The questionnaire is mainly a "tick the box", with some answers requiring a little more detail. This is a pilot study so please feel free to write comments about the questions you don't understand. Your answers are completely confidential and no names or schools will be used in the study.

Could Principals please pass these questionnaires on to the Year One and Pre-Primary teachers attached to your school. The results of the pilot study will be available to any interested party.

I have included a return self addressed and stamped envelope and would appreciate your prompt response by Thursday the 24th of September.

I do hope that you will be able to help me in my study. Thank you for your assistance.

Yours sincerely,

[REDACTED]

MAIN STUDY COVER LETTER

Dear Colleagues,

I am a teacher completing her Bachelor of Education with Honours. For part of my course I have to design and implement a research study. I have elected to study "The Continuity of Literacy Development from K to Year One".

This area interests me as a teacher in the field because there have been so many changes in the teaching of literacy skills to young children. This coupled with a change of syllabus and many new commercial resources has seen a great change in teaching strategies in K and Year One. With the questionnaire I have designed I am endeavouring to find out what is happening in K and Year One classrooms in 1992.

The questionnaire is mainly a "tick the box", with some answers requiring a little more detail. Your answers are completely confidential and no names or schools will be used in the study. You are under no obligation to complete the questionnaire, (it only takes approximately five minutes to complete!) and your assistance would be greatly appreciated.

Could Principals please pass these questionnaires on to the Year One and Pre-Primary teachers attached to your school. The results of the study will be available to any interested party.

I have included a return self-addressed and stamped envelope and would appreciate your prompt response by Thursday, 13th November 1992.

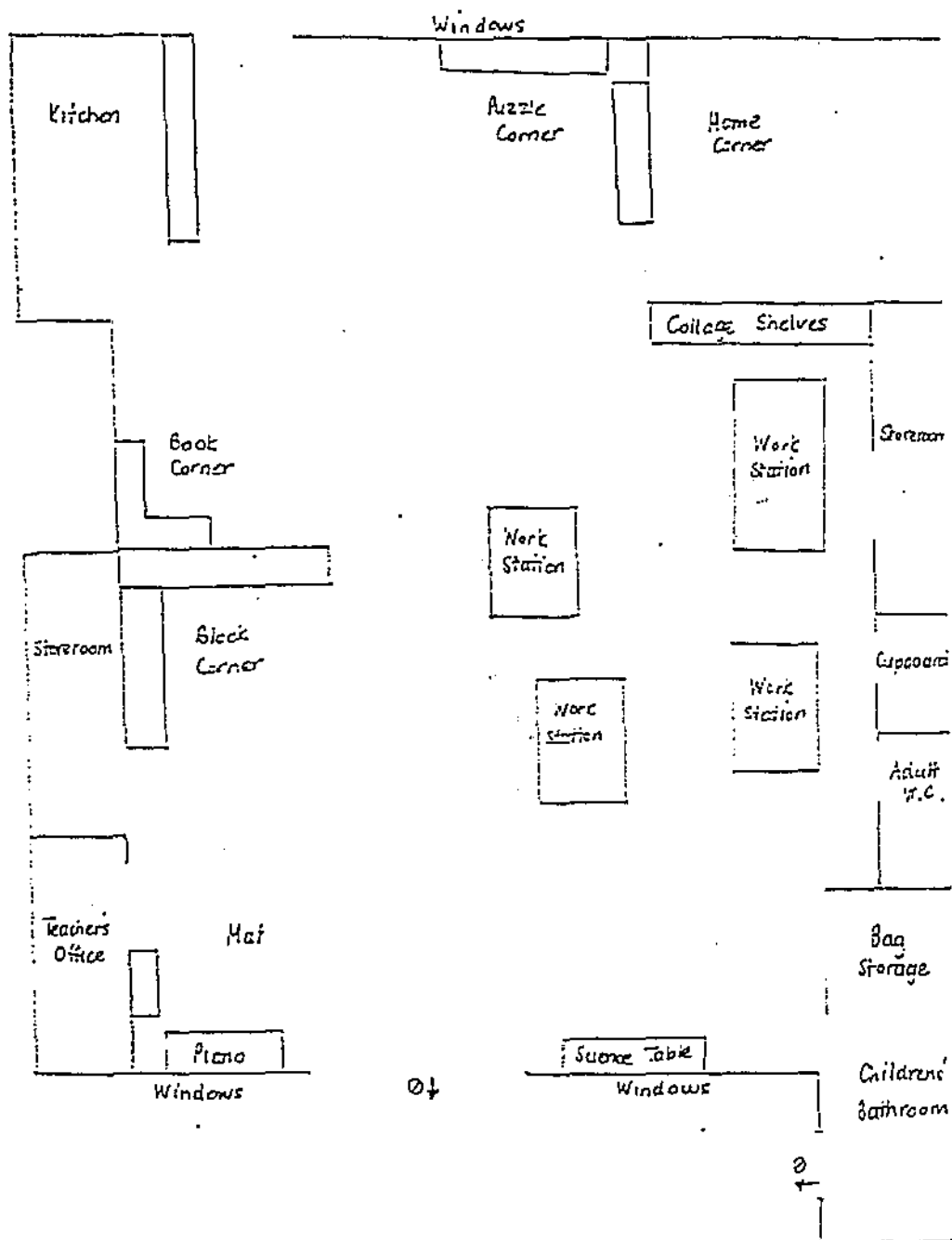
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Thank you for your assistance.

Yours sincerely,

Prompt Questions for Semi-Structured Interviews of
Kindergarten and Year 1 Teachers

1. Could you please describe the class that you teach?
2. How many years teaching experience have you had?
- 3 a) How do you define literacy?
b) In your opinion does the definition relate to language development?
4. Do you programme or plan for literacy development?
If so, how do you go about it?
5. How, if at all, you would say you have changed the way you teach literacy?
- 6 a) What teaching strategies would you say you used to promote literacy in your classroom?
b) Does play have a role in literacy development?
7. Do you use the new English syllabus and/or First Steps material in planning for literacy events?
Any other?
8. Do other teachers expectations influence your planning?
9. Do parents' expectations influence your planning?
10. Does the school language policy influence your programming?
11. Do you believe that creative play environments have a place in literacy development?
12. How important is the continuity of literacy development from kindergarten to Year 1?
13. Do you take any steps to ensure this continuity?
14. How do you believe teachers could assist with this continuity?
15. Do you have any other comments you would like to make about the continuity of literacy development?



FLOOR PLAN OF A KINDERGARTEN

The floor space of this centre was equal to that of three Year 1 classrooms

FLOOR PLAN OF YEAR 1 CLASSROOM

