

## PRACTICES AND STRATEGIES USED BY NEW ZEALAND TEACHERS OF READING IN CONTEXT:

Results from the I.E.A. Reading Literacy Study

### Introduction

How is reading taught in the classroom? What sort of techniques and methods do teachers use? Do teachers have an overall aim in mind when they are engaged in their day-to-day reading activities? From self-reported instructional practices and strategies is there one particular theoretical philosophy which is more apparent in terms of what the majority of teachers are doing?

There is little doubt that the teacher plays an influential role in the development of pupils' reading achievement (Department of Education, 1985, Durkin, 1980, and Rupley et al, 1986). Outside of the home, the teacher is the one person with whom pupils' spend a significant amount of time in developing their reading. The role model teachers present in relation to good reading habits is vital in the formation and maintaining of a positive and genuine interest in reading amongst pupils.

This paper highlights some of the findings to emerge from the recent I.E.A. Study of Reading Literacy. Specifically, it will focus on the practices and strategies used by New Zealand standard 3 (9-year-olds) teachers in their teaching of reading and literacy. This will be discussed in relation to recent developments in reading research. Twenty-seven countries took part in the study at this level, and where appropriate, international comparisons have been included.

### Previous Research

The teaching of reading in New Zealand schools has essentially, been described as developing under two central themes - reading for meaning and reading for enjoyment. It is around these two themes that the reading activities which characterise our classroom programmes are used. Namely, regular story-reading to pupils, whole language experience, shared reading, extensive silent reading, context-based approach, and the use of high quality books and materials enhanced by interesting stories and natural language. This situation has been commented upon by observers, both locally (e.g. Clay, 1979, Elley, 1985, Helm, 1983, Holdaway, 1979, Penton, 1979, and Philips, 1991).and from overseas (e.g. Goldenberg, 1991, and Goodman 1987).

There have been no previous national surveys which focused on the use of different practices and strategies in reading instruction by New Zealand teachers. Elley (1985) however, did survey a group of Christchurch teachers during an evaluation of the Later Reading Inservice Course (LARIC) programme. A number of items from this earlier study were included in the IEA Teacher Questionnaire. One of the main points to emerge from the study, was that the teachers' major aim was to develop in pupils a lasting interest in reading. Teachers were also found to be allocating 'generous amounts of time' to shared reading, silent reading, teacher story reading, study skills, and independent reading. However, direct comparisons made in this report are limited by differences in the designs of the respective

studies.

#### Theoretical Basis of Reading Instruction in New Zealand

New Zealand's approach to the teaching of reading has in the past, been significantly influenced by leading theorists in the field. The work of Marie Clay, Ken Goodman, and Frank Smith have all provided strong support for particular elements of our reading instruction. Each of them has contributed significantly over the last 15-to-20 years to the way local teachers currently practice.

Goodman (1973,1986) described the reading process of fluent readers as a 'psycholinguistic guessing game', involving the matching of predictions based on the syntactic and semantic features of the language with the developing meaning. He is also a strong advocate of using instructional materials incorporating natural whole language. Smith (1971, 1988) stressed the importance of 'non-visual information' - that is, using ones background knowledge to enhance the comprehension process, and thereby, reducing the amount of information required from the printed word. The independent research of Clay (1972) and Goodman (1969) resulted in the development of running records and miscue analyses as useful tools for teachers, as well as recognising the importance of self-correction behaviour in readers. Clay (1985) also developed the Reading Recovery programme to assist young poorly performing readers.

Much earlier, the valuable work of Ruth Trevor and Myrtle Simpson in drawing up guides for teachers which described reading as 'a process of using meaning to get meaning' (Penton, 1979) was perhaps the starting point. Another important figure was Don Holdaway (1979) who developed, among other literacy activities, the shared-book experience. During this activity the teacher reads to and with pupils to promote the use of language skills using high interest stories.

Conducting reading instruction within a literature-based framework has, in the last few years, received much more prominence from reading educators overseas. There is now, considerable research evidence (e.g. Adams, 1990, Fuhler, 1990, Giddings, 1992 (for a review), Goldenberg, 1991, and Newman, 1985) which indicates that the extensive use of children's books containing natural whole language to teach reading, results in significant gains in pupils' achievement. Another plus, is the development of positive benefits in their attitudes towards reading. This is of particular importance in helping to maintain a life-long interest in reading as adults.

#### Recent Criticisms of the New Zealand Approach

Despite the relative success of New Zealand students (Elley, 1992, and Thorndike, 1973) in international surveys of reading achievement, several researchers (e.g. Nicholson, 1991, Tunmer, 1990, and Thompson, 1992) have criticised the current approach to reading instruction in New Zealand. Nicholson's replication of the classic study by Goodman (1965), with some changes to the research design, showed that the original study gave 'an overly optimistic impression' [of the 60-80% claimed] of the benefits of reading words in context, especially with good readers. Thus, he believes that not only has the role of context to make predictions been over-played,

but it also appears to be a strategy more often associated with poor readers. Tunmer has been investigating the effects of two types of decoding ability (phonological awareness and syntactic awareness) as possible causes for the failure of some disabled readers. In a similar manner, research by Thompson has suggested that New Zealand reading programmes lack sufficient emphasis on learning letter-sound correspondence skills.

Major reviews of the debate over the best method(s) to teach reading by Chall (1983), Calfee and Drum (1986), and Adams (1990), have concluded that there is strong evidence for early intensive instruction in phonics to help pupils develop proficiency in decoding. However, the authors (to one degree or another) felt that this should not be done at the expense of losing the meaning to be gained from instructional text, and that a balance between the teaching of decoding skills and comprehension should be sought.

Most of the items about teaching practices and strategies included in the I.E.A. Teacher Questionnaire, were developed in line with one of the three instructional philosophies discussed above. Namely, teaching reading as:

1. a set of individual 'skills' taught systematically, with the emphasis on the development of the skill;
2. a series of tasks and activities which enhance the 'comprehension' ability of pupils, with the emphasis on attaining meaning from print; and
3. a series of tasks and activities that promote the use of 'literature', with the emphasis on encouraging pupils self-teaching through quality books.

Based on previous descriptions, it was expected that the majority of New Zealand standard 3 teachers would identify most strongly with (2) 'comprehension' and (3) 'literature' - based items.

#### Method

In October 1990, 176 randomly selected (based on I.E.A. sampling plans) New Zealand teachers who were teaching standard 3 (9 year-olds) classes, completed a teacher questionnaire as part of the study. The questionnaire was designed to provide data about the practices and strategies they used for teaching reading, as well as background information on the teacher and their class.

In addition to the frequency scores collected, correlation analyses (Pearson product-moment) were also conducted with pupils' reading

achievement scores.

All comparisons are based on weighted data.

## Results and Discussion

### The Teachers' Background

Seventy-six percent of the New Zealand teachers surveyed were female, this figure corresponded exactly with the overall mean percentage for all countries in the study.

The mean number of years of pre-service training for New Zealand teachers was 2.51. This compared with 2.68 years for teachers across all countries.

New Zealand teachers reported a mean of 13.99 years of teaching experience. This was lower than the comparison figure for all countries of 17.04 years.

New Zealand teachers spent considerably more time (67.58 hours) engaged in the further study of reading, compared to the mean time (53.50 hours) across all countries. They also read slightly more articles on teaching (4.0) and reading (3.4), as indicated by the mean scores for all countries (3.8 and 3.2 respectively).

Finally, in relation to attendance at in-service courses over a three-year period, New Zealand teachers once again did slightly better (2.6) than the mean score for all countries (2.2).

### The Teachers' Practices and Strategies

Aims of reading instruction - Given a set of aims about reading instruction classified as either 'skills', 'comprehension', or 'literature', teachers were asked to rank these (using a five point scale) in order of importance. The results are presented in Table 1, including the mean scores for all countries as a comparison.

TABLE 1 AIMS OF READING INSTRUCTION AS RANKED BY  
NEW ZEALAND TEACHERS

#### Aims of Instruction

NZ Teachers  
(N=175)

All Teachers  
(N=4992)

1. Developing a lasting interest in reading (L)4.02.92. Making reading

enjoyable (L)3.62.13.Improving Students' reading comprehension  
(C)2.52.84.Developing students' research and study skills  
(C)1.21.35.Expanding students' reading choice (L)1.00.46.Improving word-  
attack skills (S)0.90.67.Developing students' critical thinking  
(c)0.81.38.Extending students' vocabulary (S)0.51.39.Deepening students'  
emotional development (L)0.20.510.Expanding students' world views  
(L)0.10.711.Increasing speed of reading (S)0.10.412.Developing skill in  
reading aloud (S)0.00.6

N.B. 1: Ranking scale runs from 5.0, 'most important', to 0.0, 'least important'.

N.B. 2: S = 'skills'; C = 'comprehension'; L = 'literature'.

Table 1 clearly shows that New Zealand teachers considered (1) "Developing a lasting interest in reading" and (2) "Making reading enjoyable" as the two most important aims of reading instruction. Both aims were classified as literature-based in that they attempt to promote reading to pupils as a self-motivated activity. This result was similar to what Elley found when he surveyed a smaller group of Christchurch teachers in 1985.

The aims with the next highest ranking included (3) "Improving students' reading comprehension", (4) "Developing students' research and study skills", and (5) "Expanding students' reading choice". The first two here were comprehension-based, as each was focusing on attaining meaning from print. New Zealand teachers did not rank the skill-based aims very highly, the first of these (6) "Improving word-attack skills" being ranked only sixth. This situation fits with previous descriptions about the aims of reading instruction in New Zealand as mentioned earlier in the report.

A comparison with the mean scores of teachers across all countries, revealed that "Developing a lasting interest in reading" was a universal choice as the most important aim of reading instruction, although it was rated more strongly by New Zealand teachers. "Making reading enjoyable" was ranked a close second by local teachers, but was third choice with all teachers. Meanwhile, "Improving students' reading comprehension" was equally popular with local and all teachers, although it ranked a close second with teachers from all countries. Clearly, these literature and comprehension-based aims of reading instruction are common goals in most of the reading programmes of the 27 countries in the study.

Reading activities - Teachers were asked to rate the frequency (on a four-point scale) with which they used various reading-related activities. Once again, the reading activities were either classified as 'skills', 'comprehension', or 'literature' - based. The mean scores have been presented in Table 2.

TABLE 2 READING RELATED ACTIVITIES RATED ON FREQUENCY OF USE BY NEW ZEALAND TEACHERS

Reading Activites

## NZ Teachers

(N=176)

## All Teachers

(N=4992)

1.Silent Reading in class (L)4.83.32.Listening to teachers reading stories aloud (L)4.22.53.Reading in other subject areas (C)3.72.64.Word-attack skills (S)2.91.95.Making predictions during reading (C)2.71.16.Reading other students' writing (L)2.30.97.Making generalisations and inferences (C)1.91.68.Looking for the theme or message (C)1.91.89.Learning new vocabulary from texts (C)1.82.710.Writing in response to reading (L)1.81.711.Independent silent reading in a library (L)1.71.112.Relating experiences to reading (C)1.71.713.Listening to students reading aloud to small groups (S)1.61.514.Learning letter-sound relationships or phonics (S)1.61.715.Orally summarising their reading (C)1.41.716.Discussion of books read by students (L)1.41.017.Comparing pictures and stories (L)1.31.318.Listening to students reading aloud to a whole class (S)1.32.719.Answering reading comprehension exercises in writing (C)1.22.120.Learning new vocabulary systematically (S)1.11.521.Learning library skills (S)1.00.622.Drawing in response to reading (L)0.90.923.Studying the style or structure of a text (C)0.91.024.Playing reading skill games (S)0.90.725.Student leading discussion about passage (C)0.80.926.Reading plays or dramas (L)0.60.227.Diagramming story content (C)0.60.828.Dramatising stories (L)0.50.5

## New Zealand National Options\*

Never

Monthly

Weekly

Daily

29.Guided reading (C)1%10%65%23%30.Shared reading (L)2%15%52%31%

N.B. 1: Ranking scale runs from 5.0, 'everyday, to 0.0, 'never'.

N.B. 2: S = 'skills'; C = 'comprehension'; L = 'literature'.

\* No international comparisons available.

A look at Table 2 indicates a definite trend. Of the 12 reading activities most frequently used by New Zealand teachers, 11 of these were classified as either comprehension or literature-based. The activity used more often than any other was (1) "Silent reading in class". Over 90 percent of New Zealand teachers included this literature-based activity in their reading programmes on a daily basis. Likewise, teachers across all countries rated this activity highest too. A positive relationship ( $r$ 's = 0.04 to 0.06,  $p < 0.02$  to 0.0005) as found between teachers who allocated significant amounts of time for silent reading and pupils' scores on the reading achievement tests. Elley (1985, 1992) has identified it as an important factor associated with reading achievement.

The second most commonly used activity was (2) "Listening to teachers

reading stories aloud" which was used by 77 percent of New Zealand teachers on a daily basis. It wasn't quite as popular with teachers across all countries as indicated by the fifth ranking it received. As above, this activity has been shown to have an influential role in students' reading achievement (Elley, 1992).

Other reading activities used on a frequent basis by New Zealand teachers included (3) "Reading in other subject areas", (4) "Word-attack skills ", (5) "Making predictions during reading", and (6) "Reading other students' writing". In comparison, teachers from all countries gave their next highest support to (9) "Learning new vocabulary from texts", (18) "Listening to students reading aloud to a whole class", and "Reading in other subject areas". For both sets of results, the teachers generally appeared to spend more of their time engaged in comprehension or literature-based reading activities.

Of the skill-based activities, New Zealand teachers spent a significant amount of time teaching "Word-attack skills", and to a lesser extent, (14) "Learning letter-sound relationships or phonics". This finding suggests that local teachers certainly do not ignore these vital facets of reading instruction (Adams, 1990, Calfee and Drum, 1986, and Chall, 1983). The amount of basic skills taught at lower age levels may be even higher, since it is generally the case that the large majority of nine year-olds have acquired the basic decoding skills. At this stage, the teacher's priority moves towards developing their comprehension abilities.

The other point of interest from Table 2, were the two New Zealand national option items. Nearly 90 percent of teachers used (29) "Guided reading" on a weekly or daily basis, while over 80 percent used (30) "Shared reading" on a similar basis. Guided silent reading encourages children to become self-reliant in their reading without embarrassment, enabling them to concentrate on the ideas of the writer. Shared reading involves the teacher reading to and with children as a means of developing language skills using high interest stories.

Issues in reading instruction - Given a series of statements about issues in reading instruction, teachers were asked to indicate their agreement or disagreement (on a five-point scale) with each statement. Again, all the statements could be classified as being either 'skills', 'comprehension', or 'literature' - based issues. The results are presented in Table 3.

TABLE 3 DEGREE OF AGREEMENT SHOWN BY NEW ZEALAND  
TEACHERS WITH ISSUES IN READING INSTRUCTION

Issues in Instruction

NZ Teachers

(N=176)

All Teachers

(N=4992)

1.Children should be encouraged to read texts they have written

(L)4.54.22.All children should enjoy reading (L)4.44.43.Parents should be actively encouraged to help children with reading (L)4.44.44.Teachers should read to children daily from a story-book (L)4.33.25.A record should be kept of every child's reading progress (S)4.23.96.Children should always understand what they are reading (C)4.03.97.Most children improve best by their own extensive reading (L)3.93.98.Children should always understand why they are reading (C)3.83.89.Children should take a book home to read every day (L)3.73.310.Teachers should mark all children's assignments to provide feedback (C)3.63.811.Children should do research projects to improve reading (C)3.63.712.Reading materials should be sequenced by vocabulary and language structure (S)3.23.713.Children should always choose their own books to read (L)2.73.214.Graded reading material used as a basis for reading programmes (S)2.63.615.Children should learn most new words from vocabulary lessons (S)2.43.116.Children should always be grouped by reading ability (S)2.32.617.Children who can't understand what they read weren't taught proper comprehension skills (C)2.22.718.Children should be expected to read every word accurately (S)2.13.419.Teachers should assess most of what a child reads (S)2.12.820.Teachers should follow closely the sequence of a textbook (S)2.02.321.Children reading aloud to a class is a waste of time (S)1.91.822.Children shouldn't have access to school books they will read next year (L)1.92.123.Children shouldn't start a new book until they have finished their last one (L)1.92.824.Don't encourage children to read unknown words (S)1.72.025.Every mistake a child makes in reading aloud should be corrected (S)1.72.926.A word recognition test is sufficient to assess children's reading (S)1.52.1

N.B. 1: Rating scale runs from 5.0, 'strongly agree', to 0.0, 'strongly disagree'.

N.B. 2: S = 'skills'; C = 'comprehension'; L = 'literature'.

A look at the two sets of data show that there was little difference in the range of the respective mean scores. Most teachers appeared to have definite opinions about each of the statements, with few choosing the 'uncertain' category.

The statements which received the highest agreement from New Zealand teachers tended once again, to emphasised the importance of the comprehension and literature-based issues in reading instruction. For example, (2) "All children should enjoy reading", (7) "Most children improve best by their own extensive reading", and (8) "Children should always understand why they are reading". In contrast, our local teachers were disagreeing with statements which emphasised skill-based activities, such as, (24) "Don't encourage children to read unknown words" and (20) "Teachers should follow closely the sequence of a textbook".

Internationally, New Zealand teachers agreed more strongly with (4) "Teachers should read to children daily from a story-book", and to a lesser extent, (9) "Children should take a book home to read everyday" and (1) "Children should be encouraged to read texts they have written" in

comparison to teachers across all countries. All three items are characteristic of a literature-based instructional programme. In contrast, only a minority of local teachers showed support for issues such as (14) "Graded reading material used as a basis for reading programmes", (15) "Children should learn most new words from vocabulary lessons", and (18) "Children should be expected to read every word accurately". Clearly, these aspects of reading instruction do not sit comfortably with New Zealand teachers of reading.

What are some of the benefits to be accrued from this meaning/literacy approach in relation to these issues in reading instruction? Taking the following examples: (1) "Children should be encouraged to read texts they have written" - this provides the chance for young readers to compare and approximate their writing efforts with those of classmates, teachers, and commercially published texts; (4) "Teachers should read to children daily from a story-book" - this provides a model of a fluent reader in action, enabling pupils to experience the flow and structure of the language, to develop their listening comprehension, as well as seeing reading as an exciting and enjoyable activity; (5) "A record should be kept of every child's reading progress" - a comprehensive record is vital for comparing developmental progress and can help identify individual strengths and weaknesses; (8) "Children should always understand why they are reading" - it is important that the teacher discusses with pupils the reason for undertaking any reading, that is, there is always a message to be gained even from instructional text.

Assessing different aspects of reading - Teachers were asked to rate (on a five point scale) the frequency with which they assessed ten different aspects of reading. Once more, these aspects were classified as either 'skills', 'comprehension', or 'literature' - based. The results are summarised in Table 4.

TABLE 4 FREQUENCY WITH WHICH NEW ZEALAND TEACHERS ASSESS DIFFERENT ASPECTS OF READING

#### Aspects of Reading

NZ Teachers

(N=173)

All Teachers

(N=4992)

1.Sentence understanding (C)4.14.52.Amount of reading (L)4.13.83.Text comprehension4.04.64.Reading study skills (S)3.94.05.Background knowledge (C)3.83.86.Literacy appreciation (L)3.53.57.Phonic skills (S)3.53.98.Decoding \* (S)3.53.49.Vocabulary (S)3.44.210.Word recognition (S)3.14.1

N.B. 1: Rating scale runs from 5.0, 'weekly', to 0.0, 'never'.

N.B. 2: S = 'skills'; C = 'comprehension'; L = 'literature'.

\* Ten percent of teachers did not respond to this item.

As expected, the results here demonstrated that New Zealand teachers spent more time assessing the comprehension and literature-based aspects (e.g. (1) "Sentence understanding" and (2) "Amount of reading") of reading. However it is also apparent, that teachers assessed the skill-based aspects (e.g. (7) "Phonic skills" and (9) "Vocabulary") almost as frequently. In fact, the amount of variance here was much smaller with the mean scores only ranging from 3.1 to 4.1.

The three largest international differences evident from Table 4, showed that New Zealand teachers assessed less frequently (10) "Word recognition", "Vocabulary", and (3) "Text comprehension" in comparison to teachers from all countries in the study. Obviously, these three aspects are assessed more frequently in the reading programmes of the other countries in the study.

#### Summary

I have presented here a profile of the practices and strategies New Zealand (standard 3) teachers use in their teaching of reading. More specifically, the study attempted to differentiate between three instructional approaches namely - 'skills', 'comprehension', or 'literature', and how this related to recent developments in reading research.

Beginning with aims of reading instruction, it was found that New Zealand teachers had two major goals they wanted to achieve with their pupils. Firstly, to "Develop a lasting interest in reading", and secondly, "To make reading enjoyable". Both of these aims emphasized literature-based goals which attempted to develop in children a self-motivation for reading. As a more distant goal, "Improving students reading comprehension" was considered the next most important aim by teachers. The first skill-based aim "Improving word-attack skills" was ranked sixth.

For the reading activities, the two most popular with New Zealand teachers were "Silent reading in class" and "Listening to teachers reading stories aloud". Again both of these emphasized a literature-based approach, and were also shown to be important indicators of reading achievement (Elley, 1992). The next most commonly used activity was a comprehension-based item "Reading in other subject areas". Other reading activities used extensively included the two national option items "Guided reading" and "Shared reading".

Two skilled-based activities - "Word-attack skills" and "Learning letter-sound relationships or phonics" - were also used often by New Zealand teachers. This shows that the important (Adams, 1990, Calfee and Drum 1986, and Chall, 1983) 'basic' skills of reading are not overlooked at this level, given that most nine year-olds have already acquired these skills. In relation to the issues in reading instruction, New Zealand teachers again demonstrated a strong conviction for statements that emphasized a literature or comprehension-based approach to teaching reading literacy. For example, "Children should always be encouraged to read texts they have written" and "Children should always understand why they are reading". Some of the benefits to be gained from such an approach were also identified.

Finally, it was observed that New Zealand teachers showed little variation in their assessment of different aspects of reading. They assessed the comprehension and literature-based aspects (e.g. "Sentence understanding" and "Amount of reading") slightly more often than the skill-based aspects (e.g. "Phonic skills").

Given that New Zealand nine year-olds finished in the top six (out of 27) countries (Elley, 1992), it would seem that our teachers are delivering a more than satisfactory programme of reading instruction. As we have seen, this programme is characterised by a strong emphasis on literature and comprehension-based activities and reading materials to create in children a genuine interest in reading. The important basic skills such as phonics and decoding are taught as well, but as a tool integrated with comprehension activities, and within a literacy framework. One overseas observer believes that we have achieved the right balance between 'skills' and 'meaning':

"The entire process of literacy development seemed to involve an exquisitely complex and subtle interplay between acquiring the [basic] skills of literacy while focusing on the meaning for which literacy is a vehicle. It is an interplay the teachers we observed handled with great skill, professionalism, and ... after considerable training."

"The reading and writing instruction ... seemed to be based on the assumption that there is a reciprocal and mutually supportive relationship between word recognition skills and deriving meaning from text."  
(Goldenberg, 1991, pp. 557-8).

Obviously teaching practice is not an absolute. Good teachers may be those who modify and adjust their practices and beliefs to meet the needs of pupils they are working with.

While other observers (Nicholson, 1991, Thomson, 1992, and Tunmer, 1990) consider our local reading programmes to lack sufficient decoding skills in the early years of instruction, it would be unfortunate if teachers were unduly influenced by the ongoing 'debate' and started over-compensating with skills instruction, as may happen in such a situation. If a move for more emphasis on the teaching of skills does occur, then it should be a case of degrees rather than large dollops.

What we can conclude here, is that New Zealand has a successful literature-based, reading programme delivered by professional teachers, which incorporates a balance between the skills and meaning of reading. The desire of the teachers' to invoke in their pupils a genuine interest and passion for reading remains the ultimate goal, as they go about their day-to-day activities. The I.E.A. results provided useful insights into the practices and strategies of our reading teachers, as well as, confirmation of past descriptions of our approach to teaching reading literacy.

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## APPENDIX A

TABLE 1A BACKGROUND AND TRAINING INFORMATION  
ABOUT TEACHERS FROM NEW ZEALAND, FINLAND, UNITED STATES, INDONESIA  
AND VENEZUELA

Background and Training  
NZ (N=176)

FIN

(N=71)

USA

(N=300)

IND

(N=174)

VEN

(N=162)

1.

Percentage of Female Teachers

75.9

65.7

83.9

45.7

85.6

2.Years of Pre-Service Training 2.52.94.93.11.2

3.Years of Teaching Experience 14.015.314.911.512.5

4.No. of In-service Courses (last 3 years) 2.61.43.11.91.7

5.Hours of Independent Study on Reading 67.622.568.439.638.5

6.No. of Articles on Teaching Read 4.04.13.94.24.3

7.No. of Articles on Reading Read 3.43.33.53.93.8

TABLE 2A AIMS OF READING INSTRUCTION AS RANKED BY TEACHERS FROM NEW  
ZEALAND, FINLAND,  
UNITED STATES, INDONESIA AND VENEZUELA

## Aims of Instruction

NZ (N=175)

FIN

(N=71)

USA

(N=300)

IND

(N=174)

VEN

(N=162)

1.

Developing a lasting interest in reading (L)

4.0

3.4

3.1

1.7

0.6

2.

Making reading enjoyable (L)

3.6

1.0

1.8

0.8

1.8

3.

Improving Students' reading comprehension (C)

2.5

2.7

3.5

2.2

1.2

4.

Developing students' research and study skills (C)

1.2

3.2

0.7

0.7

0.8

5.

Expanding students' reading choice (L)

1.0

0.3

0.3

0.4

1.3

6.

Improving word-attack skills (S)

0.9

0.1

0.8

1.3

1.8

7.

Developing students' critical thinking (C)

0.8

1.1

2.0

0.8

1.2

8.

Extending students' vocabulary (S)

0.5

0.7

1.6

1.2

1.2

9.

Deepening students' emotional development (L)

0.2

1.1

0.1

0.6

1.6

10.

Expanding students' world views (L)

0.1

0.6

0.2

0.9

0.7

11.  
Increasing speed of reading (S)  
0.1  
0.3  
0.1  
0.8  
1.8

12.  
Developing skill in reading aloud (S)  
0.0  
0.3  
0.2  
0.8  
0.5

N.B. 1: Ranking scale runs from 5.0, 'most important', to 0.0, 'least important'.

N.B. 2: S = 'skills'; C = 'comprehension'; L = 'literature'.

TABLE 3A READING RELATED ACTIVITIES RATED ON FREQUENCY OF USE BY  
TEACHERS FROM  
NEW ZEALAND, FINLAND, UNITED STATES,  
INDONESIA AND VENEZUELA

Reading Activites

NZ

(N=176)

FIN

(N=71)

USA

(N=300)

IND

(N=174)

VEN

(N=162)1.Silent Reading in class (L)4.83.04.42.03.12.Listening to teachers  
reading stories aloud (L)4.22.13.71.42.43.Reading in other subject areas  
(C)3.73.34.03.23.24.Word-attack skills (S)2.92.22.72.41.55.Making  
predictions during reading (C)2.70.42.51.21.46.Reading other students'  
writing (L)2.30.51.01.81.47.Making generalisations and inferences  
(C)1.91.32.51.61.98.Looking for the theme or message  
(C)1.91.22.30.92.99.Learning new vocabulary from texts  
(C)1.81.52.72.52.810.Writing in response to reading  
(L)1.81.02.32.23.211.Independent silent reading in a library  
(L)1.71.31.22.10.712.Relating experiences to reading  
(C)1.70.92.51.32.113.Listening to students reading aloud to small groups

(S)1.60.91.71.51.514.Learning letter-sound relationships or phonics  
 (S)1.60.61.92.32.615.Orally summarising their reading  
 (C)1.41.02.01.42.516.Discussion of books read by students  
 (L)1.40.41.12.22.217.Comparing pictures and stories  
 (L)1.31.41.51.10.918.Listening to students reading aloud to a whole class  
 (S)1.32.92.72.22.6

19.

Answering reading comprehension exercises  
 in writing (C)

1.2

1.8

2.2

2.0

2.620.Learning new vocabulary systematically (S)1.10.41.91.63.121.Learning

library skills (S)1.00.60.81.40.622.Drawing in response to reading

(L)0.90.60.80.51.823.Studying the style or structure of a text

(C)0.90.31.01.61.624.Playing reading skill games

(S)0.90.20.41.50.425.Student leading discussion about passage

(C)0.80.60.91.33.026.Reading plays or dramas

(L)0.60.20.20.50.627.Diagramming story content

(C)0.60.50.40.40.828.Dramatising stories (L)0.50.50.20.50.6

New Zealand National Options\*

Never

Monthly

Weekly

Daily29.Guided reading (C)1%10%65%23%30.Shared reading (L)2%15%52%31%N.B.

1: Ranking scale runs from 5.0, 'everyday, to 0.0, 'never'.

N.B. 2: S = 'skills'; C = 'comprehension'; L = 'literature'.

\* No international comparisons available.

TABLE 4A DEGREE OF AGREEMENT SHOWN BY TEACHERS FROM NEW ZEALAND,  
 FINLAND, UNITED STATES, INDONESIA AND VENEZUELA WITH ISSUES IN READING  
 INSTRUCTION

Issues in Instruction

NZ

(N=176)

FIN

(N=71)

USA

(N=300)

IND

(N=174)

VEN

(N=162)

1.Children should be encouraged to read texts they have written

(L)4.54.84.34.34.42.All children should enjoy reading  
 (L)4.44.44.14.84.73.Parents should be actively encouraged to help children with reading (L)4.44.54.64.64.74.Teachers should read to children daily from a story-book (L)4.33.74.22.93.25.A record should be kept of every child's reading progress (S)4.22.83.94.54.66.Children should always understand what they are reading (C)4.03.93.44.24.27.Most children improve best by their own extensive reading (L)3.93.83.93.33.98.Children should always understand why they are reading (C)3.83.63.84.34.69.Children should take a book home to read every day (L)3.73.13.94.43.810.Teachers should mark all children's assignments to provide feedback (C)3.63.43.54.44.411.Children should do research projects to improve reading (C)3.64.33.74.04.112.Reading materials should be sequenced by vocabulary and language structure (S)3.23.13.24.34.313.Children should always choose their own books to read (L)2.72.72.63.14.014.Graded reading material used as a basis for reading programmes (S)2.62.12.94.13.615.Children should learn most new words from vocabulary lessons (S)2.42.32.84.54.216.Children should always be grouped by reading ability (S)2.32.82.23.42.617.Children who can't understand what they read weren't taught proper comprehension skills (C)2.22.22.43.03.618.Children should be expected to read every word accurately (S)2.12.52.54.14.619.Teachers should assess most of what a child reads (S)2.12.92.53.93.620.Teachers should follow closely the sequence of a textbook (S)2.01.32.24.23.621.Children reading aloud to a class is a waste of time (S)1.91.61.62.31.822.Children shouldn't have access to school books they will read next year (L)1.92.02.12.01.923.Children shouldn't start a new book until they have finished their last one (L)1.93.03.02.33.424.Don't encourage children to read unknown words (S)1.71.31.71.92.425.Every mistake a child makes in reading aloud should be corrected (S)1.72.92.04.53.726.A word recognition test is sufficient to assess children's reading (S)1.53.11.82.82.4

N.B. 1: Rating scale runs from 5.0, 'strongly agree', to 0.0, 'strongly disagree'.  
 N.B. 2: S = 'skills'; C = 'comprehension'; L = 'literature'.

TABLE 5A FREQUENCY WITH WHICH TEACHERS FROM NEW ZEALAND, FINLAND, UNITED STATES, INDONESIA AND VENEZUELA ASSESS DIFFERENT ASPECTS OF READING

## Aspects of Reading

NZ

(N=173)

FIN

(N=71)

USA

(N=300)

IND

(N=174)

VEN

(N=162)

1.Sentence understanding (C)4.14.34.74.84.7

2.Amount of reading (L)4.13.54.34.34.1

3.Text comprehension (C)4.04.24.94.84.7

4.Reading study skills (S)3.93.74.54.84.5

5.Background knowledge (C)3.82.94.54.34.1

6.Literacy appreciation (L)3.53.24.14.33.7

7.Phonic skills (S)3.53.24.14.54.1

8.Decoding (S)3.5\*4.04.44.13.3

9.Vocabulary (S)3.43.44.84.74.8

10.Word recognition (S)3.13.54.54.84.6

N.B. 1: Rating scale runs from 5.0, 'weekly', to 0.0, 'never'.

N.B. 2: S = 'skills'; C = 'comprehension'; L = 'literature'.

\* Ten percent of teachers did not respond to this item.

## PRACTICES AND STRATEGIES USED BY NEW ZEALAND TEACHERS OF READING IN CONTEXT:

### RESULTS FROM THE I.E.A. READING LITERACY STUDY

at Deakin University, Geelong

Glenn Chamberlain  
Research and Statistics Division  
Ministry of Education  
Wellington  
NEW ZEALAND

November 1992