Understanding teachers’ conceptualisations of reading in a multiliteracies era

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Understanding teachers’ conceptualisations of reading in a multiliteracies era

Suellen Denny
B. Teach (Prim) (Dist), B. Ed Hons (Prim)

This thesis is submitted in fulfilment of the requirements for the award of

Doctor of Philosophy
2017

School of Education
University of Wollongong
Thesis certification

I, Suellen Denny, declare that this thesis, submitted in fulfillment of the requirements for the award of Doctor of Philosophy, in the School of Education, Faculty of Social Sciences, University of Wollongong, is wholly my own work unless otherwise referenced or acknowledged. The document has not been submitted for qualifications at any other academic institution.

DATE _____9 November 2017______
Abstract

The teaching of reading has been debated and sensationalised over the last three decades. With the Australian government influenced by US and UK reports of a perceived decline in literacy standards, it is timely to understand the complex task of classroom based literacy pedagogy for the 21st century. Of particular interest are the middle years as students experience a change in academic demands.

The purpose of this research was to understand middle-primary school teachers’ conceptualisations of reading and subsequent pedagogical practices in their contemporary classrooms. These understandings were gathered with a view to the broadening and flexible understandings of reading in the multiliteracies era.

Teachers’ knowledge and beliefs are shaped by their training, experience, interests and professional development experience, and underpin pedagogical and resource decisions in their classrooms. The field of knowledge that informs teachers’ content knowledge has been developed and privileged by some theories of reading and conversations about research. Teachers, therefore, must make decisions about their reading pedagogy while implementing literacy policy. These two things might not be congruent with the teachers’ beliefs and understandings of reading, learning to read and reading pedagogy. This then may present continuities or constraints that teachers face in their decisions about their reading pedagogy.

Underpinned by sociocultural theories of literacy, this inquiry used a multiple case study methodology to explore four teachers’ conceptualisations of reading in their New South Wales middle-primary years’ classrooms. Data collected for this study included observations, interviews and pedagogic artefacts. Vignettes have been used in three ways in this research to explicate the teachers’ understandings of the nature of reading. First, a vignette was used to begin a discussion about teacher beliefs and knowledge about reading and their pedagogical practice, prior to observations. Second, the researcher produced a vignette to provide an interpretive summary for the participants at a midway-point interview. Third, the teachers produced a vignette to give voice to their story as teachers of reading. The research project developed multiple cases to consider the individual teachers and their teaching environments.
This study revealed the adjective nature of the teachers’ understandings of reading and the pedagogical decisions displayed in the observations. The teachers demonstrated a variety of understandings of and beliefs about the nature of reading. These understandings were either explicitly discussed or interpreted across the data. The teachers’ pedagogy ranged from literature-based approaches with literature as a beginning point of reading lessons and reading couched in literate practice, to lessons where the practice of decontextualized component skills occurred. The findings indicate that continuity existed between the teachers’ stated or interpreted understandings of reading and their pedagogy for the teachers whose theoretical approaches were clearly understood and underpinned their pedagogical practices. Contradictions were found when the teachers’ pedagogical decisions were based on recent professional-development knowledge rather than a formulated belief about reading and learning to read.

The study acknowledges that the conceptualisations of reading that teachers enact in their classrooms are the result of their theoretical understandings of reading and literacy combined with curriculum expectations, available resources, and available (and encouraged) professional development. It is this intricate combination of knowledge and opportunity that informs a teacher’s instructional practices and reveals constraints, contradictions and continuities in this multiliteracies era.
Acknowledgements

The journey to tell these stories has been a hard one for me personally. I began this journey to do a combination of things I loved: research, being in the classroom and looking after my three beautiful children. Our lives were forever changed when after multiple hospitalisations, the eldest and most fragile, Sebastian, became an angel in 2012 just shy of his 20\textsuperscript{th} birthday. It has been difficult to find a new purpose and keep going.

Thank you to my supervisors, Lisa Kervin and Pauline Jones, who have been with me through this journey. It has been a long and winding road and I thank you for your advice, support and conversation during my candidature…and for sticking with me when at times I retreated.

Thanks go especially to Jan Turbill, who also supported me in the last year my candidature. Thank you for your guidance, gentle nudging and encouragement. I am very grateful for all the conversations and advice you gave me. You picked me up and set me to task and most importantly you believed I could do it…and I did.

To the classroom practitioners who so graciously gave up time for me stare at them for hours and talk endlessly about their passion for reading and teaching, thank you. Your stories are courageous and filled with passion for the wonderful work you do. Your classrooms are inspiring places to learn.

Thanks also go to those who provided the financial support I received during my candidature: the Australian government for my Australian Postgraduate Award and the University of Wollongong for the Domestic Postgraduate Tuition Award; without them I would not have made the finish line. I’d also like to acknowledge the professional editing support of Laura E. Goodin.

I wish a major finding for this thesis were the treasured friendships one gains while doing such a difficult and engrossing task. Thanks go to my writing partners: Fiona, Sophie and Elise. Thank you, Fiona, for sharing an office (all six of them) with me, and writing in our “golden hours” for so many years. “Thank you” seems so inadequate for supporting me as a colleague and friend during the constant hospitalisations with Sebastian and bringing him home preparing him for his next journey. It was the most difficult time in my life and you seemed to know
exactly what I needed. Thank you, Sophie and Elise, for the wonderful, and sometimes endless, conversations about our research, for sharing Pomodoro times, omelettes, curry and wine with me, and for being bothered by (or perhaps patient with) the cats while we wrote at the dining table. Thank you, Tiffani, for coming to my rescue and putting up with my many tears. Without support from you all, I am sure I would not have made it to the end.
Dedication

I dedicate this work first to my three beautiful and amazing children, Sebastian, Zac and Charlotte, who have taken this journey with me every step of the way.

For my angel Sebastian...I send a thousand kisses to heaven. No time was ever enough and I’m sorry this took me away from you so much while you were here. We'll have forever in heaven.

Zac, you are my hero. You helped your siblings and looked after me when I was sick. Your unwavering support through to completion has been astounding. Thank you for the rewards of champagne. Yes...I’m finished now, time for coffee together!

For Charlotte, you are my heart. Your hugs always came at just the right time. I am so proud of your independence and the courage you have found in yourself. We can have more mother-daughter special time now.

...and to my mum.

Thank you for understanding all the times I had to say no. Thank you for all the help you gave while I worked on this. Yes...we can go shopping now.
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Definition of terms

Key Learning Areas (KLAs)

At the time of this study there were six Key Learning Areas (KLAs) produced by the New South Wales Board of Studies: *English, Mathematics, Science and Technology, Human Society and Its Environment, Personal Development, Health and Physical Education* and *Creative Arts*, each of which had a dedicated syllabus. The syllabus referred to throughout this project is the English syllabus (Board of Studies NSW, 1998b). See [http://www.schools.nsw.edu.au/learning/k_6/](http://www.schools.nsw.edu.au/learning/k_6/) for further information.

Stages in primary school in Australia

Primary schools in New South Wales are separated into four stages. These stages are equivalent to two years, except for Early Stage 1.

- **Early Stage 1**: Kindergarten (5-6 years old)
- **Stage 1**: Years 1 and 2 (6-8 years old)
- **Stage 2**: Years 3 and 4 (8-10 years old)
- **Stage 3**: Years 5 and 6 (10-12 years old)

Abbreviations

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Abbreviation</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ACARA</td>
<td>Australian Curriculum Authority of Australia</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HSIE</td>
<td>Human Society and Its Environment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IWB</td>
<td>Interactive Whiteboard</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>KLA</td>
<td>Key Learning Area (e.g. English, mathematics, science)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NAPLAN</td>
<td>National Assessment Program of Literacy and Numeracy (ACARA, 2011)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NSW</td>
<td>New South Wales, Australia</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PDHPE</td>
<td>Personal Development, Health and Physical Education</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RFF</td>
<td>Relief from Face-to-Face teaching</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Chapter 1 - Introduction

Chapter 1 will describe the issue that prompted this research project, and provide the background to the problem. The significance of the research will be explained and the research questions presented. The research questions refer to the case-study teachers’ understandings of the nature of reading and their pedagogy in their contemporary classroom context. The theoretical orientation that frames this inquiry is outlined in the final section of this chapter.

Purpose statement

The purpose of this inquiry is to understand how middle-primary teachers recontextualise reading theory in their classrooms in a multiliteracies era. Conceptualisation of reading will be generally defined as the relationship between a teacher’s reading pedagogy, their knowledge and beliefs about reading and literacy and the pedagogical, content and resource choices they make during lessons they have self-identified as “reading” lessons that usually involve an activity or activities focused on reading and/or responding to text.

Background

Literacy has been a contested word for many decades and there are no conclusive definitions to which all parties would agree. It has traditionally been understood as the set of skills that impart ability to read and write printed text. However, more recent understanding addresses a wide range of practices and responses to, and creation of, text (printed, visual or oral) for success as a literate person in the 21st century (Edwards, 2010; Snyder, 2008, 2009). For instance, the General capabilities Literacy from the Australian Curriculum states:

   Literacy encompasses the knowledge and skills students need to access, understand, analyse and evaluate information, make meaning, express thoughts and emotions, present ideas and opinions, interact with others and participate in activities at school and in their lives beyond school. Success in any learning area depends on being able to use the
significant, identifiable and distinctive literacy that is important for learning and representative of the content of that learning area. (ACARA, 2015)

Reading has also been understood as deciphering written text and understanding what is deciphered (Lu & Cross, 2014). While some argue that the deciphering involves a set of sub-skills that, once mastered, leads to access to meaning, others consider meaning as a problem-solving activity using the three cueing systems. Freebody (2007), in his review of literacy education research, provides a prominent example of literacy, in which reading plays a large part:

So literacy refers to the orchestration in action of resources relating to the peculiarities of the demands at hand for:
- cracking the relationship between spoken and materialised language
- using and extending cultural knowledge to make texts meaningful
- drawing on, using and making a repertoire of texts that effectively advance the individual or collective purposes at hand
- interrogating texts for the ways in which they constrain interpretation, by excluding alternative ways of documenting experience of the world. (p. 8)

This example provides an expanded view of literacy that moves beyond a traditional notion of ‘reading’ and ‘writing’ text.

Reading has been debated in the international and Australian media for some time (for example, Cambourne, 2006a, 2006b; Lu & Cross, 2015; Pearson, 2004; Snyder, 2008). High stakes national testing such as the National Assessment Program of Literacy and Numeracy (NAPLAN) (ACARA, 2011) and Program for International Student Assessment (PISA) (OECD, 2017) have been at the forefront of the media attention. Literacy and reading have been at the forefront of discussions and reports from government, both nationally (Commonwealth of Australia, 2005a; Department of Education, 2000; Louden et al., 2005) and internationally (National Reading Panel (U.S.) & National Institute of Child Health & Human Development
Reports have predominantly focused on how reading instruction might be improved to address the perceived decline in literacy levels, paying particular attention to beginning reading and reading disability/difficulty. As a result, these reports align themselves with theories of reading that have been debated and privileged through the acceptance of evidence-only research, based in scientific research, which discounts a variety of other quality research (Chen & Derewianka, 2009; Snyder, 2008). The significance of this is that the more complex reading needs, beyond decoding, are being ignored, particularly for the multimodal and digital texts required in the middle years.

**Reading theories**

Reading theories vary in their approach to the skills required to read print text. They differ in their approach to decoding versus their approach to meaning (comprehension) and subsequently their use of resources, instructional methods and the choice of teacher- or student-centred focus (Paris, 2005). The theories tend to be grounded in behaviourist and constructivist learning theories (Tracey & Morrow, 2012). For example, reading theories grounded in the behaviourist learning theory assert that for comprehension to occur, the reader is required to decode units of language from the smallest to the largest. That is, the reader decodes the letters, then groups of letters, then words, then sentences, then paragraphs and then the text as a whole. These theories suggest that reading is learned from the explicit and systematic teaching of singular and decontextualised reading components. Commercially produced texts (basal readers, worksheets, workbooks) are often used in this approach for skill and drill practice. The *Reading First* legislation that resulted from the National Reading Panel’s (NICHD, 2000) report advocated teaching phonics as the answer for the decline in literacy levels among school students.

Other approaches to reading are grounded in constructivist approaches, and include interactive, psycholinguistic, sociolinguistic, critical literacy and reader response theories (Alexander & Fox, 2013). These approaches consider the roles of

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1 This report will hereafter be referenced as (NRP & NICHD, 2000).
the text, reader and social context within which reading occurs to make meaning. These approaches resonate with many of the tenets of the whole language philosophy. Whole language philosophy proposes that the reader plays a “psycholinguistic guessing game” while engaging in reading text. Similarly, the transactional theory based on reader response theory proposes that readers also use visual cues, hypothesise and confirm, and take an efferent or aesthetic stance, and that the text is accordingly created by the reader as a continuous process (Rosenblatt, 2013).

In the late 1990s, the whole language philosophy was challenged as being the sole cause of the perceived literacy crisis at that time (Cambourne & Turbill, 2007). As Pearson (2004) outlines, there were a number of reasons for this, including the application of whole language by some; balanced literacy taking a more prominent role; a shift in the ideology of reading research; the politicisation of research and the policy agenda; and a push for measurable results from reading educators (p. 6). Though this debate was held predominantly in the United States, there was a flow-on effect to Australia. The consequences of these debates or ‘wars’ about literacy pedagogy resulted in teachers being caught in conflict over conservative or progressive views of literacy and the role of governments (Snyder, 2008). The debates were a significant episode in the literacy educational community by which teachers’ understandings of reading were influenced.

The debates

The debates in the United States culminated in the establishment of the National Reading Panel (NRP) set up by the National Institute of Child Health and Human Development (NICHD) in 1997 (NRP & NICHD, 2000) to seek the more effective approaches. The panel was formulated in response to reported deteriorating literacy levels of American students, and was a follow up to the report Reading difficulties in young children (Snow, Burns, & Griffin, 1998). The NRP produced a summary of “rigorous evidence-based research” (NRP & NICHD, 2000, p. 14). The topics in this report were drawn from, and consisted predominantly of, experimental and quasi-experimental research. This restriction on research
resulted in the exclusion of qualitative research, which was not accepted, as it did not align with the statistical and quantitative data predominantly found in experimental and quasi-experimental work in the psychological orientation of the review (Snyder, 2008; Weaver, 1998). This restriction is problematic, as it discounts studies using qualitative research methods that are typically conducted in the constructivist paradigm. As Stephens (1998) explains, “Qualitative research does not follow the rules of quantitative research because both the means and the ends of quantitative and qualitative research are different” (p. x).

Qualitative research includes case-study and ethnographic methods of data collection that incorporate observation, document collection and discourse analysis methods. Denzin and Lincoln (2000) explain that these “empirical materials” (p. 5) help the qualitative researcher interpret and understand the practice using different ways “to secure an in-depth understanding of the phenomenon” (p. 8). Importantly, the restriction also discounted the description and definition of reading in non-experimental research (Cambourne, 2006a). The work that emerged from the NRP’s report began the No Child Left Behind Act, which was instrumental in changes for teachers across the US and resulted in the identification of five elements deemed to constitute effective reading instruction: phonemic awareness, phonics, fluency, vocabulary and text comprehension. These elements have dominated research and media.

As a response to the seemingly dichotomous debate between phonics and whole language, Freebody and Luke (Freebody & Luke, 1990; Luke & Freebody, 1999) developed a heuristic with which to reframe the debate to account for the complexity of reading. They gave import to the “key aspects of literacy philosophy and pedagogy and assessment that would most likely respond to the needs of the 21st century” (Cambourne & Turbill, 2007, p. 23). This work resulted in the development of the “Four Roles of the Reader”, which was later included in the Literacy Strategy document (NSW Department of School Education, 1997) and continues in the Literacy K-12 Policy (NSW Department of Education and Training, 2007).
The Australian media played a role in catastrophising reading results in the Australian context (for a discussion on this, see Snyder, 2008). In addition to debates about methodology in literacy research, and the differences in reading components, process writing from the progressivist approach came under question. Some began to question what students were writing, and were concerned that the type of writing, mainly narrative, did not address the available genres in society. Thus, the genre theorists’ move toward teaching text types began (Cambourne & Turbill 2007, Derewianka, 2015). The product of the debates about literacy and reading resulted in a push for reports to find a quantifiable demonstration of literacy achievement and the action that government would take.

The reports

The UK’s *National Literacy Strategy* was implemented in 1998 with a pedagogical model, the *Framework for Teaching* (Standards and Effectiveness Unit, 1998) that was used in teacher-dominated instruction for the whole class during the “Literacy Hour” (Flynn, 2007). The *National Literacy Strategy* was based on the *Searchlight* model, an integrated approach to reading based on cueing systems from the psycholinguistic perspective. However, concerns by the House of Commons resulted in the *Independent Review of the Teaching of Early Reading* report (Rose, 2006). The report resulted in recommendations of synthetic phonics in early reading and a realignment of the *Searchlight* model to include word-recognition skills (Rose, 2006, p. 4). As with the US reports, the focus for reading in primary schools emphasised phonics over the broader literacy competencies.

The Australian government commissioned the *National Inquiry into the Teaching of Literacy Report* (Commonwealth of Australia, 2005a) following international debate and the catastrophising of reading levels reported through the media and researchers from the psychological discipline expressing concerns over the teaching of reading (Chen & Derewianka, 2009; Snyder, 2008; Wheldall, de Lemos, Coltheart, 2005). The report, named *The Teaching Reading Report* (Commonwealth of Australia, 2005a), aimed to clarify the current research in the teaching of literacy in Australian schools, and followed the same evidence-based
research protocol used by the NRP. This resulted in the bias towards bottom-up reading theories from the psychology discipline (Snyder, 2008).

The research reviewed by the *Teaching Reading Report* (Commonwealth of Australia, 2005b) asserted that most educational research came from a constructivist paradigm, which, they stated, is not a teaching theory, but rather a knowing and learning theory; they further suggested that more emphasis on what and how to teach was needed via scientific evidence-based research (Hempenstall, 2005). Furthermore, the committee suggested that too much emphasis had been placed on home connections, environment and background. It is interesting to note that the constructivist paradigm, within which whole language and balanced literacy are situated, places its basis for learning language within the social and cultural contexts.

The reports described above have influenced policy in Australia, through, for example, the *National Reading Panel report* (NICHD, 2000), *Literate Futures* (Department of Education, 2000), the *National Inquiry into the Teaching of Literacy* (Commonwealth of Australia, 2005a, 2005b) and *In Teachers’ Hands* (Louden et al., 2005). These reports, along with a culmination of previous research and a new political agenda, brought the Australian Curriculum to the fore. In 2008, a framing paper (National Curriculum Board, 2009) was prepared for consultation with the education sector and public, with the expected implementation to be in 2012.

In Australia, New South Wales issued a response to the Australian Curriculum, Assessment and Reporting Authority (see Board of Studies Teaching & Educational Standards NSW (BOSTES), n.d.) and explained that, due to jurisdictional issues in education, NSW would continue to teach from a newly developed syllabus that would integrate the Australian Curriculum using its two-year stage structure. It would also provide descriptions and explication of content. Most importantly, the lack of explicit learning expectations and an overarching framework were an “unnecessary compromise for the sake of national consistency” (BOSTES, n.d., p. 12). The New South Wales Minister for Education (Piccoli, 2011) released a statement on 9 August, 2011, that New South Wales would delay the implementation of the national curriculum until such time as the teachers and
schools would have time for review and stakeholder consultation and were given resources to teach and the professional development to implement it in New South Wales schools. The NSW syllabus that was aligned with the national curriculum began implementation in NSW schools in 2014. The challenge, therefore, will now be for teachers globally to expand their understandings of reading to encompass these changes.

Aim

This study aims to describe how teachers conceptualise reading in their classrooms in the complex context discussed above. How teachers conceptualise reading in their classroom in an era of technological and communication advancement is important, particularly given the introduction of the Australian Curriculum, with its emphasis on the interrelated and interdependent strands of Language, Literature and Literacy, and on viewing, representing and visual literacy, as well as its focus on multimodal texts and explicit references to comprehension strategies. The research undertaken in this project aims to understand and describe the relationship between teachers’ knowledge and beliefs about reading, and learning to read, and their literacy pedagogical practices prior to the substantial shift in policy with the implementation of the Australian Curriculum and the NSW Board of Studies English Syllabus (Board of Studies NSW, 2012).

Significance

While a number of previous studies have been conducted with university collaborators as guides in intervention studies (for example, Kitson et al., 2007; Lotherington & Chow, 2006; Rowsell, Kosnik, & Beck, 2008; Tan, 2006), few studies describe in depth teachers’ conceptualisations about reading from across New South Wales.

The middle-primary years have been chosen for this study to acknowledge the complex and demanding literate tasks required of students in the middle years (Department of Education, 2000; Maher & Richdale, 2008; McCutchen, Harry et al., 2002). The middle years are also a focus for the educational goals set by the
Melbourne Declaration on Education Goals for Young Australians, which recognises middle years as an important stage in learning (MCEETYA, 2008).

Knowledge of fundamental disciplines is developed, yet this is also a time when students are at the greatest risk of disengagement from learning. Student motivation and engagement in these years is critical, and can be influenced by tailoring approaches to teaching, with learning activities and learning environments that specifically consider the needs of middle years students. (MCEETYA, 2008, p. 12)

Research (for example, Comber, Badger, Barnette, & Nixon, 2001) has also shown that this age group has a mixture of students who might not be reading at grade level, and therefore require more assistance with early reading skills while also contending with more abstract and critical thinking. Teachers then are required to create and enact a reading program that encapsulates their own beliefs of learning, allows for differences in reading ability and meets the demands of government or school policy.

At the time of this study, teachers were preparing for reading instances using the 1998 NSW syllabus (Board of Studies NSW, 1998b) document, which defines assessment based on more traditional notions of reading. The current study is timely given the implementation of the Australian Curriculum: English, and in particular the transition to the New South Wales Board of Studies K-12 English Syllabus (Board of Studies NSW, 2012) and the multiliterate practices recognised in this new curriculum.

**Personal orientation to the study**

A precursor of my interest in this study began as a parent when my daughter, who at the time was an upper primary school student reading below level, was given a complex website to read for homework that was text heavy and information rich. The frustration was real for both of us and this was a turning point in her negative experience of reading and discouraged her from reading in subsequent years. During this time, I was a research assistant in the Faculty of Education and then involved in a summer research project concerned with the
navigation of websites that resulted in a refereed paper. My honours study was undertaken in 2009 to study primary school students’ navigation of websites. That study focused on how students navigated websites from simple navigation to more complex designs and increasingly information heavy websites.

My study raised questions for me and I began to wonder how the teacher was teaching his students to read websites and digital texts. Was he teaching explicitly or even at all? How much did the teacher know about reading digital texts when considering the navigational challenges, the influence of images and colour and the positioning suggested by the author. Finally, how do other teachers approach the teaching of websites in their classrooms? After conversations with my supervisors, we agreed upon the broader context of reading, as in the multiliteracies era, webtexts, websites and multimodal texts are likely to be included.

My pre-service teacher education experience included teaching multiliteracies, multimodal texts and critical literacy. The quantity of multimodal texts students were experiencing in classrooms together with the expectations from the syllabus and the, at the time, incoming Australian Curriculum were a perfect foundation for this research project to be undertaken.

**Research questions**

The overarching question used in this project to understand and describe teachers’ conceptualisations of reading is:

*How do teachers conceptualise and practice teaching reading in a multiliteracies era?*

This intends to capture the ways teachers’ knowledge and decisions about reading and teaching reading contribute to their conceptualisations in the classroom context. To aid in responding to this research question, three sub-questions were developed:

1. *What do teachers understand about the nature of reading?*
2. *How do their professional practices align with these understandings?*
3. What is the nature of the relationship between teachers’ knowledge beliefs, and practice in their teaching of reading?

Theoretical orientation to this study

This inquiry draws on sociocultural perspectives that view literacy as a social practice (Barton & Hamilton, 2000; Freebody, 1992; Freebody & Luke, 1990; Gee, 2004; Heath, 1982, 1983; Street, 1984, 1994; Vygotsky, 1962, 1978). This is appropriate for the study, as it recognises a wide variety of literate practices in the classroom, thus enabling me to account for the diversity of teacher practices. Therefore, it provides a useful perspective with which to study the case-study teachers’ knowledge and beliefs in the current context within which they work.

Sociocultural theory has its foundation in the work of Vygotsky (1962), who argued that language is learned in social interactions and is used for communication with others. His most significant contribution to teaching was his understanding that a child’s construction of knowledge is further developed through interaction with more-advanced or more-capable others in social interactions. The Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD) is defined as “the distance between the actual developmental level as determined by independent problem solving and the level of potential development as determined through problem solving under adult guidance, or in collaboration with more capable peers” (Vygotsky, 1978, p. 86). Thus, interactions with assistance (or scaffolding) from the expert other enables the learner to achieve more than they could alone. This scaffolding can be used by teachers to help students move to independence by the arrangement of a task—in the case of this inquiry, a reading lesson. Therefore, studying a teacher’s choice of the structure of the reading lesson and the student grouping might help to determine the teacher’s beliefs about learning to read.

Scribner and Cole’s (1981, 1988) anthropological research of an isolated community in Liberia, the Vai, set out to discover how different social situations affect or change human thought. They found that literacy is not “simply knowing how to read and write…but applying the knowledge for specific purposes in specific contexts of use” (Scribner & Cole, 1981, p. 236). Their research found that the uses
of literacies or practices in different situations have their own distinct set of skills that are specific to each situation. However, they concluded that the skills used in these literacies alone are not sufficient; rather, it is the conditions of learning and the literacies’ use that predict the skills. A contribution of their findings to education research is that understanding that students come to school with established literacies outside of the school, and use a different set of skills and literacies in the school situation, requires a broader understanding of literacy than the unidimensional reading skills that have governed research, practice and policy (Freebody, 2007).

During the debates, the New Literacy Studies (NLS) movement gained ground (Barton & Hamilton, 2000; Gee, 2004; Luke, 2004). This movement had its genesis in the work of Heath (1982, 1983) and Street (1984, 1994), whose research in literacy originated in the adult, family and community contexts (Perry, 2012). Street’s (1984) work conceptualised literacy in two ways. The first was as an autonomous model seen as a set of skills, something one has or has not. The autonomous model is synonymous with formal literacy, under which traditional instruction for a set of skills is employed and “the ways in which reading and writing are taught or the way literacy skills are assessed have been largely in line with the autonomous model” (Street, 1993, p. 82). The second way was as an ideological model, which recognises literacy as a set of practices, or something one “does” and uses in specific contexts. Street (2003) suggests that the “ways in which teachers or facilitators and their students interact is already a social practice that affects the nature of the literacy being learned and the ideas about literacy held by participants” (p. 78). Street’s work on literacy as a social practice positions this research inquiry in the social context of the classroom to further understand information gathered from interviews.

Using a sociocultural approach to literacy, new literacy studies conceptualise literacy as social practice (Barton & Hamilton, 2000; Heath, 1982, 1983; Street, 1984, 1993). Heath’s (1982, 1983) ethnographical study in home literacies viewed a “literacy event” as “any occasion in which a piece of writing is integral to the nature of the participants’ interactions and their interpretive processes” (Heath, 1982, p.
Her study shows that “in such literacy events, participants follow socially established rules for verbalizing what they know from and about the written material. Each community has rules for socially interacting and sharing knowledge in literacy events” (Heath, 1982, p. 50).

Barton and Hamilton (2000) argue that literacy has a role in social practices, and that “the basic unit of a social theory of literacy is that of literacy practices” (p. 7), which are not observable due to “values, attitudes, feelings and social relationships” (p. 7). They contend that literacy events “are activities where literacy has a role”, and are therefore observable episodes, which usually involve written text or talk around written text. In contemporary times, however, it is important to think in terms of literacy events as including “a range of semiotic systems” (p. 9) including maps, non-text-based images and language. This has implications for understanding a broader range of resources used in the classroom literacy events studied.

The New Literacies movement is a shift from the New Literacy Studies to include the different literacies required of the 21st-century learner, such as critical literacies, digital literacies, information literacies and computer literacies (for example, see Lankshear, 1994; Lankshear & Knobel, 2003, 2008, 2011; Leu, Kinzer, Coiro, & Cammack, 2004; Tan, 2006). New literacies include skills and strategies built on traditional literacies to engage with these texts. Leu (2001) explains, “New literacies are new literacies not because they appear now but because they will continuously appear as new technologies for information and communication regularly emerge and as people regularly construct new envisionments for how they might be used” (p. 10). Lankshear and Knoble (2011) refer to New Literacies as “practices that are mediated by ‘post-typographic’ forms of text” (p. 28). They further explain that where information and communication technologies exist, the challenge for educators is adapting pedagogies and teacher knowledge to incorporate these new literacies to mediate learning (p. 29).

Multimodal texts have proliferated in recent years (Walsh, 2010, 2011). Though non-digital multimodal texts, such as picture books and maps, have been used in schools for some time, new technologies pose challenges for educators to
reconsider literacy. Multimodal texts became a focus for research (Christie & Martin, 1997; Jewitt, 2009; Kress, 2000, 2003; Unsworth, 2001; van Leeuwen & Jewitt, 2001) to create connections between texts, the curriculum, and a language with which to describe them. Under sociocultural approaches, recognition that literacy is made up of multiple literacies is an important foundation. Moreover, visual literacy (Anstey & Bull, 2006; Bull & Anstey, 2005; Kress, 2000; Sharpe & Dieter, 1999; Zammit, 2000), critical literacy (Lankshear, 1994), information literacy, and digital literacy are in addition to traditional literacy to consume and create information-rich texts (Tan, 2006).

Multiliteracies

The *New London Group* (NLG) (1996, 2000), a group of international academics from various disciplines, met in 1994 to discuss “the state of literacy pedagogy” (1996, p. 62) and propose a new way of looking at meaning-making within the changing and increasingly digital, global and multimodal society. The group suggested that citizens of the changing world needed to be flexibly literate in more complex ways than ever before to effectively communicate and interact with the multimodal environment and each other. Their original paper addressed the need for a change in literacy education to respond to the changes in society occurring at the time and predicted for the future, and the meaning-making processes involved in existing within and interacting with the world in various contexts (Cope & Kalantzis, 2009). They offered a new interpretation of literacies that recognised the multiple modes of meaning available to students in many contemporary classrooms in addition to the printed text both inside and outside the classroom. They argued that representation of the varieties of texts were available across different social and cultural communities and therefore the array of socially diverse texts should be as important as digital and non-digital multimodal texts (Boyd & Brock, 2011, p. 1). The group viewed literacy through grammars and design of semiotic systems, and provided a framework for literate practice. Multiliteracies pedagogy drew on Vygotsky’s idea of ZPD in its use of situated practice using overt instruction. Using Vygotsky’s argument for collaboration, the NLG stated that there
was a need for overt instruction to supplement and to improve “conscious awareness and control of what they acquired” (Cope & Kalantzis, 2000, p. 32).

The New London Group coined the term “Multiliteracies” to refer to their manifesto and subsequent book of papers, but the term has recently become more widely used to encompass the spirit of reading multimodal and digital texts with a critical stance. Multimodal texts have been a part of the NSW Board of Studies syllabus documents; however, the Australian Curriculum: English, brought into full effect in 2014, pays particular attention to these skills in reading and creating. Therefore, at the time of this study, teachers were preparing for these changes.

The multiliteracies era is playing an important role in classrooms today in terms of using, examining and creating multimodal texts, as well as in various professional-development and research agendas to support teachers in teaching and mediating learning with multimodal texts that extend beyond traditional reading (Cope & Kalantzis, 2000, 2009; Mills, 2006; Unsworth, 2001). The connection between multiliteracies research and its application to classrooms is of importance to ensure that no student is disadvantaged by the dominant traditional literacies pervasive in schools today that are inadequate for the 21st century (Kitson, Fletcher & Kearney, 2007). Discovering teachers’ understandings of the nature of reading in the multiliteracies era will be important as the teachers are challenged by the rollout of the Australian Curriculum: English.

As outlined above, sociocultural theory views learning as socially based, and stresses the importance of the social environment within which literacy learning takes place. Hence, this inquiry studies teachers’ knowledge through their own words in the interviews and vignettes, and observes their reading pedagogy in the social context of their classrooms. This study does not attempt to examine the teachers’ understandings of multiliteracies theory or a particular reading theory, but rather attempts to understand their knowledge of the nature of reading and how it is recontextualised in their classrooms with their own students.
Methodology

Taking a multiple case study approach, this research project employed qualitative research methods. Qualitative data-collection techniques such as observations, interviews and artefact collection were used to provide a thick description of each case (Stake, 1983, 1995, 2000; Yin, 2009). Multiple strategies were employed to ensure trustworthiness of the data-collection and analysis. Data analysis was employed throughout the data-collection process, and early interpretations were presented to the case-study teachers.

Assumptions

A number of assumptions are connected to this study: first, that teachers’ beliefs and knowledge cannot be captured in an inventory of prepared questions due to the restrictions this might place describing or defining them. This study sought to describe the relationship between teachers’ beliefs and knowledge about reading, not determine a single construct. The teachers’ intended actions and decisions, verbal explanations and classroom actions form part of their beliefs and knowledge (Pajares, 1992; Talbot & Campbell, 2014) in addition to the mandated curriculum within which these teachers work. The methodology used in this study, including observations in the classroom, may present some interruption to the normal classroom culture, though all efforts will be undertaken to minimise this. These methods, however, are essential to understanding the complexity of teachers’ conceptualisations. Third, reading and writing will be closely related in the middle-primary years classroom activities and might be difficult to separate as the teacher selects their lessons; however, where the focus leans toward reading a text and responding by writing, this will be counted as “reading”.

Outline of the thesis

The Literature Review chapter will describe relevant research for this study and identify the gap the study aims to address. It provides an outline of research undertaken regarding reading teachers’ practice and the disciplinary and pedagogical knowledge required.
The case-study approach used in this research project is presented in Chapter 3 - Methodology. This chapter presents the methods used to design, collect and analyse the data. It considers the conceptual framework from which the project seeks to respond to the research questions, and outlines how the ethical considerations and requirements for the project and the participants were met.

The case-study teachers and their teaching and learning spaces are introduced in Chapter 4. Thereafter, individual chapters (Chapters 5, 6 and 7) present descriptions of the data collected with respect to the research questions, including data collected through interviews, observations and artefact collection, and the actions and decisions they made during observations. Interpretative summaries are also presented within each case study to share the researcher’s interpretations of the data collected across all sources.

The final chapter in this thesis discusses the main findings across the teachers’ cases and responds to the research questions and the literature reviewed in Chapter 2. Study significance and recommendations for further study are also provided.
Chapter 2 - Literature Review

Introduction

Literacy has been discussed in Chapter 1 and is presented as the social practice of a range of knowledge and skills to engage with reading and writing practices. Reading as part of being a literate person has varying definitions, which are contentious and culturally and historically laden (Freebody, 2007). Freebody (2007) illustrates the definitional issues with literacy and reading, and presents varying definitions from sources such as literacy policy, UNESCO and several researchers. For the purposes of this research study, reading will be defined to include bringing meaning to a text, which may consist of printed or multimodal material, decoding and sound/letter correspondence.

This study is concerned with middle-primary school\(^2\) teachers’ current conceptualisations of teaching reading in this, the multiliteracies era (Jones & Relf, 2004; Lotherington & Chow, 2006; Turbill, 2002). A focus for this study is the nexus between teachers’ understanding of the nature of reading and their reading pedagogy as it is manifested in their classroom reading practices (Lotherington & Chow, 2006).

Three areas of research are reviewed in this chapter. The first section reviews the body of research about a) literacy teachers’ knowledge and beliefs about reading and learning to read and teacher identity. Alignment toward particular reading approaches is influenced by teachers’ knowledge, beliefs and experiences (Coburn, 2005). Therefore, reviewing this research will provide insights into what underpins teachers’ literacy pedagogy (Cunningham & Fitzgerald, 1996).

The second section addresses what informs or shapes teachers’ practice from influences such as knowledge of literacy theories and reading research and current instructional practice that middle-primary reading teachers use. Chen and Derewianka (2009) argue that the body of research in the field of literacy is passed on in policies and curriculum. In turn, these tend to shape and influence the

\(^2\) Years 3 and 4 students are aged approximately 8-10 years
classroom activities and choices for the literacy teacher through professional readings and resources.

The third section reviews the literature related to literacy teachers’ classroom practice as a recontextualisation of their understandings and beliefs of good classroom practices. These understandings and beliefs have been developed through their own experiences, professional-development about reading-instruction and may be constrained by policy at the national, state or school level.

**The literacy teacher**

Teaching literacy is a complex task—increasingly so as the definition of literacy, particularly reading, has broadened. So too has the work of the literacy teacher, as teaching “reading” and “writing” includes reading digital, multimodal and visual texts for the 21st century (Cope & Kalantzis, 2009; Freebody, 1992; Freebody & Luke, 1990; Harste, 2003; The New London Group, 1996, 2000; Unsworth, 2001; Unsworth & Chan, 2009). Teaching reading requires a combination of knowledge and beliefs, assumptions, interests and experiences (Allington & Johnston, 2000; Coburn, 2005; Flynn, 2007) that underpin the literacy teachers’ pedagogy and influences their choice of resources (Gove, 1983; Hammond & Macken-Horarik, 2001; Harste & Burke, 1977; Snyder, 2008; van Kraayenoord & Paris, 1994; Weaver, 1980). Some are concerned that without a clear definition of reading, a teacher might adopt a commercially created system and therefore adopt the beliefs and definitions of the publisher (Department of Education, 2000; Weaver, 1980).

Teacher beliefs and knowledge

Literacy teachers’ beliefs and knowledge about reading have been a focus for many researchers (Anders & Evans, 1994; Fang, 1996; Cunningham & Fitzgerald, 1996; Pajares, 1992; Talbot & Campbell, 2014). For some, the impetus to study teachers’ beliefs and knowledge is to understand the effects on student learning (Comber, 2005; DeFord, 1985; Duggar, 2006; Fang, 1996; Flynn, 2007). Others are motivated to understand the effectiveness of professional development in literacy
instruction (Gallant & Schwartz, 2010; Westwood, Knight, & Redden, 2005) or in multiliteracies pedagogy in particular (Cloonan, 2007; Kitson et al., 2007; Mills, 2006).

Pre-service teachers’ knowledge and beliefs about reading have also been studied to evaluate the change in beliefs and knowledge throughout their studies; this research has aimed to improve teacher education and to better prepare beginning teachers for teaching reading in their classrooms (Courtland & Leslie, 2010; Leslie, 2010; Many, Howard, & Hoge, 2002; Nierstheimer, Hopkins, Dillon, & Schmitt, 2000). Pre-service teachers’ beliefs are based on early experiences as a student and are of interest to researchers to discover how they internalise their teacher education (Adoniou, 2015; Pajares, 1992). The impact on beliefs and knowledge of pre-service teachers’ classroom training experiences during their education then have implications and provide a motivation to research in-service teachers. The study of teacher beliefs to first examine and then discern changes or shifts of beliefs that drive practice is likely to create change in education training and in-service professional development (Pajares, 1992).

However, what is of interest to this study is in-service teachers’ conceptualisations of reading in the middle years. Teachers’ beliefs and knowledge are developed early in their experiences, as students and are unlikely to be changed by “persuasion” (Pajares, 1992, p. 309). He suggests that beliefs are resistant to change; however, knowledge might be open to change with “evaluation and critical examination” (Pajares, 1992, p. 311). Therefore, through examination of ones’ own beliefs in their teacher education and as an in-service teacher, and knowledge built from new schemata through professional readings and professional development, these might change (Cunningham & Fitzgerald, 1996).

Reported methodology

Researchers have used a range of methods to study teachers’ conceptualisations of reading. The definitions about beliefs and knowledge of reading are conjectured across disciplines (Pajares, 1992). In his seminal review of the research about teachers’ beliefs and knowledge, Pajares (1992) argued that beliefs and knowledge are inextricably intertwined and are often discussed
together. Cunningham and Fitzgerald (1996) further explained that research methods are “linked inextricably to the kind of knowledge being studied” (p. 58). Quantitative survey tools or qualitative interviews and/or observations have been the main methods used in literacy research.

Quantitative methods have been developed to determine a teacher’s theoretical orientation to literacy and reading. Harste and Burke (1977) developed a structured interview to interpret teachers’ theoretical orientation to reading. They interviewed teachers with reading data in the form of cards containing miscues, which were based upon three categories of theoretical orientations of reading: decoding, skills, and whole language. Their research prompted others to design quantitative tools for research studies using these categories (DeFord, 1985; Gove, 1983; Westwood et al., 2005). These tools attempt to classify teachers’ theoretical orientations under reading-processing models such as “top down” versus “bottom up”, or “phonics” versus “skills” versus “whole language” based approaches. For example, DeFord (1985) developed the Theoretical Orientation to Reading Profile (TORP), and Westwood and colleagues (2005) developed the Teachers’ Beliefs About Literacy Questionnaire (TBALQ). Both the TORP and the TBALQ contain pre-selected statements about literacy learning and instruction with a Likert-type scale for teachers to indicate their agreement; the questionnaire typically focuses on the traditional notions of reading with “teachers’ attitudes and beliefs concerning how children learn literacy skills and how instruction should be provided for beginning readers” (Westwood et al., 2005, p. 79). These tools, however, do not allow for the current broader definitions of literacy that include the complex nature of multiple, visual or critical literacies and the reading of multimodal texts; nor do they account for decisions in the middle-years classroom.

The instruments mentioned above were developed as self-reporting tools and do not necessarily reflect the classroom decisions a teacher makes. As a singular self-reporting tool, these inventories do not account for the “contexts under which specific beliefs become attitudes or values that give fruition to intention and behaviour” (Pajares, 1992, p. 327). Further, Pajares (1992) stated that using these in addition to interviews, “responses to dilemmas and vignettes, and
observation of behaviour” (p. 327) provide a richer and more accurate inference about teachers’ beliefs and knowledge.

Much research has used qualitative methods to explore teachers’ beliefs about reading and literacy (for example, Courtland & Leslie, 2010; Gove, 1983; Harste & Burke, 1977; Richardson et al., 1991). These methods include observations and interviews to determine teachers’ beliefs about teaching reading, and to discover the complex relationship between teachers’ beliefs and their classroom practice.

Teachers’ practice has been observed in an effort to better understand the complex nature of reading pedagogy (Adoniou, 2015; Ethel & McMeniman, 2000; Flynn, 2007; Garrett, 2007; Richardson et al., 1991), and have sometimes been used in conjunction with an interview survey tool. For instance, Gove (1983) developed a Conceptual Framework of Reading Interview for teachers using the information-processing reading models, including top-down, bottom-up and interactive, with the Harste and Burke reading data. She stated, the “implicit theories of learning to read process held by individuals can be inferred from their descriptions of their teaching behavior and the reasons they give” (p. 261). The interview questions encourage teachers to determine their beliefs about learning to read and their reading instruction. Interestingly, her findings indicated that few teachers held an interactive conceptual model.

Garret’s (2007) study researched definitions of reading, the participants’ beliefs about how they and their children learned to read and for what purposes they read. Ninety-three participants (six teachers, 40 parents and 47 students) from a large private school in first-, third- and fifth-grade classrooms were interviewed and teachers were observed for 30 minutes in a self-identified “reading/language arts” lesson. Looking through a sociocultural framework, Garret discovered that the participants viewed reading as an action/skill and that they learned mostly through formal reading experiences. Interestingly, Garret’s study found that there was a “high level of agreement about defining reading and those definitions did relate to instructional methods observed in the classroom” (p. 84). Garret stated that defining reading is somewhat difficult (p. 84), and as there was only one half-hour
observation of the teachers’ practice, Garret suggested that further research is needed to gain a fuller picture. While this research explores to some extent the relationship between the teachers’ definitions of reading and their classroom practice, reading multimodal texts was not explored.

Baccus’s (2004) study of fourth- and fifth-grade teachers and students from 25 schools in one urban district sought to find the relationship between teachers’ and students’ attitudes toward reading and reader self-efficacy and their instructional practice. Her study of teachers, found that their beliefs about reading varied with their own personal reading habits, educational training, experience and teaching context. Furthermore, the choice of resources, assessment practices, and grouping of students was aligned with their instructional practice rather than their attitude. Baccus suggested that this might be due to the context of the district and curricular mandates for the teachers involved. Baccus used a number of surveys to gain much of her data and interviewed only three teachers (all early-career). A recommendation from this research was that observations be included in further research due to the possible issues with trustworthiness of the self-reports.

Richardson et al. (1991) studied 39 elementary teachers using interviews and observations in self-identified comprehension lessons prior to a professional development program. Their findings showed that teachers’ beliefs about learning and teaching were “melded together” (p. 565-566), and identified a dimension between a skills approach and a literature approach. Those whose theoretical orientation was closer to the word and skills approach believed that “learning to read involved learning a set of skills” (p. 565), through practice in word-attack skills and working on vocabulary. At the other end of the dimension, teachers believed that students learned to read through reading, and that the teachers’ role was to motivate their students to read. The study found that teachers’ interview data provided a consistency for prediction of classroom practices in the teaching of comprehension. In some cases the teachers’ responses in the beliefs interview were contradictory when matched to the dimensions developed by the researchers, but they stated that this might be attributed to the researchers’ analytic framework rather than an inconsistency in the teachers’ own framework. For these teachers,
the inconsistencies accounted for “mismatches between beliefs and practices” (p. 576), which they suggested might be due to changes experienced by the teachers in their recent professional development. Richardson et al. (1991) suggested, due to their finding of a relatively strong relationship between the findings from the beliefs interviews and the observed classroom practice in comprehension instruction; that a multiple-choice measure might be an ineffective tool to predict instruction, therefore, an interview might be more appropriate.

A teachers’ professional knowledge is shaped by a variety of factors, and is based on different epistemological and pedagogical assumptions (Coburn, 2005). It is built from their schooling and initial teacher training, and changes as they gain more experience and reflect on their practices or are introduced to new information through professional development (Adoniou, 2015; Chen & Derewianka, 2009; Coburn, 2005; Dudley-Marling, 2005; Turbill, Butler, Cambourne & Langton, 1995). Their pedagogical practice and effectiveness in teaching is influenced by their knowledge (Coburn, 2005; Jones & Chen, 2012), and might be adjusted to the needs of their students (Allington & McGill-Franzen, 2004; Comber, 2005; Dudley-Marling, 2005; Hammond & Macken-Horarik, 2001).

Two important aspects to teaching reading are pedagogical and content knowledge. The connection between these is likely to influence student outcomes. Student outcomes have been studied in relation to teachers’ content knowledge (Adoniou, 2015; Binks, 2008; Duggar, 2006; Hammond & Macken-Horarik, 2001; Jones & Chen, 2012; Joshi et al., 2009) with particular interest in components such as phonemic awareness, phonics, spelling, grammar and writing conventions. Some studies have focused on the components of beginning reading that strongly align with the US reports (McCutchen, Abbott et al., 2002; McCutchen, Harry et al., 2002), and are typically targeted at early readers or interventionist reading rather than the complex task of reading in the middle years. In contrast, Flynn’s (2007) study of three primary teachers in the UK found that the teacher’s success demonstrated

the rich complexity of the processes involved in literacy teaching and
the fact that it has perhaps more to do with teacher behaviour, teacher
subject knowledge and teacher-pupil interaction than it has to do with following a set of teaching objectives. (Flynn, 2007, p. 145)

The relationship between teacher beliefs and knowledge and their practice is important to understand in reading, as it provides possible explanations of effective practice and the potential impact on student learning (Fang, 1996). Research in this area provides varying explanations for inconsistency between teachers’ beliefs about reading and their instructional practices. Some research has stated reasons for this outside of their literacy program such as “classroom life”, where behaviour management, classroom routine, the varying abilities of students and social or emotional issues can affect their intended practices in addition to the availability of textbooks (Fang, 1996). Pajares (1992) suggested that teachers “often teach the content of a course according to the values held of the content itself” (p. 309-310), which that may be inconsistent with their own beliefs and knowledge.

The studies above demonstrate the ways teachers’ beliefs and practice are explored through various methodologies. The common themes appear to be 1) beliefs and knowledge are difficult to separate and often reflect a theoretical orientation to reading, 2) teachers’ stated beliefs and declared knowledge are mostly consistent with their classroom practice and 3) the reasons for contradictions might include matters such as mandated materials or curriculum, or the nature of professional development on offer.

This research project aims to add to the body of research concerning the nature of the relationship between teachers’ beliefs and knowledge of reading and their classroom practice.

Teacher identity

Teacher identity has been described in literature as the way in which a person is recognised in certain situations (Gee, 2001). Gee (2001) suggested a framework of four perspectives of identity to understand how a person is viewed or is a part of a group. A “nature perspective” is something over which an individual has no control and which is forced upon them; for example, gender or genes. A position which one is given as a result of “laws, rules, traditions or ...authorities” (p.
102) is the “institutional perspective”. The “discursive perspective” is the way that individuals “treat, talk about, and interact” (p. 103) with a person but cannot be by themselves; for example one cannot “be” charismatic, one is perceived that way by others through one’s interaction with them. Finally, the “affinity perspective” is part of being from an affinity group, whether they are close in proximity to you or not, where there are a distinct set of practices that are understood to be shared. Gee stated that these four perspectives interrelate and are not discrete.

McDougall (2010) studied teacher identity as it related to changing views of literacies in the Queensland context. She interviewed 26 regional teachers from various backgrounds, roles and experiences with the aim to discover the teachers’ “voice” in the time of the reform. Using Gee’s definitions of identity outlined above, three key discourses—traditional, survival and futures-oriented—were discovered. The traditional teachers, mostly early-childhood and lower-grade primary educators, believed their role to be advancing reading and writing skills and did not wish to embrace the new literacies, whereas the futures-oriented teachers had more knowledge of and confidence in using new media in their literacy program. These teachers embraced the teaching of literacy using technologies (McDougall, 2010, p. 684), and found that using new media in literacy activities engaged students who were otherwise “disengaged from traditional reading and writing activities” (p. 684). This study showed that traditional literacy discourses still pervade the teaching of literacy, and that some of the teachers were reluctant to take on new media in their literacy programs as they perceived that their reading and writing might suffer under curriculum change. This is especially pertinent at the time of this research within the context of the Australian Curriculum and new English syllabus being introduced in New South Wales.

Teachers’ identity is related to their knowledge and beliefs about teaching and learning, and their content knowledge. Teachers who are connected to a traditionalist approach toward teaching literacy might see their role as advancing reading and writing (McDougall, 2010) and prioritise “the basics”. This is also connected to their epistemology and their understandings of learning, which tends to align with the exogenic view of reading, where skills are practiced in drill form as
part of classroom practice (Many et al., 2002). Teachers who view reading and learning to read with a constructivist lens might facilitate classroom activities where students construct their meaning through classroom activities.

**Concepts informing literacy teachers’ practices**

To explore teachers’ conceptualisations of reading, it is important to understand the underpinning literacy theories, how knowledge about them is delivered and how they have the potential to influence teachers’ beliefs and practices.

Disciplines of reading knowledge

The body of knowledge about reading reveals that knowledge about literacy and language has developed over time and through different disciplines. These disciplines (anthropology, psychology, sociology, linguistics, literary and media studies, critical theory) or hybrids such as psycholinguistics and sociolinguistics offer their own concepts, definitions and understandings of language and its development (Alexander & Fox, 2013; Chen & Derewianka, 2009; Kelder, 1996). The ways these disciplines approach the building of knowledge and theories also influence the type of research that is conducted (Alexander & Fox, 2013; Chen & Derewianka, 2009; Cunningham & Fitzgerald, 1996); hence, they promote their own contribution to the field (Alexander & Fox, 2004, 2013; Chen & Derewianka, 2009; Snyder, 2008). These paradigms shape studies and select particular data-collection resources that align with their ontological and epistemological stance.

For instance, psychology and the sciences define reading as a hierarchical set of skills, and the building of these theories are rooted in the scientific method (Lyon, 1998, p. 15). This view proposes reading as decoding text in a hierarchical way from the smallest unit to the largest (i.e. from the letter to the word, phrase, sentence, paragraph and finally whole text), with the reader mastering accuracy, fluency, automaticity and prosody in the decoding process that ultimately leads to comprehension (Dole, Duffy, Roehler, & Pearson, 1991; Kuhn, Schwanenflugel, & Meisinger, 2010; Paris, 2005, Sadoski & Paivio, 2007).
Positivist researchers typically select an isolated and decontextualised skill or practice and conduct research in controlled centres or environments, such as laboratories, using experimental methods with a large number of participants to make generalisations across the population (Snyder, 2008, p. 55). This paradigm typically builds on scientific theories using quantitative data-collection procedures and methods. Trialled and tested tools to collect data and statistical-analysis methods examine these unidimensional print-reading skills to determine the results of tests, and thus are removed from the complex nature of reading. However, these studies do not reflect classroom practice in a complex environment (Cormack, 2011; Dudley-Marling, 2005; Freebody, 2007; Lyon, 1998). They do not account for the relationship between the student, the reading material and the teacher (Cormack, 2011).

In contrast, the constructivist, transformative or pragmatic paradigms used in the social sciences and humanities build knowledge that explains the social behaviour in a set situation (Chen & Derewianka, 2009, p. 239). Social sciences and humanities view literacy as couched in social and cultural practices, rather than as the mastery of one practice or skill (Barton & Hamilton, 2000; Freebody, 1992; Freebody & Luke, 1990; Heath, 1983; Luke & Baker, 1991; Street, 1984, 1994).

Qualitative ethnographical and anthropological (Heath, 1983; Street, 2004) studies are common in these disciplines, as they view language and its uses and practices in context to understand or unpack them. Some researchers (for example Barton & Hamilton, 2000; Heath, 1983; Street, 2004) focus on the “literacy event” as it occurs naturally when using literacy in a school, home or community. Research in an authentic setting is a preferred qualitative method of constructivist or pragmatic social science researchers (Mertens, 2005; Snyder, 2008, p. 55), as it tells the story of the participants in their complex natural settings (Chen & Derewianka, 2009, p. 236).

The reports presented in Chapter 1, such as the NRP (NICHD, 2000) and the Teaching Reading Report (Commonwealth of Australia, 2005a), demonstrate the psychology discipline’s choice of including only experimental and quasi-experimental research as “evidence” (Cormack, 2011). These reports have been
widely publicised and privileged in the media and have influenced policy. However, the research that informs these reports has been focused on beginning reading skills for students with learning or reading difficulties or disabilities as taught at the primary levels (Paris, 2005). In contrast, qualitative or ethnographic studies typically take place over time in a classroom context and describe a set of practices that a person uses. Teachers’ reading pedagogy is influenced by their understanding of how students learn to read, even if their knowledge of reading theories might be implicit (see Tracey & Morrow, 2012, pp. 4-6).

Literacy theories

Reading has been widely researched and described with some complexity since the early 1950s, although early research on learning in schools goes back to the early 20th century (Alexander & Fox, 2004, 2013; Allington & McGill-Franzen, 2004; Hempenstall, 2005). Typically the research aligns with a particular perspective on learning (Alvermann, Unrau & Ruddell, 2013, p. 693-695). The most common overarching learning theories that inform reading theory are behaviourism and constructivism (Alvermann, Unrau & Ruddell, 2013). There is little agreement between researchers about reading theories (Sadoski & Paivio, 2007). Researchers have developed theoretical models of reading and literacy and articulated processes of reading and research in volumes dedicated to understanding reading and literacy and its development (for example Alvermann, Unrau, & Ruddell, 2013; Ruddell & Unrau, 2004; Weaver, 1998).

Reading process models

Reading was often presented as information processing models to show how comprehension occurs between the text and the reader (Sadoski & Paivio, 2007; Vacca et al., 2006). These models are commonly categorised as top-down, bottom-up and interactive. While they do not account for social interactions in reading, they provide an explanation of the process of reading for teachers to begin exploring their beliefs and knowledge of reading and to enable them to assist students when there is a breakdown in comprehension (Alvermann, Unrau & Ruddell, 2013, p. 691; Ruddell & Unrau, 2004).
The bottom-up models propose that reading proceeds from the part to the whole. According to this model, the skills required in “cracking” the alphabetic code, word-formation skills, phonics and grammar are the building blocks of reading and learning to read, and of comprehension (Snyder, 2008). These models are data-driven, relying on the printed word. This traditional model of reading is usually aligned with the psychology discipline and the behaviourist learning theory that was at its most popular between 1900 and the 1950s (Luke, 2014). As can be seen from the literacy debates, this is strongly aligned with phonics and direct instruction (Gough, 1972). This theory connects comprehension to its understanding of language development as a sequential and hierarchical set of skills.

Top-down models, such as the whole language philosophy, understand the reading process as a language process (Asselin, 1995; Goodman, 1989; Goodman & Goodman, 1994; Smith, 1971, 1985). Grounded in the constructivist theory, the psycholinguistic approach understands that the language process uses three cueing systems (syntactic, semantic, graphophonic) and that language is learned through testing knowledge using prediction and hypotheses, rather than instruction of a systematically taught set of rules. This prediction-and-hypothesis testing has as its goal production of meaningful understanding, not accurate mechanical decoding of text.

The interactive processing models (Rumelhart, 1984) assume that the reading process is a combination of using print and the reader’s prior knowledge, and, in effect, is a combination of features of both bottom-up and top-down; in other words, the reader decodes letters and words and hypothesises their meaning from prior knowledge of the topic and language. Schema theory is also used to help explain the reading process (Rumelhart, 1984). Activating schemata, knowledge structures built from experience (McVee, Dunsmore & Gavelek, 2005), is at the core of comprehension in the cognitive model. Thus, language is learned by adapting and adding to existing schema about language. These model classes generally help explain the reading processes between text and reader from various theorists, but do not explain specific theoretical models. They are helpful as a beginning to explore teachers’ understanding of the reading process and instructional choices.
More recent models have been created that consider the sociocultural aspect of reading in the reading process in addition to the bottom-up and top down models thus explaining the meaning constructed when the reader engages with a text for a purpose. The basis of this model is that reading is a “meaning-construction process in the instructional context of the classroom” (Ruddell & Unrau, 2013, p. 1017). This model considers the knowledge and beliefs and the language and motivations of both student and teacher, and the classroom context within which the reading is taking place. This model considers the components of reading within the wider context of meaning making, and considers them developmentally appropriated.

Components of reading

In psychologically derived theories of reading, there are five basic components or constructs of reading: phonemic awareness, phonics, fluency, vocabulary and comprehension. Even though it is widely recognised that reading has broader definitions, these main components of reading feature prominently in reports (as outlined in Chapter 1), though the relationship between them is rarely addressed (Chen & Derewianka, 2009, p. 236). They are a major focus for student assessment and are often reported with respect to beginning reading or prevention of difficulties in learning to read.

Phonemic awareness and phonics

Phonemic awareness and phonics have been two of the most publicised components and are considered by some researchers as the remedy to fix the perceived decline in reading levels. Systematic and direct instruction of these components, are considered by some (for example Fielding-Barnsley, 2010; Joshi et al., 2009; Lyon, 1998; Maher & Richdale, 2008; McCutchen, Abbott et al., 2002; Strickland, 1998) to be essential in beginning reading instruction for later reading success. These studies focus on beginning reading, predominantly decoding to sound, and have been a focus for reports of reading that influence policy (Wheldall et al., 2005). One argument for this view is that “good readers employ context to aid overall comprehension, but not as an aid in the recognition of unfamiliar words”
and that readers should “decode letters to sounds in an increasingly complete and accurate manner” (Lyon, 1998, p. 17). However, Cambourne (2005) argues that decoding to sound is insufficient due to the complexity of the English language, using as an example the homonyms “use” and “use”, which are indistinguishable without context.

**Fluency**

Fluency is another contentious construct in reading due to the differences in definitions that focus on oral reading for accuracy, automaticity and prosody (Kuhn et al., 2010; Samuels, 2004) or accuracy of meaning (Cambourne, 2006b). Some suggest that word recognition allows the reader to extract meaning from the text more readily, and repeated oral reading improves fluency (Afflerbach, Pearson, & Paris, 2008; Kuhn et al., 2010; Snow et al., 1998). Others emphasise the ability to read fluently rather than with meaning. Goodman and Goodman (1994), in determining the type of miscues a reader makes while independently engaging in oral reading, demonstrate the use of language-cueing systems in comprehension. Similarly, Smith (1985) states that while reading paying close attention to the visual information presented creates “tunnel vision”, where the brain becomes overloaded with information and is unable to use non-visual cues to aid reading. Smith argues that reading with speed but accurate meaning rather than accurate attention to letters should be the goal of reading instruction (1985, p. 35).

In the context of the middle-primary years, and in particular in this inquiry project, these singular components do not adequately define the repertoire of reading practices (Cambourne, 2005). Moreover, Paris (2005) suggested that some reading skills are learned early and quickly, which he terms as highly constrained skills, such as phonemic awareness and letter knowledge. He suggests that others are less constrained such as oral-reading fluency, vocabulary and comprehension, being complex reading skills required in the middle years (Paris, 2005). Further, Goodman and Goodman (1994) state:

Too much research on language and language learning is still concerned with isolated sounds, letters, word parts, words and even sentences.
Such fragmentation, although it simplifies research design and the complexity of the phenomena under study, seriously distorts processes, tasks, cue values, interactions and realities. (p. 637)

These skills, however, exist at least in part in the New South Wales English syllabus documents (Board of Studies NSW, 1998b) used by the teachers at the time of this study. The outcomes for the middle years of primary from this syllabus are provided in Appendix P: Syllabus Reading Outcomes. These documents represent only a small portion of the skills and strategies a student in the middle years is required to use when reading. The literacy continuums developed by the education authority of New South Wales (NSW Department of Education and Communities, 2012) also reflect the priorities given to these earlier skills. Luke (1995) suggests that though these skills are necessary, they are not sufficient, particularly for the middle years when the shift to information texts occurs.

**Vocabulary**

A large vocabulary is required for good comprehension (Anderson & Freebody, 1979). However, the definition of vocabulary varies in its focus of word recognition or knowledge of word meaning. That is, some advocate for vocabulary controlled by phonic elements in basal readers and sight words that are memorised, which Nagy and Scott (2004) suggest is a “reductionist perspective” (p. 574) that does not account for the complexity of word knowledge taught in “authentic, meaningful, and integrated” ways (p. 574). Vocabulary or word study in the middle school years must be learned through means other than explicit vocabulary instruction that teaches definitions (Nagy & Scott, 2004). It is in the “fourth-grade slump” that variability in vocabulary to support comprehension poses risks for readers in understanding informational texts (Sanacore and Palumbo, 2008). Rather, young readers need knowledge of the meaning of words and the use of context in understanding vocabulary in literature and in content areas using informational texts. Students in the middle years require contextual instruction in the vocabulary of particular subject areas to comprehend and critically analyse the range of texts, and to construct their own in response to them (ACARA, 2010).
Comprehension

Comprehension, a common yet contentious reading construct, is widely researched, as are comprehension instructional strategies (Coiro, 2003a, 2003b; Dole et al., 1991; Leu et al., 2007; Rumelhart, 1984; Spires & Estes, 2002). The nature of comprehension is debated among researchers due to varying interpretations of its definition. It can be agreed that comprehension is arriving at meaning and is generally agreed to be the purpose of reading (Harste & Burke, 1977; Weaver, 1980, 2002). However, the different views as to how meaning is derived are the main focus for disagreement. Kintsch (2004) stated that the role of comprehension and measuring it as either text-derived or knowledge-derived cannot be separated (p. 1307). For an experienced reader, comprehension is “fluent, automatic, and easy” (Kintsch, 2004, p. 1323) using schemata and skills. However, for students, comprehension instruction is needed to “engage in active problem solving, knowledge construction, self-explanation, and monitoring” (p. 1323). Comprehension occurs between the reader and the text, and is considered successful if the reader is able to demonstrate comprehension by answering post-reading questions (Kintsch, 2004; Pressley, 2001).

Schema theory, from constructivist theory, has been used to explain the comprehension process, by which readers develop knowledge structures, known as schemata, which are used in language (Anderson & Pearson, 1984) as a strategy of using background or prior knowledge (Anderson & Freebody, 1979; Sadoski & Paivio, 2007). A main contribution to the comprehension field from schema theory is the use of the prior knowledge the reader brings to the text before, during and after reading. Though schema theory usually refers to an individual’s processes, McVee, Dunsmore & Gavelek (2005) revisited schema theory with a view to how social and cultural perspectives have contributed to a change in the understanding of schema theory since its inception (p. 540). They proposed that the social and language driven lives of students’ comprehension and meaning making are aided by sociocultural contexts and the use of language. This also includes external factors such as actions, talk and experiences referring to the embodied experiences as schema are constructed with internal connections between the world and
individual, and discussions and enacted practices through “material and ideal artifacts” (p. 555-556). This revisit to the understanding schema theory has implications for teachers as they negotiate the individual aspects of reading presented by schema theory, but literacy development is understood through social interaction.

Researchers of teachers’ beliefs and knowledge about reading comprehension often describe a continuum that typically falls between the behavioural and cognitive views of reading (Dole et al., 1991; Richardson, Anders, Tidwell, & Lloyd, 1991). For example, the behavioural stance explains that comprehension is decoding to sound accurately with automaticity and prosody, whereas the cognitive view requires interplay between the reader and the text (Richardson et al., 1991, p. 562; Tierney & Pearson, 1983; Weaver, 1980, p. 15).

Much recent research has been conducted about online reading comprehension, as the reading environment non-linear multimodal digital texts—poses important challenges for middle-years students. Online reading comprehension practices have been a focus for researchers where psychological views of reading have been brought together with the New Literacies, (Chen, 2009; Coiro, 2003a; 2003b; Coiro & Dobler, 2007; Leu & Reinking, et al., 2007; Leu & Zawilinski, 2007). These practices include traditional comprehension strategies (summarising, synthesising, evaluating) but are extended to incorporate the newer challenges of reading multimodal and visual texts such as websites and CD-Roms, as well as using search strategies and results from searches conducted (Coiro, 2003a). In terms of online reading comprehension, Leu and Zawilinski (2007) describe five major functions: developing questions or problems to solve in searching for information, using search engines, reading the results, critically evaluating the information located (especially when information can at times be presented in ways that appear authentic), and ascertaining authorship of websites. These are particularly pertinent for students in the middle years, when students are expected to engage with digital and online texts.
Reported middle-years reading instruction

Literacy teachers’ work in the classroom is a culmination of their knowledge and beliefs about reading and instruction with respect to their students’ needs. Before understanding teachers’ practice, an overview of the common reading instructional practices for the middle years is presented. The relationship between the reading and learning theories and classroom instruction that may guide teachers’ decisions about teaching the reading process is also presented.

Various instructional approaches have been used in the teaching of literacy. Common instructional methods in the teaching of reading include explicit instruction, direct instruction, cognitive apprenticeship, whole language approach, balanced approach, guided reading and modelled instruction. “Explicit instruction” is teacher-centred, with particular “behavioural and cognitive goals and outcomes” (Luke, 2014, p. 1), and is highly structured in basic skills. It can be used to address comprehension strategies and aids students in discussing what they are learning (Stahl, 1998, p. 47). Explicit instruction makes students aware of the purpose of the strategy being taught so they can “transfer the use of the strategy … to their ordinary reading” (Stahl, 1998, p. 46). “Direct instruction” (DI), a part of explicit instruction methods, is teacher-directed, but focuses on single components such as phonics, vocabulary and comprehension skills (Luke, 2014; Stahl, 1998). It includes “scripts” for teachers’ behaviour, and is followed by assessment of the specific skill taught. Direct instruction is aligned to the “scientific” studies based on behaviourist learning theories encountered in the NRP and the Teaching Reading Report and high-stakes testing. These types of programs in reading (for example, Spelling Mastery) have seen resurgence in the recent past to counteract perceived inadequacies in the teaching of reading. However, Luke (2014), in referring to the four resources model (Freebody & Luke, 1990), states that in the fourth-grade slump,

students who have achieved basic literacy whether through DI or other approaches, suffer marked problems engaging with reading comprehension, and the production and engagement with specialized texts of disciplinary and field knowledge. (Luke, 2014, p. 3)
This suggests that for most students, direct instruction is inadequate for higher-order thinking about text or, indeed, engaging with text critically when a repertoire of literate practices is required and when they need to meet the literacy demands of increasingly specialised fields. Explicit instruction of a comprehension strategy, however, can be found in literature-based programs where whole language theory is practised (Stahl, 1998). The importance of this is that students exposed only to direct instruction programs or literature-based programs where the strategies are not made explicit, may not benefit from the higher order thinking required in these contemporary times.

The literature also reveals the “cognitive apprenticeship” model from constructivism, which focuses on scaffolding students through the complex processes of reading. A holistic approach to teaching reading starts with the text as a whole; as the learner progresses, the teacher slowly transfers control to them. Recognising that cognition is socially situated within cultural context, this view emphasises social interaction, such as group work or students and teachers working together to comprehend the text (Stahl, 1998). The whole language approach shares some of these features: particularly, holistic reading, higher-order thinking while reading, social interaction and motivation. However, the instruction depends on and is guided by the needs and interests of the children. A “balanced approach” combines both explicit instruction and cognitive apprenticeship to suit the needs of the students and is close to Rumelhart’s Interactive theory (1984) but with a sociocultural aspect (Purcell-Gates, 1997). For the middle-primary years, this approach includes comprehension, vocabulary instruction (both definitional and contextual) and using tasks for higher-order thinking, critical reading and responding to texts (Pressley & Allington, 2015). Weaver (1998) suggested that “balanced” approaches to literacy appear to be a type of scale where reading skills are on one side and literature on the other, and that these are perceived as separate (p. 3). She suggested that reconsidering balance to include using the skills in conjunction with “actual reading—and with writing” (p. 3) steps away from the decontextualised mastery of skills.
A standard instructional method in the primary-school classroom is “guided reading”, which is used to teach reading skills and comprehension strategies. A key characteristic for guided reading is the use of small, homogeneous groups reading texts at instructional level. During guided reading, teachers might include comprehension-reading strategies (before, during, after) and activate prior knowledge, discuss or provide vocabulary, accuracy of reading or focus on phonics. Some resources might include levelled readers, literature, novels, newspapers or Internet websites, and teachers might assess students using running records, miscue analysis or anecdotal records (Tracey & Morrow, 2012, pp. 79, 177-178). Guided reading is sometimes confused with or mislabelled as “round-robin” oral reading, where students read taking turns and the focus is on practicing reading correctly rather than on learning skills and strategies to comprehend and analyse the text (Ash, Kuhn & Walpole, 2008), thus teachers’ knowledge of the differences in guided reading comprehension activities as opposed to round-robin oral reading ultimately provides opportunities for students to engage with comprehension strategies for complex texts.

What perhaps distinguishes the subset of guided reading aligned with a behaviourist approach from that aligned with a constructivist approach tends to be the activities that occur while in these groupings with these texts. For instance, guided reading using traditional strategies for so called “lower-ability” groups appears to be a standard way of teaching for these groups, rather than teaching in context with a more-sophisticated literature focus (Leslie, 2010; p. 145; Weaver, 1998; p. 55). However, research showing this type of limited literacy experience states that this has created a “rich man, poor man” situation with some readers (Weaver, 1998, p. 44-45).

Effective classrooms in the middle years use modelled, guided and independent strategies to support and extend students’ learning (Allington & Cunningham, 1996; Allington & Johnston, 2000). The classroom talk around modelled teaching is an important part of a literacy program, where teachers demonstrate and make explicit the reading process and strategies (Allington & Johnston, 2000).
Allington and Johnson (2000) provide an insight into common instructional features from effective teachers and propose that their practice reflects their beliefs about their students’ literacy learning beyond standardised testing.

- First, their classroom talk is plentiful and respectful, occurs between students, is modelled and taught deliberately by the teacher, is focused on the lessons, allows idea shaping, encourages further thinking, and encourages an inquiry process.

- Second, a variety of materials, including the students’ own writing, was employed. Teachers used non-traditional curriculum resources such as historical fiction, biographies, magazines and the Internet. These ensured "materials of appropriate complexity" (p. 15) and fostered high levels of engagement. Teachers also provided materials that had a connection to student lives through class trips or other student-focused activities. A literary emphasis on materials was used to promote "thinking and composing strategies" (p. 15) in addition to "just reading" (p. 15).

- Third, teachers are "planful opportunists” (p. 16) in their classroom, and although they plan their instruction, they take advantage of the teaching moment. Though there is constant instruction, it is only occasionally in front of the class and usually alongside students. Students were given choices to work on extended-time projects and integrated assignments.

- Finally, student work was evaluated for projects rather than singular achievements. Feedback for students was focused, and encouraged students to self-evaluate. Teachers were found to be explicit at the time, and for whom, it was needed. The teacher then needs to have the ability to know their students and the content well enough to provide opportunities for students in the ZPD.
Comprehension-strategies instruction

The key comprehension strategies discussed in the literature include varying numbers of key skills that deal with reading beyond the decoding level. Most studies identify predicting, inferring, questioning, monitoring and summarising as the key skills; others have included determining importance (Dole et al., 1991), visualising, activating prior knowledge (Cameron, 2009) or making connections, structure of genre, metacognition and graphic and semiotic organisers. While used in various combinations, the metacognitive processes used in these strategies connect the student with the text and activity, and allow them to think about their knowledge as a reader and as a learner. What is also common across all proposed skill sets is the use of explicit teaching.

Common comprehension strategies in the middle-years classroom include activities for before, during and after reading (Cameron, 2009; Wilhelm, Baker, & Dube, 2001). Encouraging the use of metacognitive strategies and background or prior knowledge, these activities ensure that all students have the topic or genre knowledge before engaging with a topic or text. The front-loading of concepts and vocabulary prior to reading motivate students during reading (Wilhelm et al., 2001). The strategy of using background or prior knowledge, as proposed in schema theory, is particularly important in lower-socioeconomic students (Anderson & Freebody, 1979). Others have also conducted research to determine comprehension strategies (Brown, Marsh, Craven & Cassar, 2005) used in middle school classrooms.

These reading-instruction methods, combined with beliefs and knowledge about reading and learning to read, are then recontextualised in the middle-years classroom through the teachers’ practice. In actuality, their pedagogy becomes their “knowledge in action”. Reading in a multiliteracies era requires these instructional methods to include multimodal texts, and may present shifts from these traditional instruction methods to include new pedagogies.
Reading in a multiliteracies era

Reading and writing in the multiliteracies era can no longer be thought of as simply decoding and coding a linear print text; instead, it includes various visual and digital forms (images, movies, websites). Therefore, the teaching and learning around these new visual texts must include ways of reading and designing as a way of meaning-making (both externally and internally) (Anstey & Bull, 2006). Multiliteracies is a model of literate practice and pedagogy that has been taken up by various authors, policy-makers and education trainers (for example Anstey & Bull, 2006; Bull & Anstey, 2005; Cope & Kalantzis, 2000; Unsworth, 2001; Unsworth & Chan, 2009; van Haren, 2010). It takes into consideration the design of multimodal texts, the metalanguage used to describe the texts, and the lives of the students where these texts are consumed. In the multiliteracies era, the challenges of teaching reading with multimodal and digital texts requires teachers to understand the skills and strategies to read the different semiotic systems (Turbill, 2002).

New literacy work has been pluralised to recognise an ever-increasing diversity of texts at the same time as changes in technologies produce global connectedness and hybrid texts (Cope & Kalantzis, 2000). The New Literacies (Coiro, 2003a, 2003b; Leu et al., 2004; Leu, Reinking, et al., 2007; Leu & Zawilinski, 2007) are described as skills and strategies to read and comprehend information that build on traditional literacies and refer to the social practice when participating in discourses in literacy practices, with particular reference to digital literacies. Comprehending digital texts demands digital literacies that address the need to locate, organise and analyse information specifically available via digital technology. Users are required to ascertain the credibility of the source (particularly websites); thus reading in the new literacies requires critical literacies to determine the authority or agenda from authors of the webtexts (Leu et al., 2004). These critical competencies play an important role when searching, selecting and synthesising information; these are some of the roles middle-years students are required to obtain.
This section has demonstrated that knowledge about the field of reading has different priorities and focus in the components of the reading process, particularly decoding and meaning-making, and the instructional methods suggested by these fields. Understanding reading as a set of skills or practices presents major differences in literacy teachers’ beliefs about reading and learning to read. Literacy teachers’ recontextualisation of beliefs and understandings in the classroom

Teachers’ reading pedagogy is a recontextualisation of their understandings and beliefs about the nature of reading and reading instruction. These understandings may be developed from their experiences as a student, in teacher training, continuing professional learning and of policy and research about reading-instruction.

Classroom research

Research about teachers’ reading-instruction practice tends to focus on the implementation of policy (Coburn, 2005; Hammond & Macken-Horarik, 2001; Harris, 2010; van Kraayenoord & Paris, 1994). Harris’s (2010) observational case study, which looked at a kindergarten teacher’s pedagogical choices, showed that the teacher’s reading program was influenced by policy in addition to time constraints and parent expectations, which seemed to differ from her own decision-making about literate practices. While Coburn’s (2005) investigation into influences on the teaching of reading showed that teachers are influenced by colleagues, school policy and school leaders, and that their own pedagogical practice might not match the state policy. Hammond and Macken-Horarik (2001) interviewed teachers in Sydney schools about their teaching strategies in their classrooms, and while they recognised the need to teach explicitly, there was a varied understanding of “explicit” teaching. At the time of their study there was little uptake of critical literacies or multiliteracies in these classrooms. More-recent research is urgently needed in NSW to determine any changes since their research was conducted.

The body of work by Comber and colleagues (Comber, 2005; Comber et al., 2001) aims to understand the pedagogical practices by teachers in low socioeconomic areas in South Australia and Victoria, with particular interest in
critical literate practices and multiliteracies. Their work shows teachers adjusting and redesigning curriculum to meet the needs of the students, and using their knowledge and beliefs to affect children’s learning. Comber (2005) discusses “discursive work” and how teachers direct children’s attention to their “meta-linguistic and meta-cognitive strategies” (p. 7). Perhaps one of the most important findings of this body of work is the implication for the need for middle-years teachers to conceive literate practice that moves beyond the “uni-dimensional skills set” (Comber et al., 2001, p. 269) so that students can move beyond reading and writing and “learn new concepts and information (and display such learning) through their textual practices” (p. 266). Comber found that the traditional notions of reading are insufficient to engage and extend student’s literate practices in the 21st century.

An updated picture of classroom practice in the age of multiliteracies is needed to discover the shifts in teacher practice, particularly in NSW. Teachers’ reading instruction in the time of change with the implementation of the Australian Curriculum is an important area of study to discern the practices and inform potential needs in professional development and teacher education. Therefore, understanding practices of teaching multiliteracies in the middle years in this time of change is of particular interest in understanding success in the later school years.

**Critical literacy**

Critical literacy has been an area of interest for researchers for some time (Freebody & Luke, 1990; Lankshear, 1994). Since the 1960s, understanding learning and language within a social environment has brought about change with respect to reading theories. Sociocultural and critical literacy have made profound contributions to reading theory and instruction today. As the definition of literacy and reading change to take into account the notion of literacy as “multiple” and as “social practice” with various ways of making meaning, so too does the role of the teacher to aid students to “interrogate text” (Harste, 2003, p. 10) to critically read texts to which they are exposed (Comber, 2005; Harste, 2003). The literacy needed to critically read a text requires much more than the “basic skills”. Thus, the four-resources model is helpful for teachers to conceptualise these literacies.
Chapter 2 - Literature Review

Multiliteracies and the Four Roles in the classroom

Perhaps the best-known work in contemporary literacy research is Multiliteracies, developed by the New London Group (NLG, 1996, 2000) and aimed at addressing the changing needs of literacy for the 21st century learner and includes visual literacy, digital literacy and critical literacy. To address how the design framework in Multiliteracies might work with pedagogical practice, four areas were identified and developed. The ‘how’ of the Pedagogy of Multiliteracies were designed as an aid to changing the traditional forms of literacy teaching to incorporate various ways of literacy learning that support the role literacy plays in today’s society: situated practice, overt instruction, critical framing and transformed practice (Cope & Kalantzis, 2000; 2009; Tan, 2006; van Haren, 2010).

Another consideration to reading in the 21st century was Freebody and Luke’s Four Roles (Freebody, 1992; Freebody & Luke, 1990), described earlier.

In recent times studies have compared the Multiliteracies pedagogy and the Four Roles Framework (Department of Education, 2000, Healy, 2004; Rush, 2004; Tan, 2006; Tan & Guo, 2009). They that suggest comparisons provide a connection to show the “repertoire of literacy skills and practices our children increasingly need” (Department of Education, 2000, p. 82). Studies concerning Multiliteracies and the four resources (Healy, 2004; Rush, 2004; Tan & Guo, 2009) have focused on the Pedagogy of Multiliteracies with particular interest in the use of information and communications technology (ICT) (Cloonan, 2007; Prestridge, 2007; Yelland, Cope, & Kalantzis, 2008). Research in classrooms with teachers and university educators concerned with the literacy curriculum (Kitson et al., 2007; Lotherington & Chow, 2006; Rush, 2004; Tan, 2006; Tan & Guo, 2009) has also been conducted to aid in the application of the Multiliteracies theory into classroom practice.

Tan (2006) provided a connection between the Pedagogy of Multiliteracies and the four resources literacy model to explain the changes in “reading” in the 21st century. She asserted that using a multiliteracy approach to teaching reading is more than using multimedia; rather, it requires teachers to use ICT with critical literacy to engage students in learning language. In their study with a teacher in Singapore with two classes of 14-year-old students, Tan and Guo (2009) used case-
study methodology with intervention to help the teacher begin to develop her practices and design literacy activities to “weave critical multimedia literacy” into her classes. Initially, Tan used her interpretive summaries from her observations of existing practice to discuss her impressions with the teacher. The intervention consisted of jointly constructed lessons with a focus on the four roles and the design elements of meaning-making from the multiliteracies shifting from print to multimedia text. Tan and Guo discovered that while the teacher was making changes in her teacher preparation, there was some contradiction between the new literacies introduced and the “institution of old learning” (p. 323), where print was the dominant resource. Although this study was conducted in Singapore, it suggests that even with intervention, there may be a resistance to teaching new literacies. With the increasing use of multimodal texts in the New South Wales syllabus, a study that reviews existing teacher practice is needed to discern if these are used in the middle-primary years.

Using the four-resources framework to investigate possible improvement of middle-school students' reading comprehension and critical awareness of texts, Rush (2004) focused on websites in a case study. The students read the information from the website, discussed Internet texts and wrote responses. An Informal Reading Inventory was administered both before and at the conclusion of the program to measure improvement in reading comprehension. This study illustrated possibilities for instruction in both comprehension and critical literacy using the Four Resources Model (Freebody & Luke, 1990); it also focused on an individualised, scaffolded intervention program in reading comprehension. The current study aims at providing a description of existing programmes during a whole-class situation.

**Summary**

This chapter has provided an overview of the literature regarding the complex work of a reading teacher. Beliefs and knowledge about reading and learning to read have been shown to be an important aspect in a teacher’s decisions about reading and success in the classroom and content knowledge has been shown to have the potential to improve student outcomes. The definitional differences
from various perspectives and the instructional practice aligned with them underpin teachers’ beliefs and practice. Research has shown that congruence between beliefs and knowledge on the one hand and practice on the other are influenced by various sources. Multiliterate practice with digital, visual and critical literacies has been researched with professional-development programs. However, there is little research that explores existing practices of the uptake of multiliteracies.

The chapter has positioned the research study in the relevant literature for teachers in the middle-primary years at this curriculum moment. The study aims to contribute to the understanding of the complex nature of teachers’ pedagogy and the decisions they make in planning, resourcing and prioritising for their students in the middle-primary years in New South Wales.

The following chapter will describe the methodological choices in the research design that are employed in this research project to best answer the research questions and will introduce the participants and their learning sites.
Chapter 3 - Methodology

Introduction

This study aims to understand how middle-primary teachers conceptualise reading in their classrooms. It explores the relationship between teachers’ reading pedagogy and their knowledge and beliefs about the teaching of reading. This chapter presents the methodology adopted for the study.

Within this chapter, the research questions are restated, the qualitative research design is presented and the three stages of data collection for each teacher are outlined. The methods of selection and recruitment of the case-study teachers and sites are detailed. The analysis techniques employed to examine the data are then discussed, and the final section of the chapter presents the ethical considerations and steps taken towards ensuring the trustworthiness of the research.

Restatement of research questions

The main research question guiding this study is:

*How do teachers conceptualise and practice teaching reading in a multiliteracies era?*

The sub-questions that aim to answer the overarching research question are:

1. *What do teachers understand about the nature of reading?*
   This question aims to describe the knowledge and beliefs that the teachers might draw on during their planning and implementation of classroom reading experiences.

2. *How do their professional practices align with these understandings?*
   This question aims to investigate the alignment between the case-study teachers’ stated knowledge and beliefs about reading and their reading pedagogy as observed in their classrooms.

3. *What is the nature of the relationship between teachers’ knowledge and beliefs, and practice in their teaching of reading?*
This final sub-question is designed to explicate relationships between the teachers’ stated and demonstrated understandings of reading pedagogy in their classrooms.

A description of the research design, research methods and methods for analysis used in this research are provided in the following sections.

**Research design**

The naturalistic inquiry paradigm was chosen for this research as it uses qualitative research methodology, specifically the case study, to discover the socially-constructed knowledge and beliefs of the participants (Mertens, 2005). Naturalistic inquiry has implications for how the study is conducted, as it involves characteristics that address who is being studied, how and where the research is conducted and who are being studied, and how the data are chosen, collected, analysed and reported. These characteristics include collecting data in the natural setting of the participants, using the researcher as a data-collection “instrument”, employing purposive sampling, gathering multiple sources of data, conducting inductive data analysis and presenting a holistic account of the cases (Creswell, 2007, 2009).

Multiple case study methodology was used to understand the teachers’ conceptualisations of reading in what has been described as a “multiliteracies era” (Jones & Relf, 2004; Lotherington & Chow, 2006; Turbill, 2002). To understand their knowledge of reading and how this knowledge is represented in their contemporary classrooms, case-study research was used to capture the complexity of these contemporary classroom contexts.

**Case-study approach**

Case-study research necessitates that each case be a bounded context (Creswell, 2007; Stake, 1995, 2000; Yin, 2009); individual teachers and their teaching of reading in their classrooms were appropriate. Observations and interviews using qualitative data-collection methodology were used to provide an in-depth and holistic understanding of the cases. Observation of the teachers in
their unique classroom environment, within which they conducted their reading pedagogy, provided opportunity to see in action the practices teachers described in their interviews. Observations were also used to inform prompts for further discussion.

Four New South Wales primary-school teachers, across three primary-school sites, were purposively selected (see Recruitment section below) to be part of this research. The multiple case studies share complex descriptions of the data gathered by the researcher, partly by personal observations recorded in the field notes (Stake, 1983, 1995, 2000) and “direct observation of the events being studied and interviews of the persons involved in the events” (Yin, 2009, p. 11). Moreover, this methodology helped to gain insights into teachers’ professional practice with respect to teaching reading and the relationship to beliefs and knowledge about reading as teachers explained their practices through interviews and their vignettes.

The research design for this study comprised four phases. Phase 1 consisted of recruitment and initial interviews of participants. Phases 2 and 3 consisted of cycles of data collection in each classroom and ongoing analysis, and the final phase consisted of final case analysis for each of the case teachers, and cross-case analysis. Table 1 presents an outline of the project’s research-design phases for each case.

These phases were developed to schedule collection cycles of interview and observation data, and early analysis for each teacher. The insights gained at the end of each phase were then used to inform the following interview, and in particular the creation of the Portrait of Practice (Vignette 2) in the middle stage of data collection.
### Table 1. Research design

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Phase</th>
<th>Chronology of Events</th>
<th>Details</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>One</td>
<td>Participant recruitment</td>
<td>Invitation via professional association.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Data Collection: Semi-Structured Interview</td>
<td>Demographic information collected. Researcher-developed vignette provided to participant.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Analysis: Ongoing Analysis</td>
<td>Analysis from interview in preparation for next phase.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Two</td>
<td>Stage 1: Data Collection: Observations (1, 2 and 3)</td>
<td>Three non-participant observations. Mapping of the classroom layout.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Artefacts</td>
<td>Collection of teacher documentation for observed lessons where available.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Analysis: Interpretive Summary</td>
<td>Portrait of Practice (Vignette 1) developed from Phase 2 observation data and Phase 1 interview.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Data Collection: Semi-Structured Interview</td>
<td>One interview using the interpretive summary.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Analysis: Ongoing Analysis</td>
<td>Analysis from observations and interview in preparation for next phase.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Artefacts</td>
<td>Collection of teacher documentation for observed lessons where available.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Reflective Response</td>
<td>Teacher-developed vignette collected and discussed at the interview.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Semi-Structured Interview</td>
<td>One interview using teacher-written vignette.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Analysis: Ongoing analysis</td>
<td>Analysis from observations and interview.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Four</td>
<td>Case Analysis</td>
<td>Final analysis of interviews, observation data, interpretive summaries and teacher documentation for each case-study teacher.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Cross-Case Analysis</td>
<td>Analysis across cases to determine common categories.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Before undertaking the research, ethics clearance was obtained (see Ethical Considerations section on page 67). The recruitment of participants was the first
activity in Phase 1. The following section outlines the recruitment of the case-study teachers who participated in this research project.

Recruitment

To show different perspectives in literacy teaching with a focus on reading, this research project recruited four participants who taught in middle-primary classrooms. Teachers were recruited through purposeful sampling (Creswell, 2007) and had a professed interest in literacy, attended professional development in the field and communicated a willingness to be involved in all phases of the research. This final criterion was important due to the time the participant was required to invest in the study. Experience was not a criterion for the study but the variety of experiences in the case-study teachers presented in this research provides interesting perspectives on the literacy teachers’ work.

To commence the recruitment process, local school principals were identified through contact with a peak Australian professional association focused on literacy. They were provided with information about the project (Appendix A: Principal Information Sheet) and invited to identify potential teachers to participate in this research project. Initial contact was made with the recommended teachers through phone or email conversations to discuss the research project, and they were given detailed information and a consent form (Appendix B: Participant Information Sheet and Appendix C: Participant Consent Form). Once the teachers gave their informed consent, they were supplied with information to distribute to each student in their classroom (Appendix D: Student Information Sheet). The parents were given an opportunity to contact the researcher directly at any time during the study to ask questions.

The case-study teachers are described under Case Study Teacher on page 63. Data collection began once the participants had been recruited and informed consent provided. The following section outlines the data-collection techniques employed in this study and describes how each phase builds upon the previous to further develop the case description.
Data collection

Qualitative data-collection methods were used for this project (Huberman & Miles, 1994). Data were taken from a variety of sources to ensure triangulation (Denzin, 1997) and thick description of each case (Creswell, 2007; Stake, 1995, 2000). The researcher observed existing practice in the natural setting of the classroom (Yin, 2009, p. 109). Interviews were also undertaken to aid in the description (Stake, 1995; Yin, 2009) of the participant’s knowledge and beliefs, and their professional practice. Observations were conducted in Phases 2 and 3, and when made available, artefacts were collected from each observation period. The final phase of the research design involved all cases for final and cross-case analysis.

Three out of four case studies were involved in the three phases of data collection. One case study did not complete Phase 3 due to competing commitments and is not included in the case study chapters of this report due to incomplete data. One case study did not complete the final interview in Phase 3 but is included in this report. Neither teacher withdrew their participation from the project.

Due to a time lag between the data collection of the first two cases and the last two, small changes and some refinement of data collection occurred for the final two case studies. These changes were mainly concerned with refinement of the questions in the interviews and small changes to the layout in the observation protocol. One of the changes also related to the planning of observations. This was as a result of the data-collection phases in the first two cases being close together, which did not always allow a substantial amount of time between each observation, or each phase for data management, analysis and reflection. As a result, a further spread of the observations was sought from the final two case studies.

Table 2 demonstrates the alignment and choice of the data-collection methods with the research questions and provides a rationale for their use. This table is organised to view each data-collection type. The subsequent sections outline the data-collection methods used in the research project.
### Table 2. Data-collection method justification

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Data Collection in Phase 1</th>
<th>Data-Collection Method</th>
<th>Research question: What do teachers understand about the nature of reading?</th>
<th>Research question: How do their professional practices align with these understandings?</th>
<th>Research question: What is the nature of the relationship between teachers’ knowledge, beliefs and practice in their teaching of reading?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Interview 1 (Approx. 30 mins)</td>
<td>Questions focus on: - teachers’ background training and experience; - explicit understandings of reading theory.</td>
<td>Questions focus on: - description of how reading is taught and planned.</td>
<td>Questions focus on: - background experience and training, and ask how they feel this might have influenced their teaching.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vignette 1 (Hypothetical scenario)</td>
<td>Facilitates discussion about case-study teachers’ beliefs and knowledge of theories of reading by using third-person perspective.</td>
<td>Teacher is encouraged to discuss their planning of reading pedagogy.</td>
<td>Discusses the teacher from vignette. This allows for discussion about knowledge and beliefs as used in classroom practice.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Data Collection in Phase 2</th>
<th>Data-Collection Method</th>
<th>Research question: What do teachers understand about the nature of reading?</th>
<th>Research question: How do their professional practices align with these understandings?</th>
<th>Research question: What is the nature of the relationship between teachers’ knowledge, beliefs and practice in their teaching of reading?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Observations 1, 2 and 3 (Approx. 45-60 mins ea.)</td>
<td>The observations of classroom practice provide insight into reading theories used or referred to in their reading pedagogy. These observations capture established class routines.</td>
<td>Observation of reading pedagogy. Observations encompass verbal and nonverbal interactions of the reading experiences.</td>
<td>Observation of teaching reading to determine a relationship between their stated beliefs and understanding, and their practice. Observations encompass verbal and nonverbal interactions. Observations give insight into discourse used in the classroom.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Artefacts 1, 2 and 3</td>
<td>Artefacts might give insight into linking between reading theory by use of materials and resources.</td>
<td>Artefacts might give insight into linking between reading theories, classroom practice and planning of reading lessons.</td>
<td>Artefacts might show connections between espoused knowledge and practice through choice of resources and planning documents.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Chapter 3 - Methodology

Vignette 2 (Portrait of Practice)
Teachers might or might not agree with the interpretation of data collected. This opens discussion about how they see themselves as teachers of reading. Might explicate reading theories in their observed practice.

The vignette gives a Portrait of Practice that was observed in Phase 2 observations. Interpretations of observed practices that encompass knowledge and pedagogy.

Allows for discussion of teachers’ observed and perceived practice. Interpretations of observed practice might capture links between espoused knowledge from interviews and actual practice.

Interview 2 (Approx. 30 mins)
Questions focus on:
- planning of reading and what theories are drawn upon.

Questions focus on:
- planning of observed lessons in Phase 2
- what, if any, issues arose from the observations Phase 2.

Questions focus on:
- planning of reading lessons and how this is done and what is used.

Data Collection in Phase 3

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Data-Collection Method</th>
<th>Research question: What do teachers understand about the nature of reading?</th>
<th>Research question: How do their professional practices align with these understandings?</th>
<th>Research question: What is the nature of the relationship between teachers’ knowledge, beliefs and practice in their teaching of reading?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Observations 4, 5 and 6 (Approx. 45-60 mins ea)</td>
<td>This second phase allows for observations across a broad range of reading lessons.</td>
<td>Observation of teaching reading. Observations encompass verbal and nonverbal interactions of the literacy event.</td>
<td>Observation of teaching reading. Observations will encompass verbal and nonverbal interactions. Observations give insight into discourse used in the classroom. Observations articulate connections between stated and interpreted theories and observed practice.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Artefacts 4, 5 and 6</td>
<td>Artefacts might give insight into linking between reading theory by use of materials and resources.</td>
<td>Artefacts might give insight into linking between reading theories, classroom practice and planning of reading lessons.</td>
<td>Artefacts might show connections between espoused knowledge and practice through choice of resources and planning documents.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vignette 3 (Teacher-developed)</td>
<td>This vignette might espouse theories of reading. Teachers are asked how this was developed and what they used to write it.</td>
<td>This vignette is the teacher’s description of their perceived or intended practice. This is important for understanding their observed and perceived practice.</td>
<td>This vignette might show some connections between their knowledge and beliefs as compared to their observed practice of teaching reading. Teachers are asked explicitly what, if any, were the connections between their knowledge of theory and practice.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Interview 3 (Approx. 30 mins)  
Questions focus on:  
- further questions about description and clarification  
Questions focus on:  
- planning of observed lessons Phase 3.  
- what if any, issues arose from observations in Phase 3.  
Questions focus on:  
- planning of reading lessons and how this is done and what is used.

The following section provides a detailed account of the data-collection procedures for this study and includes a justification for them as they relate to the research questions.

**Semi-structured Interviews**

Semi-structured interviews are an important source of data in the research, as they present an opportunity for the participant to discuss and describe their knowledge about pedagogy (Creswell, 2009), and for the researcher to discuss emerging findings (Mertens, 2005).

To aid these discussions, three types of vignettes were used across the semi-structured interviews. The first type was used in Interview 1, and was presented to the teachers as a hypothetical scenario to discuss planning and teaching of reading. The second type was developed as a Portrait of Practice of the teachers’ reading pedagogy observed in the Phase 1 observations; it provided an opportunity to discuss the researchers’ initial interpretations in Interview 2. The case-study teachers were invited to prepare the final type of vignette for the final interview, which was an opportunity for them to reflect on themselves as a reading teacher. The next section provides an explanation of each interview and vignette.

**Interview 1 and Vignette 1 (hypothetical scenario)**

The first interview for each teacher was conducted at the beginning of the study, prior to classroom observations (typically in the case-study teachers’ own classroom). They were held at a mutually convenient time for the researcher and each case-study teacher. This also provided an opportunity for the planning of the observations for Phase 2 and to begin a rapport with the participant. The purpose of this semi-structured interview was to collect data about the teachers’ experience
and training and initiate discussion about their knowledge and beliefs about reading, and their reading pedagogy.

Prior to this interview, the teachers had been provided with some brief Pre-Interview Questions (PIQ) (Appendix E: Pre-Interview Questionnaire) to obtain demographic data and to encourage teachers to consider their experience and knowledge before the interview. The PIQ also contained the hypothetical scenario in Vignette 1 (described below).

Some pre-interview questions included more direct and structured questions that were discussed in the interview. These questions included *What year are you teaching at the moment?* and *How many years have you been teaching?* They were centred on the teachers’ background training and roles within the school. This provided an opportunity for some of the responses to be revisited in the interview, but primarily gave an initial sense of the teachers’ experience and training prior to further exploration and helped the researcher build a rapport with the teacher (Fontana & Frey, 2000; Leech, 2002).

Due to the fact that discussion and enquiry about the teachers’ beliefs and knowledge might be potentially confronting (Barter & Renold, 1999; Jenkins, Bloor, Fischer, Berney & Neale, 2010) and difficult to articulate (Ethel & McMeniman, 2000), it was important for the researcher to build a rapport and to put the case-study teacher at ease (Leech, 2002). To facilitate this, a hypothetical scenario was presented to the teacher in the form of a vignette (See Figure 1 Vignette 1) in the PIQ and revisited in this interview.
The schools annual fete is to be held in the next term. The Year 3/4 class will contribute something derived from the science KLA, such as creating and selling gooey slime in a cup. The class has not participated in an event such as this before.

The teacher considers what is readily available. The school has a library that may have books for this topic. There are two classroom computers. The teacher begins planning by looking through the science and English syllabus for appropriate outcomes. The teacher now has to decide what is needed to support the students’ literacy needs (particularly those related to reading) in this task.

Figure 1. Vignette 1

The vignette used in this first interview was a data-collection tool in the form of a hypothetical scenario. As this vignette was used as a tool for the collection of data, its construction was informed by relevant literature and previous research (Hughes & Huby, 2004). To satisfy matters of trustworthiness, such as internal consistency and internal validity, the vignette was assessed by academics that are experts in the areas of reading pedagogy and research (Hughes & Huby, 2004). This assessment was to determine if the vignette scenario was an accurate account of a realistic hypothetical situation. Subsequently, adjustments were made and the vignette and interview questions were pilot-tested (Finch, 1987; Hughes & Huby, 2004) to ensure that the depth of information sought was captured.

This vignette was a short, hypothetical but realistic scenario developed from the literature reviewed for the study (Hughes & Huby, 2004). As shown in Figure 2, it captured multiliterate practices and aligned with outcomes from the reading strand of the NSW English Syllabus (Board of Studies NSW, 1998b). It referred to the ‘multiple’ literacies of multiliteracies (Cole & Pullen, 2010) by providing opportunities for connections to critical literacy, computer literacy, visual literacy and information literacy where multimodal texts might be used in connection to the scenario. It also aimed to provide an opportunity for a teacher to plan reading across the Key Learning Areas (e.g., Science & Technology) and include multiliterate practices. Figure 2. Annotated Vignette 1 illustrates the annotated vignette with the themes identified.
The schools annual fest is to be held in the next term. The Year 3/4 class will contribute something derived from the science KLA, such as creating and selling gooey slime in a cup. The class has not participated in an event such as this before.

The teacher considers what is readily available. The school has a library that may have books for this topic. There are two classroom computers. The teacher begins planning by looking through the science and English syllabus for appropriate outcomes. The teacher now has to decide what is needed to support the students' literacy needs (particularly those related to reading) in this task.

![Figure 2. Annotated Vignette 1](image)

Although typically vignettes are used in large-scale interviews or surveys involving closed responses, they were used quite differently in this study. As the study aimed to help the teachers talk openly about their beliefs and knowledge, open questions informed by interview methodology (Bloor & Wood, 2006; Leech, 2002; Spalding & Phillips, 2007) accompanied the vignette. The open questions used in connection with the vignettes, enabled the teachers to draw on their own experiences to respond to the hypothetical character in the scenario (Hughes & Huby, 2004) and to “define the meaning of the situation for him or herself” (Finch, 1987, p. 106).

Vignette 1 was used to stimulate a response to elements of the study; therefore, the researcher selected the character and scenario. By providing sufficient context within the situation, but allowing for some open-endedness, questions made it more likely that the teachers would provide their own definitions of the situation. This shorter vignette allowed “maximum opportunity for the respondents' own interpretations” (Finch, 1987, p. 110) as it encouraged the participants to use their own background knowledge to complete the scenario (Finch, 1987).
As previously mentioned, the questions used in conjunction with the vignette aimed to begin eliciting the teachers’ beliefs and knowledge. The teachers were asked to read the vignette prior to the interview and were asked during the interview What do you think this teacher might do next? and What type of reading activities might this teacher be able to organise? (Appendix F: Interview 1 Protocol). These questions were used to encourage the teachers to share their understanding and practices through conversation about the character in the vignette before directly sharing about themselves.

Following the use of the vignette in this interview, additional “grand tour” questions were asked (Leech, 2002; Spradley, 1979). They were developed to encourage the case-study teachers to describe their practices and knowledge of teaching reading. These broad questions included Can you describe how you teach reading in your classroom? and How do you plan for teaching reading in your classroom? These questions enabled the teachers to talk broadly about their pedagogy, and allowed the researcher to follow up and probe on themes, theories and pedagogical discourse.

The questions that followed these broad questions on pedagogy were focused on reading theories. Questions such as How do you believe that children learn to read? and How would you describe reading? were asked in order to begin to discern the teachers’ understanding of reading theory. The researcher was able to further prompt for more detail as appropriate.

Following this interview, the audio recording and the field notes taken by the researcher were transcribed in preparation for analysis (Appendix G: Audio Recording Transcription example). This occurred prior to Phase 2 of the research (see Analysis below). Analysis of the interview data provided a focus for semi-structured questions in the second interview.

Interview 2 and Vignette 2 (Portrait of Practice)

The second semi-structured interview was conducted following Phase 1 Observations 1, 2 and 3. The main purpose of the interview was to discuss the researcher’s interpretations from the data collected from the observations and interview (see Appendix H: Interview 2 Protocol). It also provided an opportunity
to further discuss the teachers’ beliefs and knowledge about reading pedagogy and reading theory to address the research questions.

This interview, like Interview 1, used a vignette to facilitate discussion. The researcher developed the interpretive summary vignette, henceforth referred to as a *Portrait of Practice*, after the first three observations using the collected data and the interview information from Phase 1. This Portrait of Practice was shared during the interview with the case-study teacher to give an opportunity for member-checking, further explanation and enquiry (Lincoln & Guba, 1985; Spalding & Phillips, 2007).

As previously mentioned, vignettes are developed as short stories and take different forms for different purposes in different research projects. This study developed a vignette (Vignette Style 2 the teacher developed Portrait of Practice) for each teacher from the study data (Spalding & Phillips, 2007). Using the data collected in the initial interview and observations, an interpretative summary of the teacher was constructed for three reasons. First, it served as a reflection of the researcher’s early analysis to be shared with each teacher (Ely, Vinz, Anzul M, & Downing, 2001) and to build the trustworthiness of the interpreted data (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). Second, it was presented as a representation of the observed teacher’s professional practice (Miles, 1990; Spalding & Phillips, 2007). Third, it opened an opportunity for reflective conversation with the case-study teacher (Ely et al., 2001) about their reading pedagogy and beliefs.

This type of vignette can sometimes be seen in the education-research field as a portrait of exemplar practices (see Department of Education, 2000 for an example). However, in this interview, the Portrait of Practice was developed for each case-study teacher from the observed literacy events (Barton & Hamilton, 2000; Trier, 2006) such as actions, visible decisions, verbal instructions, interactions and physical objects that were used or displayed by the teacher during the observations.

Where possible, the Portrait of Practice was sent to the teacher before this interview to allow the teacher some time for reflection and time to respond. It was a main focus for the interview, and was used to elicit discussion about observed
practices and to further explicate beliefs and knowledge about reading theories and reading pedagogy. The teachers were asked, *Do you feel that your teaching of reading has been captured in this story about you?* They were invited to comment, confirm, advise any misrepresentations or clarify any aspects that were described in the vignette. This opportunity allowed the teachers to further discuss their knowledge about their reading pedagogy and reading theory.

At the end of this interview, the teacher was asked to create a vignette of their own (Vignette 3) to describe their practice of teaching reading in their classroom. This would be used in the final interview.

*Interview 3 and Vignette 3 (reflection)*

The final semi-structured interview for each teacher was conducted after all observations were undertaken. The purpose of this interview was to discuss the data collected in Phase 3 observations, share the teacher-developed vignette (Vignette 3) and give the researcher an opportunity to address any questions that might have arisen from the previous observations, artefacts and interviews. Questions that clarified the researchers interpretations of the case-study teacher were also asked. Further, the teacher was invited to address or initiate discussion about any issues or questions they might have. As with Phases 1 and 2, the interviews were semi-structured to allow the teacher to share openly their impressions of the research or ask questions. Appendix I: Interview 3 Protocol contains the interview questions.

The interview from this phase built on the rapport created in previous phases, and allowed for deeper discussion and clarification of interpretations of and findings regarding the teacher’s knowledge, beliefs and practice. In addition to this, it let the teachers’ own voices be heard through the research.

The length of the reflection vignette constructed by the teachers was suggested to be no more than one page. The rationale for this length was to ensure that the task of writing was not onerous but allowed enough room and time for reflection on practice, knowledge and beliefs. The intention was to invite the teacher to prepare the reflection for the final interview in Phase 3 and send it to the researcher prior to that meeting where possible. One teacher provided this prior to
the final interview and one teacher following the interview; as the teachers in Case Studies 3 and 4 did not participate in the final interview, their reflection vignettes were not collected.

During Interview 3, the reflection vignette was discussed. Questions focused on the development of the vignette. These questions intended to capture the understandings and knowledge the teachers drew on when developing it. Moreover, it aimed to discover if the experience of writing the vignette changed or clarified the teachers’ understandings of the relationship between their knowledge and beliefs about reading and reading pedagogy in their classroom. The questions asked in this interview, such as *How did you go about beginning to write your vignette?* and *Were there any parts that were difficult to write?* (Appendix I), allowed for further explanation and probing.

**Observations**

The purpose of the observations was to capture the reading pedagogy and language involved in these teacher-identified reading experiences, and to describe the context within which the teachers practiced their reading pedagogy. While observations often involve observer-as-participant (Angrosino & Mays de Perez, 2003) and use the observations as a way to interact with the subjects, non-participant observations were chosen for this study, as the objective was to avoid influencing the natural turn of events and make the least impact on regular classroom activities. To address possibilities of observer bias in this method (Angrosino & Mays de Perez, 2003), other methods were employed to member-check the researcher’s impressions through interviews and vignettes and peer debriefing with supervisors. Three non-participant observations and artefacts provided by the teacher for these observations were collected in each of Phases 2 and 3.

The observations were held during lessons that the case-study teachers identified as focusing on the teaching of reading. The length of the observation varied between the participants but typically lasted between 30 and 60 minutes. Observations began and ended as indicated by the teacher prior to, at the time of,
or at the end of a teaching session (e.g. beginning of a break). An observation protocol was developed to aid the taking of field notes during each lesson (Appendix J: Observation Protocol). To capture the teachers’ dialogue and actions during the observation, video and audio equipment were used.

During each observation, the video equipment was located at a point in the room away from main traffic areas to ensure safety for all involved in the classroom. However, it was directed toward the space used by the teacher during the lesson. An audio recorder was placed as close as practicable to the teacher to capture the verbal interactions and instructions. If the teacher was roving and it was practical, the recorder was carried with the teacher. Following the observations, the researcher recorded additional field notes.

Artefacts

Artefacts were sought from the case-study teachers across all observations. These included a range of documents such as lesson plans, planning documents and worksheets. Appendix K: Audit Trail records the documents collected.

The researcher collected other artefacts, such as photographs of the classrooms and wall displays to assist in the description of the classroom environment. The researcher also recorded a classroom layout at the first observation, and noted any changes in the layout during subsequent observations.

Any identifying information on the artefact was removed to ensure confidentiality of the teacher, school and students.

Case-study teachers

This research used multiple case studies to respond to the main research question. Three middle-primary (Years 3 and 4) teachers from New South Wales public primary schools participated in this study. These teachers were recruited in Phase 1 (as reported above under Recruitment). This research project was conducted across three sites. The first two case-study teachers taught in Site 1, and the third case-study teacher taught in Site 2.
Information about the teachers and the sites in which Third, reading and writing was obtained from the schools’ annual reports, interviews with the teachers and information collected through the My School website. Table 3 presents a brief overview of the teachers. The sites in which the case-study teachers worked at the time of the study are presented in the following sections.

Table 3. Teacher overview

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Teacher</th>
<th>Training</th>
<th>Years Teaching Experience</th>
<th>Identified themselves as early/mid/late career teachers</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Doreen</td>
<td>Teacher-trained, special education-trained for hearing impaired. Transition teacher.</td>
<td>Nearly 39 years. Preschool, primary, transition, teacher for hearing impaired.</td>
<td>Late</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trudy</td>
<td>Undergraduate primary (major city university).</td>
<td>Seven years. Australia three years targeted graduate position, then UK as a casual two years. Australia casual 2 years. In the study classroom full-time (four days per week).</td>
<td>Early-mid</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nate</td>
<td>Undergraduate – secondary method (PE). (major regional university)</td>
<td>Six years casual with full-year blocks, mostly in primary schools</td>
<td>Early</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Site 1

Doreen and Trudy both taught in Site 1. This public school is considered a metropolitan school, though it is set in a coastal semi-rural area with a small community. At the time of data collection, Site 1 had an enrolment of 120 students with cross-stage classes for Years 2 and 3 (Doreen) and Years 4 and 5 (Trudy). The school consisted of five classes made up of one kindergarten and three types of cross-stage classes: one Years 1 and 2 class, one Years 2 and 3 class and two classes of Years 5 and 6. The school cohort had 9% of students from a language background other than English and only a few indigenous students.

Site 2

Site 2 was also classed as a public metropolitan school on the south coast of New South Wales. This school had a part time (0.7 appointment) Reading Recovery
teacher on staff. It had an enrolment of 483 students in 19 classes: three kindergarten classes, one cross-stage kindergarten and Year 1 class, three Year 1 classes, one composite Year 1 and 2 class, two Year 2 classes, two Year 3 classes, and one composite Year 3 and 4, one Year 4 class, one cross-stage Year 4 and 5 class, one Year 5 class, one composite Year 5 and 6 and two Year 6 classes. The school had a 5% indigenous cohort with 25% of students from a language background other than English.

**Data analysis**

Data analysis for this project was conducted using the constant comparative method, which follows the “inductive, generative, constructive, and subjective” (Lincoln & Guba, 1985, p. 334) work of naturalistic inquiry and case-study methodology. The constant comparative method was adopted in this project to discover the case-study teachers’ conceptualisations, since in naturalistic inquiry meaning is discovered through a study of the participant’s own words and actions. The constant comparative approach allows for the discovery and analysis of patterns through the collected data.

**Preparation of data**

Data analysis began with the preparation of the collected data for each case-study teacher (Creswell, 2009; Stake, 1983, 1995; Yin, 2009). This involved using an audit trail document (Appendix K: Audit Trail) to record the quantity and type of documents collected for each teacher. Artefacts and documents collected from the teachers were de-identified and scanned to provide a digital copy for use with NVIVO 10 software.

Interviews and observations were first transcribed into Word documents. A transcription protocol for the interviews (Appendix G) and the observations (Appendix L) were developed to ensure the consistency, reliability and trustworthiness of transcripts (McLellan, MacQueen & Neidig, 2003). The protocols ensured consistency of confidential information, non-linguistic observations (e.g. answer phone, movement across the room, signing etc.), silences, pauses and
elisions, grammar and non-verbal sounds. The observation transcripts combined data taken from the audio and video recordings.

All interviews were transcribed in full, and the Word documents were imported into NVIVO 10 in preparation for coding. The first observations of each teacher were transcribed verbatim in full.

Initial analysis

Following the transcription of Interview 1 for each teacher, the researcher read the interview in its entirety. Next, margin notes were made to begin early interpretations and understandings. These notes were used to inform the questions for Interview 2 and to begin to build a picture for the Portrait of Practice (Vignette 2).

To begin examining classroom practice and the flow of the lesson, observation transcripts were read and compared to the observation field notes (Appendix J) taken during the observation. Notes were made in the margin of the transcript. A table was created to record and organise the events from the observations with respect to the teaching, actions, students and resources, and provided an opportunity for the researcher to make notes about these episodes (Appendix M: Initial analysis table example). These tables allowed for the exploration of critical moments in the observation; for example when an activity was used to teach a comprehension reading strategy using a website and comprehension teaching resource (Obs1 Trudy).

This initial analysis using Interview 1 and observation data from observations in Phase 1 was used to build the Portrait of Practice presented in Interview 2.

Coding

Coding is a process in which themes are determined from the transcribed interview data. The coding began with a thorough and repeated reading of all interview data sources for each teacher to get a sense of underlying themes; some margin notes were made in a printed version prior to moving to the NVIVO 10 package for analysis.
The first interview for the case-study teachers 1 and 2 were initially chosen for thorough open coding in NVIVO 10. Topics from these data were then used to create categories with the use of memoing of thoughts and ideas about the incidents and categories. The observation audio data were uploaded into NVIVO 10. Using the transcript function in this package, the observations were transcribed to show timing and the instances and relevant conversations. Video data were also used in this process to build a richer description. These transcripts were then coded (Appendix N: Audio Observation Transcript Coding).

The subsequent interviews and observations were coded using existing codes or adjusting codes as new information was added (Appendix N). As the constant comparative method is an ongoing coding process, comparing new topics to previous topics in the same or different categories was completed (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). A description for each category was developed (Creswell, 2009, p. 186). These categories were compared to the existing literature to refine the category.

**Ethical considerations**

Prior to the commencement of this research, ethics approval was obtained from the University of Wollongong Human Research Ethics (HE 11/259) and the Department of Education and Communities (SERAP 2011033), New South Wales, Australia. Ethical issues and considerations pertinent to this study are described below.

**Informed consent**

 Teachers were provided with an information sheet (Appendix B: Participant Information Sheet) and consent form (Appendix C: Participant Consent Form), which were collected prior to any data collection. The principal of each teacher was provided with information (Appendix A: Principal Information Sheet), the Participant Information Sheet (Appendix B) and the Student Information Sheet (Appendix D).
The participant information sheet and consent form both outlined the requirements to be involved in the study. These included the right for teachers to withdraw from the study at a time without affecting their relationship with the university. Teachers were required to sign the consent form, which was stored with the data.

Confidentiality of participants

Ethical considerations regarding confidentiality were addressed by using pseudonyms in place of teacher names, and generalising information that might identify anyone involved in the research. All information is kept in a locked cupboard and/or password-protected computer.

Reciprocity between researcher and teacher

During the course of this research, teachers were provided with opportunities to discuss the researcher’s interpretations during the interviews, and transcripts were made available to them. The teachers were given opportunities for informal discussions to engage in professional dialogue. The vignettes also provided opportunities for the teachers to reflect on their teaching practice, and they could discuss the vignettes during the interviews.

To minimise the impact of the study on the teachers, interviews were held at a convenient time and place, and every effort was made to ensure the interviews took the minimum time possible. During the observations, the researcher entered and exited the room without interruption to the classroom activities.

Trustworthiness

Multiple strategies for trustworthiness were employed in this study, including triangulating data, member-checking and peer debriefing (supervisors and expert other) to discuss the research project and its findings (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). Triangulation of data was incorporated in the multiple observations and interviews for each teacher. During the interviews, the researcher listened carefully and rephrased the answers to ensure that the participants’ understanding of the questions asked. This method of member-checking was instantaneous and on-
going. Member-checking was also achieved by way of early analysis and early interpretations of the data incorporated in the interviews and vignette (Vignette 2) to confirm or disconfirm early analysis and definitions that the teachers provided. The researcher transcribed the interview and voice recordings of the observation data then re-read with the field notes and video recordings to include contextual information were included. This ensured accurate accounts of the context of the interviews and observations.

During this project, data collection for one case-study teacher was substantially interrupted due to extreme family circumstances for the researcher. Following Observation 1, data collection was discontinued for approximately five months. This resulted in an extensive time gap between Observations 1 and 2. As such, this case study was excluded from this final report.

**Summary of chapter**

This chapter has outlined the paradigm, research design, data collection and analysis methods used in this research. It has illustrated the suitability of case-study research to investigate the research questions and provide thick description of each teacher and their professional practice with respect to reading pedagogy. It has also provided some brief data about the participants and their sites and has set the scene for discussion of the case studies in the following chapters.
Chapter 4 - The Case Studies

This chapter presents the case-study teachers, Doreen, Trudy and Nate, and the site of their professional practice. Demographic information such as teaching background and training, and descriptions of their classrooms has been included. A short account of the data collected during the study for each teacher is also provided.

Doreen

Background information

Doreen described herself as a “late-career teacher” (Int1 Doreen) who had taught for nearly 40 years (Int1 PIQ Doreen) and was near retirement. At the time, she held a relief executive position that extended her responsibilities beyond her classroom.

Doreen had a varied career, teaching from preschool to adults. Her teaching experience comprised of teaching students in mainstream classes, students with hearing impairment in an integrated school and adults in transition programs (Int1 Doreen).

Training

Doreen’s original training started in visual arts, but she then transferred and completed her primary teacher training. After some years teaching in mainstream classes, she sought training in special education and completed a “Sensory Course” (Int1 Doreen), which covered the education of hearing- and vision-impaired and multi-handicap students. Following this, she worked with hearing-impaired students. She later trained in behaviour and emotional disturbance and adolescents within special education.

In her Pre-Interview Questions, Doreen also revealed that she had completed various training courses including Frameworks (Turbill, et al., 1995), ESL in the Mainstream, special-education training and leadership conferences, and a language module for training (hearing-impaired) (Int1 PIQ Doreen). Doreen had
been a teacher in the trials for the *Phonics Alive* program for Special Education (Int2 Doreen).

**Site**

Below is information about the school and the classroom where Doreen worked at the time of the study.

**School**

The annual school report for the year of this study stated that one of the school’s targets related to literacy was to increase Year 3 levels on the NAPLAN (ACARA, 2011) proficiency bands.

Some teachers within the school had been involved in an ongoing professional-development literacy program connected to the local university before the study. Doreen was involved in this study for some of the time (Int3 Doreen).

**Doreen’s classroom**

At the time of this research, Doreen taught a cross-stage classroom of Stage 1 and 2 comprised of Years 2 and 3. There were six Year 2 and 20 Year 3 students.

Doreen’s classroom was located at the end of a small building off a long veranda, and the entry was on the side near the front of the classroom. Immediately at the entrance was a storage cupboard with resources. The front of the classroom had an interactive whiteboard (IWB) with small, wall-mounted whiteboards on each side. The teacher’s desk, a storage cupboard and a teacher chair faced toward the board and the entry door. In front of the chair and the whiteboards was a floor space used for whole-class or small-group lessons.

Behind the teacher’s desk was a storage room that held teaching resources, and beside it was an enclosed veranda with desks for students to work. At the rear of the room was a classroom library area with two bookcases, student tubs and resource tubs with a book display. On the wall next to the entry was a long storage cupboard with a sink. The students sat either in groups (four to five students) or at individual desks. The layout in each observation was the same.
Because Doreen was not in the class regularly during the observations, she requested that no photographs of the room were to be taken or shared (Int1 Doreen). Recreations of the content from the IWB are included.

Layout

Below is a layout of the classroom that shows the placement of learning areas and resources in the classroom.

![Classroom Layout](image.png)

Figure 3. Doreen’s classroom layout

Classroom resources

The resources available in Doreen’s room consisted of tubs of students’ work and a small reading library. Students’ work was written in workbooks and students were provided a reading log for their responses to books they had read (Int2 Doreen). A class set of laptops and a small desktop computer lab were available for Doreen’s class.
Trudy

Background information

Trudy described herself as a beginning/middle-career teacher. She had gained over seven years experience as a classroom teacher in both Australia (five and a half years) and the United Kingdom (two years); however; she had taken an eleven-year break during this time to raise her children. At the time of the study, Trudy had been teaching at the school for almost two years and was the school’s public speaking-coordinator (Int2 Trudy).

Training

Trudy gained her undergraduate teaching degree at a large city university. She stated that her undergraduate degree was underpinned by the whole language approach (Int1 Trudy). Trudy’s recent professional-development opportunities were undertaken both in and out of the school setting, and consisted of: ALEA professional literacy association workshops, NAPLAN training, university teacher course (IERI: Grammar) and resource publisher’s training (e.g. Super Sentences from i-learning) (Int1 Trudy).

When asked how the professional development had influenced her classroom practice, Trudy stated that she would be “more receptive” to courses that support the “literature-based task, whole language experiences and English being embedded in all KLAs”, which aligned to her original training, rather than the “dry” professional-development courses to which she had recently been exposed (Int1 Trudy).

Site

Below is information about the school and the classroom where Trudy worked at the time of the study.
School

The school’s annual report for the year this study was conducted stated that one school target related to literacy was to increase Year 3 levels on the NAPLAN (ACARA, 2011) proficiency bands.

Some teachers within the school had been involved in an ongoing professional-development literacy program connected to the local university before the study; however, Trudy was not involved (Int1 Trudy).

Trudy’s classroom

At the time of this research, Trudy taught a cross-stage classroom of Stage 2 and 3 comprised of Years 4 and 5. There were 27 students in total: 22 Year 4 and five Year 5, in Trudy’s class.

Trudy’s classroom (Figure 4) was located off a long veranda. At the entrance to Trudy’s classroom, through a door at the side of the room, there was a teacher space located near the front. This space had a desk with a computer, a storage cupboard containing teaching resources, a low tub-storage cupboard for resources with a book display on top, and a small desk used by students to work. A large floor area was located near the front of the classroom with an IWB and a large, wall-mounted whiteboard at the front of the classroom as the central focus of the front of the classroom; a mobile whiteboard used predominantly for small-group work was kept in the front corner. Six student desks in groupings of four to six students took up most of the central space in the room. The layout remained the same in each observation.

On the wall opposite the entry door there was a storage room, another veranda with desks and chairs that provided an additional outside space for small group work and access to a shared computer lab with desktop and laptops. There was a reading nook at the back of the room with three bookshelves and pillows and a range of fiction books. On the wall with the entry door, there was a large sink area used for artwork or extra desk space as required.
The classroom walls and windows displayed student work and environmental prints with encouraging slogans; work samples and definitions hung on lines across the room.

Power points were dotted throughout the room, and the students used these at times to recharge the class laptops while working on some lessons. As these power points were not at desks, it necessitated students to be seated on the floor or leaning on a chair or bench to access them during learning experiences. The students appeared adept and independent at managing the laptops and their charging.

**Layout**

Below is a layout of the classroom that shows the placement of learning areas and resources in the classroom.

![Figure 4. Trudy's classroom layout](image-url)
Figure 5. Still shot from video of front of room during Observation 1

Classroom resources

The resources available in Trudy’s room consisted of: tubs of resources (art, paper, books, Post-it notes, scrap paper), tubs of student work, reading-strategy prompts under the whiteboard (Figure 5) and a set of classroom laptops. Students’ work was written in workbooks labelled “literature”.

Nate

Background Information

Nate originally trained as a secondary Health and Physical Education teacher. He had gained six years’ experience teaching Years 3-6 primary. He secured a permanent position in his current school and began at the beginning of Term 2. He also held the position as the sport coordinator for the school.

Training

Nate had undertaken various professional-development courses to increase his knowledge of literacy teaching. These included the Ants in the Apple phonics program, Literacy on Track, Focus on Reading and Super Six Comprehension
Strategies. All of these courses were taken at in-school development programs at his previous postings.

Site

School

The school’s annual report for the year of the study stated that targets existed for literacy and numeracy. In particular, a literacy target was set for Years 3 and 5 reading achievements to increase in proficiency bands.

No literacy professional-development programs were mentioned in the report for the year of the data collection. However, “guided reading” was a program used across the school to help achieve these performance increases.

Nate’s classroom

Nate’s cross-stage Year 4 and 5 class was made up of 31 students: 11 Year 4 and 20 Year 5. The class had 16 girls and 15 boys.

At the entry of Nate’s classroom was a bookcase full of reading material such as serial readers and dictionaries. On the right side of the entry was a screen used as a temporary wall between the entry and the art space and the resource storage room. Behind the screen was a separate table used as a “thinking” table.

The art area had storage cupboards with a sink and a long table. On the walls in this area were 3D models of mathematical objects.

In the main area of the room, there were three rows of tables and chairs facing toward the front of the room and a large floor space between the front wall and the desks that was used for various activities throughout the day, including the morning routine where instructions were given before an activity or reading groups. There was an IWB mounted on the wall in the centre front of the classroom and a large whiteboard mounted on the left side. The whiteboard was taped off with sections for spelling lists and rules, and had a large section for daily use during teaching instances. Around the IWB were posters for grammar and a section for “class jobs”. Next to the IWB was a table that housed the laptop computer and a video player.
Nate’s desk was placed in the corner opposite the entry to the room near the whiteboards. In front of Nate’s desk was a small student desk for monitoring individual work in front.

On the far wall opposite the door, there was a large storage cupboard for student work. Various artworks were displayed on the back wall or on a string around the room. The room was spacious, colourful and tidy.

*Layout*

![Diagram of Nate's classroom layout]

*Figure 6. Nate's classroom layout*
Classroom resources

The classroom literacy resources consisted of a class set of the Red Box, a box of activities based on comprehension levels “carefully cultivated to give students valuable practice at literal, interpretive, inferential and critical levels” (Teachers 4 Teachers, 2015) which was used in various classes in Nate’s primary school; guided levelled texts used in guided reading groups; school magazines; the UPWORDS board game used in literacy groups; and the class novel Charlotte’s Web (White, 2003) currently being read aloud to the students.

Summary of chapter

This chapter has introduced each of the case study teachers and their background information. Details about their teaching and learning environment, and resources used in their reading pedagogy with their own cohort of students during the course of this study have been provided.

The experiences of the case study teachers are varied and span across various times in changes of literacy teaching history. Both Doreen and Trudy have
taught during a time when a focus on Whole Language was a prominent philosophy in the teaching of reading. Nate, as a secondary sports teacher, trained in contemporary times with the current balanced teaching philosophy. In this study, the teachers’ classroom layouts had two different styles: group tables and rows of desks. Both layouts included a large space for whole class instruction on the floor in front of the IWB. Doreen’s and Trudy’s classrooms incorporated table groups for their students while Nate used rows of tables for pairs of students. Though tables for groups are usually used for collaborative learning and rows of desks are used for individual learning and teacher-centred teaching style, the rows of tables may have been influenced by Nate’s behaviour management decisions with his cohort with difficult behaviour that was hard to settle (Int1 Nate). Interestingly, Nate also stated that he liked to have a quiet classroom for the students to work in (Int1 Nate).

Data collected for these cases included semi-structured interviews, observations and field notes, and artefacts such as photographs, teaching or planning material, and vignettes (Appendix K: Audit Trail). Interpretative summaries were developed from the teacher and observation data. These summaries reveal the important themes for each of these data. A final interpretive summary for each case-study teacher establishes the key findings across these data for each case study. Figure 8 presents a diagram to show the development of the final interpretive summary.

Figure 8. Process for development of interpretive summary
The next three chapters present each case study teachers’ initial discussion about reading from their first interview (Figure 9). Key reading activities from the observations are introduced. However, any data collected during observations that did not specifically relate to reading are identified but not explicated. The midpoint discussion of reading, which includes the Portrait of Practice (Vignette 2) developed from the initial interview and Phase 1 observations, is then presented. Phase 2 observation data and then the final discussion on reading from Interview 3 are presented. The teachers were invited to provide their own reflection (Vignette 3) at or before the final interview, to give their own interpretations of teaching reading; where available, these have been included. The final section presents a summary that brings together the interpretations of the key themes from the data collected for each case study.

Figure 9. Organisation of Case Study chapters
Chapter 5 - Doreen

This chapter presents Doreen’s case as a teacher of a Year 2 and 3 class. While at the time of the study, managing a relief executive position, Doreen allowed the researcher time with her class in self-identified reading lessons. What follows, is an account of her data with the researcher’s interpretive summaries that lead to the identification of the main themes in Doreen’s case.

Initial discussion about reading

The first interview was used to glean Doreen’s definitions of reading and begins to discuss her reading pedagogy. The interview took place in Doreen’s classroom between sessions in school time and was interrupted several times as she responded to the demands of her executive position. These interruptions made it difficult for Doreen to come back to our interview and continue with her responses. The interview began with a discussion about Doreen’s Pre-Interview Questionnaire responses (Int1 PIQ Doreen), which included some details of her teaching experience and professional development outlined in the previous section. What followed was a discussion about Doreen’s experience, her response to Vignette 1 and some prepared questions (Appendix F includes a sample of the interview protocol). Relevant quotes from the interview data that respond to the research questions are now presented.

When talking about her background, Doreen spoke about her experiences teaching students with disabilities and the direct-instruction type reading programs that were followed in these occasions:

That would not necessarily be the way that I would work, would have worked with children who did not have that form of...disability, and...I personally found it difficult because...if anything I am a natural-language advocate. And I see reading as part of um of the whole literacy area as a holistic thing you know that you need. The talking and listening as well as the reading, and you need the writing. (Int1 Doreen)
Later in the interview, she talked again about the direct-instruction methods coming back into schools:

I guess that’s fine when there is a need for that and there are some students that will need to have [a] more directed approach because they don’t have that in their background. They don’t even have the vocabulary in their background, they may not have the sentence structure in the background. If they don’t have that in their oral language, they’re certainly not going to be able to pick it up in— in reading. And so there is a place for that but it’s not for every student in the classroom. (Int1 Doreen)

These responses support Doreen’s statement of being a “natural language” advocate and indicate her beliefs about reading to capture student background, prior knowledge and connection of oral competencies to reading.

She also talked about her experience in terms of “spirals” of change in her teaching career:

When I first started teaching we were, we had a whole language approach with integrated programming and…a lot of reading from the school magazine as well. Plus, I guess, [a] thematic approach to other areas, to other KLAs [Key Learning Areas]. I’ve always seen reading as going across all KLAs. And that every opportunity to, um, practice the skill, or to develop the skill, or to teach the skill. (Int1 Doreen)

In this discussion, Doreen continued to share her experiences of the changes she had seen in her career. She went on to speak about the changes in an earlier version of the English syllabus, known as the “Blue Book”, and briefly mentioned “process writing” and changes in grammar. She stated, “So we’ve gone through the no grammar approach and now the grammar approach, you know the functional-language approach” (Int1 Doreen). After a short interruption, Doreen continued to discuss the changes she had seen, with the introduction of “reading schemes” into

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3 Key Learning Areas are explained in the Definition of terms.
schools at a time when “that’s what the available resources were”, having previously stated that school libraries did not exist as they do today with rich and well-resourced literature.

She then explained programming for integrated teaching and described “looking at the specific language, the specific...terminology”, and used mathematics and HSIE as two subject areas that required map-reading. She went on to say, “There are specific skills that are involved in that, that would be part of reading. Um, skimming and scanning. Um, hand-eye. Hand-eye you would need, you know, to be able to follow, to read a map. To be able to coordinate your hand and your eye” (Int1 Doreen). These explanations demonstrate Doreen’s understanding of reading to include reading images and even a physical component. It also shows that her belief that developing a student’s “skill” can occur in a variety of ways.

Vignette 1 (Figure 1) was used in this first interview to stimulate responses to elements of the study, and was presented as a character in a scenario rather than asking Doreen direct questions about her practice. Doreen, prior to being asked a question, responded:

Okay, now, I guess this is exactly what I am saying about what I would call an integrated program. I could not disassociate the fact that they were going to have a gooey slime in a cup and that they were going to be selling that. I couldn’t just say that that was one thing. Right? It would have to be integrated through my maths, and again, they would need to be able to read text that involved money, labelling, um, they would, er, students would also need to be able to—say, in writing, or as part of a reading, we might have worked on procedures using the text-type approach. Ideal opportunity to do that. Hate to waste time. And then so, I’d look at that I guess, when I’m programming, so I’d say, okay, what have we got? It says we’ve got two classroom computers. I’d look through the science and English syllabus, which I’ve just basically told you what I was just doing. I probably would have foreseen, you know, that the fete was coming up or something was coming up at this time. I may have even known that at the beginning of the year when I actually
programmed that procedural writing was what I was going to look at that particular time of the year and reading procedures, and doing procedural recounts, after the event. Then I would, I guess, like you say, I’d go looking for what resources I’ve got, or I would need. I’d be looking at borrowing a class set of things from the school library, probably from the science-experiment section. (Int1 Doreen)

She then discussed using the computers shared with the class next door to find the information. She also stated that students had the skills “to go onto the internet”, as they had learned their passwords, could use email, could find and insert an illustration into a document and had experience “converting font”. When asked for clarification, Doreen responded,

We talk about, well, I guess again, this is in our reading lessons, we talk about the print that is actually in the text, so that a particular author or publisher may use a specific type of print or text type to gain your attention. So in a persuasive text or a poster, if I was reading it I’d be looking at the big, bold, bright pictures and the big, bright text. If I’m skimming through a book for an information report, I’ve got my headings and sub-headings usually in bold print or something else that allows my eye to pick up that information first and then scan for the rest. (Int1 Doreen)

Already in her response to this vignette, Doreen identified reading across the KLA of English, mathematics and science, some of the KLA’s computer literacy, and knowledge of text types to assist in programming for this scenario. She also began to identify her beliefs about reading images in addition to printed text.

Doreen said she would find resources to use the interactive whiteboard (IWB) and, when “looking specifically at reading”, would consider the individual needs of the students. She stated that the groupings in her class were “pretty flexible”; however, some students “would require more specific programming than others”. She clarified that some students would require extension while others had
less strength in reading. I would give them more support in, perhaps, modelling initially. Perhaps providing the task for them using some other of their learning styles. So, not straight-out visual, so I may give them a written, a...[interview interrupted] (laughs). A recording so that they could actually follow that. (Int1 Doreen)

This interview was interrupted, but when Doreen re-joined the interview, she spoke of building the vocabulary for the students using the ingredients as an example, and then the structure of the procedure. Last, she suggested,

If I was looking at the students participating in that kind of event, then we might actually need to do some sequencing of what is required on the day. So maybe some timetabling. Grouping to allocation of roles. And again, that that involves reading all sorts of—reading different types of texts. (Int1 Doreen)

It is clear from Doreen’s responses to Vignette 1 that she believed reading is more than reading the printed text. For her, reading involved images, critical reading, purposes for reading, reading digital text and reading and writing connections.

Doreen immediately spoke about what she would do in this scenario rather than responding to the character in the scenario, which would indicate that she was comfortable and at ease in responding to this situation. These responses give some insight into her beliefs about reading and her planning for classroom experiences.

In the final moments of this first interview, Doreen was asked to describe reading:

Doreen Ah, here we go. Um, reading is [pause] um deciphering, decoding, um, symbols, accepted symbols, um, in and that, that are connected as words and that have meaning, and understanding that meaning. [pause 6 secs] More?

Interviewer Yep – as much as you want to give me.

Doreen [pause then laughs] What did I say? [laughs]
Interviewer: So, reading is deciphering, decoding symbols that [are] connected as words, and then those words have meaning.

Doreen: Yes, um, leave that one with me I’ll come back to it. (Int1 Doreen)

In this initial response it appears that Doreen was thinking through her answer and offering key words to describe reading as a decoding process. She seemed to describe reading through a “bottom up” or traditional reading model focusing on the smallest aspect of reading symbols, then progressing to the word to determining meaning. This definition appears in contrast to Doreen’s earlier focus on reading images or critical reading.

Next, Doreen was asked, “How do you believe children learn to read?”

Doreen: They learn by exposure, they learn by immersion, they learn by...connecting those symbols. We give them a sound and a name and connect them. I’ve had children that—I’ve taught children that only learn by straight-out word, you know word association, I’ve had—

Interviewer: Like whole word?

Doreen: Yep, whole word. I’ve had students that you—who’ve sounded out words you don’t need to sound out D O W N down. I had students that learned to read by following the books that they read with their parents. I do believe that, shared reading is really important [walked to the door]. Doesn’t mean it’s the only answer but it’s important. (Int1 Doreen)

Here Doreen described her understanding of the variety of ways individual students learn reading. She discussed phonics approaches (recoding to sound), whole language approaches with literature, word identification and connection to home literacy practices.
The final question asked of Doreen before the abrupt cessation of the interview was, “What do you think is the most important thing a child needs to learn to read?”

Doreen [pause] Care! [laughs]

Interviewer Can you expand on that for me?

Doreen Well as I said, I do believe that you know in the initial phases there in shared, this is overall, shared and that it is an enjoyable experience. (Int1 Doreen)

**Initial discussion comments**

The interview ended as Doreen was required to attend other matters. However, throughout this interview, Doreen has begun to talk about her beliefs and understanding about reading, reading pedagogy and the ways she believes children learn to read. She has begun to provide some definitions in this interview, which are interesting in connection with her beliefs about learning to read. She identifies reading as encompassing both printed and multimodal text and refers frequently to text type.

**Key reading activity episodes**

Because of the relieving executive role, there was another regular teacher (Megan) in Doreen’s classroom. Megan was not a participant in the research; therefore only instances where Doreen was observed are reported. During the observations, the students were completing units from the Science and Technology key learning area titled *Eating Out* (Year 3) and *What’s for Lunch* (Year 2), and *Picture it* (Year 2) and *Moving Pictures* (Year 3) (Int2 Doreen).

The resources used in the lessons observed included student workbooks, websites, PowerPoint documents, serial reading books, sporting-team workbooks and posters.

Doreen’s observed lessons demonstrated that lessons moved from class discussion about a topic to working in pairs or groups or as a whole class to complete an activity. During this time she would move around to individuals or
groups to discuss their progress or help them. Sometimes a discussion would follow about their work, but usually the lesson ended to move onto the next. When introducing a new lesson, Doreen typically held a discussion about the item or object used in the lesson and attempted to connect it to students’ experiences or knowledge.

Students were grouped in a variety of ways for different episodes. In addition to whole-class lessons, students were randomly paired or put into levelled literacy groups.

**Phase 1 Observations**

Doreen identified six one-hour (approx.) time slots for the researcher to visit where she planned a focus on reading. However, due to her other school-based commitments, five observations were undertaken. For the observations, Doreen chose a wide range of reading activities covering key learning areas such as science and physical health.

The students were often unsettled at the beginning of the observations. Doreen pointed out in Interview 3 that the students were not usually unsettled when she had the class full-time; “you’ve…come in when I come back into the group so therefore they weren’t even settled when I came in” (Int3 Doreen). All observations occurred in Doreen’s classroom and were taken with both whole-class and small-group experiences.

Analysis of each observation period revealed key reading activities. Each observation is presented below with the timing and specific teaching and learning activities related to reading.

**Observation 1**

This lesson was the first lesson back in the classroom for Doreen after an absence during the previous weeks. Students entered the room after lunch and sat on the floor at the beginning of the observation. Doreen took care of some classroom housekeeping but still used these opportunities as learning experiences for reading.
Table 4. Orientation to Observation 1 for Doreen

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Activity</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>4 mins</td>
<td>Reading community texts: Locating information in a newsletter</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9 mins</td>
<td>Independent reading: Reading and reviewing data table</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4 mins</td>
<td>Modelled reading: Orientation to the new printed text</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4 mins</td>
<td>Reading the visual: Reading the Dragons book</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6 mins</td>
<td>Independent reading: Exploring and responding to a new text</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9 mins</td>
<td>Modelled reading: Book orientation</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Reading community texts: Locating information in a newsletter**

During the first part of the observed session, Doreen focused on visual aspects of the school newsletter when attempting to locate information. This does not appear to be a planned episode, as the discussion began with students’ questions. Doreen discussed the colours and font size to locate information easily in the newsletter. She drew attention to the ways that the colours “draw your eye” saying, “It’s red so that it will stand out” (Obs1 Doreen).

Doreen then referred to the sections of the newsletter to find an article. A student offered, “It’s in the community notices.” She used phrases such as “not in the front, or in the middle, but in the back.” These are examples of Doreen using incidental moments to connect the teaching of text structure using authentic texts.

**Independent reading: Reading and reviewing data table**

The lesson began with a review of a previous activity, where students across the school had been asked to record their breakfast-food consumption in a table. Doreen initially reviewed the format and the content of the table with the children with respect to the columns and categories, and then proceeded to discuss the purpose for taking the data. Doreen put an example of the table on the IWB (Figure 10. Recreation of the data table).
This led to a discussion about the table that included vocabulary words such as nutrients and asterisk. As a student had mentioned the asterisk, this provided an incidental opportunity for focusing on strategies to spell the word “asterisk”. Doreen and the students attempted to spell the word together using the small whiteboard. They used a sounding out strategy for the ending of the word. Following some attempts, Doreen stated that she did not know and that she would “leave it with them” (Obs1 Doreen). Directly following this, a student offered another purpose for an asterisk, namely that it is used in music to denote a time for taking a breath. Doreen acknowledged this use and moved on to reading their data collection table.

Next, students moved to their desks and were handed their workbooks. During this time, Doreen asked a student where he would find the correct spelling of the word asterisk. The student went on to locate the correct spelling in the dictionary, advised Doreen who stopped the class to announce the correct spelling, who wrote it on the small whiteboard next to the previous attempts.

Each student was asked to “scan” the information in their workbooks to locate a time on Monday, and this was to be recorded on the IWB by a student helper. Students were asked to share the time they ate breakfast. The student

![Image](image.png)

**Figure 10. Recreation of the data table**
helper wrote these in the top right corner of the table next to “Time” (See Figure 10), and included a tick for each person who had the same time. The numbers and ticks were crammed into the corner of the table, and Doreen indicated that it was not very easy to read. She asked for suggestions from the students, and they agreed to put the times in sequence order in one of the blank cells at the bottom right of the page. The student helper was given this task. During this time, Doreen demonstrated a “flipping the pages” technique by moving the top page up and down to read the page underneath. This would help them discern if they had breakfast at the same time every day. Once students had shared this information and it was recorded on the board, Doreen directed the students to put their workbooks on their tables ready for the next task.

Modelled reading: Orientation to new printed text

In the next episode, Doreen introduced a new text (the Dragons book⁴) to follow on from this lesson. Before handing the book out, she discussed what to do with a “new printed text” (Obs1 Doreen). Students suggested, “write your name on it”, “read the first page”, “read the back”, “read it”, “check if we like it”, “flip through” and “have a look at it”. Doreen affirmed their responses, moving on to ask how to find specific information. One student offered, “Go to the table of contents.” She responded that they might look in the back of the book if there was no table of contents but did not follow up on this during the observation.

Reading the visual: Reading the Dragons book

Doreen commented on ways the students began to read the book, such as “running your finger down so you could have a quick look at something”. Quickly this conversation turned to a student when Doreen noticed she had looked at a page in the middle of the book. Doreen indicated that she liked the page “‘Cause it’s colourful. I always go for the colour you know that!” Doreen then discussed the colours on this page and the role colour played in a persuasive text, particularly how

⁴ The Dragons are a local sporting team who had previously visited the school as part of a health-education program. The workbook was part of this program.
the colours “red” and “green” can be interpreted. The students offered explanations such as “down”, “bad”, “stop”, “danger” or “things you don’t want to do” for red, and “up”, “go” or “good” for green. The students were referring to the asterisks that showed salt or sugar (Int2 Doreen).

*Independent reading: Exploring and responding to a text*

Before sending students off to read the new text independently for five minutes, Doreen connected the middle pages of the book to an earlier “life education” activity where students had created a board game. Then, as the rest of the class read, Doreen moved around the tables, stopping to talk to particular students, making connections with their sporting experiences to the book. Students at one table then asked to play the game located in the middle of the book and Doreen asked the students to figure out what “you need to do...the procedure” for playing. When Doreen returned to the table, one student read out the materials required to play the game. Doreen took this opportunity to ask the student, “If it has a title, material and steps what do you think it might be?” Using the titles, Doreen appeared to be making a connection to a procedural text type. The students suggested “like snakes and ladders” and Doreen nodded and walked away.

Next, Doreen called the students to the floor to discuss what they had been reading in the new text. She told the students, “Lots of people I saw having a quick look through. Open up now to the page that you were looking at, or that you were looking at last. ‘Cause they’re not all the same.” Students then opened their books to their page and Doreen asked, “Tell me something you gained from that,” and “What did you find out?” The students took turns to discuss the key message, referring to some examples in the text. One student related her reading to the previous lesson on the breakfast data table. Doreen referred to the nutritional-information table in the front and discussed the types of asterisks located on the page the student was looking at; for example, for alerting to high sugar or salt. Another student mentioned that he read that there might have been a change in nutritional information since the book was written; this information was indicated by a small asterisk and type at the bottom of the table in small print.
Modelled reading: Book orientation

Continuing on with the orientation to the text, Doreen brought the students’ attention to the inside cover of the book and identified it to be a menu chosen by the Dragons’ players. Doreen explicitly pointed out the title and the layout of the page, and asked students to identify the players that matched to breakfast, lunch, dinner, and snack ideas. Doreen used a fake prize (“$55K question”) if students could identify what the text type of the “special list” was called. Doreen gave clues, the final being related to the Year 3 unit Eating Out, which the group was studying at the time. Students answered correctly with the word “menu”.

Doreen gave instructions for students to copy the menus into their science books. There was some discussion about the layout in their books such as title and margins, and Doreen referred to real menus and asked the class if they have a margin. Students continued to copy this menu into their books for the remainder of the observation.

Interpretive summary of Observation 1

This lesson demonstrates Doreen’s ability to connect to a text in a variety of situations in both planned and incidental experiences. For example, this one-hour observation referred to three texts: the newsletter, the table and the Dragons workbooks. Doreen also identifies purposes for reading these texts such as the retrieval of the earlier recorded information.

Doreen used both planned and incidental experiences to teach text types and aspects of visual literacy. For example, she attended to the colour and the possible meanings of some of these, and the layout of some texts such as the newsletter, the game and the menu.

Doreen connected strongly to student experiences in both the classroom and the home. This was clear in the links Doreen consistently made between home and school in reading experiences such as the newsletter and the sports that some students played. She also made connections to reading experiences in previous lessons, such as the game that had been played in a previous lesson and the creation of the “breakfast” data table. Doreen indicated an appreciation of the
students’ individual experiences in reading, especially in the response to the text where students were asked to discuss what they had read with the rest of the class.

Observation 2

This observation was conducted in the second hour after recess. Doreen came into the classroom in this hour and took over from the relief teacher, Megan. Students were moving around when she entered the class and while Doreen prepared for the lesson, she asked the students to retrieve their life-education books from their tubs and then be seated on the floor.

Table 5. Orientation to Observation 2 for Doreen

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Activity</th>
<th>Duration</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Reading:</td>
<td>35 mins</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reading online</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Independent</td>
<td>10 mins</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>reading/writing</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Responding to</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>images</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reading:</td>
<td>15 mins</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Presenting</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>student</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>responses</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Reading: Reading online

Doreen loaded a webpage on the IWB about “peer pressure”. As soon as the page was loaded, a recorded voice began to read some of the text (text-to-speech) from the screen. She stopped the voice and asked the students, “What information did you get from that?” One student answered, “It was too fast,” and another gave a recount of some of the information that had been read. Doreen then asked, “Where did you get your information?” This student then replied, “What it said.” Doreen acknowledged that the student had listened to it but went on further to ask, “What was happening to that text?” Doreen and the students discussed the highlighting of the text as it was read.

Next, the discussion addressed playing games. Doreen asked the students, “How do you know how to play a new game?” Students suggested connections to their home experiences, such as using computers at home or playing their portable PlayStations. Then, the conversation turned to reading instructions to play games and finally to following links through a website to inappropriate or unwanted content and what was to be done in this occasion. This line of questioning seemed unrelated to the text on the screen and incidental in nature.
Doreen then drew the students’ attention back to the website on the IWB, and while logging in to the proxy again, asked the students to read the URL silently, though no purpose or follow-up was given. She then announced to the students that she was going to do an “experiment” with them and turned the text-to-speech back on to see if following the highlighted text made it easier for them to read aloud or not. At this time, a student recognised the icon for increasing the text size, and all students agreed to increase the size as they thought it would make it easier to read. After two attempts at trying to read with the sound on and off, it was obvious that the students could not keep up with the speed of the reading and lost track after approximately the first five sentences. Next, Doreen fielded questions about the meaning of “cut math” from the text, and explained that this was an American website and asked for suggestions for the meaning of “cut math”. She hinted at the meaning; however, a student gave the class the correct answer. Doreen then asked the students to go to their desks.

*Independent reading/writing: Responding to images*

Doreen handed out a workbook for the next part of the lesson. Once the students were at their desks, Doreen questioned them about the meaning of “peer pressure”. Students gave answers and Doreen referred them to the heading in the text and the website. Once the meaning had been clarified, Doreen asked the students to turn to the page about peer pressure, though she stated that the page might not be titled “peer pressure”. She asked a student to share and justify his interpretation of the illustration on this page. He responded by reading out the text on the page. Doreen drew attention to the speech bubble, gave her own interpretation of the image, and explained that the girl was facing away so therefore was not interested or was avoiding the situation. Students were asked to read this page to try to interpret the other images so that they could then share this with the rest of the class. One student shared their response and the class conversation led to the use of computers, emails or the student portal, or computer use in general and the permission that was required to use the computer. This was because the content of the page, which addressed the illustration, showed a student who wanted to steal another student’s email account.
Students were then asked to “respond” to questions in their workbooks, particularly the first question, “How would you feel?”. They were asked to read the speech balloons, graphics, pictures and visuals, interpret what was happening in the picture and respond to the question. During this time, the spelling of certain words arose and Doreen took the opportunity to ask the class how to spell them or where to find the spelling. She also asked what students could do if they could not read a certain passage: “If you need any help, [Student name], what would you do?” He replied, “Um, ask?” Doreen responded, “You could! I would be more than willing to help you. If you have any questions that are urgent you can remain here and I will work with you.” The students then moved to their desks to complete the task, and, when finished, shared their responses with the person sitting next to them.

Reading: Presenting student responses

During this part of the observation, students were asked to sit on the floor to listen to the student presenters’ responses to the questions. She stated that she chose these students for their “choice of vocabulary,” they gave “a full answer” not just single words, and they “extended their answer to give a more complex sentence.”

The student presenters lined up in front of the IWB. Doreen reminded students how to “show respect” as an audience. Students began in turn to read out their responses from the workbooks. As they read, Doreen told the class specific elements of the responses she liked, such as their vocabulary (for example, "avoid") and their "specificity” (for example, "as soon as possible"). She confirmed strategies for dealing with peer pressure and feelings associated with peer pressure. She then commented on a student’s responses, as he had “written them in a special way”. Doreen gestured with her hands, moving one beneath another indicating a list and asked the class how had he presented his answers. The class guessed until they answered correctly. The students were sent back to their desks to colour in their books for the remainder of the observation time.
Interpretive summary of Observation 2

The incidental moment at the beginning of the planned learning experiences was dissimilar to the previous lesson, where these incidental moments were used as a connection to the current activity and built upon previous knowledge. However, this lesson was dealt with differently. For example, Doreen addressed playing games while beginning to focus on reading online; she appeared to be bouncing from one topic to another and made no connection to the online reading task she began and gave no new information. Rather, it was a series of questions about how students knew how to play a new game at home and appeared to focus on the reading of instructions in a pamphlet or on a website. In this instance, the connections to playing games at home were not connected back to classroom experiences.

Doreen again used this lesson to teach visual literacy. By providing the students with her analysis of the illustration in the booklet, she demonstrated how to make meaning from the image and discussed how the reader is positioned by the use of this particular image.

The students’ strategy to answer Doreen’s question about the structure of the text and illustrations they were viewing was guessing. Doreen prompted the students with gestural cues to clue them into the speech bubble and did not use language to aid them. Students were given opportunities to discuss their reading of the visual images by responding to the images to draw meaning and share their understandings with their peers.

Midpoint discussion about reading

The second interview was held to discuss the first two observations and the researcher’s initial interpretations presented in Vignette 2. The questions were to further explicate Doreen’s stated knowledge and beliefs about reading and teaching reading, and to clarify any discussions from the first interview (Appendix H: Interview 2 Protocol). Presented below is the vignette and relevant quotes that respond to the research questions.
Portrait of Practice: Vignette 2

This Portrait of Practice was developed by the researcher used data collected from the first interview and the first two observations. It provided an early interpretation of data with attention to actions, instructions, interactions and physical objects observed. This vignette served as a stimulated recall in the second interview and provided an opportunity for the teachers to respond or recall the events observed.

Wall-poster prompts for mathematics and writing are displayed across Doreen’s 2/3 classroom. The room consists of table groups of four or five students with three desks at the back of the grouping set for individual students. There are two small whiteboards either side of an interactive whiteboard and in front of these there is a space for the students to sit on the floor. The whiteboards have words used for spelling, diagrams and is used for practice and explanation of incidental spelling queries that arise during lessons. There is a reading corner with some books, and a long cupboard containing children’s tubs. On this cupboard there are some books on display in addition to work from previous lesson.

Following breaks, the students gather on the floor area in front of the whiteboard. Students are eager to participate in conversation and while some students indicate with their hand to be ready to speak, other students are reminded not to call out, to turn to the teacher’s direction and sit flat on the floor. There is a great deal of questioning in lessons and incidental opportunities for spelling, punctuation and grammar are taken and either dealt with verbally or on the small whiteboard.

Doreen uses the interactive white board during lessons. The children, when asked to do so also use the whiteboard during lessons to indicate a section on a webpage or document and to write on the document if required. The webpages used are discussed in terms of not only text content but, given Doreen’s background in art, particular attention to some visual features of the websites. This same attention to these features is drawn to the books the students are using. The lessons unfold with discussion about the text (print or webpage) and then a task is set for students. The students work independently on this task, is marked. Doreen walks around the room constantly visiting desks, keeping students on track and again, taking advantage of incidental opportunities to help with spelling.

Interview 2 discussions

Interview 2 was held in Doreen’s classroom during her “Relief from Face to Face” (RFF) time. Doreen was given an opportunity to review Vignette 2 at the beginning of the interview. Due to time constraints for Doreen, there was little time between the second observation and this second interview. Doreen and the researcher discussed that this initial interpretation was completed soon after her observation. Doreen began to clarify some points in the vignette, referring to the attention to visual features of websites and books. Doreen explained, “Programming of looking at things like visual graphics and text is not just my background, it is because I do believe that’s an important part of our reading.” She
also explained that the two current science units, titled *Picture It* and *Making Pictures*, paid attention to “visual acuity” and “visual awareness…and what we see, basically”.

Doreen also spoke about the students’ work in creating storyboards in cooperative groups that were subsequently used in Observation 4. At this point in her planning, Doreen had not decided how the movie would be created; for example, PowerPoint, still shots and music or the use of a video camera and iMovie and iDVD to edit. Doreen also stated:

> When I teach reading, I’m not teaching that we are only looking at the text in front of us. Whether it is part of the author and what the author’s written, the author’s voice, what the author is trying to present, as well as the audience that’s receiving it and why. And in between, when it’s something like a book or a movie, that in between, times there is the role of the editor and the publisher and the artist that all combine to provide that text or that information to you. And that all of that is part of it. (Int2 Doreen)

Doreen then went on to talk about the lesson in Observation 2:

> Part of what [it] was…you can put that up and you can have an automatic voice tell you that. Didn’t help you read that any better; actually, it made it worse. Some students, you know, I like them to recognise the way that they learn themselves. And so therefore, if they are a visual person and the movement of the highlighting of the text assisted, well, you mightn’t need it now but when you get to high school that might be a really good strategy for you to be using in your reading or to hone in on particular a text or information that you are deriving. So sometimes it’s the process that’s important, sometimes it’s the message that’s important. (Int2 Doreen)

In this conversation, Doreen described reading in terms of meaning making, reading critically and reading for purpose. Next, she referred to the English syllabus (Board of Studies NSW, 1998b) and stated that although her students were
independent readers according to the...tick off the box...they have a certain level of automaticity at the moment and independence at the moment with the type of text that they’re reading. But you know, when you go to something that is new to you, if it’s a factual text or a technical text, you actually have to go back to those strategies and reintroduce them so that you can comprehend, so that you can actually understand what you’re reading, so that you know and that’s why I am continually talking to them about what vocabulary is that—“This word, you can read that, but you may not understand it. Where does that word come from? What’s the derivation of it that will assist you in understand the reading? (Int2 Doreen)

In Doreen’s statements above, she recognised the different strategies for reading complex texts that emerge in Stage 2 classrooms. She had also begun to explain her practice of building topic vocabulary and word-attack skills for students to aid in their reading of these texts. She also stated, “Part of my philosophy or understanding of education and teaching is that every lesson is a writing lesson, every lesson is a reading lesson, every lesson is an opportunity for talking and listening” (Int2 Doreen).

When Doreen was asked how she planned for the reading lessons observed, she stated that she started with the outcomes for her cross-stage class and looked at “both the group and the individual’s needs.” She explained that she used an integrative approach with the curriculum outcomes, grouped them and attempted to teach literacy through HSIE, Science or other units. She said, “I try to teach my literacy through HSIE, Science or units just because you don’t have time to do it any other way.” She explained that she has a “literacy block” in the morning, which covers talking and listening, reading, handwriting, spelling rules or syllabification and vocabulary.

When asked to speak about how she planned for reading experiences, Doreen spoke about her classroom library and the responses to some of the books from the students. When some students stopped reading a book, she shared usual
conversations she had with these students. Referring to an example of *Black Beauty* (Sewell, 1998), she stated,

I could see some of them actually becoming quite agitated and I said, “What’s the problem?” and [they responded,] “I don’t, you know, like it”. “Okay, what don’t you like? Why did you choose it in the first place?” You know, “What prediction did you use? What experience did you use in choosing it?” Might have seen the movie, you might like horses, you know, “Looked at the cover and thought I knew the story”, and then when we got into it, I mean it was pretty heavy reading for some of them, so that group overall chose not to continue with that text. They all had to justify why...so some of them said it was too hard, some of them said the print was too small, some of them said they didn’t like the way it was written. And we went back talking about the first person and the fact that it was the horse that was telling the story, which they might have understood in a less mature text but they couldn’t take in this one. (Int2 Doreen)

In this example, Doreen appeared to connect a purpose for students to read the text by demonstrating choices made in initially choosing the text. She then aided students to make informed decisions about their independent reading material.

When Doreen continued to share her practice of planning for reading lessons, she stated that she would look at grouping and the syllabus to determine what would need to be taught. She would also look at the NAPLAN (ACARA, 2011) focus to have “structured lessons” on text types and ensure that this was included in the writing, and “that they are seeing it as part of their reading as an example as well”. She also stated that the students were looking at the “author’s intention and the author’s voice” and the varying levels of messages in these texts.

Doreen was asked how the syllabus aligned with her beliefs. Though Doreen asked not to be quoted by name, she stated that within some syllabus outcomes (Appendix R gives an example), there were “indicators” that Doreen could report on, and though she was expected to cover the other “outcomes”, some more than
others aligned with her overall philosophy. This might indicate that Doreen’s beliefs in reading might be compromised or adjusted to align with the syllabus.

With regard to NAPLAN (ACARA, 2011) testing, Doreen stated that she used magazines and the online tests to teach the students what they “need[ed] to do in that test. And that...you actually need to read in a certain way to do that type of reading”. This was not observed during this study, however. She also referred to teaching reading if “students had struggled with the text” and coaching with detailed strategies such as “go through the text” together on the board, “disassemble” and “deconstruct it” then “reconstruct it.” They would “look at each word..., take words out and say, you know, this is what—how this one works.”

Next, she offered an explanation of spelling in her classroom, as the students had “gone beyond the CVC and that very alphabetic [sic] stage, and they are into multisyllabic words. And there are some ways you put these together, and for some of them they are past that and, now having to recognise the ones that don’t fit in.” She stated that she constructed some of her own lists or used a spelling program designed to compliment the syllabus. At this stage of the interview, she stated that there are a “lot of effective systems” but that “explicit teaching is probably the best” and “if you plan well and you teach well, you teach explicitly”. Doreen was then asked to share her view on how this fits with whole language, her earlier stated theoretical position. She recalled a time of process writing, in which students learn to write by writing, and emphasised the repetition of the practice of writing. She then explained that students now “will talk and talk” and “listen and listen but you just don’t get it all that way” (Int2 Doreen). She went further to explain that when a child is learning to talk by making an attempt and being corrected, the interaction of the other person responding and providing “some correction” is what helps the child improve. She then connected this to reading by giving an example of accepting some attempts of understanding substituted meanings, but then looking at the accuracy of word by identifying the word by length and beginning sounds. Doreen was demonstrating her knowledge of the cueing systems used in whole language, where reading begins with sense.
She also outlined the shift in teaching graphophonics when more accuracy is required.

Doreen had completed the *Frameworks* (Turbill et al., 1995) professional-development program in the 1990s, which she stated had “evolved” the way she thought about reading “a bit further…, it clarified clarified aspects that I believed strongly in, that I felt, you know, that I was doing correctly or that was working. It clarified that in my own mind” (Int2 Doreen). She then spoke about the importance of keeping up to date with professional development in her years of teaching due to the changes she had seen in her career.

The end of the interview brought the conversation back to the vignette. Doreen suggested that the vignette “doesn’t reflect just how much I love reading” to the class, and she attributed that to the type of text her lessons were reviewing at the time of the observations. Doreen shared the students’ reading log since the beginning of the year and commented on how the students’ responses to their readings had changed across the year. She read one response out to the researcher: “‘I like this book because I like reading.’ Oh, I love reading things like this—it makes me so happy!” (Int2 Doreen). She then referred to an activity with the pop-up book *Jabberwocky* by Graeme Base (1996): “when you open it, it forms a foreground, a middle ground and a background, and there’s a repeat through again of colour giving emotion” (Int2 Doreen). Here Doreen provided another connection to reading visually: “So there’s lots of things in reading. There’s a lot more than just looking at a book” (Int2 Doreen).

Doreen also spoke about a set of yet-to-be-delivered lessons that the students had not begun due to her being out of the classroom so frequently. This group of lessons suggested her whole language roots of using authentic literature and integrated lessons while connecting to the syllabus outcomes. This unit consisted of the book, *The Secret Garden* (Hodgson Burnett, 1998), that connected to growing and planting which the students were already involved in, then connecting these experiences to the explanation text type the students were learning. It involved other texts with similar vocabulary and themes.
The final questions for Doreen in the interview were to explicate her understandings of pedagogies beyond the printed text. When asked, “Do you teach visual literacy with the books that you read?”, Doreen was not able to talk explicitly about visual literacy; however, her observations indicated that she had some knowledge about aspects of visual art.

Next, Doreen was asked to explain her understandings of “multiliteracies”:

I see it as the fact that my chi- the students need to be able to read things from all different places, techniques, and that so, therefore, what I was talking about before originally, like, they’re getting environmental print. They’re getting things from multimedia all the time.... They have to be able to read computers, they have be able to read all those cues that come that come on, the icons. And it’s not just reading words, not just deciphering print. You are taking in all that information from all those many, many different sources. (Int2 Doreen)

Interview 2 discussion comments

It is clear from this discussion with Doreen, that her beliefs about children learning to read were centred on literature and exposure to various text types. She connected reading and writing in her talk about learning to read or teaching reading, and provided opportunities for students to respond to texts in different ways. When discussing her planning of reading experiences in her classroom, she described planning experiences that connect authentic literature to syllabus requirements as well as reading for enjoyment. Doreen’s beliefs about reading are connected to critical awareness of the author’s position.

When discussing the researcher-developed Portrait of Practice, Doreen indicated that she thought it was accurate for what had been observed, but that she did not feel it represented her normal activities, particularly the love of reading she attempted to instil in the children from the beginning of the year.
Phase 2 observations

Observation 3

Doreen entered the classroom and relieved Megan, who had taught the class during the morning. The first 10 minutes of the observation involved some classroom housekeeping. Doreen showed the students a “high achievement award” certificate received for a report they had submitted to a competition. They discussed the feedback and what to do with the text. The class decided that the report would be put in the library to share with the school, but also be available to take home to show parents.

Table 6. Orientation to Observation 3 for Doreen

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Activity</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>10 mins</td>
<td>Independent reading: Silent reading of the text</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15 mins</td>
<td>Guided reading: Focusing on expression</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Independent reading: Silent reading

At the beginning of this lesson, students were seated on the floor space. Doreen gave out bookmarks the students had created for the book they were reading. These included responses to the text such as "It's about a boy who has to save his mum" and "He went on an adventure". The students were asked to put their bookmarks in the second chapter of their books and then to read silently from their books until Doreen stopped them. Most students read for approximately 10 minutes, during which time the class was almost silent. Doreen used this time to prepare the IWB and then moved around the room and asked students some questions about what they were reading. She went to a student who had earlier stated that he did not understand “some parts” or “some of the big words” in Lord of the Rings (Tolkien, 1994). Doreen asked what strategies he had used to help him such as reading with his mother, older sibling or Megan. She offered to follow up with him later.

Next, the class began an independent writing activity that consisted of writing a booklet of the novel. This was to include the book title (capitals for main
words), author, setting(s), and problem, and Doreen reiterated that for a narrative a problem was called a complication.

*Guided reading: Focusing on expression*

While the class was working on the independent writing activity, Doreen asked the Year 2 students to work with her on the floor area and bring their copies of *The Spiderwick Chronicles* (DiTerlizzi & Black, 2003). Doreen began to read from the book and stopped periodically to discuss some word meanings and to pay attention to expression by taking note of punctuation; for example, exclamation marks, italics and commas to punctuate the speech to vary the speed and make it sound “more scary.” Doreen read another passage and modelled this expression for them. The students then went back to their desks to participate in the independent writing activity.

For the remainder of the lesson, Doreen moved around the class, helped students and answered questions during their independent writing activity. She helped students by discussing their progress in the activity and encouraging them with statements such as, “Yes! You’re on the right track,” and giving strategies to catch up on finishing their reading, such as reading during lunch or taking the book home. She asked a student to “tell me about” the settings they were writing about, characters and character traits while confirming the student’s predictions, and then guided him through the story to determine the “problem” in the story.

The lesson concluded as Doreen reminded the students that they were working on a draft and that more detail would be required in the final product, such as describing the characters with more adjectives; for example, “reluctant hero” rather than “hero”. Doreen concluded the lesson by reading a passage from the book with the expression she had modelled in the guided reading episode.

*Interpretive summary of Observation 3*

The consideration to the class-created text submitted for the competition demonstrated the value Doreen placed on her students’ work. She showed this value by sharing it with the school community, and by the organisation and care she took to discuss taking the text home to show parents and caregivers.
This episode included a short session of silent reading while Doreen prepared the next part of the lesson. Again, she showed an interest in the students’ experience of reading by discussing what the students were reading during the silent reading episode and in the responses to the texts when she handed out the bookmarks the students had created.

Doreen conducted a short, guided reading lesson with a group using the class’s authentic literature text, *The Spiderwick Chronicles* (DiTerlizzi & Black, 2003) whilst the rest of the class worked on the booklet. Though this session was interrupted several times, Doreen managed to focus on the students’ expression while reading. She explained and then modelled what she required of them during this session and again at the end of the lesson, when she modelled the expression to the whole class.

Observation 4

Prior to this observation, students had started to create a storyboard for a movie they were creating based on a poem (Int2 Doreen). During this lesson, the groups continued to work on their project.

Table 7. Orientation to Observation 4 for Doreen

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Activity</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>58 mins</td>
<td>Creating/reading: Create a movie from a poem</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5 mins</td>
<td>Choral reading: Reading a poem</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Writing/creating: Create a movie from a poem*

Though this lesson appeared to be predominantly a creating lesson, the basis of the creation was reading and responding to a poem. As a class, Doreen and the students reviewed the storyboard they had designed to help create the movie. Doreen asked the purpose of creating a storyboard and students offered suggestions such as “a thing with boxes in it and then you draw something in it like the title”, “you drawed [sic] the pictures of what happens first, second and third”, and “to tell you the sequence of the story”. One student also offered, “We were writing whether it was close up or far away.” Students then discussed how to introduce the story and the location of the title and credits. Doreen also stated that
students “need to have a scene that was going to capture people’s interest and place them in the actual movie as part of it.”

Students then began moving to their groups while Doreen handed out the previously created A3 storyboards. Some students were finding it hard to settle into the group work so Doreen spent time settling them down and reminded them of the task and to work as a group member. She also suggested that students start to practice their lines. As Doreen handed out the storyboards, she addressed the need to make decisions by “consensus”. She asked students how they were going to develop their characters as the story moved along. For example, the There Was an Old Lady Who Swallowed a Fly (Adams, 2000) needed to be a thin character at the beginning. She also suggested thinking about props that were needed to create the story. Some students had already chosen their props, which included fluffy toys or puppets for the character depictions, while other students were still deciding if they would use real people or not. Doreen continued to ask the students about the decisions they had made about backdrops and helped students negotiate, decide as a group and record their decisions.

At one point Doreen stopped the class to discuss one group’s dilemma. She told the class that this group was working on The Circus (Dennis, 1976). She asked the class if all the characters needed to be depicted, and could they give suggestions of characters from which the group could choose. Some suggestions included, they “could only show the ones that the poem says”, and “You could choose the main characters or specific characters”. Other suggestions for solving the problem of not having enough actors were for students to use pictures or stuffed toys. This led Doreen to recall a movie previously created by a student with the class mascot toy, “Snowy”. The student had created the movie using miniature furniture that was appropriate for Snowy’s size and then suggested that students could zoom in and out for their film. The group was asked to take into consideration all the suggestions and come up with a “cooperative answer”. The class continued to work, and Doreen moved around once again to work with groups.
After approximately 40 minutes, Doreen asked all the student groups with the storyboards to sit in their groups on the floor. The class then discussed suggestions for backdrops and scenes. Some suggested using the IWB as a backdrop or creating something in the computer lab. Doreen told the students that her kindergarten class in the previous year had printed out a scene and put it in a box and used it as a diorama for filming. Another student suggested using shadow puppets, which led the discussion of shadow puppets’ construction, especially the moving body parts made with sticks and pins.

During this final part of the episode, the book-club books were brought in to the classroom. The students were very excited; however, Doreen advised them that they would have to wait until the next break.

*Choral reading: Poem*

As a transition activity, Doreen loaded a poem onto the IWB in the last five minutes of the observation. Students were asked to read the poem, *Sing a Song of People* (Lenski & Laroche, 1987). The students began to choral read from the IWB and Doreen stopped the class when their expression was “silly” or “inappropriate” (Obs4 Doreen). She stated that she was not happy with the recitation and that reading poetry “is related to singing”. She told them that posture was important for projection of the voice and there was no need to shout. She told the students that she felt that they had read better at previous times.

The students were given time to go back to their chairs to look at the book-club books or read silently before the bell. One student could be heard asking Doreen why they read the poem. Her response was “because we haven’t done it for a while”. During the third interview, Doreen stated that she used poetry to “finish off” or as a “little break” (Int3 Doreen).

*Interpretive summary of Observation 4*

This observation demonstrated Doreen’s use of multiple texts in the classroom to support reading, which included serial reads and poems. Her connections to reading and writing in creating movies of the poems were clear indications to support her statement that she “can’t disassociate reading from other
areas” (Int1 Doreen), and that all four modes were needed. Her lesson on the creation of the movie indicated her encouragement of the four modes working together in this type of complex task. In particular, the use of storyboarding showed interconnections between reading and writing.

While it was clear from the performance of the students reading the poem that they knew it well, it is unclear whether this was a regular practice, given the student’s question of why they had read the poem. It appeared that he saw no purpose in reading the poem, as it was unrelated to the task before it.

Observation 5

This observation was short compared to the previous observations. Prior to this lesson, Year 5 students had visited the classrooms to persuade the students to vote them into leadership positions for the following year. The students were also required to create a poster.

Table 8. Orientation to Observation 5 for Doreen

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Activity</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>11 mins</td>
<td>Viewing a poster: Orientation to and critically reading a poster</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>22 mins</td>
<td>Independent reading: Judging the poster</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Viewing a poster: Orientation to and critically reading a poster**

Doreen loaded a digital copy of an authentic poster on the IWB and asked if the students had seen the poster—a US Army recruitment poster of Uncle Sam—before. Some students said they had seen it in a movie or a television show and at an unremembered place in Sydney one student had visited. Doreen asked why students remembered this poster, particularly the image of Uncle Sam. One student answered that it was because “it’s not normal”. Doreen suggested that people remember things because they are uncommon or unusual. She stated, “That is why sometimes when we come to a word in reading we think ‘ooh, goodness, I don’t know that one’. It causes us to halt and either work it out or substitute something else for it, we [go] on, and go back and look at it later.” She then stated that as “a hint”, studying things out of context would be helpful to remember when the students were older. The conversation turned to describing
the poster, such as what Uncle Sam was wearing. The students described a white top hat and a blue jacket. They noticed that his finger was pointed toward the reader, and Doreen asked, “What does that do?” She answered the question herself, saying that he was engaging with the observer personally. The students also said it “catches your eye”, as did the colour of the words that were red. During this observation, Doreen also recalled an earlier art lesson taught about perspective and foreshortening.

Doreen then asked the students how the design of the poster got their attention. She suggested that the creator of the poster “wants to get a message to you”, but asked the students what they thought the message was. Then, she asked if the character was a real person and a student answered, “Yes”, but Doreen replied that she did not know. Some students entered the classroom and interrupted the lesson for a short time. When the students focused on the lesson again, one student noted the star on the top hat of Uncle Sam, and Doreen stated that it is from the American flag. Doreen identified elements of the image, such as Uncle Sam looking serious as an indication that the message was serious. Doreen told the students that it was a patriotic picture created in a time of war. She pointed to the bottom of the poster where there was a blank space to insert a recruiting station. Doreen asked a student to read the text on the poster while she pointed to the words, gesturing more at the word ‘YOU’:

“I WANT YOU
FOR U.S. ARMY
NEAREST RECRUITING STATION”

Doreen said to the student that he “hasn’t persuaded” her, and suggested he had another try to read it again to “work on perfection”. Doreen wrote the school name in the space allocated on the poster for the nearest recruiting station. She told the students that when she went to download the image, you could buy the image without the words and create your own poster. The class then realised that a student had used this design in their election poster.
Independent reading: Judging the poster

Next, students were allocated the task of judging persuasive texts in the form of an election poster created by the Year 5 students for leadership positions in the school for the following year. Students were asked to judge the poster based on what persuaded them the most. Prior to this lesson, the Year 5 students had presented a speech, an oral persuasive text to each class in the school; however, Doreen instructed the students not to take into account those oral presentations, but to only consider the poster.

Doreen gave each poster to random pairs and gave them two minutes. They were asked to judge the poster on parts of the text that influenced them to want to read it, that caught their eye or that gave an explicit message that they felt was important about that person that would encourage the students to vote for that candidate. They were to think about the structure, language, graphics, print, message (text) and what type of message was in the poster. Students worked in the pairs and could be heard describing colour elements of the poster, such as “that’s red and it stands out”. After two minutes, Doreen rang a bell and instructed the students to return to the floor with the poster and sit in their pairs.

The students took turns holding up the poster they were judging. Doreen asked one student from the audience to read the written words. After the first student read the words, Doreen asked, “Was it easy to read?” The student replied, “No,” so Doreen prompted, “What would you naturally do, if it was hard to read? I know you concentrated from there.” The student responded, "You might go closer?" The conversation then turned to the question, “What caught your eye first?” The students offered “the Vote 1”, “silver and shiny” and “the stars”. Next, Doreen asked the students why people use the symbol of a star. “It’s telling you that something’s special or something,” said one student. Then Doreen read out some adjectives from the poster such as, "caring, sporty, wonderful and kind" and asked the students, “What kinds of words are these?” One student replied with, “Words that she is?” Doreen encouraged him further, "Words that she is. Give me a bit more?" Another student tried to answer but Doreen said, "No, it's his turn to
think it through. How do those words make you feel about her? What sort of person does she sound like?” He finally offered, “A very happy person.”

The next poster was held up and another student read the text aloud. They commented that the text was a poem and that stated this candidate had also used a poem in their verbal presentation.

Next, Doreen discussed the poster in terms of the size of the text’s “big writing and little writing,” and asked, “What does it mean?” Some students guessed that it was “important.” However, Doreen offered, “Sometimes you need a contrast,” then clarified that this was different from “fine print”. Finally, Doreen pointed to the colour red in the text and asked if it was “because it catches your eye”. The lesson ended when Doreen asked students to put the posters on the desks. In a short conversation following this observation, Doreen told the researcher that the next step in the lesson was for the students to create their own posters.

Interpretive summary of Observation 5

Again, Doreen demonstrated her practice in teaching aspects of visual literacy to the students while viewing the US recruiting poster and then judging the student posters. She drew the students’ attention to the colour, text and font, and to how these can be translated while reading out loud to match the author’s intention.

It appeared that Doreen made an attempt to connect the words from the poster to grammar; specifically, adjectives. She read out the words and asked, “What kind of words?” but when the students replied, she did not guide the students to reach the objective of knowing that they were adjectives. Rather, the conversation turned to making a judgment about the type of person the author is.

During the second interview, Doreen was given an opportunity to respond to the vignette. Doreen stated that she felt as though it captured her “at this given time”, but went on to say that it does not capture “how much I love reading” (Int2 Doreen). She also noted that with respect to teaching paying “particular orientation to some visual features of the websites” (Vignette 2 Doreen), that it was “not just
my background but is because I do believe that’s an important part of our reading” (Int2 Doreen).

**Final discussion about reading**

The final discussions with Doreen occurred at the end of the five observations. Due to time constraints, Doreen had been unable to write her vignette before the interview.

The researcher read out Doreen’s description of reading from the first interview to ensure that a fuller record of her beliefs and knowledge were captured. Doreen again stated, “You can actually decipher and decode without having any meaning,” and referred back to learning her husband’s first language and being able to read but not understand it. She went on to describe “reading as being more than just one thing that you do at school. It’s a life skill...and that it is not necessarily only print.... I guess it’s that one person is sending a message or giving a message, and the other person is actually able to decode and interpret it and understand it and hopefully respond to it...Whether that response is an answer or whether that response is just a personal response of a feeling or an emotion” (Int3 Doreen).

As Doreen had used the word “decode” in her responses, she was asked to define “decoding”. She responded:

Decoding is taking those symbols or parts of the message, whether it be, you know, a puff of smoke or a stroke cut into a message stick, and it has a set meaning that I guess it is [her mobile phone rings] decided between the two [reads the phone]...the receiver and the sender...Because that goes back to that I can read things, but if I don’t have understanding of what that is, then I can’t read it, I don’t have any comprehension or understanding of it. So you can take each inherent part...you can take them ALL apart.... You can learn your sounds or your alphabet or whatever, but if that doesn’t have any meaning, you’re parroting. (Int3 Doreen)

Doreen then spoke about being a teacher of English and the difference in teaching the code. She described it as
letters that they need to have. When they go beyond their letters—children go beyond learning their letters in—and again, we are referring to English teaching that I am doing...the what we call, you know, the sight words—those that are so common in our language that they become automatic in our response to them—we’re not going to try and sound it out...to those words that we learn...because we have an interest in them and those that we take the component parts. So we’ve got the letters. We take the component parts, we put them together to make our syllables or to build up our words. [pause 4 sec] and yes, we’ve got our terms, “grapho this” and “grapho that”, and you know you can look those up if you want to if you want to use them. (Int3 Doreen)

Here she distinguished between reading sight words and words that can be easily decoded by “sounding out” using synthetic phonics.

The researcher then drew Doreen’s attention to the reading of visual images in the observed lessons. Doreen’s response was to link symbols to the environmental print that students are exposed to as part of their social lives, including words they are regularly exposed, to such as “their street sign” or “favourite program”.

Next, Doreen shared her experience teaching braille to students with vision impairment or sign language to students with hearing impairment; to her “it is not just—reading is not just the print.” She also referred to universal symbols that are recognisable across cultures. Doreen demonstrated a broad understanding of the nature of “reading”, which included the alphabetic system, images, icons and colours.

The conversation was brought back to Doreen’s description of reading. She was asked, “How do you believe this occurs in your classroom?” Doreen began with “exposure” and described the print in her room, although she stated that there was not as much as she would like due to time. During this conversation, Doreen changed quickly from “exposure” to the use of “immersion” and stated,
There’s an immersion of that print, there’s an immersion [in] that there are always books available in my room. (Int3 Doreen)

She continued,

What is modelled for me now you’ve come in and that’s there the rest of the year it was all here and that whole shelf off of where they’ve got their book boxes was all texts that I was saying these are ones that I would like you to be able to go and use so that’s one way. Um...I use you notice I use the board the the [the whiteboard?] well the the smartboard and the whiteboard um when I’m not writing I’m drawing. If I need to explain something ah quickly I will generally draw but the word the label the label will go with it so that there is a word that is associated with it you know? (Int3 Doreen)

She also spoke about “sending [the students] notes” as a personal response to their work, and included “labelling things” as part of her modelling classroom practice. Doreen then acknowledged that exposure “is that I provide it for them. It’s there...yeah, right. Exposure is it’s there.” She also described and immersion:

[W]e go into it more deeply, I guess, is the way I would look at that. So that’s where...say, if we’re working within our literacy unit and I wanted them to be to be actually learning to read certain words—understand or read a certain text type, [to] look for the features of the language because...I don’t believe—unless you’ve got an understanding of those features—that it becomes automatic. (Int3 Doreen)

Doreen gave an example of immersion: going to an excursion and having environmental print “to know to follow certain signs, well, then we would have those up around the room until they were part of what of what we are doing”. Though there was little evidence in the room of environmental print, Doreen stated that as it was getting toward the end of the year, the students had taken some home.
The next set of questions was to ensure that the teacher was given a voice about the observations undertaken in the study. The researcher asked Doreen if the observed lessons were what she expected to have been seen. She responded, “My understanding was to do what I do and at this time of the year I needed to do what I was doing.” She was then asked if perhaps there was something that was not seen. She stated that due to the time of the year, the observations caught “the last bits of where I’m trying to pull those ties together” rather than at the beginning of a unit. She also stated,

You didn’t get to see me [do] what I called shared reading, when I sit down and I really, you know, I am immersed in in the book that I am, that we are reading, and what part that shared reading fits into one my belief in teaching of reading. (Int3 Doreen)

The final questions in this interview were to discern if Doreen understood the Four Roles framework. Doreen had not heard the term before. She was then asked to describe how she teaches explicitly in her classroom. She referred to the modelled, guided and independent teaching strategies:

I believe that I model what is required, and I actually teach what I’ve defined as—I want the outcome or what I actually specifically teach that I don’t expect that is going to come only by immersion. I provide an opportunity for them [to be] for a guided [lesson]. So I don’t accept that just because I’ve modelled it that they’re going to get it the first time. And I guess the explicit part is that that you are continually conscious of what you say how you present it and that you do need to often present it in more than one way. (Int3 Doreen)

Doreen indicates in this explanation that explicit teaching is achieved through both the progression of the lesson and the clarity of instruction.

Teacher reflection: Vignette style 3

Doreen created a one-page vignette of how she saw herself as a teacher of reading after this interview.
As a teacher of reading, I always cast my mind back to my own reading experiences. I carry deeply embedded, my memory of the moment I learned and was conscious that I was “reading.” Books and storytelling had always been part of my childhood, fairytales, tall tales from my drover grandfather, Australian bush ballads recited for bedtime stories and viewing from a table leg my mother reading the newspaper (& completing cryptic crosswords) after Dad and older sister had left for school.

After a traumatic flood my sisters and I were evacuated to a Children’s Home to live with The Principal and his wife (both ex missionaries from Africa and teachers.) On Mrs. Woods’ knee, feeling safe, I had my epiphany. The thick black shapes on the page of the old style Primer matched sounds and I could put them together and read words. In one moment I became a reader. I was three and half years old.

As a teacher of reading I place emphasis on my personal experience…. that reading draws from a various experiences….background knowledge , language experience and learning and feeling confident to crack the code of letters, words and sentences.

In addition, what is read must make sense and the reader comprehend and hopefully have use for what is read.

Finally as a teacher of reading I aim to develop a love of reading, a love of the sounds of words and an excitement that sets a sense of anticipation for what is to read or discovered next.

I am an eclectic teacher and teaching reading for the 21st century opens new doors…the internet: digital text, sms, email, multimedia, pages, posters, files with multiple captions and purposes. The reader of today is constantly bombarded with information and is continually absorbing, deciphering, filtering and endeavouring to understand and prioritise ideas and meaning. Like myself as a pre-schooler, many Australian children of today are taking those first steps into reading before they enter formal education, reading environmental print, computer icons and symbols and following instructions. As a teacher I am keen to take up the challenge to model and guide my student's learning, so they may experience reading for a variety of purposes, including pleasure, finding and comprehending information and making discriminatory decisions.

When comparing the researchers’ early interpretation in the Portrait of Practice (see page 99) and Doreen’s reflection, some similarities can be found. Both focused to a degree on the personal experiences of the students. The researcher’s Portrait of Practice alludes to the student’s engagement and discussion while, the teacher’s story states that she wants students to experience reading for pleasure as well as for purpose.

Doreen’s story talks about decoding, “crack[ing] the code of letters, words and sentences,” meaning-making, “comprehending information” and a purpose for what is read and “experience[ing] reading for a variety of purposes, including pleasure, finding information”. The researcher’s vignette also supports this, mentioning “words for spelling...practice and explanation of incidental spelling” and “incidental opportunities for spelling, punctuation and grammar”.

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Doreen draws heavily on her early childhood experiences in her vignette and thus demonstrates her connection to home experiences and language learning. She states in paragraph 4 of her vignette that her reading pedagogy emphasises and draws on personal experience. This statement is supported through the observation data when Doreen connects some reading instances to student’s home lives; for example, when she questioned students about their newsletter and sporting activities at home in Observation 1 and home computer practices in Observations 1 and 2.

**Reading in Doreen’s classroom**

Doreen appeared flustered through some of the observations, which can be accounted for by her coming in and out of the classroom from her relieving executive role within the school. The interpretations below were developed from the observations and interview data.

Four prominent themes emerged from Doreen’s data of teaching reading. These include teaching visual literacy, the connections between reading and writing, questioning as a teaching strategy for classroom activities and knowledge-building, and using incidental moments to teach content.

**Reading the visual**

Doreen undertook many opportunities to teach her students to read visual cues in various texts, from community newspapers (Obs1 Doreen) to comic images in workbooks (Obs2 Doreen) to persuasive texts such as posters (Obs5 Doreen). Doreen often linked reading a text to understanding the effects of colour and font (Obs5 Doreen, Int2 Doreen), positioning of characters and the author’s purpose (Obs5 Doreen). While these are aspects of visual literacy, they were not observed to be taught explicitly.

In the second interview following Doreen’s reading of the Portrait of Practice (Vignette 2), Doreen stated, “Looking at things like visual graphics and text is not just my background, it is because I do believe that’s an important part of our reading” (Int2 Doreen). Further, Doreen’s story (Vignette 3) also makes her passion
for teaching to read the visual clear when she states, “I am an eclectic teacher and teaching reading for the 21st Century opens new doors...the internet: digital text, sms, email, multimedia, pages, posters, files with multiple captions and purposes.”

She referred to previous lessons that dealt with visual literacy during the observations. For example, in the lesson about the posters (Observation 5) she talked about a previous lesson about perspective. There was an emphasis on the colour red and the size of the font to “catch your eye”. She also talked about the font colour and text type that “will catch your eye” (Obs2 Doreen).

Visual literacy was not explicitly taught; however, Doreen extended to other areas such demand/offer, modality or angle in the lessons in Observations 4 and 5. During the final interview Doreen stated that she did not know the term “visual literacy” and so it would appear that she might not have knowledge of the nuances of all aspects of visual literacy, or the metalanguage; however, her background in visual arts appears to have played a large part.

Reading/writing connections

Doreen initially identified six one-hour observation time slots. However, only five observations were undertaken. While these five lessons were identified as “reading” lessons, those parts that did not relate to reading specifically are not fully described in presentation of this case.

Some of episodes had a distinct focus on writing or creating, such as writing a booklet for the novel in Observation 3 and the movie creation in Observation 4. Doreen also provided opportunities for reading and writing to be used in reader-response activities, such as the bookmarks created for their serial read, with responses to the text on the bookmark, and for the movie creation. This connection supports Doreen’s statement at the first interview that she could not dissociate reading from other literacy areas (Int1 Doreen), and at her second interview where she stated that every lesson is a reading and writing lesson (Int2 Doreen).

Questioning

The observations demonstrate that Doreen used questioning as a teaching strategy. The culture in Doreen’s classroom was such that there was lively noise
and movement by all, including large physical gesturing from Doreen to aid comprehension and guessing (surmising/speculating) about the topic at hand.

Doreen questioned the students about the content they were working on and the requirements of the task. Her questions stopped when a student arrived at the correct answer. This might have been because she felt that her classroom was a collaborative space for learning.

At times, Doreen’s questions appeared unrelated to the focus of the lesson. For example, in Observation 2, when the trail of questions started at the webpage related to the topic but ended at selecting on links and strategies to deal with unwanted material. These questions appeared to be more of a “show and tell” of what the students knew, more appropriate for a lesson on using IT than for building shared topic knowledge or strategies to help with the task, as no new information was introduced during this session. In the first interview, we had discussed how her students read websites, and it is conceivable that this part of the lesson might have been a response to my interview questions (Obs2 FN Doreen).

It appeared that the children were comfortable making approximations in their responses to the questions. If they did not give the correct answer in the first try, Doreen insisted on several occasions that they try again. An example of this is found above in the field notes for Observation 5:

Then Doreen read out some adjectives from the poster such as "caring, sporty, wonderful and kind" and asked the students “What kinds of words are these?” and a student responded with “Words that she is?” Doreen replied, "Words that she is. Give me a bit more?" Another student tried to answer but Doreen said, "No, it's his turn to think it through." "How do those words make you feel about her? What sort of person does she sound like?" He finally offered, "A very happy person.” (Obs5 Doreen)

Doreen rarely answered negatively to a student who gave an incorrect answer.
Incidental moments

Doreen often used incidental moments to capture student interest and facilitate opportunities to discuss and share ideas, knowledge and strategies. Doreen used these moments to teach different aspects of reading, such as structure of website texts (Obs2 Doreen), community texts (Obs2 Doreen), spelling (Obs1 Doreen) and website use (Obs2 Doreen) and study strategies (Obs5 Doreen). These moments appear to be unrelated to the focus of the lesson but take advantage of the teachable moment.

Case summary

The data collected about Doreen establish her as a teacher who is highly engaged with student participation in their reading and learning. She provides opportunities and a safe environment for students to talk, share and practice their reading knowledge as they demonstrate their understanding of the literacy activities. She presents the students with opportunities to critically engage with and question various types of texts, for example the poster and the workbook examples. The students are provided with opportunities to demonstrate their understanding through the creation of their own text, such as the movie, and response to the text such as the bookmarks they create for their own use.

In the lessons observed, there was evidence to support Doreen’s later broader definitions of reading as meaning-making, rather than her initial description of reading as deciphering and decoding symbols. The lessons she chose to demonstrate as reading lessons focus on reading a variety of whole texts.
Chapter 6 - Trudy

This chapter presents Trudy’s case as a teacher of a Year 3 and 4 class. Trudy allowed the researcher time to visit her classroom over six self-identified reading lessons. What follows, is an account of her data with the researcher’s interpretive summaries that lead to the identification of the main themes in Trudy’s case.

Initial discussion about reading

The first interview was used to glean Trudy’s definitions of reading and discuss her reading pedagogy. The interview took place in Trudy’s classroom between sessions in school time. The interview began with a discussion about her Pre-Interview Questionnaire responses (Int1 PIQ Trudy) that included some details of her teaching experience and professional development, as outlined in the Training section above. What followed was a discussion about Trudy’s experience, her response to Vignette 1 and some prepared questions (Appendix F gives a sample of the Interview 1 protocol). What follows are relevant quotes from the Interview 1 data that respond to the research questions.

Trudy spoke briefly about the extensive interview she underwent with the NSW Department of Education to return to teaching after her break. She stated that there had been changes in teaching since her original training and her return to Australia, and the difference in planning due to the “concept of outcomes and indicators and things was new, rather than just [the] objectives we used to have with our lessons”. She stated that her original training had been “very theoretical” and that lessons were “very much immersed within literature and whole language experiences”.

Trudy then discussed the ways that technology had changed how she taught in “simple ways” such as “using the interactive whiteboard... as a projector” to “put text up and have everybody read things together rather than have multiple copies”. She also stated that she used it for “interactive whiteboard games” and “grammar lessons on connectives”, and used it with Garage Band for miscue analysis by putting text and audio “where you would like it to be and break it up into parts.”
She explained, “So I think it’s certainly a lot more user-friendly as well as being less obtrusive.” She gave an example from a previous term’s work that was still displayed on the walls for the use of IWB: “We did Iron Man, as you can probably see [points to environmental print/posters on walls], last term and we listened to an audio of that and just being able to listen to that. And you know see the images, the animated images and the poems that came from that was just a great stimulating thing and really engaging for the kids.” She finished by stating that technology had given her “more tools to work with”.

The professional-development (PD) courses Trudy had attended were listed on her responses (Int1 PIQ Trudy). When talking about PD, Trudy discussed her love of reading and that students emulated this. When reflecting on an in-service PD session about NAPLAN, she stated that her students from the previous year had not performed as well as she had hoped. She went on to say, “I thought that reading was going to be skyrocketing in NAPLAN, yet, you know, breaking it down, you know, I’ve realised it’s not just a love of reading, though certainly that’s an excellent thing to have. But, you know, there are a lot of things that I wasn’t covering that I needed to, particularly in the area of poetry.” She explained that the NAPLAN covered areas of poetry, which she felt she had not taught enough about.

When asked if the PD courses she had attended changed how she viewed reading or changed her knowledge about reading, she replied,

No. Perhaps it should be more than it is. But, no, I find that I still keep clicking back, whether it be because I really believe what I was learning at uni [laughs], you know, the learning. I think I said in the thing, I SO believe in doing things in context, I believe there’s so many things we can do with literature, particularly at Year 4 level. (Int1 Trudy)

Trudy had attended a private company’s PD session for their product, and had initially felt that this product was “a little bit dry” and that she had not “enjoyed it”. However, she had recently implemented one of the strategies as a daily prompt she calls “Daily Sentences” (In1 Trudy, Int2 Trudy, Obs1 Trudy, Obs4 Trudy), which promoted writing with a grammar focus using a visual prompt. She stated that the
students’ writing had improved and that students were more willing to share their writing than before.

Trudy said, “I’ve just got a real love of real literature and I think that when I hear of things that break down and tear away from that at any courses that I’m at, then I tend to go, “Oh, well, that won’t work for me,” and then I switch off to it a little bit. Yeah I’m not as open-minded as I should be.”

Interviewer  So are those courses more skills-based?
Trudy  Yeah, yeah.

Interviewer  So that doesn’t really align with what I understand you believe in?
Trudy  Yeah, yeah, aah, yeah. (Int1 Trudy)

Next there was a discussion about the Vignette 1. When responding to the Vignette, Trudy was asked, “What to you think this teacher might do next?” Trudy began by stating that as the character in the scenario knew their theme, they would look at the outcomes for both English and science. She then turned the conversation to herself and stated,

I’d meld them both, I’d look at—well I think you need to know what the kids’ literacy needs are as to what they do next. So, if, and often, I would go to grouping and, you know, you’re not going to have the same needs for everybody across the class. So I would look at perhaps grouping their needs. And perhaps you’ve only got this one extension group that really have down pat whatever the outcome was that you were looking at within reading. So, then I would look at giving them something else within that context, but then I’d be looking at, you know, for example, if we’re looking at writing structure, if they need to look through procedural text and if you had kids who really understood the structure of procedural text and they knew exactly what they were coming from. And you had kids who really needed to be doing work on that, then I’d probably start with a lot of modelling of different procedures to have kids familiarise themselves with it, to break it down
for them and explain that this is what the components are. And then I would have them work perhaps collaboratively, so you are guiding them through and to see what you’d do together and what the guiding procedures [are]. We’d have a look at making our gooey slime, you know, from the procedure we’d gotten from somewhere else, and then perhaps we’d have a go at individually writing that ourselves with some scaffolding if they were really new to it. (Int1 Trudy)

She then discussed the grouping for the lessons, clarifying that the students would be grouped according to “need” or ability grouping for the task so that she could work with them and deliver what they needed to progress. She discussed some students’ pairing to “have a go at writing how you think you’d present this at the school fete, how would this visually be appealing, what’s the language you should be using”, while working with others to support them in “collaborative work” to “brainstorm the words” they might use and scaffold as required, using a shared writing experience with a familiar topic. When redirected to consider reading activities, Trudy referred to the methodology when they were doing the reading, so what word-attack skills are—they, you know, how are we working this out in reading. You know, which strategies they were using, if any strategies required. In particular, I’d have to look at the reading outcomes to really know specifically, to know where we were reading from as well. I’m just trying to think of them, like I use the strategies a lot and use the character breakdown, I use the author perspectives and things. (Int1 Trudy)

In the initial discussions about reading with Trudy in this interview, she described reading as

making sense of writing...giving it a voice.... It just takes you to another world. It might be the imagination, you know, it’s a great escape, and that’s why I think it’s wonderful for kids to have and I think it just spurs their imagination on, it teaches them things if they’re reading non-
fiction texts. It’s crucial, there’s so much environmental print around, it’s a life skill as well, reading... It’s a pleasurable thing, it’s something that I feel very passionate about. (Int1 Trudy)

Trudy’s response indicates her belief that reading is more about experience and purpose. When asked about how she believed that children learn to read, she stated,

I think it starts right back, I mean, I always read to my kids from babies, ‘cause I think it’s the modelling.... So modelling is a really important thing and seeing, just being motivated to do it. So realising that it’s a wonderful thing to have, which can come through your modelling but it’s just a—you know, it’s a seeing a picture and wanting to know what the author thought of that picture, and so it’s having the drive. You need drive.... So, to me it’s just about finding something they can be passionate about and, you know, whether it be a non-fiction text or whether it be a comic book, whether it be a, there’s got to be something out there for everybody. So it’s a finding the right thing to interest you.... If you’ve got that, you’ve got something you’re wanting to read, then it comes down to the skills that you’ve learned. I don’t know, some kids just seem to, they don’t have a breakdown, they know how they read, they just pick it up and they can do it, they just seem to have been immersed in it and they can do it which is just amazing. Because I haven’t had a kindy and things where they’ve been learning, I just reflect on that skill, but here [points to classroom], certainly with the kids that we’re still struggling to get to read, here it’s about lots of practice, like just making sure they’re doing it all the time. You know, like any skill that we need to be practicing and doing lots of it, with interesting material, discussion about it that they’re understanding that this is comprehension, such a crucial part of it. It’s not just about getting out the words, it’s knowing that this has meaning and discussing what this is about and, you know, break[ing] it down. We do cloze passages and things like that where they can think about what word
would make sense in that place, and you know, because that’s all part of it as well. (Int1 Trudy)

It appears from the quote above that Trudy believes that learning to read is driven by motivation and supported through an adult modelling reading aloud, and discussions about reading. She connects students’ immersion with success in reading, and in reference to her own class, struggling readers require “practice”, but underpinning all of these is comprehension of what is being read.

Trudy stated that she is an advocate for the whole language approach, which is aligned with the theory presented in her undergraduate teacher training (Int1 Trudy). As a whole language proponent, she believes in using literature in her classroom to foster a love of reading, escapism, imagination and life skills (Int1 Trudy). Trudy also stated that “modelling” is an integral part of her belief about teaching literacy (Int1 Trudy, Int3 Trudy), and attempts to model the enjoyment of reading whenever possible (Obs2 Trudy). Trudy believes in and plans an integrated curriculum model that allows for cross-KLA programming (Int1 Trudy).

Initial discussion comments

Trudy began in this interview to share her understanding of reading and her teaching pedagogy. She alluded to her attitude towards professional development being influenced by strongly held beliefs about the Whole Language approach. She appeared to have considered elements of PD that did not align with her identity as a Whole Language teacher if she considered them to be of benefit for her class.

There is a strong thread of reading and learning to read for purpose in Trudy’s discussions. Though she spoke about “skills” and ‘strategies’, these appeared to be at a problem-solving level across the text when required, rather than to be a skills approach to teaching decontextualised skills.

Key reading activity episodes

At the time observations were conducted, Trudy was using an integrated approach to teaching in her classroom. She explained that she could not separate
reading, writing, speaking and listening, and that literacy was embedded in her lessons (Int1 Trudy). Smoking was the current topic for PDHPE (Int2 Trudy).

Students used a variety of resources to complete the reading activities during the observations. These consisted of laptops, books, photocopied versions of the current serial book, mind maps, PowerPoint presentations and literature workbooks for students writing. The serial book *Teacher’s Pet* (Gleitzman, 2003) was used for comprehension and drama.

In the lessons observed, students were grouped in a variety of ways for different episodes. For example, literacy groups were organised into like-ability groups while groups, for other lessons consisted of table groups. Trudy stated that she also had the students in “paired work which is great for them to buddy up with either a like ability or a completely different ability and to do some peer tutoring and things, and help kids to go through and discuss what they think” (Int1 Trudy).

Trudy implemented lessons that were modelled and guided, and facilitated independent reading and writing opportunities for the students during the observations. She often connected lessons to prior knowledge and experiences (home and school) and modelled summarising texts. Students were encouraged to share their experiences and understandings throughout the lessons. In the observed lessons, Trudy would state the topic of the lesson and discuss it, and then students would work individually, pairs or in groups. She would move around the desks or groups to give help. Some lessons ended when it was the end of the session, and other lessons led onto the next lesson, which was not observed.

**Phase 1 Observations**

Trudy identified six one-hour (approx.) time slots for the researcher to visit and observe her planned lessons that focused on reading. All observations occurred in Trudy’s classroom or the adjacent veranda areas, and both the whole-class and small-group experiences were observed.

Analysis of each observation period revealed key reading activities. Each observation is presented below, with the timing and specific teaching and learning activities related to reading.
Observation 1

This observation began with Trudy conducting the “Daily Sentences” activity planned to help improve the students’ writing (Int1 Trudy, Int2 Trudy). Students were given a visual-image prompt from Google to write three sentences using adverbs while Trudy marked the roll. After 15 minutes, they had reviewed some sentences and moved onto literacy groups.

Table 9. Orientation to Observation 1 for Trudy

| 30 mins | Guided reading: Prior knowledge |

Guided reading: Prior knowledge

Trudy explained the activities for each group in this session. She took the “like-ability” reading group (Obs1 TR Trudy) of eight students for this observation time.

Figure 11. Literacy groups

The students sat at a small group table and were given an empty concept map that had been copied onto a large sheet (Obs1 TR Trudy). Trudy had moved the small mobile whiteboard nearer to the group table (Obs1 V Trudy). Two website addresses were written in the top left corner of the board (www.oxygen.org.au and
www.druginfo.adf.org.au). The students would use these websites during the lesson to locate information on smoking. Trudy chose these websites after the life-education van had visited and recommended eight websites for the topic, and she “thought these two were most appropriate for where [the students] were at” (Int2 Trudy).

Trudy presented the concept map (presented as a web) to the students and introduced the topic from the integrated unit they would be reading about: smoking and cigarettes. She asked the students to write “smoking” in the middle of the web.

Trudy framed this lesson from the *Teaching Reading Comprehension Strategies* book (Cameron, 2009) using the “before and after web” (Obs1 TR Trudy). First, students were asked to “activate their prior knowledge” about the topic: Trudy placed a small card at the middle top of the whiteboard. She led a group discussion about the importance of activating prior knowledge, and students gave some reasons such as comprehension, memory, prediction, help with questions or help with words.

Next, Trudy asked the students to write eight things on the inside ring of the web about the topic using their existing knowledge. While the students wrote these, she moved around the room to help students from the other literacy groups and then came back to the guided-reading group. The guided-reading group students were handed the laptops in preparation for reading the websites. She asked them to be “specific” about the things they know, rather than writing general term such as “smoking is bad”.

During this time, Trudy took the opportunity to address the spelling of some topic words. Trudy scribed attempts at the spelling of “emphysema” on the small whiteboard. Trudy and the group discussed where they might be able to “borrow” the spelling (e.g. previous work, ask a friend or dictionary). The correct spelling was left until later in the lesson when a student found “emphysema” on the website and the word was correctly written on the whiteboard. This then started a small list of shared vocabulary words for the rest of the session.
Students took turns sharing their prior knowledge facts from their web to build topic knowledge across the group. Some of these facts came from previous PDHPE lessons or from a current-affairs television program. One student suggested the word “nicotine” as part of her web fact, which she sounded out to be added to the vocabulary list (Obs1 Trudy).

As part of the reading activity, students were asked to look up the websites listed on the small whiteboard to seek new facts to write in the outer ring of the web. Trudy instructed the students to write the facts in full sentences if possible, and to use their own words. Trudy also guided the students’ reading on the website to look for facts that were different to what they had written (e.g. “effects of smoking” or “ingredients of cigarettes”). Students worked in pairs on laptops at the group desk. Trudy moved around the table during this lesson to help the students find their facts and write these down on their web.

Whilst some students turned on their computers or were going to the website, an advertisement appeared on one students’ screen that took the attention of Trudy and some of the students in the group. This incidental situation offered the opportunity to talk about the origin of the website and to point out that it was an Australian facts website (Obs1 TR Trudy). Trudy drew attention to the phrase “second-hand smoke” and asked for an alternative word. The students contributed “passive”, which was added to the “word list.” At times, students read aloud facts they found that could be linked to other sources of known information (e.g. debate, newspaper, home). Students shared facts from various sources.

Students were asked to log out, shut down and close the laptop computers to begin the further and final sharing of their facts. Students each shared one new fact from their web. They were questioned about their own thoughts about those facts; these were clarified, rephrased and connected again to prior classroom learning experiences (lessons and the life-education program) and their home experiences. Students were asked to hand in their information webs to Trudy and put the laptops away. The lesson concluded with the arrival of another teacher who was to work with the children.
Interpretive summary of Observation 1

In this lesson, Trudy ran a guided reading lesson using the current HSIE topic in an integrated lesson to teach a comprehension strategy of "prior knowledge" using digital texts to build upon content knowledge. Trudy demonstrated her commitment to using authentic literature for literacy learning through her choice of text for the activity. Using explicit instruction practices, she introduced the lesson goal and then discussed the importance of learning the strategy. She then continued to assist the students to build their topic knowledge through sharing their prior knowledge with the group and to assist acquisition of relevant vocabulary with spelling strategies. Using the websites provided, the students and Trudy began to conduct the intended research in the “real-world” task of locating information about a topic using an existing digital text. However, Trudy took advantage of the teachable moment to participate in an incidental lesson about critical literacy when they came across some advertising to discuss the authenticity of the information the advertisement presented.

Observation 2

This observation was conducted in the second hour after recess. All students were seated on the floor when observations began. The lessons were centred on the class serial being read, Teacher’s Pet (Glietzman, 2003).

Table 10. Orientation to Observation 2 for Trudy

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>20 mins</th>
<th>Modelled reading: Serial read</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>40 mins</td>
<td>Reading response: Character profiles</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Modelled reading: Serial read

Trudy reminded the class that she had been away the previous day for the reading of the class serial Teacher’s Pet (Glietzman, 2003), and asked for a summary from a student of the previous day’s reading. She interrupted and stopped the student while disciplining and reminding students about “active listening”. She rephrased the student’s summary and asked questions about different motivations for some characters’ actions. Several students contributed their own summary.
Discussion between the students and Trudy continued for approximately three minutes.

Trudy told the students that while listening to her reading the story they were going to concentrate on “visualising”. She pointed to the reading-strategies posters under the whiteboard (Figure 12). She asked the students for their interpretations of visualisation and they responded, “like a picture in your head” (Obs2 Trudy). Trudy informed the students that they were not just going to do a picture in their head but a “picture on paper”, and instructed them to get their literature books and a pencil and come back to the floor. She wrote a title on the whiteboard for their “visualisation from Teacher’s Pet”. She gave suggestions of what could be drawn, such as a series of pictures like a comic strip or a graphic novel.

![Figure 12. Visualising prompt](image)

A student noticed the apostrophe in the book title and they discussed the different meanings given by the placement of an apostrophe; i.e. possessive or plural.
Then, Trudy read the chapter and questioned the students throughout the reading. She led discussions about the events in the book and made connections to personal experiences and previous lessons.

Following the reading of the chapter, students were asked to volunteer to share their visualisations. One student was asked to share by standing at the front holding his image. Trudy discussed the comic strip layout and asked the student to explain what they had drawn and why (e.g. use stick figures to “get lots done”). Students were then asked to close their books for another time.

**Reading response: Character profile**

Prior to this session, students had been asked to create a character profile for the class’s serial read *Teacher’s Pet* (Gleitzman, 2003). This session began when Trudy ensured that the students could see the IWB. Prior to students presenting their profiles, Trudy gave instructions to the student audience about their roles. She invited them to “agree”, “disagree” or “comment” and Trudy prompted the students to look for how well Michael, the first student presenter, had captured the character, used evidence, and “inferred”. She used the prompt from the front wall and placed it on the whiteboard. When she asked the students to explain, they answered “inferred” is using evidence; Trudy added to “read between the lines”.

Michael began to present the character profile he had created in a PowerPoint presentation. Students from the audience helped him to organise the IWB screen. Volume was adjusted, but there was a problem so the music could not be played. Michael continued and was asked to explain his choice of image for his visualisation. He then moved to the next slide and read out the character description he had written. Trudy discussed “key words” about the character “Mr Wong”, and wrote these on the whiteboard while offering synonyms. Trudy asked the class to look for the evidence in Michael’s writing to support the key words and his interpretation of the character. Michael then moved to a page about one characters’ view of another and was asked to state how he knew about the motivation for this character. Next, Michael showed his “prediction” and discussed how it had changed during the reading. Although the music could not be heard
because of technical difficulties, Michael was asked to justify his choice of song for his presentation.

The next student, Sam, presented his character profile of “Mr Napier”, which included music, image and title. He also justified the visualisation of the character through his choice of an image and music. The audience was invited to comment. Comments were made about the detective music Sam had chosen as sneaky music and “kind of evil”, and they all agreed with his choice. Sam then presented his character’s description, which included quotes to support his opinion. He also included a page titled “What are they like looking through another character”. Sam had included a quote that he recorded and attached to the PowerPoint. Predictions were presented about what might happen next in the story.

Trudy used her whiteboard comments to begin to compare the two presentations. She began by stating the words the students had used to describe each of the characters. Trudy pointed out that a quote or “specific evidence” to support Sam’s comments would have improved his presentation. Trudy told the students that they would revisit these later and compare the same character.

Students were instructed to move on to finish their character-profile slide using a computer. Students got laptop computers and moved to desks around the room, veranda areas or floor. Some students were required to sit near power points for the laptops to change while they worked; one student sat on a chair with the laptop on a chair near a power point. Trudy moved around the room and helped individual students while the other students were busy writing or typing. She suggested some students help their peers with technical issues such as inserting music and images to the PowerPoint presentations. Some help was given to students with their spelling and punctuation in their final draft in their books.

Luke, a third student, was ready to present his character profile PowerPoint. The class discussed the similarities between the images of the character. There was a problem with the music again so he began to read out his description. Luke rushed to read the next two slides, as they were now working into lunchtime. There was discussion about the prediction, as they had read further in the book since this student had completed his presentation. Trudy attempted to compare
the presentations of the character but did not write any additional information on the whiteboard. The music was now found in a folder on the computer and Luke was asked why he chose the music. Some students agreed with his choice. The lesson finished as students were excused for lunch.

*Interpretive summary of Observation 2*

This observation presented Trudy's classroom practice of using literature as a starting point for her reading activities. It included an opportunity for students to present their response to the text in the form of a character profile. The first included modelled reading of the serial read while using the comprehension activity of visualisation.

The second activity provided students with an opportunity to present their understandings of the character, its motivation, and its relationship to others. Whilst the activity would be deemed as a writing activity to create a PowerPoint, it required students to read and present their text.

This observation demonstrates Trudy's belief in the four modes overlapping in classroom experiences. Trudy stated in her first interview:

*Interviewer* …moving, really, across the KLAs for the tasks.

*Trudy* I think you have to. And I find, I know what you’re saying, what are you doing with reading but I find that reading, writing and the talking and listening strands are so melded it’s really hard to, you know when it comes to programming, I find it hard to work out, well, do I put this in the reading column or do I put this in the writing column? Because they’re so closely linked, because you’re reading everything you’re writing, and using, yeah, you know similar strategies for both.

*Interviewer* And it sounds like you do a lot of talking about it the reading and talking about writing.

*Trudy* Absolutely! (Int1 Trudy)
An example of this talk across the modes is captured at the beginning of this observation, prior to reading the serial. Trudy provided an opportunity for students to catch her up on what she had missed the previous day and share their enjoyment of reading, but also allowed Trudy to gauge her students’ comprehension. Trudy gave opportunities for students to express what they understood both orally and visually (word, image, music); that is, using multimodal ways of expressing meaning and understanding.

Observation 3

This observation was conducted in the middle session of the day.

Table 11. Orientation to Observation 3 for Trudy

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Duration</th>
<th>Activity</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>15 mins</td>
<td>Readers’ Theatre: Modelled reading</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>35 mins</td>
<td>Readers’ Theatre: Independent reading</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Readers’ Theatre: Modelled reading

This session began by reviewing the techniques and expectations of a Readers’ Theatre performance. This included using voice only, sitting down to perform, using copies of the chapters they were to be given, taking note of spoken instructions and using sound effects and perhaps extra dialogue to help explain. Jobs to be allocated to each group were narrator, actors, sound effects and prompter.

Trudy used a warm-up activity before the students moved onto their class serial read, Teacher’s Pet, and its Readers’ Theatre activity. A section of The BFG (Dahl & Blake, 2010) was displayed as a Readers’ Theatre script on the IWB (Figure 13).
Figure 13. *The BFG* Readers’ Theatre example

Students were chosen to be the narrators and actors to practise this example. Students then read aloud their parts from the screen. Trudy stopped and pointed out that the text on the example was not from the book but rather was set out as a script. Students suggested that “lots of detail” was removed in this example. The actors continued to read from the script and the audience was invited to comment about the things they liked in the performance. Expression, timing and projection were identified as good things. Sound effects were suggested to be quiet and one at a time.

*Readers’ Theatre: Independent reading*

While still in the floor space, students were given three copies of the chapters of *Teacher’s Pet* (Gleitzman, 2003) per table group. Students were instructed to use a highlighter to identify the spoken parts. They then moved off onto their group desks, computer desk or the outside verandas with their photocopies and began working on their scripts.

Trudy moved around the room, verandas and computer room to help the groups organise their roles, suggest expression and prompt students to use the highlighter to choose the dialogue. She also encouraged students to rehearse in the time left.
While students were working, Trudy prepared a row of seats in the floor space for the players to sit and present their drama. After 15 minutes, Trudy sang a song and students responded so that she knew they were paying attention. She shared a question from a student with the class and confirmed they were allowed to have their sheets with them during their performance. They were given a further five minutes to rehearse, and then Trudy moved around to each group to call them in.

The order of the groups’ performance was determined by the order of the allocated chapters. The first group to perform was called to the chairs and the remaining students were asked to sit on the floor. The audience was asked to critique the performance with two positives and an area to work on; then the first group of students began to perform. Once completed, students offered something they “liked”, such as the accents, voice projection, following from the page and limited narration. Some things to work on were fluency and at times being too quiet.

The groups swapped and Trudy collected the scripts from the recent performers. The next group performed, and part of the way through was asked to speak a “bit louder”; they continued reading from their scripts. The bell rang part of the way through their reading but the students remain seated and listening. She reminded the performers to be “a bit louder” and they continued to read. Trudy asked the audience to applaud the performers and give their feedback for the things they liked. Some of the things to improve upon were projection and narration.

The lesson concluded when students were asked to put their scripts on their desks to continue after the break and were excused for lunch.

*Interpretive summary of Observation 3*

Trudy scaffolded this lesson initially by explaining the task and the roles of the students. She provided an opportunity to practice these new skills and gave the students an opportunity to work with a group. This observation shows Trudy’s commitment to using quality literature in reading lessons. While she provided a
formal script for the warm-up activity, this was created from the children’s book rather than a mocked-up text.

It also shows Trudy's commitment to providing an experience for her students to discover how enjoyable literature can be; using Reader’s Theatre as a drama activity was one of those.

**Midpoint discussion about reading**

The second interview was held to discuss the first three observations and the researcher’s initial interpretations presented in Vignette 2. The questions were to further explicate Trudy’s stated knowledge and beliefs about reading and teaching reading, and to clarify any discussions from the first interview (Appendix H contains the Interview 2 Protocol). Presented below is the vignette and relevant quotes that respond to the research questions.

**Portrait of practice: Vignette style 2**

This Portrait of Practice was developed by the researcher using data collected from the first interview and the first two observations. It provided an early interpretation of data with attention to actions, instructions, interactions and physical objects observed. This vignette served as a stimulated recall in the second interview and provided an opportunity for the teacher to respond to or recall the events observed.
Trudy introduces lessons by drawing upon and connecting to prior lessons and prior knowledge about the topic. Statements like ‘Remember when …’ are typical. Students often nod or contribute to the talk. The purpose for reading in the lesson is declared, and reading and comprehension strategies are discussed and revisited throughout the episodes observed. These strategies include, inferring, questioning, predicting, visualisation and summarising. Students’ attention is drawn to the wall displays also used in small group lessons.

Trudy believes that quality literature, particularly books and serials, is important for reading academically and socially, and is important for engaging the students with reading. Connections to writing about these texts are evident on the classroom walls with work published by the students about a previously read book. For example, short dynamic powerpoint presentations about the current book are shared among the class with justifications for choices and opinions presented. Spelling errors in these presentations are not attended to at this time. Students take turns to present and show confidence in articulating their opinions and reasons for choice of image, text and music. The student audience is also able to articulate their ‘likes’ or feedback for the presenter. This example illustrates Trudy’s belief that readers connect to the reading experience beyond the words.

Using technology for literacy in Trudy classroom is a common and frequent occurrence. Reading occurs in websites when gathering information where discussions extend beyond the intended text to include purposes and contents of advertisements on the webtexts, background information needed to understand these, and continually linking the new knowledge to previous lessons or experiences. Literacy episodes conclude with sharing their achievements and linking to the next phase of learning about the topic.

In the second interview, Trudy was asked, “Do you think that captures what you think you do?” She replied, “Yes. As I said, it’s good in terms of—often when you’re caught in the moment you don’t realise just what you are doing, and I’d say this is sort of my philosophy of reading, sort of, yeah, it’s where I’d like to head, and it’s what I’m hoping I’m doing at any given time” (Int2 Trudy).

The researcher then asked, “You said you think that this aligns with what you believe, what you believe about the reading theory. Can you tell me more about that?” She replied,

**Trudy** I do! I liked in there [Vignette 2], that your line talked about the enjoyment. What was your opening lines or something, and that’s very much what I think reading’s about…. You know, I certainly hope that we have a class that’s immersed in reading and it’s a reading culture that we have in the class. And you know, I think that’s coming through. And there was just a line that you used about something being [reads] “enjoyment”—

**Interviewer** Oh, that you model that?
Trudy: Yeah! Just that we model that, and for me that encouragement and that that enjoyment being modelled is so much a part of what you do as a good teacher. I hope that it rubs off and it, you know, it usually seems to rub off and they become motivated and willing to have a go at different things. (Int2 Trudy)

Interview 2 discussion

Interview 2 was held in Trudy’s classroom immediately after school. Trudy was given an opportunity to review Vignette 2 at the beginning of the interview. Trudy referred to Observation 2, in which a student was reading their character profile and there was a spelling mistake that Trudy did not address (Obs2 FN Trudy). Instead, she stated that she chose in this instance to keep the focus of the lesson on “their ideas”. She recognised that for that particular student, what he presented was an improvement, and that “he had done a fairly good job of editing that because it was riddled with mistakes prior to him getting to that” (Int2 Trudy).

When asked if she felt the vignette captured her in the observations, Trudy responded,

As I said, it’s good in terms of—often when you’re caught in the moment you don’t realise just what you are doing. And I’d say this is sort of my philosophy of reading, sort of, yeah, it’s where I’d like to head and it’s what I’m hoping I’m doing at any given time. Sometimes it’s hard because you’re caught up on whether it be a management [aspect] or something else that you might have lost a focus on. And I as I said to you about the lesson plans…. I’m aware that we usually deviate away from that and pick up on something that does come up incidentally and looks like it’s a focus area that we should be going towards, just because of their interest or because of something that’s come up in something they’re doing. So it does chop and change a little bit and perhaps isn’t is as focused as it needs to be all the time on those
outcomes. But, yeah, like, I’d hope, you know, that’s great. I feel good about what I’m doing, actually. (Int2 Trudy)

This response from Trudy shows her reflecting on her practice and realising that at times, her teaching needs to be flexible to adjust to the situation and student need at any given time.

The discussion turned to Trudy using NAPLAN results to reflect on and guide her teaching to be more explicit in this academic year. The researcher asked Trudy if she felt that the NAPLAN strategies aligned with her own beliefs. She stated that she was doing the strategies and to fit with her “whole language theory and to do it with real literature”, she was using the class novel and the PDHPE unit on smoking for “inference” (Int2 Trudy), and using the content focus and explicit strategies together. She spoke further about her cross-stage classroom planning using quality literature to teach comprehension strategies and conduct miscue analysis for individuals and as a group. She stated here that she had seen other teachers use running records, which she felt was more about accurate decoding than understanding the meaning.

When asked about choosing resources for her class, Trudy stated, “You’ve caught me in the wrong end of the term…. It previously was always related to the thematic unit that we were doing” (Int2 Trudy). She referred then to the Iron Man theme still evident in the classroom. She mentioned that she would use a serial read that would provide a “cross-over of discussion and topic area as well as literature.” Trudy stated that in the online reading lesson in Observation 1, when students used a website to learn inferential strategies, she had chosen two appropriate websites out of eight possible websites that the life-education program had recommended. She also shared the experience with the students of searching for information and the need for critical literacy in searching for credible authors when searching for information, using appropriate keywords, and using a variety of sources. She stated that the students came to the class with a diverse range of knowledge about how to use and access IT and websites.
Trudy identified that time constraints might have interrupted her planned lessons and related this to the character-profile PowerPoint presentations in Observation 2 that were still unfinished. She stated,

So time constraints and having that flexibility...and I always over-program; I always assume I’m going to get through so much more than I do because of all those other bits, I don’t know, and because they take a little longer on something. I do think, though, that it’s important for them to feel that they’ve shown whatever it is or they’ve been recognised for their work, so we usually do end up not getting through everything that we’re intending getting through. I suppose that’s something. Sometimes it’s the fact that you have a really divergent ability group, and I would love to be able to run with those top-end people just because that’s how I am, I suppose – I’m always headed up there, I love all of that stuff that we can do together and the way they love to analyse literature. They’re reading amazing books and just being able to showcase that and talk about that, but thinking, “No, we need to...” (Int2 Trudy)

In this example, Trudy demonstrated her expectations of student work and her reading pedagogy. She also said that technology interrupts her planned lessons due to the time required to move to the computer lab, sign-in and settle, or using the laptops, which might be “half-charged and run out of power or they can’t log in for whatever reason.” She also stated that she found that the students are motivated by the technology but that it could be very frustrating.

Next, Trudy was asked if she felt that the syllabus aligned with her beliefs about reading. She responded, “I do, because whenever I’m looking at the outcomes to be achieved I can always think of lots of activities that can do that. I think it’s open-ended enough that we can.” Trudy was then asked about her use of home connections in her lessons. She stated that creating this connection makes education meaningful to the students if they can “see where they’re using this elsewhere, and it’s not just what happens within the four walls of the classroom that is schooling” (Int2 Trudy).
Trudy was asked to describe multiliteracies. She guessed, “I would see multiliteracies as reading across areas, content areas and just the different forms that reading can take and the different sources that you’re using for your literacy skills.” She gave an example: “Information, textbook as opposed to website, as opposed to novel”. This perhaps indicates that she understands the plurality of texts, and her definition might be closer to the term “multiple literacies”. She said, “I’m just saying ‘multi’ because it means many forms of literacy and I’m assuming it means reading perhaps for many different purposes as well. Why do we read? It might be multi-literacy.” She stated that she used it in her classroom in the following ways:

I try to cover lots of bases, have reading as part of environmental print, try and have lots of environmental print around, try and use technology, use websites, use interactive whiteboard games – just the kids having books. We do lots of reading: they do novel reading each day, we have serial read, we teach from big books just for samples of writing things in that, so they’re reading through that, they’re reading drama scripts today and things. If it is that, that’s how I teach that, and I also teach, I suppose, for different purposes – in reading for different purposes – in that like today’s was a performance; that’s why they needed to do it. Yesterday’s was a research; they needed to have down their knowledge and build onto that so they needed to use information skills – skimming, scanning – to do that. Other times it’s reading for pure enjoyment, “Let’s just read a chapter and let’s just enjoy it, let’s talk about it.” (Int2 Trudy)

The researcher drew Trudy’s attention to the multimodal texts the students had created for their character profile that included text, image, sound and colour. Trudy explained that the students had completed lessons at the beginning of the year on the perceived messages from music. In this classroom activity, the students were restricted to creating meaning in only four slides. Trudy said, “I suppose a lot of it is just showing that they are aware of the different interpretations of your visual, of your auditory, and the rest of it” (Int2 Trudy).
Interview 2 discussion comments

In this interview, Trudy described her pedagogic decisions of resources and the benefits and difficulties in including IT into her reading program. Interestingly, Trudy stated that she adjusts her lessons to ensure that her beliefs are not compromised and that the curriculum requirements are met.

Trudy’s Whole Language identity was furthered when she discussed the differences between running records and miscue analysis, stating that the goal should be “understanding the meaning”. When discussing the requirements for following NAPLAN-led strategies in the classroom, Trudy was able to adjust these to conform to her beliefs of starting with literature.

When Trudy discussed her understanding of multiliteracies, she identified the use of a variety of texts beyond print texts: multimodal text, oral text and digital text.

Phase 2 observations

Observation 4

This observation began with the independent writing activity, Daily Sentences. The focus was types of adjectives. After 20 minutes for this activity, the eldest students at each desk collected the books for marking, and then students moved to the floor to begin their literacy groups.

Table 12. Orientation to Observation 4 for Trudy

| 40 mins | Guided reading: Comprehension using DEAR books |

Guided reading: Comprehension activity

Trudy took a like-ability group for a guided reading activity for this observation. She reviewed some strategies when reading an unfamiliar text. Students suggested rereading, and then discussed the importance of reading every word. Trudy asked the students to give their opinions and then suggested that not every word needs to be read. She gave an example of when she reads to the students, she leaves out or substitutes words.
A student offered his strategy of reading when he comes across a word he does not know. He explained that he would read on to work out what the word might mean. Trudy restated his explanation to the group and wrote the word “context” on the board underneath “reread.” She stated that it is not necessary to know the word, as substitution was another strategy. She also suggested that strategies such as sounding out or looking up the word were also not necessary.

Trudy requested that the student’s copy the table she had written on the small whiteboard into their books. The table was separated into three columns titled “word,” “meaning prediction” and “use context to work out what it means”. She began this lesson with an example from the Asterix and the Banquet comic book (Goscinny & Uderzo, 2004), and wrote in the first column “stockade p. 8.” She changed the “prediction” column to “meaning prediction”. She had the students write a prediction of the word “stockade” in the next column while she helped another group.

Next, Trudy made a prediction and wrote “barrier” in her column. They discussed where they might know the word, and the Eureka stockade was suggested. Students wrote their prediction, then shared the origins of their predictions; for example, knowing parts of the word, such as “stock” suggesting stocking up, and “ade” meaning aid. Trudy then read the words from the comic book for students to work out what the word “stockade” meant. Students used their meaning predictions and the images to help complete the column “use context to work out what it means” for the meaning of “stockade”.

Trudy then asked the students to find five words and record the page numbers from their own “drop everything and read” (DEAR) book to write in the first column. While students worked independently to find the five words in their own books and record them, Trudy moved around the group to guide them. Next, she swapped the literature books so that the students could predict the words recorded from another student. She created a pile of the DEAR books in the centre of the table. She asked the students to make a guess of the word or use the “word clues” and what they already knew to make a meaning prediction. Students then used the DEAR books to find the meaning of the word through context.
Interpretive summary of Observation 4

This lesson demonstrates Trudy’s belief in bringing literature to her reading lessons and her practice of modelling to the students. To teach the students the strategy of inferring, she began with literature and then used the student’s own reading material. Trudy stated in an interview that she was opposed to using readers, as reading for me is whole language rather than breaking things up. So looking at [the text], “Do I understand what’s happening?”, questioning yourself as you read the whole time, “Does that make sense?”, immersing yourself in it, really. Literature is part of it, really, and breaking it up into school-based things that are not necessarily related to...it doesn’t have meaning to that child. I don’t like readers that aren’t related to a theme and are graded, so simply they are—I think that kids need to be able to know that the reading is there for a purpose and the purpose is... well could be varied depending on who it is, I suppose, but there needs to be a meaningful purpose to why they are reading. And another facet of whole language I believe is that environmental premise, and that modelling, is very much part of that. (Int3 Trudy)

Observation 5

This lesson focused on the serial read the class had been reading.

Table 13. Orientation to Observation 5 for Trudy

<p>| | |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>5 mins</td>
<td>Modelled reading: Serial read</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>45 mins</td>
<td>Independent reading/writing: Complications in the serial</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Modelled reading: Serial read

Students took turns to summarise the serial Teacher’s Pet (Gleitzman, 2003) they had read so far. Trudy supported the students by rephrasing and questioning. She related the summaries and their interpretations with the comprehension strategy of “hidden inferences”. She then read a chapter and asked questions as she read. She asked students to share their prediction.
Independent reading/writing: Complications in the serial

Trudy then referred to a lesson from the previous day about the complication as a feature of a narrative.

Trudy Yesterday you were given a task. You needed to go to your books and you needed to write down what?

Student Dialogue?

Trudy Dialogue was the day before. Yesterday we did something about a part of narratives that every single narrative has. Do you remember what it was?

Student The problems?

Trudy The problems. The complications that we had. And you had to find a few of them. How many did you, how many of you found three or more complications? Excellent! Who’d like to share one with us? (Obs5 Trudy)

They then shared their ideas of the novel’s problems so far. Trudy asked the students to draw a horizontal line in their literature books. They were then asked to choose the events first and then rank five problems and provide a justification of their choices for ranking one and five.

Trudy moved around the room while the students worked in their literature books at their desks. She stopped the class and reminded the students what they were expected to do, gave a title for the page and wrote instructions on the board. She continued to move around the class helping individual students. She stopped the students again and reminded them to use two or three sentences per complication using correct punctuation. She continued to move around the class and monitored students working. When a student had difficulty spelling a character’s name, Trudy asked students to help with the spelling and scribed on the board. She resumed moving around the room assisting students and fielding questions. One student asked if she should provide an explanation as to why it was a complication and Trudy verified it was a good suggestion.
To conclude the lesson, Trudy stopped the class and asked a student to share their number-one complication and justification. Following this, as an aside, she made a connection to the idea of “evil versus the good” and the group discussed movies or stories they know where good did not triumph over evil. Trudy continued around the class and could be heard continuing to talk about stories they knew in common.

After a few minutes of work on the set task, she then asked the students to share their “least” and “most” complications to compare with their table group. Trudy moved around the class again and talked to the groups. She asked students to share their justifications with her and talk about agreement or disagreement among the group. Trudy rung a bell to stop the class then asked if there was agreement about the most important problem. As students shared their justifications, Trudy took the opportunity to share vocabulary and real-world connections to their ideas.

The session was interrupted and concluded when the school bell rang.

*Interpretive summary of Observation 5*

Trudy provided an opportunity for students to engage with quality literature for practicing the “summarising” comprehension strategy. Using the book as a starting point, she engaging the students in identifying the text structure, with particular focus on identifying the complications in the serial read. She then encouraged the students to discuss and defend their choices of complications in their groups.

In this lesson, Trudy incidentally connected the “good winning over evil” trope to some students’ home experiences with other media such as movies.

**Observation 6**

Students began this lesson seated in the floor space.

**Table 14. Orientation to Observation 6 for Trudy**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Activity</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>20 mins</td>
<td>Guided reading: Hot Seat</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20 mins</td>
<td>Independent reading: Drama</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
**Guided reading: Hot seat**

Trudy identified this lesson as a guided reading lesson (Obs6 TR Trudy). Students were chosen to be the characters via a draw of names. The remaining students were given 10 minutes to write five questions per table group for each character. One person from each table was asked to be the interviewer. The characters moved to the front of the room on the row of chairs while the other students sat on the floor space.

Ten minutes had been allocated for interviewers from each table to ask one question of each character. One student was selected to host the event and used a hand-on-a-stick pointer to approximate a microphone that he moved between the character and the interviewer. The student related this activity to the Oprah show and the host interjected at times with statements such as, “You’re getting a free car!” Questions in this activity required the students in the “hot seat: to justify their character’s actions within the story, their motivations and relationships. It was necessary to have a good understanding of the story to both consider the questions and answer them as a character.

**Independent reading: Drama**

This session required students to use the same Readers’ Theatre scripts and groups from Observation 3. They determined the “hero” and the “evil-doer” of the story and were asked to reverse these characters in their performance. Groups moved to various areas in the classroom (front and back verandas, desks in the classroom and computer room) to work on their performance. Trudy moved around the room to help the students organise their groups and allocate tasks within the group. Trudy discussed the motivation and behaviour of the characters and how these could be organised to create the change required.

Trudy asked the students to sit in the front three desks so that the floor space was available for the actors. Trudy used a timer and bell to keep the scenes at two minutes and worked in reverse order from the Readers’ Theatre lesson.
The groups took turns to perform their section of the script. The audience was given the opportunity to state one thing they thought the group did well. Other groups performed until the lunch bell rang.

*Interpretive summary of Observation 6*

Again in this lesson, Trudy shared her love of drama as a way for students to engage in reading and understanding text in a complex manner. This episode demonstrated Trudy helping her students to realise how much they enjoyed and understood what they read using a format other than writing a response. She created a positive environment for the students to explore and explain their understanding of the literature they were reading.

**Final discussion about reading**

This final discussion with Trudy occurred after the six observations had been undertaken. Trudy had sent her vignette to the researcher prior to the final interview, which was held after school. This interview was intended to discuss the vignette, clarify any interpretations from the first two interviews and discuss any changes to planning that were noticed in Phase 2 observations. Presented below is the vignette, followed by relevant quotes that respond to the research questions.

Teacher reflection: Vignette style 3

Following the observations and first two interviews, Trudy was invited to create a one-page vignette of how she saw herself as a teacher of reading. Trudy provided the following vignette prior to the third interview.

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My teaching of reading

Four main ideas underlie the reading programme with my stage 2 class. Firstly, the learning needs to be meaningful to be motivating to the students. Secondly, there are many engaging resources (using a range of media) that can be employed. Thirdly, the four modes of English – Reading, Writing and Talking and Listening are entwined, and their outcomes often, and should, overlap. Finally, learning is enhanced when both the students and teacher are enjoying themselves.

In an effort to make the reading lessons meaningful and thus motivating to the students, it is important they either see how it leads to a growth in understanding and skill or its relevance to the real world. As such I like to explain this to the students where possible during lessons. I often make links to experiences in their lives, such as connections during serial reading or an
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Chapter 6 - Trudy

**explanation as to how a strategy might be used for different forms of narratives, such as films or posters. Sometimes the reading outcomes are taught explicitly in a directed way, sometimes the lesson requires flexibility as we follow a different direction entirely based on an interest/need that only became apparent as the lesson was in progress.**

I try to include a variety of media in my reading lessons. The students are very computer-savvy and there are so many effective ways of using technology in reading lessons, whether it be to research, present work or engage students using interactive programmes. There is always a place for ‘paper’ though, and I aim to expose the students to a variety of quality books in our classroom and lessons. I like to have lots of environmental print around for reference. Sharing their own work is also a way to learn and give them purpose.

It is often difficult to distinguish between the four modes of English. It is important for the students to be confident when reading aloud and independently, as well as participating in partner and group discussions (which are Reading and Talking and Listening skills). I also combine reading and writing outcomes, for example encouraging written responses to books, book commercials (persuasively convincing others to read their novel) and using vocabulary from students’ reading to form part of spelling lists (Reading and Writing skills).

Finally, seeing the students enjoying themselves is very important to me as a teacher. It is great to see the smile that comes with gaining new knowledge, sharing an over-zealous expressive serial read or the positive feedback that comes from their peers congratulating them on a great presentation. The students enjoy working with their peers, so we participate in lots of cooperative or group lessons. I work with quality literature (usually based around the themes for that term), and the students have the opportunity to choose their own reading material so it is something that they are motivated to read. The students have a love of drama so I try to incorporate this into reading lessons. I often display students’ work in the class or have them share their efforts with their peers, as they like to see their hard work valued.

The portrait of practice (Vignette 2) and Trudy’s reflection (Vignette 3) both showed the use of quality literature as a focus for reading lessons. They also included modelling of enjoyment of reading and encouragement of students’ interpretations of texts, both of which were seen in the observations.

Trudy’s reflection focused on her explanation of the “intertwined” four modes and explained how these were planned in her lessons.

**Interview 3 discussion**

This interview was held in a meeting room on the school premises after school had finished. To begin this interview, the researcher read out Trudy’s definition of reading from the first interview to ensure that a full record of her beliefs and knowledge had been captured. Trudy added,

To me I think it should be an enjoyable experience and a way to transport you to other worlds and to learn things, and that sort of thing. But I realise that not all children get that, and that’s the point of reading, trying to get them to understand that that is what it is all
about, I think, and to be able to give them the skills and strategies to do that and have that meaning. (Int3 Trudy)

When Trudy was asked to define “skills and strategies” from her comment above, she stated,

Decoding—there will always be a place for having to be able to decode something and to work out what it is, and I would usually get them to read on and to put it into a meaningful context, and to read on and to work out what...word would be better, then stop and do a phonetic thing generally. I think that some of [those] skills is just understanding that reading is to have that meaning and to be looking at synonyms for words as they are going along as well, to help make things relevant to them in something that they can put into their own line of thought. Yeah, I think it is the decoding things that would do that. (Int2 Trudy)

Here, Trudy’s definition of reading extended beyond decoding to include the experience and building vocabulary in an effort to make meaning relevant to her students. She also described strategies for decoding. To ensure that a full picture was established of Trudy’s knowledge, she was asked to explain what she understood of the theory of Whole Language. Trudy began by explaining,

Well, reading for me is whole language rather than breaking things up. So, looking at “Do I understand what’s happening?”, questioning yourself as you read the whole time, “Does that make sense?”, immersing yourself in it, really, literature is part of it, really, and breaking it up into school-based things that are not necessarily related to—it doesn’t have meaning to that child. (Int3 Trudy)

She continued to state that she did not like using readers that were graded and not related to a theme, and that students needed to connect their reading to a meaningful purpose. “Another facet of whole language, I believe, is [that] that environmental premise and that modelling is very much part of that I believe is dealing with the situation, and see[ing] the way it is done.” It appeared from this
conversation that she was referring to context in reading practices. Next, Trudy described her understanding of decoding as it relates to whole language:

Leaping into it and just doing a phonetical decoding, and it’s not about having every word correct, it’s about the quality of the mistakes you make, and you making mistakes that are meaningful and that are going to change the context to what that thing is telling us, or making mistakes that are just the synonym, or throwing a pronoun or differing a pronoun that still makes sense. (Int3 Trudy)

As in Interview 2, here Trudy focused on meaning rather than accurate decoding. Trudy next referred to the reading and writing connections, talking about making sure that “the text is at the right level for the child, but it still needs to be a motivating text and something that I’d have them do lots of their own writing, I think, and have them reading back that” (Int3 Trudy).

Trudy had already identified reading for meaning with texts and stated that advertisements, posters, movies and magazines were included in addition to literature in her classroom. The researcher asked her how she would “read for meaning within those multimodal texts”. She referred to a writing activity the students had completed in making “some anti-smoking ads taped on the video cameras” and a class discussion held to “talk about the way they are a form of persuasive text, as it is a movie.” She then related this lesson to another activity: bringing in the creator of a campaign poster for the “school captaincy”. She brought the senior student to the class and discussed the choices they made when creating the poster to “highlight important things” for the audience to understand the intended message. The researcher then asked Trudy if she thought she was teaching visual literacy. She replied, “I suppose we are but I don’t break it down and make it explicit; I didn’t with that.” The conversation then turned to using prior knowledge during reading, particularly advertisements, as occurred in Observation 1 with the website, and asking the students, “What do you know about this? What do you need to know to understand?” Trudy stated that she did not have this as an explicit goal within her program but that it had been covered.
Next, Trudy was asked if she used the Four Roles (Freebody, 1992). However, Trudy stated she had not heard of these.

The next section of questions was to consider how Trudy believed the researcher had captured or observed her lessons. She stated that she “threw a few of the diverse things in” to be observed so that it was not the same structure each time. She also stated that she wanted the variety of literacy groups to be observed, particularly to “see how motivated the children are by it. I just think they’re very effective and the kids really enjoy it. When you said ‘reading’, that was just the first thing that popped into mind” (Int3 Trudy). Trudy also stated that she wanted to include drama: “I put in there because I think that drama is very much a part of... well, the kids love it but I thought it might be something that you wouldn’t see from other people; they mightn’t necessarily perceive that aspect of it as reading and we do quite a lot of that sort of thing in here. I know, to me, that’s very much reading; it’s functional reading, it’s reading for that meaning, for performance or for analysing characters and things – just to see that the kids are operating at a – I think – a reasonably high level, too, in what they’re understanding and their confidence in being able to do things” (Int3 Trudy). Trudy also stated that part of her decisions about what the researcher saw were to do with timing.

Next, Trudy was asked if there were perhaps lessons that she would have liked to have had observed. She replied, “I suppose some of the basics of some of that stuff that you were seeing happening – maybe just looking at, you know, when we break down our strategies for reading and things, the way I’d introduce those would have been good probably to have a look at initially, and seeing just the way it was modelled and the conversations and things that we had around that.” She also stated that she wished she had been observed more, particularly in the follow-up conversations to activities.

The conversation then considered Trudy’s vignette that she had written and sent. She clarified the goal as students presenting and displaying their own work because it reinforced the purpose of the lesson and literate activity, and was used as a reference tool. She then referred to the PowerPoint presentations: “I think that’s a skill in itself that children are able to present that and do.... The talking and
listening strand is certainly very strong within here, and it’s just making them feel like] really competent public speakers, which I love among these kids, just getting up and being able to showcase. They love to do it; they’re very enthused to do that” (Int3 Trudy).

Trudy was asked about her spelling program, as no lists existed around the walls. She stated that there were four approaches to that, which combined to make up the spelling list: theme, literature, a published spelling program and difficult or challenge words from the NAPLAN (ACARA, 2011) website. Trudy stated that the school was preparing a focus on spelling for the following year. The interview ended when Trudy also stated the difficulty of spelling for some students who were successful in the spelling test, yet could not “translate that into their writing or talking about the theme” (Int3 Trudy).

**Interview 3 discussion comments**

Trudy’s interview shows her description of her reading pedagogy as, first, enjoyable; second, meaningful for the students: and third, with a focus always on meaning, not accurate decoding. This was demonstrated in her discussion of using miscue analysis rather than running records, and her intimations about spelling as a separate activity to other literate activities.

Again, Trudy’s understanding of reading was that it encompasses a broad range of practices, including drama. While Trudy stated that she wanted the researcher to see a broad range of activities, the students appeared comfortable with the routine and expectations of the activities and gave no indication that these were unusual practices.

**Reading in Trudy’s classroom**

Trudy showed a variety of reading activities during the observation times. Students were encouraged to share their knowledge, think deeply about their reading and make connections to previous lessons, home lives and other prior knowledge and experiences. Trudy used the strategies from the book *Teaching Reading Comprehension Strategies* (Cameron, 2009) to have students activate prior knowledge, infer and visualise, predict along with other strategies. Trudy’s students
went about their task with minimum distraction. During the observations, students appeared to be engaged in their set task rather than off-task talking or engaging in off-task activities. Previous research (Stallings, 1980) has shown that students who were given interactive instruction and remained on-task had a higher gain in reading level.

Purposeful teaching

Trudy used purposeful teaching to introduce a lesson and its purpose, and began by drawing on and connecting to prior lessons and prior knowledge about the topic. The purpose for the lesson was declared and revisited, and students were reminded during the lesson of the prompts on the wall (summarising, visualisation etc.). The front-loading of concepts, vocabulary and motivation prior to a lesson or activity was a common teaching strategy that Trudy used often. Front-loading was used prior to a reading lesson to introduce and scaffold concepts and strategies (Wilhelm et al., 2001).

When talking about the Readers’ Theatre, Trudy stated,

because every child in the class got up there, and I have a range of, you know, five or six kids that are really, you know, not terrific readers, not fluent, not expressive and don’t read aloud, [but they] volunteer that, and they were really happy to do that in that context. It gave them a purpose for doing it, and, you know, I thought that was very good. (Int2 Trudy)

Connection between the four modes

Trudy reported (Int1 Trudy, Vignette 2 Trudy and Int3 Trudy) that teaching reading, writing, speaking and listening were “intertwined, and their outcomes often, and should, overlap” (Int3 Trudy). Her observed lessons showed her understanding of interconnected reading and writing practices as an approach to literacy through her choice of “reading” activities for the researcher to observe. The integrated approach to the teaching of literacy plays an important part in the whole language approach.
Trudy chose a variety of lessons that focused on reading a range of texts: printed (e.g. serial book, readers’ theatre using copied chapters); multimodal texts (e.g. IWB, students’ PowerPoint presentations, websites, images); and verbal texts (e.g. readers’ theatre play, hot seat, drama). These observed reading lessons displayed the importance of orally sharing the experiences of the texts by making connections, summarising, expressing enjoyment and stating an opinion (critical thinking). Trudy provided space for the students to share their feelings and thoughts about what they were exposed to (serial read, peer work), which gave an opportunity to engage in the Four Roles (Freebody & Luke, 1990), particularly “participant” and “analyst”.

Using quality literature

Quality literature played an important role when Trudy planned literacy lessons, especially using literature as a tool toward teaching literacy. Trudy used quality texts in the form of children’s fictional series books (Iron Man, Teacher’s Pet), information websites for the current PDHPE topic, children’s novels in the classroom library and student work samples (sentences, PowerPoint presentations) as a starting point for her lessons. The current serial was used in a variety of lessons (summarising, visualising, inferring and predicting, Readers’ Theatre). Student works were used as samples, models for critique and explanations.

Two websites were chosen for students to use to search for information. Though specific searching skills were not the focus of this guided lesson (Obs1 TR Trudy), the lesson did give students an opportunity to navigate through an existing website to broaden topic knowledge and build a shared vocabulary.

Using IT in reading lessons

Trudy used IT to facilitate her teaching of literacy. These might be used as a teaching tool or a writing tool. The IWB was observed to display information (schedules, sentence prompt, model) or as a presentation tool (PowerPoint presentation). Laptops were used to view websites in small groups, and to create and produce writing. The writing of the multimodal PowerPoint presentation was evidence of the reproduction and transformation of knowledge (Cope & Kalantzis,
2000, Anstey & Bull, 2006) from the serial read about their interpretations of characters’ personalities and motives and the students’ predictions for the remainder of the story.

No connection to a community external to the classroom was observed that used IT or ICTs except for access to the website to search for information about smoking.

**Case summary**

The data collected about Trudy established her as a ‘Whole Language oriented’ teacher finding ways to be true to those roots while adapting to syllabus requirements that at times appeared to her to fragment language activities. Trudy met the middle-years challenges of reading complex and technical texts for research by providing examples of comprehension strategies with different texts. She engaged the students in valuable and reflective discussion about their reading and understanding. She modelled the purpose and enjoyment of reading as a literacy leader in her classroom.
Chapter 7 - Nate

Nate’s case as a teacher of a Year 4 and 5 class is presented in this chapter. He allowed the researcher time to visit his classroom over six self-identified reading lessons. An account of Nate’s data is presented next with the researcher’s interpretive summaries that lead to the identification of the main themes in his case.

Initial discussion about reading

The purpose of the first interview was to begin to discuss Nate’s understanding of reading and his reading pedagogy. The interview took place in Nate’s classroom at the end of the school day. The interview was interrupted once for Nate to handle some arrangements for the upcoming sports carnival. Nate had not completed the Pre-Interview Questionnaire (Appendix E) prior to the interview, so he answered the questions during the meeting. The interview began with a discussion about Nate’s teaching experience and professional development (as outlined in the previous section), his response to Vignette 1 and some prepared questions (Appendix F contains a sample of the interview protocol).

When talking about his background, Nate spoke about his experiences in teaching having trained as a secondary Health and Physical Education teacher but working predominantly in primary schools. Nate had completed several professional development (PD) courses to up-skill, as he had identified literacy as an area to focus on. He was asked what he thought he had learned from these courses, and he explained that he felt he had learned more from “the real world than you do at uni as far as the practical side of it all goes”. He went on to explain that he had worked with mentors who were now retiring and felt privileged to have had the experience of learning from these people. He recognised that he did not always have the same ideas about teaching but felt that gravitating towards a mentor who had “similar sort of ideas and approaches that you do” was preferable, yet he could “definitely still learn...bits and pieces from anyone”. Nate also spoke
about the importance for him to reflect on his teaching to improve his practice. He said,

I’m definitely always thinking about it, you know, driving home in the car or sitting in the surf or at the gym whatever. “Oh yeah, that’s a good idea, that worked good, but next time I’d do this differently.” Just, you know, always on the move, thinking of ways to do things better.

(Int1 Nate)

Next, Nate was asked about teaching literacy, as this had not been a focus of his undergraduate degree. “I mean that was the area that I always had probably the most work to do.” He continued to speak about the importance of students “getting a good base so they can keep on learning from there”, and that this was an area of improvement for himself. He listed some PD courses he had completed at his previous school, including Ants in the Apple, Literacy on Track, Focus on Reading and some of the Super Six Comprehension Strategies.

Vignette 1 (Figure 1) was used in this first interview to stimulate responses to elements of the study, and was presented in the form of a character in a scenario rather than asking Nate direct questions about his practice. Nate quickly read through the vignette to reacquaint himself with the scenario. When he was asked, “What do you think this teacher might do next?”, Nate immediately responded about his own practice:

I would be trying to link it with whatever, like, text, like, I’d try and link with a text type straight away. You think of procedure, and try and, I mean that’d be a good way to teach procedure because you’d be able to put it straight into something that’s relevant to the kids and [that] links in with other things that you’re doing. And obviously around that you’d be teaching them how to follow a procedure and how the steps work and that sort of thing. And then I’d get them to write one. Once we’ve worked out how we’re going to make the slime, yeah, I’d get ‘em to write a procedure on how to make it and then follow it to make it
basically—would be a good one for me, ’cause you know that’s going to be covering quite a few syllabus outcomes. (Int1 Nate)

Nate connected the lesson to the procedure text type and the syllabus documents. He stated that he would use the procedures text type to both read similar procedures as a model and write a suitable procedure, and then continue to make the slime, which would give the students a purpose to their literacy practice. Nate discussed using Google to demonstrate using “key words” to search for procedures rather than providing an example himself.

I’d try and get them to do a bit of research, like, in that way and then work out and then maybe find a couple of different ones we could make. Then they can decide which one they think is going to be the most appropriate and the most simple maybe or the best slime you could possibly make, and which one would be easier to put into our own words as a procedure. (Int1 Nate)

This response suggested that Nate recognised that there are different versions of text types, and would use research skills for reading online and critical literacy to determine the best option for the procedure. He explained that he would speak with the students about what they were making, and then determine and negotiate key words for the research task.

When asked about the resources the teacher might use, Nate suggested Google, perhaps school magazines for the information, or “ideas on how procedures might look”, the NSW Board of Studies syllabus modules document (Board of Studies, NSW, 1998a), an online literacy teaching-resource website and a teaching-resource book about text types. In reference to ideas for teaching activities, Nate explained that he would most likely model on the board to gather ideas, they would write a procedure together, and then have the students write their draft procedures in their “draft books” and use the editing process SDIPS (Sense, Describing Words, Interesting sentences, Punctuation, Spelling). This process involves students editing their own work twice, giving to a friend for the same process and then editing their work a final time before it is handed to the
teacher. He further explained that the students had IT lessons with the RFF teacher so he might give the students this task for homework.

Nate then discussed his classroom makeup of students as a cross-stage class. In the term the research was begun, Nate had introduced literacy groups into the classroom routine. He spoke about grouping his students into same-ability groupings, and had assessed the students by having them read aloud to him and take a standard Australian spelling test. He also stated that in other activities he mixed the groups into peer tutoring.

In the next section of questions, Nate was asked to discuss his knowledge and beliefs about reading and teaching reading. His discussion moved quickly backwards and forwards between the definition and description of reading, and his classroom practice. First, he was asked to describe reading. His response began,

Yeah. So I think reading’s like, just about the most as important as it gets as far as literacy goes, because if you can read you can do, you can learn to write better and you can do all those other things, so I push reading a lot. (Int1 Nate)

While Nate discussed the importance of being literate, he did not describe any reading process or theory. After some discussion (presented below) about his reading pedagogy, Nate was given another opportunity to define reading.

Nate Being able to take meaning from [pause] text. [pause] I guess so. [pause] I don’t know. Yeah, being able to take meaning from letters on a page that have been put together with a weird things that we call punctuation [laughs]. [pause] Um, I guess also being able to do it. [pause] Um, what’s the word, like autonomy, autonomous, is that the right word, where they can do it without sort of having to think too much about [it]?

Interviewer Automaticity?
Nate: Yeah, so they can do it, and actually take notice of what they’re reading and not have to concentrate on the process of reading. (Int1 Nate)

Nate’s description of reading appeared to align with a bottom-up decoding process (“take meaning from letters on a page”), punctuation and automaticity. He then spoke about a strategy he used for encouraging his students to read at night. While the school had a home reading strategy, Nate encouraged and motivated students to read their choice of text at home by giving them extrinsic rewards, the value of which increased every 50 nights of reading. Nate’s purpose for this home reading program was to encourage sustained practice by using reading texts that connected to the students’ interest.

In addition to the home reading strategy, Nate also provided opportunities for sustained silent reading in his classroom for 15 or 20 minutes each day, again with their own choice of text. These activities demonstrated that Nate encouraged students to read by providing a choice of reading material and set the purpose for reading for enjoyment everyday.

As Nate discussed the reading activities in his class, he spoke about the difficulty in having a split two-hour literacy block, as the first hour was in the morning and then the second hour in the afternoon. He stated that the first hour of the literacy block was used for literacy groups. The resources used in the literacy groups included: a commercial direct instruction package, Red Box, that was also used in the other same-stage classes across the school; the “guided reading groups in groups [use] suitable levels of books for each group.” He clarified that the guided reading groups read out loud to a group of people, and it’s only eight kids and me. They want to be confident in their ability to be able to read it because they can’t—it’s a bit hard to read out loud in front of other people so. So, I’d rather have the levelled things for that. (Int1 Nate)
Nate is stating his belief about building students’ confidence to read through appropriately levelled texts and small-group situations. Nate explained how he would plan reading for students who were at a higher level.

I talk to them about trying to put a bit of expression in and just, you know, those finer things, because when they’re not reading out loud, which they’re not most of the time, they just reading to themselves, so they don’t get to think about that. So when I’m doing the books I try and, like, you know, do all the voices and that sort of thing. So I say to them, you know, “You’re getting pretty good with your fluency ‘cause you’re sounding out things and you’re not having any trouble with your words, so start to think now more about how you’re saying things and look at the punctuation. And if it’s got an exclamation mark, what does that mean?” So I’ll try and push them in that way or even asking, obviously, comprehension questions about “What do you think they meant when they said that?”. That Super Six Comprehension Strategies stuff was really good, but for things like that, when you’re doing guided reading and what sort of questions to ask .... (Int1 Nate)

These quotes indicated different reading goals for his lower- and higher-level reading students. He focused on fluency and prosody with higher-level students. Nate referred to the Super Six Comprehension Strategies PD course he was unable to complete:

I wish I would have had more time to finish that development before I moved on from that school because, like I said, I only went to a couple of them. And they’re the sort of things you want to learn about how to—like, I teach guided reading, but I don’t know if I teach it brilliantly. I don’t think I always ask the right questions, and there’s probably more-specific ways you could do things. (Int1 Nate)

The next set of questions asked Nate to talk about how he believed children learn to read and what the most important aspects of learning to read were. He appeared to struggle to identify teaching reading in his stage, and instead
responded with praise for teachers in the younger years. When redirected to his definition of teaching reading, he said it was “taking meaning from text”; he was then able to discuss reading beyond “decoding”.

Nate That’s right, and that’s what the Focus on Reading highlights.... It’s not just, like you said, [students] decoding and being able to blurt it out to you. It’s about when you’re taking meaning from it and being able to comprehend it. So, yeah, to me that’s probably answering that question and that’s what reading is: it’s being able to decode but also take meaning from what’s going on there and be able to take it and work out what context it fits in and that sort of thing.

Interviewer So what do you think are the most important aspects of teaching reading, learning – of teaching reading, particularly at the stage you’re doing?

Nate Just developing the comprehension, like vocabulary skills and that sort of thing, definitely, I think, like, the more exposed they get to different, different especially different types of text, like the information texts and then, you know, procedural texts and that sort of thing, like they’re going to get a lot more of a chance to see how different words can be in different contexts, and they learn a lot more about the topic-specific sort of language and that sort of thing. So, yeah, I guess I think a lot of it is, like, at this stage is about giving them an exposure to different types of texts and the way that it can be set. Because even navigating certain different types of texts, like, you might give them a novel and they can work out how to read that, but if you give them a newspaper and say, “What’s going on here?” they wouldn’t sometimes know where to start because
there’d be something here and here and here—and, “Well, and where do I start?” and that sort of thing.”

Interviewer  And then add the complexity of a webpage.
Nate  Yeah, that’s right, and the exposure to different things and that sort of thing. And a lot of it’s—yeah, I guess it’s about talking about the specific language that goes with that topic, and then talking about some of those words in context and what they mean and that sort of thing.

Interviewer  Mmm. Interesting. Okay.
Nate  Because you would hope that they can do—most of the decoding is in being able to put the letters together and work out what sounds they’re making but not always, but yeah, more of it, I guess, at this stage is about giving them exposure to different types and working out where, what context the words have to fit into in different ways, and how texts can be set out quite differently. (Int1 Nate)

In this response, Nate needed to be guided to recognise himself as a teacher of reading. His definition of learning to read appeared to be tied with beginning teaching of reading, rather than the complex reading activities he was teaching in his cross-stage classroom. Nate recognised the need for talk about reading through building vocabulary for topics, and this was reflected in his discussion about search terms for the slime-making procedure earlier in the interview.

Initial discussion comments

Nate had obviously taken great initiative and interest in seeking more professional development to improve his practice and understanding of reading and literacy practice in his classroom. This interview with Nate challenged him to think about himself as a teacher of reading. While he recognised and spoke about some key points in his reading program, opportunities for silent and sustained reading, confidence-building and information literacy while searching for information on the
internet, he appeared unable to articulate fully his definitions of reading. Instead, he relied on the professional-development programs he had attended for strategies that may have been reflected in his teaching practice, and identified resources he used in his lessons.

**Key reading activity episodes**

Nate’s class studied Antarctica in one term and natural disasters in the next as their HSIE units (Int2 Nate). The literacy groups that were observed consisted of guided reading, a word board game (UPWORDS), the Red Box and an activity sometimes related to their HSIE unit (Antarctica or natural disasters) (Int2 Nate).

**Phase 1 Observations**

Nate identified six observation time slots for the researcher to observe lessons where a focus on teaching reading occurred. Analysis of each observation period revealed key reading experiences during each session. Each observation has been explicated in terms of timing and specific teaching and learning activities. Below is a description of the key reading activities in the literacy episodes observed in Nate’s classroom during these observations.

**Observation 1**

This observation began when Nate showed the students the plan for the day on the IWB and announced excitedly to the class that they now had their own class Red Box set so they did not need to borrow it from another class. He loaded the grid for the literacy groups on the IWB and started the students working by saying, “Let’s get into it.”

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table 15. Orientation to Observation 1 for Nate</th>
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<tr>
<td>20 mins</td>
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</table>
**Guided reading: Readers**

The literacy groups were to complete the *Red Box* comprehension tasks, while the other groups were to complete the Antarctica sheet (HSIE unit), play the UPWORDS board game or complete guided reading with the teacher.

The students moved around the class to get to their group’s locale and the leaders collected the resources for their group’s activities. The guided reading group of six students sat on chairs in a circle near Nate’s desk. Nate directed the groups to start. Each student in the guided reading group had a copy of their own guided text and Nate followed with his own copy. The text used in this lesson was about different cultures’ clothing. He began by asking the students what they had learned in the previous week. The students reported that the book covered cultural clothes, and Nate reminded them that some cultures have different clothes for some ceremonies. Each student read aloud to the group and Nate corrected students who read incorrectly or who struggled. On one occasion, he corrected a student and then asked the group for the definition. He encouraged students to access picture cues to support their reading. One student began to read with a Scottish accent without realising and Nate commented on this almost immediately and the group all giggled. Nate continued to encourage the students as they read.

The students turned to a new page, and Nate asked, “What do you reckon that one says, [student name]?” referring to the title on the page. The student looked at the title but after a few seconds did not make an attempt. Nate prompted her by saying the first part of the word, “Bun-” and then asked the group, “What does it say underneath the title in brackets?” He then prompted the students, “What is the purpose of the bracket underneath something?” He advised the students that it is telling them how to pronounce it. They worked on pronouncing the title together and began reading, taking turns. As the students read, Nate asked the students to read the labels on the images and then praised the group for their reading. When it came to the next chapter, Nate asked the same student who had previously struggled to attempt to read the title this time. She struggled to read the title even with the pronunciation help in the brackets. Most
students struggled reading some words in this book, as they were foreign, Asian or archaic.

The students then moved to the next activity.

*Interpretive summary of Observation 1*

Nate's guided reading lesson appeared to focus on reading unfamiliar and unknown words in the guided readers. When some students struggled with reading, Nate immediately corrected or encouraged them by prompting with picture cues and beginning sounds. He gave background information to the students and provided some opportunities for them to view the images to help with comprehension.

In this observation, Nate was seen to continually praise the students for their efforts in reading in an attempt to raise their confidence levels (Int1 Nate).

**Observation 2**

During this lesson, there was some movement of students between classes. Some Year 3 students moved into Nate’s class and his Year 4 students to another class.

Table 16. Orientation to Observation 2 for Nate

| 30 mins | Reading comprehension: Visualisation |

*Reading comprehension: Visualisation*

The class novel at the time of this observation was *Charlotte’s Web* (White, 2003). It appeared that Nate was trying to establish the purpose of an orientation in a narrative as a segue to a visualisation exercise. He began by asking the students what part of the book, from the narrative, gave an idea of what the scene looks like. Students responded with “describing words”. Nate asked what type of words told them where the scene was set, to which the students replied “orientation.” Nate then responded, “Yeah, the orientation. Very good.”
When asked what part of the book had told them about the place where the characters lived, a student responded, “At the start.”

Nate Yeah, the orientation did. Where did he start off with?
Student 1 Where the barn is?
Nate Yeah, where the Arables lived. Where has he moved to?
Student 1 The other farm?
Nate Yeah, the home of Zuckerman. (Obs2 Nate)

They discussed the barn from the book, including the animals, the swings, the doors, and other parts of the barn they remembered. Nate then explained the purpose of the task, that is, visualisation using a part of the text from the book, Charlotte’s Web. Nate discussed closing their eyes to listen but stated that it was not to sleep; rather, “It might be a better way to get a picture.” He handed out a small piece of paper with a passage from the book and asked the students to read it silently. Nate waited at the front of the room for the students to finish reading the passage.

When all of the students had finished reading, Nate selected one student to read the passage aloud to the class. As the student read, Nate corrected words and praised the student for reading so well.

Nate then asked what senses the author used in this passage. He reread the text again, and the students identified smell as one of the senses. He then asked the students if there were any words that they did not understand, and the students, responded with “monkey-wrench”, “scythe” and “perspiration”. Nate first asked the students what they thought “monkey wrench” meant and one student replied, “A type of wrench.” Nate described and further explained what it was to the rest of the class. The student who did not know what a scythe was, pronounced it as sky-th and Nate said, “That’s a good one does anyone know what a scythe is?” Nate pronounced it the same as the student. Nate stated that he did not know and had never heard of it and justified that the book was set in America so this was not something familiar to him. A student then offered, “It’s a blade.” Nate replied, “Like for harvesting? Yeah, that makes sense.” Nate went on to say that as this was a farm there would be lots of old equipment lying around. Nate sought answers
from the students for the definition of the word “perspiration”. All students agreed that it meant sweat.

Next, Nate instructed the students to close their eyes and listen to him read the passage, as next they would draw their “impersonation [sic] of what it would look like”. Nate read the text twice as he wandered around the room while students rested their heads in their hands or covered their eyes with their palms. After he read through the text twice, Nate asked the students to use the information from what they had read in this passage as well as what they had previously read. He asked for suggestions of what they remembered about the barn from what they had previously read, and students offered stacks of hay, Charlotte, Wilbur, a milk pail, Templeton and the trough. Students then began drawing quietly at their desks while Nate helped a student get something from the storeroom.

After approximately 20 minutes, the visiting Year 3 students were required to go back to their own class and Nate’s Year 4 students returned. The returning group were given their sketchbooks and the piece of text and settled straight into reading silently. Nate asked where the text came from and they immediately identified *Charlotte’s Web* (White, 2003). He asked what the text was describing and the students identified the barn. Nate explained that Year 5 had read through the text a couple of times and were supposed to put themselves in the position of being there in the story and thinking about things that they could see and smell. He also stated that this was a small part from the book but they would be using a full page of the sketchbook and pretend that they could draw what they could see. He asked what other things the students knew about the barn that were not in the text they had been given. Students also identified the trough. Nate asked the students if they knew about the fence to keep the animals in, and the students stated that it was made of wood. He also asked them who else might they see, to which they answered Charlotte and the rat. Nate helped the students with the rat’s name by saying, “T- T- T-“ and the students replied, “Templeton.” He asked the students not to look at other people’s work as he wanted their own pictures. He
moved around the classroom looking at the images while the students worked quietly. This episode finished when the bell rang.

Interpretive summary of Observation 2

In this lesson, Nate discussed the text to ensure that students were aware of the adjectives used in the passage and to build on vocabulary related to the novel. He also connected his reading to the text structure of the novel. By using a “visualisation” comprehension strategy, students were encouraged to draw their understanding of the passage he read. Again, in this observation Nate praised the student who read and immediately corrected him to give him the correct word.

The disruption in the student cohort meant that the Year 5 students did not get the same experience as the Year 4 students, which Nate believed to be unfair due to the loss of opportunity to have the same quality and time for discussion from the first time it was delivered (Int2 Nate)

Observation 3

At the beginning of this lesson, students entered the classroom and sat in the floor space in front of the whiteboard. When the timer on the IWB ended, the students quickly settled and the roll was marked. Nate revealed the day’s program on the IWB. He talked about the image of a dodo on the program that was something the class had discussed the previous day. He told them the origin of the dodo and how they became extinct. He then directed the students to their desks.

While they moved around, he put up the literacy-groups grid on the IWB. As soon as students were settled, they were called out of the room to participate in a whole-school activity and returned at approximately 9.30am. He explained to the students that there was to be a change in the literacy groups for that day. He had organised worksheets for their HSIE units for Antarctica, which consisted of two sheets. The first was an assessment cloze passage and the second was a writing activity about living in Antarctica. He took a few minutes to read the instructions to the class and orientate the students to sections of the worksheet. He ensured that students understood they would be able to find the choice of words for the cloze activity on the passage on the front of the page. The second activity was a writing
activity consisting of writing how they would exist in Antarctica. He asked a student what they would need to change in their diet, but went straight on to another writing point of living conditions. He explained that they “would need to do a fair bit of thinking” to do the task. He then placed these assessment sheets in a box on the front right hand side of the classroom. The other literacy groups would complete the Red Box, UPWORDS game or guided reading with Nate. Referring to the timetable on the IWB, Nate advised them in which activities the groups would participate for this session. The red group (the highest group (Int2 Nate)) would work with him. Nate started the groups working by saying his key phrase, “Let’s do it.”

Table 17. Orientation to Observation 3 for Nate

| 10 mins | Guided reading: Readers |

*Guided reading: Readers*

The seven students in the red group quickly settled in the circle of chairs they had organised near Nate’s desk. Nate and the students discussed their place in *Victor’s Quest* (Freeman, 2009) from a previous session and agreed on a starting page. Nate looked at the book of the student who sat next to him. He chose students to read aloud to the group and corrected them as they read.

At one point, Nate needed to quiet the group playing UPWORDS on the floor space near them. He then turned back to the guided reading group and told the student reading that he liked his expression and voice. He praised the group for their fluency and told them that as they were very capable readers, they would need to start thinking about expression and putting in voices as they read. Students began to read but Nate told them he would stop them randomly so they needed to be ready to take over, but clarified that he wouldn’t stop them in the middle of a sentence.

He asked a student to read “a little bit louder”, but when the student got stuck on a line, Nate repeated some words in the sentence to help him. After the
student finished reading, Nate asked the group to look at a few lines from where he left off and reread the sentence to address reading the punctuation.

Nate  “Victor stopped eating. No he said.” (read in a monotone voice) How should he say no?
Student 1  No? (raising his voice at the end to indicate a question)
Nate  Yeah. How come?
Student 2  Because he’s like saying it in surprise, like.
Nate  What’s the thing after it?
Student 1  A question.
Nate  He’s saying it as a question so he would have went, he’s saying “No?” (Pulls a quizzical face) As in...really? Sort of thing. So that’s what A [student name] missed when he read it. He read it “no” when he was sort of saying “no?” But he would have said “no?” Because it’s like a question as in, like, “Really? Aren’t you?” So that question, mark makes it as one of those important things, I’d say. But you did really good, A. Let’s go to J [student name]. (Obs3 Nate)

Students then continued to read until a student made a mistake in a sentence by, saying “split custard” instead of “spilt custard”. Nate prompted the student by addressing meaning: “How do they split custard?” and asked him then to have another look. The student looked at his book but did not understand what was incorrect. Nate then encouraged the student by saying, “Sp- what does it say?” The student still made no comment so Nate went on further to say to the student, “It doesn’t say ‘split’, that’s what I’m getting at. What’s it say?” The student says, “Spilt.” Nate replied, “Spilt, very close to split.” The lesson then continued with the next student reading and Nate complimenting him on his voices as he read. Nate complimented students who noted the question mark while they were reading and had good expression. Nate stopped the group and made a note of the page where they stopped. He congratulated the students for taking on board his suggestions for expression invoices.
Interpretive summary of Observation 3

During this episode, Nate tried a different strategy for a student who made an error while reading. He attempted to have the student check for meaning when the student read “split” instead of “spilt” custard. Unfortunately, the student did not appear to understand that he had made a mistake until Nate explicitly read the words out to him and explained that he had read the incorrect word.

Again, Nate praised the students as they read and identified aspects of their reading such as fluency and expression.

Final discussion about reading

The second interview was held to discuss the first three observations and the researcher’s initial interpretations, which had been presented in Vignette 2. The questions were to further explicate Nate’s stated knowledge and beliefs about reading and teaching reading and to clarify any discussions from the first interview (Appendix H contains the Interview 2 Protocol). Presented below are the vignette and relevant quotes that respond to the research questions.

Portrait of Practice: Vignette 2

This Portrait of Practice was developed by the researcher using data collected from the first interview and the first two observations. It provided an early interpretation of data with attention to actions, instructions, interactions and physical objects observed (see page. 59). This vignette served as a stimulated recall in the second interview and provided an opportunity for Nate to respond to or recall the events observed.
or guided reading. Nate indicates to all students that the session has started and that quiet work should begin. Students in the guided reading group sit on chairs in a circle next to Nate’s desk and take out a reader. Nate briefly revisits their reading from the week before. Students then begin to take turns reading from the book with Nate correcting as they go and at times asking students if they know definitions or meanings of words and praising good expression.

In another whole class activity, Nate tailors a lesson to the reading of their class chapter book, *Charlotte’s Web*. There is much discussion about the passage of the story used to describe the barn. Students are asked to read a passage from the book and think about the descriptive language featured. They identify unknown words, and definitions are discussed as a whole class with students contributing their knowledge of the words. Students are asked to draw a picture of the passage they have read using the descriptive language that has been discussed by the class as a guide.

Interview 2 discussion

This interview was conducted after school in Nate’s classroom. Nate read the vignette, and before being asked a question, he stated, “It is me!” Then when asked if he thought it captured him, he replied,

Nate  Yeah. It sounds pretty good. From what you saw that sounds spot-on.

Interviewer  Is that how you feel that things were happening?

Nate  Yeah. Yeah. Yeah.

Interviewer  Is there anything you feel that is misrepresented or missing, perhaps?

Nate  Not in the lessons you watched. That sounds pretty like, yeah, that’s exactly what happened, from what I remember. That sounds pretty spot-on.

Interviewer  Is there anything that you would add do you think? To show as a representation of you?

Nate  Um...

Interviewer  Or maybe something I’m not seeing?

Nate  I don’t think so. No, it’s pretty spot-on, like, the kids are, you know, trained to know what they’re supposed to do and when an instruction is given. Yeah, just, basically, I always ask them to give me 100% from the start. I always tell them that they have to give me 100% in
everything they do, and I would never be unhappy with that so long as they’re trying their best. (Int2 Nate)

Here Nate agrees with the vignette and shows his high expectations of the students, which are demonstrated through their cooperative, respectful and concentrated effort in their learning and on-task behaviour in the classroom. Nate said that he spent a lot of time setting the behaviour for the students in the beginning, but that this time had paid off, as “the whole thing is just teaching because they come in and know what to do, exactly what I expect of them, when they’re doing each activity. It just flows from there. So it’s worth spending the time to do it properly when you’re training that, I think, yeah”.

Nate discussed that the changes for the current term compared to the first three observations was the amount of assessment, and found this to be interrupting his normal classroom routine. He also said that the students found the amount of assessment difficult to keep up with: “It's the lower group and they just can’t stand to sit there and do four pages plus” (Int2 Nate).

Nate discussed the assessment he used in his units such as Natural Disasters to build a common knowledge set using a KWL chart. He stated that the reading activities for this unit included reading about the Newcastle earthquake, and that the materials included details and technical language. The reading activities he was using were from a pre-developed published unit from the Primary Connections series of books, which included activities on one unit. He stated that previously, he had used an outcomes grouping document at other schools. As this unit would be mainly on one topic, earthquakes, the researcher asked him how he was choosing resources. He stated that he would use the Internet, YouTube clips to “show them visually...how tectonic plates work”. He continued to say that he would not use just books, as he had the IWB.

The conversation turned to the resources used in the observed lessons for guided reading. Nate stated that they were using “levelled readers” or school magazines, or the class novel used in Observation 2 for the descriptive lesson of Charlotte’s Web (White, 2003) to support their study of narratives that term.

Next, Nate was asked how his beliefs were demonstrated in his classroom,
As I say to parents a lot of the time, if I have interviews and that sort of thing, reading is to me, like, if not the most important thing in English—it all comes back to being able to read and being able to understand language and get inferential information from language, and that sort of thing. And so I think their writing improves a lot more the more they read, especially their spelling too. But even in their writing, and you look at the way the texts are put together, the language that’s being used, and that sort of thing. And...reading, to me, is the one thing out of all of the more important things in English [that] you really need to be able to do to get by in life. You know, writing, you need to be able to put a sentence together, but you don't need to be able to necessarily write a narrative to get by in life. You do need to be able to read. And I mean [that] talking and listening are also very important skills, but I think a lot of talking and listening comes more naturally without really having to be specific to get a basic level of it. Whereas reading’s got to be taught from a young age specifically or they’re not going to have much idea by the time they get to Year 5 and 6. But the at this age I think it’s really important to teach comprehension strategies at this age and also to make sure to just give them practice at reading so that their fluency improves, and [they’re] not always just concentrating on how to say the words, 'cause if they're still concentrating on reading the words all the time they’re not going to get as much meaning from the text, because they’re too busy concentrating on the sounding out the letters—so just reinforcing that especially before they get to high school. (Int2 Nate)

Nate continued to give some reading activities in his classroom including reading any material of interest at home and silent reading following their lunch break for 15 to 20 minutes.

When asked about the NAPLAN preparation for his Year 4 students entering Year 5, Nate stated that he believed in teaching to the syllabus, not to the test. He said that leading up to the test, he would give the students practice in answering
the questions so that when they were at the test they would not be “scratching their head about what to do”. He said he would give some practice with writing stimuli and talk about what needed to be covered, and he might send some multiple-choice language-convention tests home for practice and then discuss at the end of the week.

Next, Nate was asked, “Can you describe multiliteracies?” He stated that he had not heard the term before.

The interview ended with organising the next set of observations.

*Interview 2 discussion comments*

Nate’s interview covered the initial interpretation of his observed classroom practice, which he found to be an accurate depiction of how he saw his pedagogy; however, he did not make reference to his reading pedagogy specifically. His resource choices include printed books, video and Internet resources, which demonstrated his understanding of reading beyond the printed text; however, he did not articulate this when asked about how his beliefs were realised. His conversation about his beliefs about reading stated that reading requires “specific” teaching to be able to cope with Year 5 and 6. He spoke about being able to understand information texts and, specifically, understand their structure and the language used in them. He again made the point about the need for fluency, or perhaps automaticity, in reading to get meaning from the text (Int1 Nate).

**Phase 2 Observations**

**Observation 4**

In this observation, Nate reviewed some information about the water cycle on websites and in particular, reviewed the structure of an explanation report. At the beginning of this observation, students walked into the classroom. Nate took care of some housekeeping before going through the day’s plan. While going through the plan that included the water cycle, he asked the students, “What do you think we’re going to be doing with it?” One student responded, “Learning it?” Nate replied, “Yep, you’re going to be looking and learning it but you’re also going
to be ex...pl... .” A student finished his words by saying, “Explaining it?” Nate confirmed, “Yep, explaining it.”

Table 18. Orientation to Observation 4 for Nate

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Activity</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>30 mins</td>
<td>Reading: Reading online explanations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15 mins</td>
<td>Reading and writing: Writing an explanation</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Reading: Reading online explanations

Nate asked the students to prepare their writing books for the writing activity titled The Water Cycle. Students moved around to get their pencil cases, and the monitors handed out the workbooks. Nate loaded the interactive notebook he had created for the topic onto the IWB. He told the students that once they had prepared the heading in their workbooks, they could put the books away because they were going to do “a bit of exploration first, quite a bit actually”. While the students were working, he told the researcher that they usually had writing books, but as this was near the end of the year some students had used all of their books, so they kept one general book under their desk so as to not waste time looking or getting a book out.

To begin this lesson, Nate attempted to ensure that students had a shared knowledge before embarking on new information. He asked the students to volunteer to share their prior knowledge with the class about the water cycle. Following one student’s explanation, Nate responded, “Very good, you’re definitely on the right track.” He then went on to ask the students to explain why it is called a cycle, and some students gave answers.

Nate then asked if they were going to explain the water cycle, then asked specifically what they would be explaining. A student replied, “How the water cycle works?” Nate responded, “Exactly! How the water moves and forms from one to the other and then going round and round.” Nate went to the IWB and explained that it is a cycle, and pointed to the image using the arrows shaped in a circle as a reference. At the time of this observation, Hurricane Sandy had been a recent event, and Nate shared with the class that he had learned that Hurricane Sandy was
half the size of Australia. Next, Nate showed the students the technical names for the parts of the water cycle, such as evaporation and precipitation, using the image on the IWB.

Next, Nate opened a page on the IWB (Figure 14) that included an explanation and an image of the water cycle. He explained that it is “an explanation that is different to the one we are going to be writing”. To review the structure of an explanation, he asked the students what would they expect to start with if it were a proper explanation. The students suggested a title and an introduction. Nate then talked about what is included in the introduction. He chose a student to read the text from the web page; after the student had finished reading, Nate focused on one of the words in the first sentence. The student read out, “also known as the hydraulic cycle”. (However, “hydrologic’ was the correct term and Nate did not correct him.) He then asked one student if she thought this was a good definition for the first paragraph of the explanation text.

Figure 14. Water cycle explanation

Nate again reviewed the water cycle, using hand movements to show the movement of the cycle. He then referred back to the web page and asked the students without reading the text what was “good or bad” about the explanation
section. He hinted that something was wrong or something was missing. Students stated that there were paragraphs; Nate agreed and commented that “one big slab” is harder to read, and people do not want to read that amount of writing. Another student stated that there was a lot of information, and Nate agreed that was “good”. Another student suggested it needed more pictures, and Nate proposed that although there was an image it would have been better with images that show each step to make it clearer, thus having a combination of descriptive words and pictures. Nate used the text to discuss the vocabulary in the text and meanings.

As another student read, she said, “This is called underground,” instead of “This is called groundwater.” Nate helped the student by beginning to rephrase and prompted, “This is called...”, and when the student did not correct herself he said, “...ground-water.” She continued to read to finish the paragraph. Nate then discussed the meaning of “transpiration” from trees. He listened to and accepted an explanation from a student and then went on to further explain the concept, and gave a real-life example. Nate then discussed where the water goes when it rains; some students offered “the ocean”, and Nate guided the conversation to talk about the water table.

Next, Nate loaded to another website to review the water cycle “in less words”. He asked a student to read the first sentence, and the student misread “some” for “same”. Nate pointed to the board and said, “That’s difficult to see but it’s an ‘a’ there so it must be ‘same’.” Nate then discussed an interesting fact of the water cycle from this web page; that the water has been the same since the beginning of time but has been recycled. He told the students that the clouds clean the water from saltwater to freshwater. Nate chose another student to read this page, and as he read, Nate immediately corrected a misread word.

There was an interactive component to this website that required the arrows to be moved to a certain place on the website to reveal the next part in the cycle. Nate had some students read the text, and others moved the arrows to the next place in the cycle. Once all the sections had been completed, there was a review game that required students to “place the words in their correct positions” and match the labels with their images. Nate chose the student to read the first
word in the game, “precipitation”; however, the student struggled pronouncing the word, so Nate slowly enunciated each syllable to help him. Next, Nate chose a student who had put her hand up to move the word “precipitation” over the correct image. Nate chose the next two students to complete the water-cycle revision task. Each of these students required assistance from Nate to complete the task. Nate then reviewed the three things they had talked about in the lesson: precipitation, evaporation and condensation.

*Reading and writing an explanation*

Next, they were to begin to write an explanation using the websites they had just visited. He returned to the original website and had students review the website to find a “good definition” on which they would focus when writing in this lesson. They agreed not to copy the definition, and instead write using their own words. They were to use what they had learned from the information from this and the previous website to write their own definition. Nate encouraged the students to begin their definition with words different to those on the website.

While the students were writing, Nate and some of the students talked about Earth when it was in the Pangaea formation, and he explained to them that there was no more water then than there is now, due to the change in form of water (ice, salt water, fresh water and water vapour). Nate reread a question from the web page: “There is a fixed amount of water in the world that’s been here since the beginning of time. The water in your tap is the same water that the dinosaurs drank millions of years ago. How is this possible?” He read this to establish whether the students were going to put a similar question in their definition. The students appeared unsure, and Nate reassured them that it was their choice but they should create their own question to make it more interesting. This ended when the students had completed their definition.

*Interpretive summary of Observation 4*

This lesson provided students with an opportunity to read online information texts to learn about the water cycle. Nate discussed the structure of the explanation text type and gave them different examples while finding the key
elements. They were given opportunities to check their understanding through discussions about vocabulary and discussion with Nate about the content, and later by Nate’s providing them opportunities to create a text of their own. Nate provided various images and text references for this topic and ensured that each term was explained in the interactive component.

Nate continued his strategy of immediately correcting students when they misread a word while reading aloud. Another strategy he used this lesson was to prompt students by giving them the beginning of the words they had misread. He did not use comprehension strategies to assist the students.

Observation 5

The students sat on the floor at the beginning of this observation. Nate marked the roll and told the students the day’s schedule from the IWB. He then loaded the literacy group timetable and asked the students what day they were on (Day 1, 2, 3 or 4). The students confirmed it was Day 3. He explained one of the literacy activities as the explanation of the lifecycle of a frog and explained what was expected in writing it. He confirmed how to set out the page. He then gave his usual call to action, “Let’s do it, then,” and immediately the students moved around the classroom preparing for their activity. The blue group was reading with Nate in guided reading on this day. The eight students in the group moved their chairs in a circle near Nate’s desk.

Table 19. Orientation to Observation 5 for Nate

| 30 mins | Guided reading: School magazine |

Guided reading: School magazine

As the students were preparing themselves for the group, Nate advised the researcher that he was doing some assessment with this group and that he would not be talking to them as much as usual. He was doing a “running record sort of thing” with them. He had a clipboard for taking notes as each student read. He
began the webpage for the group doing the frog explanations and then said, “Righto, we’re into it,” and the noise level reduced immediately.

In this guided reading lesson, the students were using a copy of the school magazine. The first student began to read and made a mistake with one word. Nate asked, “Out of their what?” The student began that sentence again, self-corrected and continued to read. Nate occasionally praised the students as they read. The class worked silently, and Nate at one point redirected the red group working on their explanations, reminding them of their activity using the IWB.

The students had moved to a new page in the school magazine that had a title and some dates underneath. Nate discussed the heading of the page and asked a student, “When was it set? What’s it say under the heading there? Time.” The student read, “Um, 65 BCE,” and Nate replied, “Not 65.” Other students read out, “366 BCE.” Nate asked the students what BCE stood for, and a student replied, “Before Christ,” to which Nate added, “I think it’s era.” The students then continued to take turns read until a student read the word “decrepit”: they discussed the definition, and a student gave an answer from the book.

The text contained words unfamiliar to the students and they struggled to read the names. Nate asked one student who was particularly struggling, “Why are they tricky names to read, do you think? What sort of names are they?” The students replied, “They could be a real name or not,” so Nate continued, “When’s the story set and where? It’s set a long, long time ago in what country?” A student replied, “Rome?” and Nate said, “In Rome?” Another student replied, “Greece?” Nate confirmed, “It’s set in Greece, isn’t it? So, do you think they’re Ancient Greek names? They’re a bit weird to us because we don’t often see them, so they’re a bit hard to read, aren’t they?” The student continued to read. “Very good, good boy.”

As the next student read, he said “wipe” instead of “whip”. Nate noticed this and asked, “What’s that word say? This part of the text referred to a runner having a false start and being ‘whipped’. A false start and you get whipped, that’s not good!” The student then continued to read.

As the next student read, Nate corrected him when he read incorrectly three times, and said “Good, mate!” as he finished. The last two students remained.
Nate asked a student to “pick another one, what do you want to read?” She chose the “Women in the Olympics” page and began to read. Nate gave the beginning of words, such as “exce-” to help the student with the word “exception”, and assisted with other words.

Another student read the page, and Nate asked the students inferential comprehension questions about the reasoning behind not allowing women into the arena to watch the games after they had read that women who sneaked in to watch the games could be put to death.

The lesson closed as Nate said to the students, “Good reading, well done!” and asked the students to pack away.

*Interpretive summary of Observation 5*

This lesson demonstrated Nate’s classroom practice of the different reading resources students used. This group was a higher-level group, and thus had access to the school magazine rather than the levelled texts, as in other observations, and were given the choice of what to read. Nate used a variety of strategies for students who read incorrectly. These included checking for meaning; for example, the instance when he discussed with the students the words “wipe” and “whip”. He also gave the beginning sounds to students to help them determine the word “exception”, while at other times he corrected the students without using a strategy.

**Observation 6**

The timer had started on the IWB and the students took their places on the floor and settled down immediately. Nate marked the roll and then loaded the class schedule on the IWB. One of the activities was ”Grammar: Verbs that agree" and Nate said to the students, "That sounds like a funny one, doesn’t it?" Other activities included a spelling activity and a challenge with synonyms.

What followed was a conversation about the class novel, *Charlie and the Chocolate Factory* (Dahl, 2007). He stated that they could not do that activity because they had finished reading it so they would begin a new novel, *James and the Giant Peach*, also by Roald Dahl. Nate continued to read out the rest of a
schedule, and when he had finished, a student with his hand up told Nate the novel that followed *Charlie and the Chocolate Factory* was *Charlie and the Great Glass Elevator*. He had read it, and when Nate asked, "Is it any good? That's one I've never actually read," the student responded, “Yes,” and another student said they had read it also. Nate responded, "Is it good? [student nodded] Did you like that too? Would you like to read it again or would you like to read *James and the Giant Peach?" The student thought about it but did not answer. Nate said, "Have a think about it. I have a big box of Roald Dahl books but I'm not sure if that's in it."

Table 20. Orientation to Observation 6 for Nate

| 40 mins | Grammar: Subject-verb agreement |

*Grammar: Subject-verb agreement*

To prepare for this lesson, Nate advised the students that they would need their literacy books. They got up from the floor and moved quickly to their seats. One student handed out the books while Nate displayed a page on the IWB titled “Verbs that agree”, and told the students, "That's your heading on the page."

To begin the lesson, Nate attempted to discover students’ prior knowledge about the topic and asked, "What are you thinking about ‘verbs that agree’? What do you know about verbs so far? We've done a bit about verbs. What do you know, J [student name]?” The student replied, "They're doing words?" Nate affirmed, "They're doing words. Very good. So let me show you. It's a bit hard to guess unless I give you some help." He loaded another page with the same title that also had an explanation, and asked a student to read it. The student read, "The subject of a sentence is the person or thing doing an action.” What follows is Nate’s introduction to the subject-verb agreement grammar rule.

**Nate** So remember we’ve talked about the subject in sentences before. The sentence must have a subject and there must be a what, [Student 1], for it to be a proper sentence?"

**Student 1** A verb.
Nate: Yeah, it’s got to be a verb. Because remember I said the other day you have to have a verb to make it a proper sentence. If I said, “The boy went”, that wouldn’t be a proper sentence, would it?

Student 1: The boy went to school?

Nate: Actually went is a verb in that sentence so that is probably a bad example. “The boy?” That wouldn’t be a full sentence. Because we have a subject? [goes to the board and points to the writing]. The subject is the person or thing. So if I said “The boy”, hands up and tell me what is the subject of the sentence. “The boy?” Does it have a verb? If I just said “The boy”, there’s no action, is there? So the sentence isn’t complete. So the thing to remember is the subject is the person or thing. “The dog went for a walk.” What’s the subject there? [Student 2]?

Student 2: The dog?

Nate: Yeah. The dog isn’t a person but it is a thing [going back to the board and points to the part of the sentence that says “person or thing”]. The dog isn’t a person, it’s a thing. If it isn’t a person it’s probably going to be an animal. It doesn’t have to be an animal. What if I said, “The light was flickering”? °

Student 2: The light?

Nate: The light would be the subject, wouldn’t it? So it’s not always a living thing but that’s the subject in the sentence. It says [pointing and reading from the board], “The subject in a sentence is doing the action.” Then it says, “The verbs and the subjects must agree.” What do you reckon that means? [He was interrupted to address a student need.] What do you reckon that means? The
verbs and the subjects must agree. So if I have “a dog”, like in this example—. [He goes to the IWB and reveals the next part of the page.] There’s two sentences there, [Student 3].

Student 3  “The dog are barking.” or “The dog is barking.”
Nate   Which one is going to make sense?
Student 3  The dog is barking.
Nate   Why?
Student 3  I don’t know. Because it sounds right?
Nate   [points to the words again on the board] The subject must agree with the verb. The verb is “is”. And the dog is. In other words, does it make sense?
Student 4   Yes.
Nate   “The dog is barking.” The other one. “The dog are barking.” Do “dog” and “are” agree? Why not?
Student 4   If “are” was in the sentence it would be “The dogs are”.
Nate   Good girl! So sometimes if we change the subject slightly, what do you call it if we have something more than something?
Student 4   Plural?
Nate   Yeah! So if we changed the dogs to plural does “are” agree with it? Does it agree with the subject noun?
Student 4   Yes.
Nate   Yeah. So if the subject is plural then we can change the verb to make sure it agrees or not. So if we have “The dogs is barking” does that agree anymore? But up here we have “dogs” and “are”. So that’s what we’re working out today. (Obs6 Nate)

This exchange between Nate and the students showed the opportunities he gave the students to learn the grammar rule he was focusing on while giving explicit gestural cues to connect with ideas he was discussing. In addition, he was
supporting their knowledge of language by using phrases such as “does it make sense” and “does it sound right”. The lesson continued with another example from the sentences until Nate asked the students to copy down the text from board and underline the verbs in red. While students worked independently, Nate advised the researcher that he had created the notebook page the night before. He stated that normally he would talk about it more and have the kids create their own, but this topic is not as easy. He went back to the students and asked, “What did you notice about the verbs in red? It’s pretty much something we already talked about. They must do what?” A student replied, “Relate.” Nate asked, “To what?” and the student replied, “To the person.” Nate affirmed, “Yeah. To the person or thing that we’re talking about.”

Nate then went to the next page on the IWB, which showed two columns with the verbs in red. He asked the students if “I” is singular or plural, and then read the examples provided. He also asked the students what tense the verb “are” was, and a student answered, “Present.” He then asked that student what it be if it was past, and she answered, “were.” Nate praised her.

He then went to a page and presented a new example: “Verbs can sometimes change to relate to the nouns. Nathan hits the ball. Friends hit the ball.” In this next part of the lesson, the students were given time to copy the sentences and insert the correct verb as a “verbs that agree challenge” activity. Nate went through the first sentence and they answered together. Students then worked independently to finish the rest of the challenge. During this session, he wandered around the room checking in with students to help where needed. After nearly five minutes, he asked a student to “drag” the verbs to the correct sentence in the activity on the whiteboard. He chose a different student for each sentence, and they discussed appropriate verbs that could be used for multiple sentences.

Nate then announced to the students that this was just a warm-up, and handed out a cloze worksheet for the students with a similar activity to start as soon as they received it. Once he had handed out the sheet, Nate talked to the students about the first sentence; he then read it out and asked the students to suggest a verb to be placed in sentence from the list available on the sheet. He
asked a student to read out the first sentence and asked what the correct verb was for the sentence. There was a choice of “am”, “is” or “are” at the end of each sentence, and they were required to write in the correct word. He recommended that they read out the sentence with each of the three options to work out which was the correct sentence. He then asked the students to turn over to the next page. On this next page, there was a choice of two verbs for the sentence, and they were required to cross out the incorrect verb. He read some of the sentences and then began to explain the next activity on the sheet that required them to circle one of the two possibilities. Nate started the class working independently with his key phrase, “Let’s do it.” The students immediately started to work. As students began to finish, Nate checked their work and told them to glue it into their writing books.

As an extension activity for those students who had finished, Nate wrote some of the spelling words on the board. Students were required to find three synonyms for each word. Those who had already completed their worksheets moved to get the thesaurus for the challenge. He gave the students who were completing the worksheet a further six minutes to finish, moved his chair to face the class and asked the students doing the challenge to return their thesauruses and take their seats.

Nate then began marking the worksheet activity by saying, “Righto, let’s do it!” and the class immediately quieted down. He chose students to read each sentence. When a student read, “ca-know” instead of “canoe”, Nate corrected him immediately. For other students who struggled with some words, Nate gave them the beginning of the word.

At one point, there was confusion when two students misread the noun as singular rather than plural; however, they supplied the correct verb. When Nate pointed out that he had made a mistake in the singular/plural noun but had changed the verb to agree, he praised him. Another student was chosen and he clarified the word “hull”. He asked students who had not had a turn yet, as he wanted “to share it around.” He continued to choose students to read their responses. When the last sentence had been read, Nate said, “Wonderful, we
nailed that!” He then told the students to pack up their books and get ready for fruit and drink break.

*Interpretive summary of Observation 6*

This lesson began with a discussion with students about their preference for a novel in class and with students’ home reading experience. Nate demonstrated several times his belief of allowing students to choose the texts they read.

Nate needed sound grammar knowledge and pedagogical strategies to teach this noun-verb agreement episode. He had prepared different activities to support this lesson. He began the lesson by seeking what the students knew about the topic, and then exploring the topic together. Nate used the text to give the rule and opportunities for students to answer while using explicit gestures to match the text on the board with the conversation. In this episode, he used the strategy of “does it sound right” to decide whether the verb and subject agreed calling on students’ existing structures of oral language. Nate further supported the students by giving them an independent opportunity to practice what they had learned.

Nate again corrected students immediately and gave the beginnings of words for students who misread or struggled to decode the words, showing a limited range of strategies for teaching reading.

**Reading in Nate’s classroom**

Nate’s class was always observed to work on task. There was very little movement time and no behavioural issues in Nate’s observations, which allowed the students to fully engage in the prepared lessons. Nate’s classroom culture was such that a simple phrase such as “Let’s do it” or “Let’s get into it” meant that the students immediately proceeded to work on the activity he set. Nate used praise to motivate his students throughout his reading activities for students who read well, and participated in discussions or activities. He created a positive learning environment for students to take risks in attempting to read complex texts.

Half of the observations were taken in guided reading time, though “guided reading” for Nate consisted of mainly “round robin” reading rather than a skill-focused activity. He prompted and praised students during the lesson and
occasionally checked on comprehension or gave some general background knowledge to assist the groups as they read.

Nate’s reading lessons presented four key themes in his reading pedagogy: use of text structure to teach content; activating prior knowledge; use of IT in his reading lessons; and correcting oral reading. These were key moments in his practices.

Text structure

Nate used a variety of texts and paid particular attention to the text structure, explanation or narrative. Nate provided the students with a variety of examples of an explanation report, and discussed the structure and the similarities or differences between the examples. He ensured that the students were comfortable with the features and purpose of the explanation before embarking on creating their own examples. In the case of the narrative, the class novel exercise in Observation 2, Nate took the opportunity to discuss how the section they read communicated the location (orientation). In addition to using the text type to teach the content—for example, the water cycle or the visualisation comprehension activity—Nate was careful to continue to review students’ understanding of vocabulary in context with the lesson.

Activating prior knowledge

Nate began most of his content reading lessons with reviewing the students’ prior knowledge of a topic. He ensured that students began the lesson with the shared knowledge of their peers and a shared vocabulary.

Using IT in reading lessons

Nate used IT in a variety of his lessons as a teaching and learning tool and to facilitate of his lessons. He deliberately sought or created interactive webpages for students to engage in learning activities to show their understanding of the lessons. In his interview, Nate discussed the use of the Internet to locate information in his lessons; however this was not observed. However, he was keenly aware of the
need for students to apply vocabulary and topic knowledge when needed for searching for information texts.

Correcting oral reading

Across all instances of reading observed, when students misread a word, Nate immediately corrected the students and moved on to further reading, which may suggest that accuracy in reading was of key importance to him. He was seen to prompt students to use image cues; however, this only happened in the guided reading. Nate used the strategy of immediate correction, and allowed the students to continue unhindered. This correction was said matter-of-factly and was not presented together with other strategies. In other cases where a student struggled, Nate gave the beginning sound of the word to encourage the student to use the graphophonic cue to continue to read the correct word. If the student did not continue immediately with the word, he would repeat the sound again or add the next sound and wait for the student. If the student still could not decode the word, Nate gave them the word and the student then continued to read.

Case summary

Nate’s class appeared to have high levels of engagement and on-task behaviour in the observations. Nate’s knowledge of reading strategies and assessment strategies, as demonstrated in the observations and interviews, appeared to be aligned with the bottom-up approach, focusing on accuracy during oral reading. However, in other lessons where comprehension was a focus, students were given other opportunities to understand the text; for example, visualising or creating text. Nate provided opportunities for students to read a variety of texts in his reading lessons; however, he was not observed to address any critical, digital or visual literacies.
Chapter 8 - Discussion and Conclusion

This study aimed to describe middle-primary teachers’ conceptualisations of reading in the multiliteracies era. Using multiple case studies, this inquiry focused on the overarching research question, *How do teachers conceptualise and practice teaching reading in a multiliteracies era?* and addressed the following sub-questions:

1. *What do teachers understand about the nature of reading?*
2. *How do their professional practices align with these understandings?*
3. *What is the nature of the relationship between teachers’ knowledge beliefs, and practice in their teaching of reading?*

The teachers’ learning environments were described in Chapter 4 while Chapters 5, 6, and 7 presented each case study’s data collected from their interviews and observed pedagogy to respond to the research questions. The teachers’ voices have been heard through the interview data and, where provided, the reflective vignettes. The data collected shows a ‘glimpse’ of each case-study teacher’s reading pedagogy, the choices they make in their planning and as they respond to situations as they arise.

This chapter will address the main findings across the cases that respond to the research questions and literature presented in Chapter 2. Next, a summary of the case studies is presented before a discussion section will draw together responses to the research questions. Then, the study’s significance, limitations and recommendations for future research will be addressed before making concluding comments.

Summary of the case studies

Teachers’ descriptions of reading

Similarities in initial descriptions of reading were found across the cases presented above. For instance, Doreen, Nate and Trudy all defined reading as making meaning from letters or symbols (Doreen (Int1 Doreen), and Nate (Int1 Nate)) or text (Trudy (Int1 Trudy)). Doreen and Nate initially appeared to be more
focused on the smaller unit of language to discuss decoding in their first interviews. However, in her third interview, Doreen suggested that while decoding “symbols” was possible, it did not necessarily lead to comprehension or understanding without knowledge of the language (Int3 Doreen). Nate’s initial response showed his tentative explanation of reading as decoding letters in text with the use of punctuation with a focus on automaticity that leads to comprehension (Int1 Nate). Trudy on the other hand referred to “decoding” in later interviews (Int2 Trudy, Int3 Trudy) and focused more on decoding beyond the word as she explained the use of context within the text as an explanation to assist reading, such as “moving on” rather than phonetically decoding (Int3 Trudy). These initial responses suggest that the teachers’ descriptions of reading connected to print text.

Similarities in Doreen and Trudy’s responses over the course of the discussions of the study show their understanding that reading occurs at a level higher than letters or word level, such as text and context. Though Nate needed encouragement to discuss the definitions of reading and to see himself as a teacher of reading in his classroom, his initial response gave the impression that his understanding of reading was at the smallest language unit level. He stated on several occasions that meaning is taken “from text” and suggested that text types were important to enable reading comprehension.

These explanations suggest that Doreen and Trudy’s understanding of reading align with a top down or integrated approach where reading occurs at the whole text or language level to aid in decoding text using the readers’ experience with language and content. Whereas, Nate’s explanation would appear to align more closely with the bottom up approach where comprehension is as a result of decoding the text at the smaller units of language such as letters and words.

Another similarity in the descriptions of reading across the case study teachers comprised of purposes of reading beyond decoding or comprehension to include reading as a “life skill” (Doreen (Int1 Doreen), Trudy (Int1 Trudy), Nate (Int2 Nate)). Two teachers also included comments about the nature of reading for purposes such as, reading for “pleasure” (Doreen (Vignette 3 Doreen), Trudy (Int1 Trudy)), “enjoyment” (Doreen (Int1, Int2 Doreen), Trudy (Int2 Trudy, Vignette 3
Trudy)) and “imagination” (Trudy (Int1 Trudy)). The similarity of these comments across the case-study teachers, suggest that they understand reading within the broader context of social practice. Doreen was the only teacher to broaden her description of reading beyond printed text to include other signs, images and environmental print.

Connection to the four modes

All teachers stated connections between the four modes (reading, writing, speaking and listening), but especially, the connection between reading and writing (Doreen (Int1 Doreen), Trudy (Int1 Trudy), Nate (Int1 Nate)). Nate suggested a relationship between reading and writing, stating that reading leads to better writing (Int1 Nate). Doreen (Int1 Doreen) and Trudy (Int1, Int3 Trudy) both stated that the four modes could not be separated. This similarity would further support the teachers’ understanding of reading within literate practice rather than decontextualised or silo skills.

Multiliteracies and the Four Roles framework knowledge

None of the teachers had heard of the terms ‘multiliteracies’, visual literacy or the Four Roles framework. However, Doreen and Trudy both attempted to explain their understanding. They raised some important ideas within multiliteracies; such as reading multimodal texts, using computers, sourcing information and plurality of texts (Int1 Doreen, Int1 Trudy). None of the case-study teachers above were able to talk explicitly about “visual literacy” in their discussions (Int2, Int3 Doreen). However, Doreen was observed to engage in elements of teaching visual literacy in some of her lessons, termed “reading the visual”. Trudy stated that she “supposed” that she taught visual literacy but not explicitly (Int2 Trudy) which indicates that she did not have an extended knowledge of visual literacy.

Learning to read

The explanations they provided about learning to read were similar across the teachers. All teachers identified that students learn to read in modelled
experiences (Int1 Doreen, Int1 Trudy, Int1, Nate). These experiences ranged from modelling more aesthetic features of reading (enjoyment, imagination, voices) to modelling fluency in their class novel read. Another common belief about learning to read is the importance of shared experiences (Int1 Doreen, Int1 Nate) such as reading a class novel, exposure to literature and text types (Int1 Doreen, Int1 Nate) and immersion (Int1 Doreen, Int1 Trudy). Doreen and Trudy both identified the home connections to learning to read (Int1 Doreen, Int1 Trudy).

So far this chapter has presented important similarities and differences between the case study teachers’ understandings of reading as discussed in their interviews and realised in their classroom observations. The next section will discuss the themes found in the case studies presented here to respond to the research questions and the literature presented in Chapter 2.

**Discussion**

Teachers’ understanding of the nature of reading was examined over several conversations and observations. This ensured that the complex nature of teachers’ knowledge and beliefs about reading and their reading pedagogy were captured. They were best understood through discussion and reflection of their practice through professional dialogue (Chen & Derewianka, 2009; Coburn, 2005; Dudley-Marling, 2005; Turbill et al., 1995). Teachers are often required to “weave” between strategies and activities that best fit their students (Allington & Johnston, 2000; Comber, 2005). The way that some case study teachers talk about their beliefs of how children learn to read include offering students opportunities to engage in reading rich texts rather than the practice of subset or compartmentalised skills. They include rich conversations with students to discuss what is being read and understood, along with opportunities to demonstrate their understanding in a variety of ways (Allington & Johnston, 2000).

**Responding to the research questions**

To understand the case-study teachers’ conceptualisations of reading in their classrooms, it was important to explore their knowledge and beliefs about
reading and learning to read. What follows presents the analysis of the case-study teachers’ understandings of reading with respect to sub-question 1, *What do teachers understand about the nature of reading?* Teachers were asked in the first interview to describe reading and articulate their beliefs about how students learn to read. This response was followed up in their final interview to further articulate their responses.

**Teachers’ descriptions of reading**

Teachers were initially unable to clearly articulate their understanding of reading using processing models or theory. Despite their divergent views on the nature of reading, the teachers’ vocabulary in the first instance was often surprisingly similar. For instance, each of the four teachers initially included a reference to “meaning-making” from text in their responses when asked directly to describe reading. This common terminology across the teachers’ responses suggests that they understood the purpose of reading to be comprehension (Harste & Burke, 1977; Weaver, 1980, 2002). However, the difference between the case-study teachers’ approaches to decoding was discovered in this study. It is perhaps the differences in the teachers’ own definition of decoding during the duration of the study that is important when teachers discuss reading.

*Differences in definitions*

The literature shows the term “decode” draws on meanings from different disciplines and can range from decoding letters to sound (from the smallest to the largest unit of language) to comprehension as a result of decoding the text (from largest to smallest) (Paris, 2005; Tracey & Morrow, 2012). Doreen and Nate used “decode” in their initial responses. However, Trudy referred specifically to “decoding” in later interviews. Though the teachers’ responses had the common wording “decode” and “meaning-making” in their first discussion, they were prompted to define this term in later discussions to explore their understandings. What resulted was a much broader explanation.

The teachers’ responses from the first interview were revisited in the final interview, in which Doreen and Trudy took part. Their explanations were much
broader at the end of the project and included decoding with meaning, decoding non-alphabet symbols such as pictorial representations (Int3 Doreen) and decoding to meaning not decoding to sound (Int3 Trudy). A possible refinement in their answers could be attributed to the reflective nature of the study or that they had already identified the key words mentioned above and by the third interview had had an opportunity to explore these concepts further.

Research has shown that while teachers might know pedagogical terms, they may not be able to fully explain or define them (Hammond & Macken-Horarik, 2001). They may use these terms, which are familiar in their profession, but their meaning is different in other settings, such as research. Ethel and McMeniman (2000, p. 88) also propose that as a teacher’s experience is increased, there is “automation of procedural knowledge and the consequent freeing of working memory to be utilized in higher-order cognitive skills necessary for conceptual understanding of new knowledge.” The teachers’ initial responses when asked directly would support Ethel and McMeniman’s (2000) finding. However, the findings of this study suggest tensions in the way that teachers initially described the nature of reading compared to the rich descriptions they provided across the study in the interviews and observed in practice. This suggests that teachers often require time and professional dialogue to articulate their knowledge and reflect on their practice. The research design of this study using an extended period of time for data collection and offering reflective opportunities in interviews and reviewing the teachers’ practice, such as this inquiry has employed would support this (Coburn, 2005; Dudley-Marling, 2005; Turbill et al., 1995).

For example, Doreen’s initial response when describing reading included pauses and thinking between single words to answer. She identified reading as “deciphering, decoding, symbols, accepted symbols, in and that, that are connected as words and that have meaning and understanding that meaning” (Int1 Doreen). This might indicate a bottom-up theoretical orientation in this initial response. However, in other conversations, Doreen also described reading as including reading images, writing or talking as a response to reading and reading critically. This suggests that Doreen’s understanding of reading extends well beyond the basic
reading skills she first mentioned and moves into more-sophisticated, interactive use of texts.

Similarly, Nate’s initial discussion about reading focused on the importance of literacy, and appeared to consist of bottom-up approaches also such “take meaning from letters on a page” and the importance of automaticity and punctuation (Int1 Nate), even though Nate did not have the meta-language in the interview. However, in further discussions, Nate also recognised that students must move beyond the constrained skills to more-complex skills by being able to understand the place words have in different contexts and text structure (Int1 Nate). In contrast, Trudy’s initial description of reading covered a range of aesthetic ideas such as “imagination”, “pleasurable experience” and “life skill”, with little discussion of the “skills” themselves. Thus, two out of three teachers revealed more about their knowledge and beliefs about the nature of reading in the discussions during the study than in response to the initial single question. They described a broader range of reading practices than “decoding”, such as critical stances, connections to texts for enjoyment, online reading, integration of the four modes, reading images, and responding to reading material.

Knowledge about multiliteracies

Much attention is paid to multiliteracies in the research, professional development and teacher resources (Bull & Anstey, 2005; Healy, 2004; Kalantzis & Cope, 2005; Unsworth, 2001), and in research with teachers (Kitson et al., 2007; Lotherington & Chow, 2006; Rush, 2004; Tan & Guo, 2009). However, the teachers in this study were unfamiliar with the term, suggesting that the recontextualisation of theory into classroom practice is perhaps “patchy” or taken up differently across classrooms (Kitson et al., 2007). “Multiliteracies” as a term firmly embedded in research discourse (Mills, 2006; Kitson et al., 2007), but is not in professional dialogue for the teachers in this study. However, some singular elements of multiliteracies were recognised.

For example, in Trudy’s first interview, she responded with some ideas of the plurality of texts (for example, “textbook as opposed to website”) and reading multimodal texts; however, the definition she supplied was perhaps insufficient to
judge a full knowledge of multiliteracies. Thus, there is not enough evidence to suggest an alignment between Doreen’s or Trudy’s knowledge and implementation of multiliterate practice. This may, however, be an opportunity for further research following Tan and Guo’s (2009) study, as they initially started with observations and provided the teacher with interpretive feedback, and then in Phase 2 had teachers begin the task of developing lessons. It appears that discovering teachers’ existing practice informs future professional-development needs.

A teacher’s pedagogy is influenced by their beliefs in how students learn to read (Adoniou, 2015; Allington & Johnson, 2000; Coburn, 2005). When talking about learning to read, in addition to some initial constrained skills (Paris, 2005) such as decoding and oral reading fluency, the case-study teachers gave explanations that involved opportunities for their students to engage in rich discussion of reading materials such as novels, websites and posters. The common beliefs of the case study teachers about how students learn to read are revealed in their comments that support learning to read with the help of an adult or expert other. That is, modelling experiences and strategies to the students to engage and assist in learning. Also, the idea that learning to read encompasses the experience gained from reading such as enjoyment and pleasure is an important focus across all teachers. Furthermore, the three teachers identified home connections to learning to read (Int1 Doreen, Int1 Trudy, Int1 Nate). These beliefs about learning to read are grounded in sociocultural practices of reading (Barton & Hamilton, 2000; Freebody, 1992; Freebody & Luke, 1990; Street, 1984).

Multiple opportunities to articulate understandings

Teachers need opportunities to engage with professional dialogue about their beliefs and practice (Chen & Derewianka, 2009; Coburn, 2005; Dudley-Marling, 2005; Turbill et al., 1995) to articulate their descriptions. Discussions were posed in ways that allowed the teachers to consider and then articulate and discuss what they believe about reading and literacy, and what they believe to be the way their students learn to read emerges from the dialogue over time. When teachers in this study were asked to describe reading in the first instance, there were tensions between their descriptions and their classroom practice. When engaged with
professional discussions about their practice, the descriptions were richer, with continuity between their knowledge and beliefs, on the one hand, and their practice, on the other. It is through this that their articulations and description becomes deeper. Therefore, opportunities for professional discussion among peers would provide a foundation for considered and reflective practice.

Alignment between teachers’ professional practice and understandings of reading

The case-study teachers’ knowledge of reading introduced above was realised in their professional practices in the context of their classroom teaching and learning episodes. To begin to understand the relationship between their knowledge and beliefs, and practice, the following sub-question 2, *How do their professional practices align with these understandings?* is addressed.

The case-study teachers’ *initial definitions* of reading were not matched to what was observed in their classroom observations. Rather, their statements about *how* students learned to read were more closely aligned with their classroom practice. In further conversations with the teachers about reading, they included a wider range of reading practices with particular focus on “meaning making”. Doreen, Trudy and Nate provided opportunities for students to talk about their reading material, and made connections to other texts or home experiences, and encouraged their students to share and discuss their opinions and understandings of what the students had read. This “discursive work” (Comber, 2005, p. 7) of teachers is an important aspect of effective teaching in the middle years, when students are challenged by new concepts (Comber, 2005).

This may be accounted for by their knowledge about reading theory defined earlier rather than knowledge about how students learn to read, together with the expectations of the curriculum requirements. The knowledge about reading theory, as discussed earlier, focused mainly on ‘decoding’ print text, rather than the richer classroom experiences they allowed the researcher to observe.

Teaching multiliteracies

Though the teachers were unfamiliar with the term ‘multiliteracies’ in the interviews and information provided in the interviews did not provide enough
evidence to suggest that the teachers had formal theoretical knowledge, the observations in Doreen’s and Trudy’s classrooms revealed some moments when elements of visual and critical literacy were included in classroom activities. These included critical reading of texts (Obs5 Doreen, Obs1 and Obs5 Trudy); attending to visual aspects of texts (Obs1 and Obs5 Doreen, Ob1 Trudy)—for instance, Doreen’s use of visual texts to teach some elements of visual literacy (colour, font, image) aligned with her interest in critical awareness of an author’s position combined with her love of art; and, to a lesser extent, digital literacies (Obs1 Doreen, Obs2 Trudy). Interestingly, both Trudy and Doreen provided opportunities for students to show their understanding through the creation of multimodal texts: the character-profile PowerPoint presentations (Obs2 Trudy), visualisations (Obs2 Trudy and Obs2 Nate) and the creation of a digital movie (Obs4 Doreen). Comber (2005) stated that teachers’ traditional notions of reading are not enough to cater for students in the 21st century, yet the sometimes ‘patchy’ understandings of multiliteracies or multi literacies may also not be enough.

There were contradictions between teachers’ understandings of multiliteracies and multiliterate practices. While the teachers in the study had little or no stated knowledge of multiliterate practice, their classroom activities included some visual and critical literacy activities. Hammond and Macken-Horarik (2001) had similar results in their study some years prior to this study, which would suggest that there is still little uptake of multiliteracies in some New South Wales classrooms. More is needed to upskill these teachers in the use of IT beyond facilitation of their teaching to engage in digital and multimodal texts as critical users.

*Defining a reading lesson*

Teachers’ reading pedagogy is driven by their beliefs about reading and shaped by their experiences but are also influenced by mandated curriculum (Coburn, 2005; Flynn, 2007). This is seen through the breadth of reading purposes the case-study teachers’ identified: drama, visual literacy and, visualisations, comprehension of information text. The inclusion of such a wide variety of multimodal texts demonstrates the breadth of knowledge the teachers need when
developing their reading program. For example, the case-study teachers’ broad definitions of reading extended beyond print text to include multimodal and oral texts and engage in visual and critical literacies. The types of learning experiences that teachers identified as “teaching reading” for the researcher to observe showed differences in their definitions of reading. For instance, Doreen and Trudy demonstrated different types of reading practices in their lessons and taught a range of strategies. In contrast, Nate’s choice in guided reading activities for the lessons may indicate a narrow reading program. Nate was reminded that he was able to show the researcher any lesson that he felt he taught reading. He did, however, show reading across the key learning areas of science and English in one of his lessons. As Trudy and Doreen were more experienced teachers, and trained as primary teachers, they may have had more resources and experience to draw on.

Teachers’ understandings of reading play an important role in their reading pedagogy. These understandings influence the resources they use, the method of delivery, their focus for instruction, how they shape their lessons for students to learn to read and their descriptions of reading (Comber et al., 2001; Paris, 2005). Each case-study teacher understood reading from different viewpoints. As identified above, the focus and content of the lessons chosen by each teacher differed. The resources and delivery of these lessons appeared to reflect the teachers’ understanding of reading and learning to read they offered in their discussions.

For instance, Doreen’s definitions of reading as decoding and reading visual images related directly to the lessons she chose to be observed. Her lessons included reading visual images, and offering activities using both print text and online content. Similarly, Trudy’s lessons were also varied with resources such as novels (used for modelled reading, hot seat, plays), information websites, and the student-created PowerPoint documents that included words, images and music. The choice of lesson and resources matched Trudy’s definitions of reading as reading for enjoyment and using quality texts that included print and multimodal texts. Doreen’s and Trudy’s choices of activities and resources used in their observed reading lessons create ‘literacy events’ (Barton and Hamilton’s, 2000)
which would support the earlier interpretation of their understanding of reading as social practice.

However, Nate seemed to find it difficult to articulate his understandings during his interview. Though he taught reading in different curriculum areas, half of the reading lessons he asked the researcher to observe were round-robin reading and consisted of levelled readers or the school magazine (a magazine created by the education department for the purposes of reading in the classroom) (Ash, Kuhn & Walpole, 2008). He did also include online content (both found and created) in one lesson and used the novel for a visualisation comprehension task. Some researchers argue that effective teachers use a rich supply of reading material across the curriculum areas and provide opportunities for “thoughtful literacy” instruction (Allington, n.d.; Allington & Johnston, 2000, p. 20).

The significance of this is that students in classrooms that use limited and contrived resources as opposed to real-life or authentic resources and are engaged in lessons with limited opportunities to critically engage and analyse texts they may not be prepared for the skills required for 21st century citizenship.

![Diagram showing the relationship between narrow and broader definitions of reading](image)

**Figure 15. Definition and practice relationship**

Figure 15 suggests the connection between the teachers’ definition of reading and learning to read, and the classroom practices observed. The diagram
demonstrates the ways the teachers describe reading, and the relationship to the classroom practice; it denotes the relationships found in the case studies of this research project, though these should not be considered discrete and opposing sides, but rather opportunities to move between the sides as the situation necessitates (Allington & McGill-Franzen, 2004; Weaver, 1998).

As 21st century literacy demands a broad understanding of reading, teachers are required to provide pedagogy that includes reading and opportunities to critically respond to multimodal and digital texts. There was evidence of all teachers using digital texts on the IWB to facilitate their teaching; however, only two teachers were observed to give students an opportunity to critically respond to the texts displayed. Doreen used a website for a lesson about peer pressure and discussed with the class some icons of the webpage (Obs2 Doreen). Trudy set a website for students to locate information and as an incidental teaching moment, was able to have a discussion with her students about the author and credibility of a website and the advertising located on it (Obs1 Trudy). Nate used the websites he found or created, as they had the explanation and interactive elements to aid his teaching. Doreen, Trudy and Nate used multimodal texts in the form of webpages or posters with text and images, but did not pay attention to the elements of these beyond the facilitation they offered during the teaching and learning instances. The policy and curriculum requirements for the 21st century learner place encumbrances on teachers to align their professional practice with particular ideals and practices that might not be consonant with their knowledge or beliefs about learning to read (Coburn, 2005; Harris, 2010). This is particularly true of the middle years (Comber et al., 2001). While the teachers had adapted to utilise some of these requirements, there appeared to be no evidence of higher-order or metacognitive uses with these texts, which perhaps poses a gap in in-service teacher knowledge at this time.

Relationship between teachers’ knowledge, beliefs and practice

The final sub-question 3, What is the nature of the relationship between teachers’ knowledge, beliefs and practice in their teaching of reading?, addresses
the influences on the teachers’ conceptualisations of reading in their middle-primary classrooms and the relationship between them.

The relationship between teachers’ knowledge and their reading pedagogy might extend or restrict access to multiple and varied texts required for more-complex reading in the upper stages of primary education, particularly the middle years (Allington & Johnston, 2000). Nate was observed to have limited reading pedagogy, strategies and resources in his classroom activities, which aligned more closely with a skills focused program. Although Nate used limited strategies to help his students who misread words, his teaching style was mostly student-focused, though there were times when questioning students became rhetorical as he moved quickly to the next question. Nate’s “guided reading” lessons appeared more round-robin reading style at times, where students practised rather than focused on, an identified skill or strategy, though students were sometimes engaged in conversations about their knowledge and understanding of what they were reading. In contrast, Trudy and Doreen were both more experienced teachers than Nate. Their teaching style was student-centred and, apart from instances of shared reading, they rarely taught from the front of the room; instead, they allocated groups to collaboratively work on literacy projects that developed higher-order comprehension and moved among the students to advise and encourage them while they worked. Continuity between teachers’ identified reading lessons and descriptions of reading.

The teachers who self-identified reading lessons with activities that clearly connected to other modes such as writing and creating (e.g. plays, movies), speaking and listening (presentations) used reading as one inseparable practice of the four modes. Typically, literature was used as a catalyst to these lessons. The teachers who self-identified reading as a “guided reading” or “fluency” lesson then practiced or learned a skill using a contrived text. This congruency has implications for teachers with a narrow description or understanding of reading who attend a professional development program that is not underpinned by theory and offers an alternative approach to literacy than the teacher has (Pajares, 1992).
What has been identified from this research is that the teachers’ knowledge and beliefs and the pedagogy have been understood through both discussion and observations, which have given a rich picture of these teachers’ practice. An important aspect that is influential in classroom practice is that of policy. The relationship between the elements of a teacher’s conceptualisation of reading can be represented as layers that rely on each other (Figure 16).

![Figure 16. Conceptualisations of reading.](image)

The case-study teachers’ conceptualisation of their reading practice, was created from their understandings of reading and literacy, selection and use of resources, instructional choices and the professional development that informed them. As Figure 16 and the inquiry show, all elements link or overlap in some way, but some have a stronger relationship than others, and certainly the understanding a teacher has developed is the “meat in the sandwich” that grounds the use of resources and informs the overall conceptualisation. Resources and instructional
choices are the result of their understanding of reading and literacy, though these may be influenced from policy, such as curriculum or school expectations, than from understanding. Whether the resources are used from a skills approach or a literature-based approach, this inquiry has demonstrated they will align with the teacher’s knowledge of and beliefs about reading and learning to read.

**Study Significance and Recommendations**

Significance of the study

This chapter has presented the main findings across the case studies in this multiple case-study research that describes three teachers’ conceptualisations of reading in the middle primary years. It has discussed the important relationship between their stated and revealed definitions of reading, their beliefs of how children learn to read in their classrooms and their reading pedagogy.

**Significance one.** Teachers do not have the required meta-language to teach reading in the Multiliteracies era effectively. The roll-out of research about multiliteracies pedagogy does not appear to be reaching classroom teachers. Without further work teachers may not best prepare students for engagement in diverse literate practice and skills required for the 21st century.

**Significance two.** Teachers as researchers and being involved in research allow them to further understand the research being undertaken; be exposed to research theory beyond their original teaching qualifications; in addition to having opportunities for professional and reflective dialogue.

**Significance three.** Reflection is an important part of teaching and understanding decisions for instructional and resource choices. Enabling teachers to have multiple discussions and revisit their explanations enabled the teachers in this study to discover or explain broader definitions. Additionally, providing the teachers opportunities to discuss what is observed in their classrooms provokes reflective discussion. The descriptions provided in one conversation or a survey, are inadequate for discovering the complex work of teaching reading.

**Significance four.** Teachers’ uptake of professional development may be influenced by their own beliefs and understandings of reading and learning to read.
When a teachers’ underlying theory is more closely aligned with the underlying theory of the professional development, there may be uptake in the classroom. However, if there is a discord between these two, then the teacher may have limited uptake and need to adjust this to meet their own beliefs.

Limitations

In case-study research, the story of a small number of participants is not generalisable across a population. This research was limited to a small sample size of three teachers across two sites. Care should be taken when making generalisations from these teachers’ stories to other settings. The findings from this research come from each teacher’s own conceptualisations and pedagogy as a result of their own knowledge, classroom and school needs. So, any similarity or differences from this research context should be considered carefully. However, the methods within the research can be repeated and thus provide an opportunity to add to the stories of teaching.

The reading lessons observed by the researcher were chosen by the classroom teacher and as such were dependent upon the teacher’s expertise in this area. While this allowed for the researcher to include observation data of the teacher’s understanding of literacy, it also allowed for teachers to show and extend their ‘reading’ program beyond ‘decoding’. Though the teacher had discretion about the lessons observed which may have limited the variety of lessons studied, the choice of lessons contributes to the understanding of their conceptions of reading. The purpose of the research was to discover the teachers’ conceptions of reading. Therefore, this limitation is also one of this study’s strengths.

Recommendations

Recommendations for further research

- Provide teachers with opportunities as ‘teachers as researchers’

This study sought to investigate middle-primary teachers’ understanding of reading and the relationship to their pedagogical practice. The teachers were purposively selected, and due to the limited group of teachers in this study, further
study of a larger cohort of teachers will extend this study’s findings. Moreover, a longitudinal study of teachers of Years 3 and 4 might provide findings to compare across different teachers’ with different theoretical positions. The teachers in this study showed that their understandings and articulations are at times perhaps fragmented. Therefore, research that provides teachers opportunities for professional dialogue to explore their understandings may confirm this finding for other cases. Longitudinal studies with interventions through professional learning might also provide responses to the impact of professional development on these teachers during the change of curriculum.

- Conduct longitudinal research

This research project was conducted immediately prior to the Australian Curriculum: English being implemented; therefore a study to discover the teachers’ responses to the new curriculum might be advantageous. The model of conceptualisation of reading presented in Figure 16 may assist teachers to explore the potential influences of these elements on their practice. As a school implements school-wide programs, discussions on how these programs align with teachers’ conceptualisations may give insights to success or failure to achieve the set goals.

Recommendations for methodology

- Provide vignettes of teachers’ practice to aid in their reflections

This research makes a contribution to research methodology in the use of vignettes in educational research. Using the vignette as a tool to allow teachers to talk about their practice without being asked or challenged directly was one way that allowed them a springboard for reflection on their own practice. The interview participants began to shift their conversation from speaking about the character in the Vignette 1 to talking about their own practice. Vignettes are not widely used in this way in educational research, but they can be useful in that they provide the researcher an opportunity to focus on particular areas of interest while allowing the participant a risk-free examination of practice.
Vignettes 2 and 3 provided opportunities for teachers to reflect on their practice during the interview discussions. As has been demonstrated, sustained professional dialogue provides teachers opportunities to articulate and describe their understandings.

Recommendations for policy/practice

- Assist teachers to understand their underlying beliefs of reading theory to engage better in professional development

Teachers make the best use of professional learning if it aligns with their underlying theory of pedagogy. If teachers were aware of the theory they hold, justification for use of, or perhaps adjustments to, professional development would be more forthcoming. As some PD is presented by education authorities and by publishing houses of educational resources, the conceptualisation model (Figure 16) could be used by teachers as they engage in reflective practice and consider their beliefs and knowledge when making choices of PD courses or potential changes to their reading pedagogy.

Teachers can use this model in reflective activities prior to embarking on PD. This model can be used to discover and discuss the relationship and degree of overlap between these elements. With respect to further research, it could be used as a model during interviews to discuss existing practice and influencing factors prior to any intervention study.

- Professional development in multiliteracies

Further dissemination of multiliteracies knowledge and pedagogies and multiliterate skills for the 21st century is needed to ensure they reach in-service teachers. Otherwise, more traditional and print-based literacy practices will continue to dominate 21st century classrooms. This would result in a risk of students being disadvantaged by being exposed to mostly dominant traditional literacies and students would have inadequate skills required to future-proof their skills in the 21st century (Kitson, Fletcher & Kearney, 2007).

The more experienced case-study teachers, Doreen and Trudy, displayed efforts to engage students in rich discussion with texts: their reading philosophy
was grounded in sociocultural practices that required students to engage critically with the texts and for the teachers to provide the students with opportunities to represent their understanding orally or visually using digital media. These literacy practices are important as they move beyond the standardised assessment practices.

**Concluding Comments**

This study examined three middle-primary teachers’ conceptualisations of reading. Lessons focused on reading were observed in the New South Wales case study teachers’ Year 3 and 4 classrooms. Conversations with teachers during semi-structured interviews were also employed. Data collected from observations, semi-structured interviews and vignettes, both researcher and teacher created, were collated into four cases. These cases were then analysed to find emerging themes and were compared across cases.

This study demonstrates that these case study teachers’ conceptualisations of reading in their middle years classroom have been created from continuity in the relationship between their articulated understandings of reading and learning to read and their pedagogical choices. The findings suggest that the congruent relationship between the teachers’ articulated beliefs and knowledge about reading and their pedagogy would not be discovered in a short term research project, and rather, requires extended professional dialogue for teachers to discover their deeper understandings.

This study shows that the case-study teachers’ definitions of pedagogical terms, though at times not theoretically articulate or utilising meta-language appropriately, were better understood through observation and connection to their pedagogical decisions in their classrooms. This suggests that for some teachers, reading pedagogy is “knowledge in action” (Ethel & McMeniman, 2000, p. 90), and that practices reflect a more accurate picture of their knowledge of, and beliefs about learning to read than their utterances. This is important to consider when developing PD courses that seek to influence teachers’ pedagogy related to teaching of reading in the multiliteracies era.
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Appendices

Appendix A: Principal Information Sheet

LETTER TO SCHOOL PRINCIPAL

Dear Principal,

I would like to invite a teacher at your school to participate in a research project conducted by the University of Wollongong on behalf of the Department of Education and Training. The project is titled *Understanding teachers’ conceptualisations of reading in a multiliteracies era*. I write to seek your approval and assistance to conduct this research.

**Purpose of the research**
The purpose of the research is to understand and describe middle years primary teachers’ conceptualisations, understandings and beliefs about reading theory and their teaching reading practice. The main research question for this project is “How do teachers conceptualise and practice teaching reading in a multiliteracies era?” The findings of this research will provide information to further develop professional development programs. Publications of the results will include a doctoral thesis, a report to the Department of Education, and may include journal articles, book chapters and presentation of findings at conferences.

**What will be required of the teacher?**
Teachers involved in the study will participate in interviews and observations across 2 consecutive terms.

**Interviews**
Teachers will be asked to participate in a total of three interviews. These will be scheduled for mutually convenient times. These interviews are expected to last approximately 30 minutes each and will be audio recorded. The initial interview will seek demographic information, discussion of reading theories, beliefs about reading and the teachers’ reading pedagogy. The subsequent interviews will discuss the observations and interview data. The researcher will develop an interpretive summary to be used in these interviews that will outline ongoing interpretations of analysis. The teacher will be requested to write a vignette (scenario or short story) prior to the final interview about how they teach reading. It is anticipated that this may take approximately 1 hour.

**Observations**
Teachers will be observed teaching reading in their classroom across term 4, 2011. It is anticipated that these observations will take up to one hour each (there will be six observations in total). The researcher will conduct the observations as a non-participant so there is a minimum interruption to teaching and learning. The teacher will be video and audio recorded during the observations and the researcher will take observation notes. The main focus of the observations is the teacher. The observations will be taken over two cycles: three observations over 1 week in Term 4, 2011 for each cycle.

**Artefacts**
A copy is required of lesson plans, teaching materials and planning documents that are used and related to the planning of the lessons observed. Information will be removed by the researcher to ensure the privacy of any person involved in the research.

**What will be required of the school?**
Access to photocopy equipment is requested to copy any artefacts for the observed lessons (lesson plans, planning documents, teaching documents etc.). Photocopy paper will be
supplied to help cover costs. Alternately, permission could be granted to take these documents off school grounds to be photocopied and returned the following day. All identifying information will be removed.

Information about ethics
The ethics of this research have been reviewed by the NSW DET and the University of Wollongong’s Human Research Ethics Committee. Please find attached to this letter the Participant Information Sheets for the teachers and Information Sheets for parents of the students in the classroom. All information collected during this study will be kept in a locked cupboard and password protected computer. Pseudonyms will be used to protect the identity of the teachers. If there are any ethical concerns you can contact the Ethics Officer, Human Research Ethics Committee, University of Wollongong on (02) 4221 4457.

Who should I contact if I need more information?
Should you require any further information please do not hesitate to me on 02 4221 3857 or std997@uowmail.edu.au.

Yours sincerely,

Ms Sue Denny
PhD Candidate
Faculty of Education

Attachments: Participant information sheet
Information Sheet for parents/caregivers
PARTICIPATION INFORMATION SHEET FOR TEACHERS

This is an invitation to participate in a study conducted by researchers at the University of Wollongong.

**Project title:**
“Understanding teachers’ conceptualisations of reading in a multiliteracies era.”

**What is the purpose of the research?**
The purpose of the research is to investigate middle years primary teachers’ conceptualisations, understandings and beliefs about reading theory and their teaching reading practice. The main research question for this project is “How do teachers conceptualise and practice teaching reading in a multiliteracies era?” Multiliteracies theory is flourishing and presents a new way for teachers to think about and react to literacy in classrooms. The study works from the desire to understand how teachers respond when faced with psychological and ideological views of reading.

**Who is the contact person?**
If you have any questions about the research you may contact Ms Sue Denny, Faculty of Education. Phone: 02 4221 3857. Email: sld997@uowmail.edu.au. Ms Denny is a doctoral student supervised by Dr Lisa Kervin and Dr Pauline Jones.

**What will be required of you?**
If you choose to be included, you will be asked to participate in interviews and observations across term four, 2011.

**Interviews**
There are a total of three interviews that will be held at a mutually convenient time and will typically last 30 minutes each. All interviews will be audio recorded. The first interview will be held prior to any classroom observations and may include questions such as: How long have you been teaching? Could you describe how you teach reading? How do you plan for teaching reading? What do you think are the most important aspects of learning to read? The subsequent two interviews will be held following two observation cycles (see below). These interviews will provide an opportunity to discuss the researcher’s interpretations of the interviews and observations. For the final interview you will be asked to prepare a vignette about how you teach reading.

**Observations**
Observations will be conducted in your classroom during times that you identify are lessons focusing on teaching reading (in any field of knowledge). Three observations across one week (a total of six) will be conducted. These observations will last for approximately 45-60 minutes. These are non-participant observations and it is expected that there will be little interruption to your class. The researcher will use a video camera and audio device to record and will take field notes during your lesson.

**Documents**
The researcher will copy documents for the lessons observed. These may include lesson plans, teaching materials and planning documents. They will be copied on site where practicable, otherwise the documents will be returned to you the following day. All identifying information will be removed.
What are the possible risks?
Apart from the interviews and observations of your teaching, we can foresee no risks for you. Your involvement in the study is voluntary and you may withdraw your participation from the study at any time. Refusal to participate in the study will not affect your relationship with the University of Wollongong.

What are the benefits of the research?
Findings from the study will be published in a doctoral thesis and a report to the Department of Education, and there may be publications and presentations about the research methodology and results in education publications and conferences. Confidentiality is assured, and the school, you and the students will not be identified in any part of the research.

What about ethics?
This study has been reviewed by the Human Research Ethics Committee (Social Science, Humanities and Behavioural Science) at the University of Wollongong and the Department of Education. If you have any concerns or complaints regarding the way this research has been conducted, you can contact the UoW Ethics Officer on (02) 4221 4457.

Thank you for your interest in this study.

Ms Sue Denny
PhD Candidate
Faculty of Education
University of Wollongong
Appendices

Appendix C: Participant Consent Form

CONSENT FORM FOR …………………………………

Project: Understanding Teachers’ Conceptualisations of reading in a multiliteracies era

Researcher: Ms Sue Denny

I have been given information about and discussed the research project with Ms Sue Denny who is conducting this research as part of a Doctor of Philosophy (Education) supervised by Dr Lisa Kervin and Dr Pauline Jones in the Faculty of Education at the University of Wollongong.

I have been advised of the potential risks and burdens associated with this research, which include designating a convenient time for classroom observations, interviews outside classroom time, collection of documents and creating a vignette about how I teach reading. I have had an opportunity to ask Sue any questions I may have about the research and my participation and understand that I can contact her at any time with concerns or questions I may have.

I understand that my participation in this research is voluntary, I am free to refuse to participate and I am free to withdraw from the research at any time. My refusal to participate or withdrawal of consent will not affect my relationship with the Department of Education or my relationship with the University of Wollongong.

If I have any enquiries about the research, I can contact Ms Sue Denny (phone: 4221 3857), Dr Lisa Kervin (phone: 4221 3968) or Dr Pauline Jones (phone: 4221 3322). If I have any concerns or complaints regarding the way the research is or has been conducted, I can contact the Ethics Officer, Human Research Ethics Committee, Office of Research, University of Wollongong on 4221 4457.

By signing below I am indicating my consent to

• participate in three interviews (approximately 30 minutes)
• designate six lessons across in term 4, 2011 that focus on reading in my classroom (approximately 45-60 minutes) for Sue to observe
• provide access to planning and teaching documents for Sue to copy
• write a vignette about how I teach reading (approximately 1 page).

I understand that the data collected from my participation will be used to be published in a thesis, journal articles and conference proceedings and I consent for it to be used in that manner. I understand that my identity will be protected in any publication.

Signed Date

.......................................................... ………/……/……

Name (please print) ..........................................................
Appendix D: Student Information Sheet

Dear Parent/Caregiver,

This is an information sheet to advise you of a study conducted by researchers at the University of Wollongong in your child’s classroom.

Project title:
“Understanding teachers’ conceptualisations of reading in a multiliteracies era.”

What is the purpose of the research?
The purpose of the research is to investigate middle years primary (years 3 & 4) teachers’ conceptualisations, understandings and beliefs about reading theory and their teaching reading practice. The main research question for this project is “How do teachers conceptualise and practice teaching reading in a multiliteracies era?”. Multiliteracies theory is flourishing and presents a new way for teachers to think about and react to literacy in classrooms.

Who is the contact person?
If you have any questions about the research you may contact Ms Sue Denny, Faculty of Education. Phone: 02 4221 3857. Email: sld997@uowmail.edu.au.

Ms Denny is a doctoral student supervised by Dr Lisa Kervin and Dr Pauline Jones.

What will be required of your child?
The focus of this study is the teacher and as such no direct research will be conducted with your child. The teacher will participate in interviews and observations across term four, 2011. The observations will be held in the classroom and will focus on the teacher teaching reading. The researcher will use a video camera and audio device to record and will take field notes during the lessons. The researcher will be sitting in the room however will not be participating in any teaching and learning so therefore there should be little interruption to the normal classroom experience. Any video or audio capture of your child will be incidental. All identifying information will be removed. Information collected during this research will be kept in a locked cupboard or on a password protected computer at the university. People with access to audio/video recordings will be the researcher and if required the researcher’s supervisors.

What are the possible risks?
We can foresee no risks for your child. The children will be made aware of the recording equipment and it will be placed in as safe a place as practicable.

What are the benefits of the research?
Findings from the study will be published in a doctoral thesis and a report to the Department of Education, and there may be publications and presentations about the research methodology and results in education publications and conferences. Confidentiality is assured, and the school, teacher and the students will not be identified in any part of the research.
What about ethics?
This study has been reviewed by the Human Research Ethics Committee (Social Science, Humanities and Behavioural Science) at the University of Wollongong and the Department of Education. If you have any concerns or complaints regarding the way this research has been conducted, you can contact the UoW Ethics Officer on (02) 4221 4457.

Thank you.

Ms Sue Denny
PhD Candidate
Faculty of Education
University of Wollongong
Appendix E: Pre-Interview Questionnaire

Dear [Name],

I am sending you some questions prior to our first meeting. They will help me get to know you before we start. To answer the questions please feel free to:
- fill out the form and give it to me in the interview, OR
- fill out this form using a computer and email to me, OR
- print out the form and fill it out by hand and mail, or scan and email to me, OR
- email the responses directly to me (ensuring to indicate the question numbers with your answers).

Your answers can be as long as you like.

If you have any questions at any time, please feel free to contact me by email ([suedenny70@gmail.com](mailto:suedenny70@gmail.com)), phone ([040 777 1901](tel:0407771901)), or mail ([PO Box 4008, Towradgi NSW 2518](mailto:PO Box 4008, Towradgi NSW 2518)).

I have also attached a vignette (short story) for you to read before we meet. I would like to hear your thoughts about it.

Sue

1. Would you describe yourself as a beginning or middle or late career teacher?

_______________________________________________________________

Why? ________________________________________________________

_______________________________________________________________

2. How many years have you been teaching?

_______________________________________________________________
Pre Interview questions – Interview 1. CS4

3. What years have you taught in your teaching career?

_____________________________________________________________

_____________________________________________________________

4. Have you been involved in organising a whole school literacy program? _____________________________________________
   a. What role/s have you played?

_____________________________________________________________

_____________________________________________________________

_____________________________________________________________

5. Do you belong to a professional literacy association? (eg. ALEA, PETA) _____________________________________________

6. What professional development courses have you attended in relation to reading/literacy?

_____________________________________________________________

_____________________________________________________________

_____________________________________________________________

_____________________________________________________________
Pre Interview questions – Interview 1. CS4

a. What do you feel you learned most from these courses?

_________________________________________________________
_________________________________________________________
_________________________________________________________
_________________________________________________________
_________________________________________________________
_________________________________________________________

b. Why?

_________________________________________________________
_________________________________________________________
_________________________________________________________
_________________________________________________________
_________________________________________________________

7. How many students are there in your class. _______

Number of Boys: _____ Number of Girls: _____
8. Below is a short story about a teacher. I would like to hear your thoughts about this when we meet.

Vignette

The school's annual fete is to be held in the next term. The Year 3/4 class will contribute something derived from the science KLA, such as creating and selling gooey slime in a cup. The class has not participated in an event such as this before.

The teacher considers what is readily available. The school has a library that may have books for this topic. There are two classroom computers. The teacher begins planning by looking through the science and English syllabus for appropriate outcomes. The teacher now has to decide what is needed to support the students' literacy needs (particularly those related to reading) in this task.
Appendix F: Interview 1 Protocol

Sue Denny

Questions Interview 1

Purpose of this interview:
- acquire demographic information
- describe teaching beliefs/practice
- respond to vignette as an icebreaker and beginning discussion on beliefs and understandings

Demographic Information

1. What year are you teaching this year?
2. Do you share a teaching load with other teaching staff?
3. How many years have you been teaching?
   Would you describe yourself as a beginning or middle or late career teacher?
   How do you think this influences your reading pedagogy?
4. What years have you taught in your teaching career?
5. Would you consider that teaching reading across (these) years differ?
   Can you identify how?
   Why do you think these differences occur?
6. Have you been involved in organising a whole school literacy program?
7. What professional development courses have you attended in relation to reading/literacy?
   a. What do you feel you learned most from these courses?

Vignette

Participant to read the vignette.

1. What do you think this teacher might do next?
2. What type of reading activities might this teacher be able to organize?
3. Could you tell me what your first impressions are?
4. Would you have approached this situation differently? How? Why?
5. What reading activities might you organise for this activity?
6. How would you use the computers to read about this topic?

Probe about: groupings, activities that involve reading, considerations to students’ with higher literacy needs.

Describing teaching beliefs/practice

1. Can you describe how you teach reading in your classroom?
2. What would you expect me to see if I walked into your classroom and you were teaching reading?
3. How do you plan for teaching reading in your classroom?
4. What do you think are the most important aspects of learning to read? Why?
5. How do you believe that children learn to read?

Explicit understandings of Reading

1. How would you describe reading?
Appendix G: Audio Recording Transcription example

Transcription of Interview CST1-Interview 1 held on 25th November 2011

Italics - Interviewer

1 [1.11 Interview begins and I go through the consent form information]
2
3 1.30 But you’re doing lesson observations aren’t you?
4
5 1.35 yes so it would be really great if you could think about what you’ve got
6 ahead [yes] and pick six (mmm) times. Pick six kind of 45-60 [yes] minute lessons
7 that you are going to be focusing on reading [yes] and that can be (right), you’re to
8 define that [yes alright], it’s not for me to tell you [yes] um so you do that at will
9 and I will come in and [mmh] set up [yes] and watch you and help out in between
10 or
11
12 yes
13
14 1.56 or whatever works for you.
15
16 Are are you going to be filming as well as recording? Yes
17
18 2.03 Yes. So I’ll just be, if you are principally going to be at the board [yes], I will
19 have it pointed there [yes ok]. It’s really only an extra.
20
21 yes
22
23 um because I will be taking observation notes
24
25 yes yes
26
27 2.09 so it is purely only for an extra look [yes], extra data [yes] and it kind of
28 helps me confirm things [yes] great
29
30 and also, and also, when um, you’re giving a lesson and only recording orally
31 (mmm) you’re not getting any of my facial expressions.
32
33 No!
34
35 that’s right isn’t it.
36
37 because I could have some very good facial expressions [pulls a stern face].
38
39 [laughs] there’s a lot of non-verbal teaching that happens isn’t there?
40
41 yes yes. [Laughs]
42
43 2.40 Which is really interesting…I find it interesting.
44 Ok, so um so what I wanted to do was talk with you about your experiences
45 teaching reading (mm) and then what you know about reading (mm). Um, so I’ve
46 got some planned questions [yes] I’d like to ask (mm) and I am happy to veered off
47 some of those (ok). Um, please don’t assume I know everything so if we’re talking
48 about something I might ask you to explain more [yes] so don’t assume that I
Appendices

Appendix H: Interview 2 Protocol

Questions for Interview 2 – CST3

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Purpose of this interview:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• to discuss observation data from observations 1,2 and 3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• to cover any questions from interview 1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• to discuss the vignettes created from the researcher’s interpretations from the analysis of data from interview 1 and observations.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Vignette</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Do you feel that your teaching of reading has been captured in this story?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. What do you think about the literacy events that I observed?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Is there anything that you feel is missing or misrepresented?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. What would you add to this?</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Interview data</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. We talked in our last interview about the teaching of reading in your previous school using a script from a whole school program for spelling. In one lesson I observed, you were teaching a spelling rule, it was the ‘or’ sound. Was that part of the whole school program?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>a. Is spelling set for homework every time?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b. What words are chosen for the spelling list?</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Observation data</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Can you share with me how you chose the resources or texts for the lessons I observed? (reading, NAPLAN)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Were there any issues that arose that changed what you had planned for the lessons?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>a. What were they and why do you think they occurred?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. In another lesson I observed, you were teaching reading of questions. Was that for NAPLAN?</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Describing teaching beliefs/practice</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Can you share with me how you feel that your belief about teaching reading might be seen to happen in your classroom?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>a. How do you think that differs from other teachers that you may have seen or talk to?</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Multiliteracies</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Can you describe multiliteracies?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>a. What does it mean for you?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. How do you think it influences your planning or teaching?</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Dated 22 October 2012
Appendix I: Interview 3 Protocol

Interview 3 – CST2

Revisit describing meaning from Interview 1

1. In our first interview, I asked you to define or describe reading. Your first words were that it is “making sense of text of writing” and you emphasised throughout that reading is comprehension from quality literature or environmental print and that modelling was essential for learning to read.

Do you want to add to this?

2. Can you share with me what you know about theories of reading?

3. How do these theories affect, or not, your planning or organisation of activities and teaching reading?

4. You talk about making sense of or reading ‘text’ or ‘writing’ and environmental print in your definition. How does this relate to multimodal texts (advertisements, posters, movies, magazines) etc.

5. Do you consider that you use the four reader roles framework? Can you give me an example?

6. Thinking back to the lessons I have observed, what do you hope that I have seen or captured?

Ideas for questions about CST1 vignette

In your vignette, you mentioned that you explain “how a strategy might be used for different forms of narratives, such as films or posters”. Can you describe how you might do this?

When your students are creating or presenting their work about what they have learned, how do you guide them in this? What do you want them to achieve?

You mention spelling lists are formed from the vocabulary of the students reading. Do you mean that you use context only spelling words or do you use ‘spelling lists’ from a predefined list? Why? Why is this important to your beliefs about reading?
## Observation Record

What do I know about the lesson.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Participant</th>
<th>Setting</th>
<th>Activity</th>
<th>Non-Verbal</th>
<th>Thoughts/questions/ follow up</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Teacher</td>
<td>How is room set up</td>
<td>How is lesson introduced (What is said, What questions and responses occur, What instructions are given, What are students doing, What is CST doing, How does the teacher help students, How does lesson end)</td>
<td>What non verbal cues are used, What is implicit in this lesson</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Student</td>
<td>Are there groupings, What movements occur, What objects or artefacts are used</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Other?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Other?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
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Page of Date: __________/________/________

This version dated 10 October 2011
Appendices

Appendix K: Audit Trail

### Audit Trail Case Study - Doreen

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Semi-Structured Interview [1]</th>
<th>Video footage</th>
<th>Collection of Teacher Resources</th>
<th>Pre-Interview Questionnaire Responses</th>
<th>Code</th>
<th>Data Source</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>25 October 2011</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Int1 Doreen</td>
<td>Int1 PQ Doreen</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17 November 2011</td>
<td>Observation (1)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Obs1 Doreen</td>
<td>Obs1 V Doreen</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>22 November 2011</td>
<td>Observation (2)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Obs2 Doreen</td>
<td>Obs2 V Doreen</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>23 November 2011</td>
<td>Observation (3)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Semi-Structured Interview (2)</td>
<td>Obs3 Doreen</td>
<td>Obs3 V Doreen</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Video footage</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Int2 Doreen</td>
<td>Int2 PQ Doreen</td>
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<td>24 November 2011</td>
<td>Observation (4)</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Obs4 Doreen</td>
<td>Obs4 V Doreen</td>
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<td>25 November 2011</td>
<td>Observation (5)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Semi-Structured Interview (3)</td>
<td>Obs5 Doreen</td>
<td>Obs5 V Doreen</td>
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<td>Video footage</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Int3 Doreen</td>
<td>Int3 PQ Doreen</td>
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### Audit Trail Case Study - Trudy

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
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<th>Video footage</th>
<th>Collection of Teacher Resources</th>
<th>Pre-Interview Questionnaire Responses</th>
<th>Code</th>
<th>Data Source</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>25 October 2011</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Int1 Trudy</td>
<td>Int1 PQ Trudy</td>
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<td>16 November 2011</td>
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<td>Obs1 V Trudy</td>
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<td>Pre-Interview Questionnaire</td>
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<td>Obs1 TR Trudy</td>
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<td>17 November 2011</td>
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<td>Video footage</td>
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<td>Obs2 V Trudy</td>
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### Audit Trail Case Study - Nate

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<tr>
<th>Date</th>
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<th>Video footage</th>
<th>Collection of Teacher Resources</th>
<th>Pre-Interview Questionnaire Responses</th>
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<th>Data Source</th>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Int1 Nate</td>
<td>Int1 PQ Nate</td>
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<td>27 Aug 2012</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Video footage</td>
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<td>Obs1 V Nate</td>
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<td>Collection of Teacher Resources</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Obs1 TR Nate</td>
<td>Obs1 TR Nate</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Video footage</td>
<td>Obs2 Nate</td>
<td>Obs2 V Nate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Collection of Teacher Resources</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Obs2 TR Nate</td>
<td>Obs2 TR Nate</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Video footage</td>
<td>Obs3 Nate</td>
<td>Obs3 V Nate</td>
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<td></td>
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<td>Video footage</td>
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<tr>
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<td>Collection of Teacher Resources</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Obs6 TR Nate</td>
<td>Obs6 TR Nate</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

250
Appendix L: Observation Transcript Example

Transcript for Observation #1 – CST1
Held on DAY, 12:00-1:00 at Teachers’ classroom
[time for video] [time for audio file]

[audio for observation begins prior to the video]

[teacher walks in and goes straight to desk looking at something on the computer]

T Yes my dear? Tell me! [7.52]
S Do we go to our seats?
T Ah come and sit down with me to start off with. [pause] Only because I’ve missed you so much.
   [moves from desk then sits down at teachers chair next to her desk]
   Ah, let me see. [holds a plastic bag with something in it] Jayden.
S (J) Yep?
T In charge of reminding me that I have these to take up when I go back up at recess. [walks with the bag to the cupboard near the door] [sits down at her chair]
   Hands up if you are a person who are a person who [students chatter].
   who goes to the library for, library for non-scripture time today? [some students put hands up. T points to a child then to the floor]
S Me me me
   You are to remind me at scripture time or just before we go out that I have, I think I have the Christmas tree.. that we need to put up.. for the gifts that are coming in for the gifting tree (oooh) and some people if we put the Christmas tree up are going to remember it. So, remember that message for me, because otherwise I will forget it.
S? Do we get to put it up?
T [teacher gets up to move a pile of books] Well I guess I’m not going to have time to do it because I’ll have to be in the office filling out all those awards, won’t I? [yes!] [kids are bouncing up and down and saying ‘yes’] So I guess somebody else will have to do it. [comes and sits down at her chair]
Ss Yes!
   [Crosstalk- Inaudible]
T Ah, Emma has a question. It’s her turn. Jeremy! Emma has a question it’s her turn.
S (E) Um, do we bring in presents?
T I think it’s in the newsletter. Do you get the newsletter in email? Or do you get the newsletter as a written copy?
S (E) I don’t know.
T Do you take home a paper one or you look on the internet? It’s in the newsletter, we are collecting, the same as we do every year, we are collecting the gifts and they which we’ll put them ALL under the tree and
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>CST2</th>
<th>Reading (Literacy) Activity</th>
<th>Key Observations</th>
<th>Resources Used</th>
<th>Who &amp; where are students/Teacher</th>
<th>Obs #</th>
<th>Notes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Independent Writing</strong></td>
<td>Daily Sentences</td>
<td>* Review of adverbs. 3 sentences * Students share their sentences * Improve writing</td>
<td>* Literature books and image on the IWB.</td>
<td>* All students at their seats while Teacher calls the roll.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>* Grammar practice * High expectations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Guided Reading</strong></td>
<td>Reading online websites</td>
<td>* Activating prior knowledge * Building topic information &amp; vocabulary * Reading websites, collecting information use web sheet to organise collected information * Sharing information they have found with each other.</td>
<td>* Prompt * Web sheet * Laptop computers &amp; web sheet * Web sheet</td>
<td>* Guided reading group at a small table. Same ability group. * Other groups around the classroom working on their literacy group activities.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>* Following set comprehension model.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Modelled Reading</strong></td>
<td>Serial Reading</td>
<td>* Review the book so far * Listening to teacher reading while drawing their actual ‘visualisation’ in their literature books. * Students share their images and explain their choices.</td>
<td>* Serial “Teacher’s Pet” and literature books, pencils.</td>
<td>* All students on floor</td>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Independent Reading</strong></td>
<td>Reading the student created slide show</td>
<td>* Reading and justifying choices of image, music and interpretations of their character profiles.</td>
<td>* Power Point presentation</td>
<td>* All students on floor. * Student presenting uses teachers’ computer to present on IWB</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>Visual literacy with justifications from the students</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Independent Reading</strong></td>
<td>Writing the slide show</td>
<td>* Students use laptops to complete their character profiles or prologue. Or draft in their literature books.</td>
<td>* Literature books or laptops</td>
<td>* Students at group desks, both verandahs, computer rooms, spare chairs or floor. Teacher moves around the room.</td>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Independent Reading</strong></td>
<td>Readers’ Theatre</td>
<td>* Explanation that the voice is used for Readers’ Theatre and today will be a “live performance”. Instruction to ‘cut out’ of the chapter: scene settings, “said”, who, leave in sound effects, actors for dialogue, use narrator, prompter. * Discuss the example. Teacher chooses students to read from the IWB as narrators 1 or 2 and characters. Students share what they liked. Suggests expression, timing and project of voice.</td>
<td>* IWB with example of Readers’ Theatre from ‘The BFG by Roald Dahl’ is displayed.</td>
<td>* All students on floor.</td>
<td>3</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
## Appendix N: Audio Observation Transcript Coding

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Start Time</th>
<th>End Time</th>
<th>Transcript</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>00:00:00.0</td>
<td>00:02:37.8</td>
<td>CST walks in the classroom and discusses the students with a casual teacher</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>00:02:37.7</td>
<td>00:03:52.0</td>
<td>Getting students ready to sit down at the floor</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>00:03:54.0</td>
<td>00:06:43.4</td>
<td>Introducing a new text and working out where it comes from. It's the Uncle Sam image. Students connect it to a movie Cody Banks &quot;near his door&quot;. She asks &quot;why does it stay in our memory&quot; and a student answers &quot;because it's not very normal&quot;. CTI suggests that we remember things that are uncommon we remember very easily. R.13 So that's why sometimes when we come to a word in reading we think oh my goodness I don't know that one it causes us to halt and either work it out or substitute something else before we went on and go back and is ok at it later.&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>00:06:43.4</td>
<td>00:07:06.5</td>
<td>Interrupted by visitor to the classroom.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>00:07:06.2</td>
<td>00:14:17.5</td>
<td>How has the author designed the poster to get the attention or message across. Poster character is pointing to the audience. &quot;VG&quot; Character in the poster. Q: Is he real? S: Yes. Q: When has the poster been used? S: WW2. Q: Why the poster has been used? Character: Uncle Sam = patriotic picture. S: It's a bit American! Discusses how the poster can be used as a basis to create their own poster. How a student has used this poster to create the poster.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| 00:14:30.4 | 00:15:52.4 | Task: Jude persuasive texts: posters. "environmental print"
Appendix O: Interview coding

Um, I don’t know, down the track, 10 years or so, um I went back again. No maybe 15 years, and did um er behaviour, emotional disturbance. Um, and er programming for adolescence within special ed. And I’ve had some variety (mmmm), this is why I asked what you wanted. My roles as a person or my roles as a teacher (mmmm).

6.19 Um I’ve been a Support Teacher um, Transition working with, um, students leaving high school and going into the workforce or to um, community work, um, work placement (mmmm) and trialled the ac- trialled the computer programmes that linked with, I think it was with the Health Commission and DAVID and all those sorts of things when they started doing that kind of online kind of work (mmmm) the same with the online um applications for special needs and I’ve worked, and I have worked preschool through to adults. So I had a preschool um hearing impaired class ah and I have worked with adults moving from group home living into independent living.

Oh wow.

7.01 So the range for for reading is those areas is different preposterously than what you would be looking at maybe with a regular class teacher (mm mm) because the reading, how I see reading may be different (laughs)

7.12 So can you,

7.16 different according to the group that I’m working with (mm). Or the student that I’m working with (right) so so so for a child with hearing impairment, for some of them, the visual form is is one of their accesses for their language. And so um in that case we attempted to teach reading very early because at least gave them another clue. Um in the case of an adult who had, who had come from an institutionalised um, background to a group home and then into independent living it was environmental print and and um, literacy ah involving um reading environmental print. Being able to look at, um, at reading for everyday living. So er whether they could or could um, not read basic forms to fill out (mmmm). Ah whether following signs is in the community, bus timetables, train timetables. [pause 8.25 —
## Appendix P: Syllabus Reading Outcomes

### Learning to read

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Reading and viewing texts</strong></th>
<th><strong>Skills and strategies</strong></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>RS2.5: Reads independently a wide range of texts on increasingly challenging topics and justifies own interpretation of ideas; information and events.</td>
<td>RS2.6: Uses efficiently an integrated range of skills and strategies when reading and interpreting written texts.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

#### Shared, Guided and Independent Reading
- contributes to a class summary after reading or viewing
- makes some inferences about ideas implicit in a text
- refers to the author and illustrator of a book or software title, commenting on other texts produced by them
- predicts and lists a range of print and nonprint resources for answering focus questions, eg Internet, literary and factual films, photographs, charts, people
- shows empathy with characters in literary texts
- interprets basic maps, charts, diagrams, graphs, photographs, other still and moving graphics
- uses e-mail to request and receive information
- joins in reading a greater range of simple poems
- engages with children’s TV documentaries and news shows
- enjoys videos of stories or plays
- obtains information from selected Internet/computer sites and other computer graphics and texts.

#### Responding to Texts
- reads more complex recounts, eg biography of a famous person
- relates the story of a picture book, providing some supporting detail from the text
- identifies elements such as main characters, setting and events in a variety of literary texts
- follows written procedures
- interprets and follows short printed instructions or directions such as those in recipes, maps, board games, safety guidelines, computer adventure games
- finds information for specific purposes in factual texts
- obtains information from databases
- uses knowledge of alphabetical order, first and subsequent letters of a word to locate information in dictionaries, encyclopedias and glossaries
- uses the table of contents, menu, index, page numbers, headings, captions and key words to find information
- makes brief notes of information relevant to the topic
- records resources used
- locates and sorts information on a topic from a variety of sources
- locates information from sources such as books, pictures, bookmarked sections of the Internet, databases, CD-ROMs and media texts
- makes judgements about the appropriateness of information.

#### Contextual and Semantic Information
- uses a range of automatic monitoring and self-correcting methods when reading, eg rereading, reading on, pausing, subvocalising
- draws on experience or knowledge of the topic or context to work out the meaning of unknown words
- skims a text for overall message using headings, subheadings, layout, graphics
- relates information in text to accompanying graphics
- uses strategies to confirm predictions and to locate information (eg key words, headings, subheadings)
- reads texts aloud, using appropriate stress, pause and intonation.

#### Grammatical Information
- identifies adjectives and how they are used to provide information about nouns
- identifies words that indicate possibility, probability
- identifies relationships in written sentences signalled by conjunctions and/or connectives
- identifies evaluative language in literary and factual texts.

#### Graphological and Phonological Information
- uses word-identification strategies
- reads two- and three-syllable words and contractions
- makes substitutions or omissions that maintain meaning when reading
- reads aloud using appropriate pitch, pause, emphasis and intonation.

#### Information Skills
- selects print and nonprint material on an increasing range of topics from school and community libraries, the Internet.
Learning about reading

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Context and text</th>
<th>Language Structures and Features</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>RS2.7: Discusses how writers relate to their readers in different ways, how they create a variety of worlds through language and how they use language to achieve a wide range of purposes.</td>
<td>RS2.8: Discusses the text structure of a range of text types and the grammatical features that are characteristic of those text types.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Purpose
- recognises and describes the purpose of a narrative, recount, procedure, information report
- compares the way texts are organised into stages to achieve different purposes
- recognises how different literary texts are organised according to their purpose
- identifies in stories main elements of structure such as orientation, complication and resolution
- recognises how different factual texts are organised according to their purpose.

### Audience
- recognises different styles of favourite authors
- distinguishes between fact and opinion
- identifies writer’s intended audience.

### Subject Matter
- selects texts relevant to topic under discussion.

### Responding to Texts
- talks about different interpretations of written and visual texts
- recognises recurring character types and their traits
- discusses the ways different groups of people are represented in texts
- identifies simple symbolic meanings and stereotypes in texts and discusses their purpose and meaning
- identifies symbolic use of music, sound effects and voice style
- makes general statements about how visual texts such as diagrams, tables and illustrations enhance or detract from meaning
- offers an opinion about a story or aspects of it
- makes comparisons and identifies differences between text produced in different media
- identifies writer’s viewpoint.

### Text Language
- can talk about rhyme, syllables, rhythm when discussing a poem
- talks about the characteristics of different types of poems, eg haiku, cinquain
- discusses the use of the colon, semicolon, dash
- identifies types of visual information, eg map, chart, table, animation
- identifies conventions of electronic texts, eg hyperlinking
- uses appropriate terminology to discuss computer texts.

The above table has been developed from the information in *The English K-6 Syllabus* (Board of Studies, 1998b). The teachers were expected to build their reading program from this syllabus during this study.