AN INVESTIGATION OF THE SHARED EXPERIENCE OF CHILDREN'S LITERATURE, WITH PARTICULAR REFERENCE TO THE TEACHER READING ALOUD, IN SENIOR PRIMARY CLASSES.

Dissertation
Submitted in Partial Fulfilment of
the Requirements for the Degree of

MASTER OF EDUCATION
of Rhodes University

by

DAVID WILLIAM McKELLAR

December 1983.

NOTE

The Cape Education Department was asked for permission to use the information obtained from the student assignments in Part C of this dissertation.

This has been refused.

The following letter explains the reasons for this.

An embargo, thus, has been placed on Part C of this dissertation which deals with the findings that emerged from student assignments based on their observations made in a sample of Eastern Cape schools. Consequently, Part C may only be read with the permission of the writer. Under no circumstances may any part of this section be quoted or reproduced in any manner whatsoever.

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Dear Mr McKellar

A DESSERTATION CONCERNED WITH READING ALOUD IN THE CLASSROOM SHOWING WHY AND/OR HOW, BY THE TEACHER, MANY POSITIVE OUTCOMES ARE ACHIEVED: M.ED. RESEARCH

1. Your undated application has reference.

2. The Department of Education wishes to emphasise its good-will towards researchers and research which is in the interests of education.

3. The Department nevertheless has a special responsibility to parents, schools, teachers and pupils, and therefore constantly guards against research procedures which could, inter alia, subject individuals or institutions to identification, or which could prove embarrassing in any way.

4. Certain fields of research are considered by the Department as its prerogative: for example, the evaluation of teachers and teaching programs in CPA Schools. It is, therefore, the policy of the Department to conduct continuous research in these areas.

5. Given the preceding the Department regrets that is can, unfortunately, not accede to your request.

Yours faithfully

J.H.H. Visagie

for DIRECTOR: EDUCATION

TABLE OF CONTENTS.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT.

I would like to thank my colleagues at the Rhodes University Education Department for their advice and assistance.

Without the student-teachers, the most interesting and valuable part of this dissertation would not have been possible. Their enthusiasm, interest and conscientiousness was seen in the manner in which they responded to their part in the research.

Most of all I want to thank my tutor, Ken Durham, for his assistance, advice, interest and encouragement. The care with which he read the work as it progressed and the consequent advice that he gave me, revealed his dedication, experience and talent as a teacher - both of children and adults.

PART A.

THE PLACE OF 'READING ALOUD' IN THE CLASSROOM.

"The teacher's biggest contribution throughout the 9 to 13 age range is in reading aloud to his pupils."

Adams A. and Pearce J.
Every English Teacher (1974)

"Ultimately what we have to do is bring literature and children together. And in bringing about this union, one of the greatest skills that we who are concerned with children and literature can cultivate is that of reading aloud. Again, it is simple. Again, that's all.

Blishen E.
That's all
Children's Literature in Education
No 2. July 1970.

From observations made during visits to various primary schools in the Eastern Cape and through discussion with teachers, it seemed to me that reading aloud by the teachers to the children was not a common and regular occurrence. Some teachers told me they would like to read to their classes, but that the pressure of examinations, syllabus demands and a belief prevailing in the school that reading to the children somehow was not 'work', prevented them from doing this.

Bearing Adams and Pearce's comment in mind, this was cause for concern. How widespread is this belief or attitude ? If teachers should be reading to their children, what is meant by this and is it of any value ? What do teachers understand by 'reading aloud' in the classroom ? What does the Cape Education Department recommend in terms of reading aloud in the classroom and how is this interpreted by teachers in terms of existing practice ? These are some of the problems and issues to which this dissertation addresses itself.

Defining children's literature for the purpose of the teacher reading aloud.

Most general works offer a definition of children's literature in a broad context (e.g. Huck C. 1976 pp 4 - 5) but defining children's literature with the view to the teacher reading a book aloud to children dictates criteria of a more particular type. Despite the cries of

alarm about competing media and attractions - television, computer games, the cinema - even the most inexperienced student-teacher can recognise the enjoyment, concentration and web of enchantment that overtakes and involves children in a well selected and well read book. Children love a good story. They enjoy the shared experience of a group responding to the emotions or broad issues raised in a well written book. Where their reading ability lags behind their interest and maturation levels, the teacher bridges this gap through sensitive adult presentation of the book.

These claims will be examined in greater detail later in the dissertation, but to appreciate how children respond to worthwhile literature, the comments of a group of student-teachers are interesting. I had been invited to read Eric Knight's Lassie Come Home to a Standard 3 group who had not had much read to them and whose listening skills were not very good. On one occasion several student-teachers sat in on one of these sessions. Their observations, recorded during and after the event, include the following:

> "The children are very responsive to questions and become deeply troubled when things go wrong. They hang on the very words waiting for the plot to unfold and are scared of consequences."

> "Tremendous excitement is shown when Lassie tries to break free."

"When it was free I heard a girl say
'Phew!'"

"The children were so involved that they seemed to be living the story. They loved it. They were glued to the story waiting for the next event. One could see by their very expressions."

And this student:

"I couldn't write any observations because I got caught up in the story. May I borrow the book ?"

By children's literature suitable for reading aloud, then, I mean a book, fiction or non-fiction, which satisfies most or all of the following criteria.

(a) <u>It tells a good story</u>.

The plot should unfold fairly quickly. Weak listeners and children unaccustomed to having books read to them are put off by a drawn out build up to the plot. It is the plot that holds the children's attention, resulting in them wanting the teacher to read on. (Arbuthnot and Sutherland 1972 p. 26; Calthrop K. 1971 pp. 14 - 17).

While one wants to avoid the predictable plot, it should have a recognisable climax or rounding off. (Huck C. 1976 p. 7). Children are often frustrated when, on turning the

last page and closing the book, you hear some of them ask, "Is that all ?" On the other hand, provided there is a recognisable climax or rounding off of the plot, the author need not tie up all loose ends. Often valuable post-reading discussion can take place when this situation arises.

(b) <u>There are underlying themes which will extend the childrens' experience and knowledge of life</u>.

In reading aloud the skilful teacher brings a dimension to response that even the most capable child readers cannot attain. A well written book will provide the teacher and the children with issues that are raised through an underlying theme or themes that provide talking points that extend the childrens' awareness about life.

Kenyon Calthrop's survey showed this to be the most important criterion for teachers in terms of book selection:

> "All the teachers interviewed produced this very basic criterion, some very explicitly, others implied it, but all considered it important."
>
> (Calthrop K. 1971 p.10).

The theme or themes that arise from the shared experience of the book should be worthwhile in terms of the developmental level of the children and can be utilised by the teacher in several ways. (Arbuthnot and Sutherland 1972 p. 28).

Briefly the teacher has three main options:

(i) To use the emerging theme for discussion purposes.

(ii) To plan other learning experiences in the curriculum that follow up and are based on the theme.

(iii) To plan a theme in advance and then select books for reading aloud that concern themselves with the pre-selected theme.

(Also refer to Annexure 1).

(c) Character development.

For a book to be worthwhile in terms of reading aloud, character development is important. The characters must grow and change in response to the developments in the story or theme. Additionally, both the strengths and weaknesses of the characters will be clear, providing the teacher and the children with talking points that often result in the children identifying with the characters and coming to realise the realities of life in the nature of people. (Huck C. 1976 p. 9).

(d) Emotion

Often linked with theme, expression of emotion is important in that the children are provided with a range of situations that they might or might not have experienced, but that are a part of everyday living. While sentimentality is to be avoided - children recognise and dislike it - the good writer will create situations that

result in the children allowing emotion to 'get under their skin', experiencing the forces acting upon and influencing the character in the story.

As Calthrop points out,

> "Most (teachers) felt that any book which was to be used successfully and positively with adolescents must have an emotional appeal which allowed for identification and involvement in order to enrich their own experience of human behaviour and thus, mostly through discussion, to help them come to some sort of terms with themselves and society."
>
> (Calthrop K. 1971 p. 10).

(e) Humour.

People enjoy the shared experience of humour - and this is highlighted by humorous situations that arise in the reading aloud of a book. (Calthrop K. 1971 p. 16).

(f) Sequence.

Though not crucial, a book which can be divided into sections or has clear episodes, lends itself better to the on-going presentation of it to the class. Much will depend upon the age, reading experience and ability of the children, as well as the frequency of reading to the class, but as a generalisation, children enjoy complete episodes within the story as a whole. (Chambers A. 1973; Calthrop K. 1971 p. 16).

(g) Stimulates further reading.

A worthwhile book will result in the children wanting to

read more books of that type - or it may be seen when the teacher reads only a part of the book with the intention of whetting the children's appetite to continue reading the book on their own. (Kamm and Taylor 1966 p.37; Arbuthnot and Sutherland 1972 p.661; Southgate V. 1981 p. 318).

(h) Extends the children yet caters for the individual abilities of children.

This is one of the most difficult criteria to assess. Ideally the book must extend all the children yet have meaning and relevance for them at various levels despite their range of individual abilities.

As a general guideline in terms of the difficulty of a book, the teacher should not read it to the class where the majority could read the book individually and silently. Some books, however, can be read by the children on their own yet will also be suitable for the teacher to read aloud as the issues raised are of such a nature as to allow the teacher to take the children beyond a more superficial response to it.

(i) Enjoyment by the children.

One need hardly comment on this aspect. No matter how outstanding the book might be in terms of the adult critics response, if it does not provide enjoyment, pleasure or interest for the children, it is inappropriate. No matter how much the book might have been enjoyed by the teacher

as an adult or a child, no matter how much reviews, recommendations or assurances lead the teacher to believe the book to be 'worthwhile', if the children do not enjoy it or respond to it, it is a poor choice and should be set aside by the teacher for the purposes of reading aloud, to that particular class. (Huck C. 1976 p. 15).

Within a very short time (two reading sessions, for example) the teacher will know through her sensitivity to the class, whether the book is appropriate or worthwhile.

(j) Enjoyment by the teacher.

Again, no matter how 'good' the book is claimed to be, if the teacher does not enjoy it or respond to it, this will affect the children's response to the book negatively in one way or another. Children are very sensitive to their teacher's beliefs, impressions and feelings. It follows that it is imperative that the book selected is one that the teacher enjoys personally. (Calthrop K. 1971 p. 17).

It is worth noting in the same breath, however, that a book found enjoyable by the teacher does not necessarily mean that the children will respond in the same way (Huck C. 1976 p. 15). The quality required of the teacher in terms of this criterion, is sensitivity to the nature of her class. (See also 'How children respond to fiction' by Nicholas Tucker, Children's Literature in Education No. 9, 1972.

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2. Defining "The teacher reading aloud"

What, exactly, is meant by the 'teacher reading aloud' in this dissertation ?

It means only the teacher having the copy of the selected book, and the children sitting comfortably listening to the story being read by the teacher. As Edward Blishen might say, "That's all."

The teacher might stop during her reading and discuss some aspect or issue about the book, but essentially the children are listening for pleasure, allowing the web of enchantment to take hold of them.

And that is all.

3. Other interpretations of reading aloud in the classroom.

Ask teachers if they promote 'reading aloud in the classroom' and the answers will vary as there are as many interpretations as there are schools of thought about 'reading aloud'. There are several ways of sharing experience in a book being read aloud, but this shared experience can range from the negative to the worthwhile depending on how the teacher interprets the activity of 'reading aloud in the classroom'.

In the current Cape Education Department syllabus reference to reading aloud is found in two entries:

Paragraph "2.2 Activities

Each school must plan a balanced programme which

must:.....

2.2.5 provide regular opportunities for the training of fluent, clear reading aloud with correct phraseology and pronunciation.

NOTE: This may be done in individual or group situations provided that teacher control is effective and clear objectives are established."

(C.E.D. Syllabus 1979 p. 8).

.... and then, rather strangely, having worked through aural-oral enrichment, vocabulary, language patterns and talking, the syllabus on page 10 returns to reading. Here we see the instruction:

"2.8 The teacher should read frequently to the class."

As will be seen in Part C of the dissertation, the majority of teachers interpret the syllabus in one of two ways - and sometimes teachers use both the following methods or strategies:

Method 1 - Whole class oral reading.

This means reading aloud by individual children, round the class, where each child has a copy of the reader being read, and all the children are reading at the same pace.

Method 2 - Group oral reading.

The children are grouped and then read aloud 'around the ring', each child having the same book as the others in

his group, and each in turn reading a section. It follows that the group then reads at the same pace.

The main problem in interpreting 'reading aloud in the classroom' seems to stem from the fact that many senior primary teachers fail to distinguish the difference between the teaching of developmental skills in reading and reading development and extension once the child has an adequate reading ability which allows him to read silently with meaning and satisfaction. While it is true that developmental skills continue to improve as the child reads between the ages eight to thirteen - and beyond - the teacher's aims and objectives change, moving from developmental ones to the promotion of functional skills and reading for pleasure.

What, then, are the aims and objectives of the senior primary teacher ? The answer is a more complex one than realised by most teachers. For the junior primary teacher the task is generally accepted as being one where the teacher must equip the child with the basic skills that allow the child to respond to the letters and spelling patterns that convert print into speech patterns that convey meaning (refer Bullock Report 1975 pp 89 - 80). By the time the child reaches secondary school he should be equipped with functional reading skills that allow him to read with meaning at literal, inferential and evaluative levels and that equip him to employ different reading strategies in terms of recognised purposes. Secondly, the

child should have come to view reading for pleasure as an activity that is worth time in his life. Certainly the pressures of the South African secondary schools system will not allow for all but the most talented teachers to promote and encourage these two mainstreams in reading performance. It follows that it falls into the senior primary camp to use the three or four year period between standard two and five[1] to bridge the gap between the junior primary objectives and what is expected of the child when he enters secondary school.

Because many senior primary teachers are uncertain about how to go about teaching reading other than using whole class oral reading and/or group oral reading, an examination of the aims and objectives for the senior primary phase in so far as reading is concerned, becomes necessary. If the teachers know what the children must be able to do or which attitudes to promote, their planning and methodology will be affected accordingly.

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(1) Officially standard 4 is the final year of the senior primary phase. In practice most teachers and schools see and treat the standard 5 group as the final year of primary schooling.

The aims and objectives in the Cape Education Department syllabus encourage the adoption of sound reading teaching strategies. The general aims of the junior and senior primary phase, as well as the particular aims of the senior primary phase are as follows (along with comment):

"1. General aims.

.....1.2. to provide regular opportunities for sound consolidation and continuous development of skills acquired in .... reading."

Comment: The junior primary teacher is free to interpret 'skills' as developmental skills; the senior primary teacher to see 'skills' as developmental and/or functional skills.

"1.3. to lead the pupil to appreciate what he reads, so that reading may become a source, not only of profitable information, but of life-long pleasure."

Comment: The teacher must ensure that the child develops positive attitudes to using books as a resource for information and must devise strategies that result in the child recognising that reading for pleasure is, indeed, a pleasurable activity.

"1.5 to promote the pupil's intellectual, emotional and social development."

Comment: Broadly speaking (although it cannot be compartmentalised in water-tight categories)

intellectual development will be promoted through the child becoming a competent functional reader, while his social and emotional development will be fostered through children's literature as mentioned in point (b) on page 5.

Particular to the senior primary phase is the following aim:

"To enable the pupil to meet the practical and cultural needs of life effectively."

Comment: Equipping the child with functional reading skills helps him meet the practical needs of life, but the term 'cultural needs of life' is too vague to be of any worth or guidance for the teacher.

"To achieve this aim the teacher must:

continue teaching the mechanics of reading..."

Comment: Unarguable, but the need for this will decrease in all but the remedial cases.

"....develop the reading potential of each pupil..."

Comment: This is so broad an aim as to be almost meaningless.

".....encourage the pupil, by example and enthusiasm, to enjoy and understand books and other reading matter of a worthwhile standard."

Comment: 'By example and enthusiasm' implies that the teacher will be seen reading silently, for pleasure. He will also be interested in and talk about books as well as sharing books with children in an enjoyable way.

"....assist the pupil to interpret the experiences and ideas of others through his exploration of factual and imaginative writing."

Comment: The way is open for discussion about books, though perhaps it would be better to change 'his exploration' to 'the children's exploration of factual and imaginative writing, with the teacher'.

"....train the pupil to read for information and to develop study skills, e.g. skimming, intensive reading, reviewing, research work."

Comment: The competent teacher of reading will include these and other skills in her reading development and extension programme under the broad heading of Functional Reading Skills.

And lastly:

"NOTE:

....encourage and assist the pupil to acquire the habit of reading."

Comment: Admirable. But how is this to be done other than by providing regular and frequent

> opportunities for the pleasurable reading of books - either by allowing the children to read silently for pleasure or by sharing a book with the children, again for pleasure - or both ?

As said, the aims are broad enough for the competent teacher of reading to embark on a programme that includes worthwhile activities, as endorsed by the many research studies conducted during the last hundred years. (See A Review of the Literature, pp. 21 - 55).

If, however, reading aloud in the classroom is interpreted in terms of whole class oral reading or group oral reading, what does a review of the literature show about these practices ? If, as will be shown in Part C, teachers still use these two methods, sometimes to the exclusion of all others, are they satisfying the aims as listed ? The research suggests that these teachers need to stop and assess their reading teaching strategies.

A brief examination of the research and recommendations over the past century leaves little doubt about the need to understand the difference between sound practice in 'reading aloud in the classroom' and unproductive, damaging practice.

Before doing this, it is useful to outline what is meant by unproductive reading aloud in the classroom. Christopher Walker (1974) describes as 'archaic practices' the three most common methods and comments on their lack of merit:

1. Whole class oral reading.

Walker says of this strategy: "There can be no justification for such a practice today." (Walker C. 1974 p. 15).

Four reasons are offered why this is so:

(i) It ignores the individual differences in ability in a class of children;

(ii) It ignores individual interests and preferences;

(iii) If reading for meaning is important, the accent in oral reading is on enunciation. As Walker comments here:

> "...changes of reader are dictated by disciplinary needs rather than by the nature of the material, those who are suspected of 'not following' being the most likely candidates to have the distinction of 'being next'."
>
> (Walker C. p. 16).

(iv) The frequent change of reader affects the pace and development of the story - compounded by the frequent interruptions by the teacher (and sometimes the children) when a reader errs.

Just how 'archaic' such practices are is highlighted by the very clear condemnation of whole class oral reading when, in 1929, the Board of Education Handbook said:

> "What is really needed is the complete disappearance of the traditional reading lesson, the lesson which

> consists solely of setting child after child, often in a large class, to read aloud a few lines in turn without previous preparation, while the rest of the class are required to follow word by word."
>
> (H.M.S.O. Board of Education Handbook of Suggestions for Primary Schools 1929 p. 79).

2. Group oral methods.

This method arose out of the realisation that whole class oral reading was futile - along with the growing call for 'group' teaching. In reality the same disadvantages exist - plus a few new ones. As Walker points out

> "....the end result is that (the teacher) effectively loses control over the responsibility for the reading behaviour of almost the entire class."

and

> "The disciplinary problems likely to arise from group oral.....reading sessions make even whole class methods seem desirable."
>
> (Walker C. 1974 p. 16).

3. Hearing children reading aloud individually.

While being a strategy used with success for beginner readers at the mechanical skill stage, this practice is uneconomical in terms of the limited time available when dealing with thirty children, as well as in the very limited progress the children will make once they have passed through the initial print decoding stage.

All three methods are still used in many schools in the Eastern Cape (refer Part C), but that this is so is cause for concern. As Walker puts it:

> "These three 'methods'....are survivals from an age when attitudes towards teaching reading were quite different from those appropriate to teaching reading extension today. In every case the emphasis is on oral rather than silent reading, an emphasis more obviously relevant to the beginning stage than at levels beyond that of basic competence. It is doubtful if whole class methods will ever be suitable for reading instruction...."
>
> (Walker C. 1974 p. 17).

A REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE.

The origins of whole class oral reading stems from 'payment by results' in England where inspectors of education listened to children reading aloud as a measure of the teacher's success. As Matthew Arnold (1889) recorded:

> "....a book is selected at the beginning of the year for the children of a certain standard; all the year the children read this book over and over again, and no other. When the inspector comes they are presented to read in this book; they can read their section or two fluently enough but they cannot read any other book fluently.....
>
> The circle of the children's reading has thus been narrowed and impoverished all the year for the sake of a result at the end of it, and the result is an illusion."
>
> (Arnold M. 1889 pp. 136 - 137).

'Payment by result' was abandoned in 1890, but it is worth bearing in mind the influence a result has on teaching strategies and teachers, particularly where teachers are assessed for 'merit' awards that improve their salaries - as is the case in South Africa at present. Consequently many teachers are reluctant to deviate from recommended practice - even when they feel that the recommendations are either not educationally sound or not appropriate for the children in their class.

The 1982 Cape Education Department Guide, for example, still suggests that a final 'reading mark' for standards

2, 3 and 4 be arrived at as follows:

"Standard	Oral reading	Silent reading	Reading mark
2	20	10	30
3	15	15	30
4	10	20	30"

(C.E.D. Guide 1982 p. 59).

It is a rhetorical question to ask how teachers will interpret this - and this point will be taken up in Part B.

The 1900 Board of Education's English Schedules show why the teacher might resort to whole class oral reading, in terms of the requirements:

"Standard 1 (7 years)

Reading: To read a short passage from a book not confined to words of one syllable.....

Standard 3 (9 years)

Reading: To read a passage from a reading book....

Standard 4 (10 years)

Reading: To read a passage from a reading book or history of England.

Standard 5 (11 years)

Reading: To read a passage from some standard author, or reading book, or history of England...."

(Quoted in Shayer D. 1972 pp. 4 - 5).

The move from reading aloud by the children to silent reading is seen in the period 1904 to 1907. The 1904 Board's recommendations refer only to reading aloud by the pupils, while by 1907 the emphasis has changed: "In the higher classes silent reading should be the rule rather than the exception." (Shayer D. 1972 p. 28).

If children in the higher elementary classes should be encouraged to read silently, the 1905 Board of Ecuation's first Handbook of Suggestions does reflect the need for the teacher to interpret 'reading aloud in the classroom' as the need for the teacher to read more to their classes. As Shayer points out:

> "On the question of elementary material the Handbook is less conservative. There is clearly a great need to get a wider range of reading material into the schools, to give the children not only snippets and extracts but whole stories, to get teachers reading more to their classes, and to try and encourage literary 'taste' with a more liberal approach to suitable subject matter."
>
> (Shayer D. 1972 p. 31).

The 1921 Newbolt Report - The Teaching of English in England - is a milestone in directing teachers to the

need for the teacher to read aloud to the children and not for the children to practise reading aloud, year in year out, at the senior primary level. Paragraph 84 is worth quoting in full:

Reading aloud

> "84. We are governed, we have said, largely by words, and 'Reading', like 'Composition', has acquired a special Time Table significance which puts a constraint upon the methods of teaching. 'Reading' in the early days of elementary education meant securing a pass in the mere mechanical art of interpreting the symbols. Attention was, therefore, concentrated on the mechanical side, so much so, that an inspector could write, a generation ago, 'The great danger that besets the teaching of reading is that the English that is read may be to the children, and may be treated by the teacher, as a dead language.' For nearly thirty years H.M.Inspectors each year heard each child read a passage aloud. It is another thirty years since the regulation requiring them to do so was cancelled, but the schools have never forgotten it. Though at 8 or 9 years of age the children should have mastered the mechanical difficulties, Reading continues, right up to the leaving age, to keep its place on the Time Table, and retains, as a rule, its time-honoured significance of 'reading aloud.' And yet, of all the aspects of the teaching of English, it is the reading aloud that our witnesses have criticised most severely."
>
> (Italics mine) (Newbolt Report 1921, paragraph 84).

In paragraph 85 they report that "Children will scarcely be heard today chanting out their reading in unison...." (p.80) and then express the concern that teachers were still using reading strategies that did not extend the children's abilities:

> "But there are still schools and classes in which

> the old tradition persists, and in which failure consequently occurs. Here the reading, like the composition, is a routine performance. Definite mistakes, mostly due to carelessness, are corrected, and the meanings of certain words are explained. But after achieving a certain degree of fluency the children get no further. It is not clear that they are aiming at anything they cannot already do."
>
> (Italics mine.)

They continue:

> "....From the very beginning, reading should be treated, not as a mechanical trick, but as a means of getting at ideas...."

and:

> "....The monotonous, expressionless way in which children even high up in the senior school sometimes read, is usually traceable to bad habits acquired in the lower standards, or in the Infant's Class. They read each word separately, each in the same tone, as if it bore no relation to any other word in the sentence, ticking them off like beads on a string, and this exasperating trick often proves most difficult to eradicate."
>
> (Newbolt Report 1921 para. 85).

Working towards suggesting that in the upper primary classes it might be profitable to change the lesson title from 'reading' to 'literature', the report turns to the need for the teacher to be able to read aloud and to do so. In paragraph 87 they comment:

> "....the teacher should be a good reader himself, capable of showing by his own example that reading is not a mechanical process, but a social and humane accomplishment, and a method of interpreting literature....Reading aloud by the teacher should be much more

> frequent than it is, and it is most important that children should be practised, not only in the art of speaking and reading, but also in the art of listening. Just as they are apt to read by words instead of phrases, so they are apt to listen for words and not for sense. They should be trained to follow attentively the sense of what is read to them...."

Noting that children should be encouraged to develop the 'reading habit' (paragraph 88), the report amplifies what is meant by the literature lesson rather than the reading lesson. In the literature lesson one of the main aims is to promote the "appreciation and enjoyment of literature", where "....Above all, the children should discover the delight of books. Here the great crux is the personality of the teacher." (paragraph 89).

As enlightened or progressive as the Newbolt Report was, drawing on the progressives such as Philip Hartog and Caldwell Cook, actual practice still lagged behind theory and blessing. In the 1928 report Books in Public Elementary Schools, there is the "....disturbing comment that some elementary schools are still depending solely upon the use of a set of readers to present literature and prose stories to the pupils in the traditional way (reading round the class)." (Shayer D. 1972 p. 33).

The problem is picked up by the Board of Education Handbook of Suggestions for elementary schools, in 1929. The Handbook takes a more conservative line, but is quite clear in trying to get teachers to change the nature

of reading aloud in the classroom in that enjoyment for the listeners is of key importance.

The Handbook continues on from the Newbolt Report of 1921, and again is worth noting in detail because of teaching strategies that will be reported on in Part C of this dissertation.

They note in Paragraph 10:

> "Every care should be taken to prevent the reading practice taking the form of the monotonous droning of apparently unrelated words. Such a performance is still far too common and when it becomes a habit it is most difficult to eradicate, sometimes persisting even high up in the senior school. What is really needed is the complete disappearance of the traditional reading lesson, the lesson which consists solely of setting child after child, often in a large class, to read aloud a few lines in turn without previous preparation, while the rest of the class are required to follow word by word. There is really nothing to be said for this type of lesson except that it is the easiest way of getting through the period allotted to reading on the timetable, and its persistence helps to explain the statement in the (Newbolt Report) that 'of all the aspects of the teaching of English, it is the reading aloud that our witnesses have criticised most severely'."
>
> (Italics mine).

As far as recommended practice is concerned, the Handbook views 'reading aloud' as worthwhile in terms of various purposes. If the children are to read aloud, they must have practised the passage beforehand. The actual purpose here is for the 'effective rendering' of the passage - in other words practice to do with elocution.

On the other hand, the purpose might be that of sharing with their peers something that interests them, though even here the children must have prepared their reading beforehand. As the Handbook points out: "They should feel that their object in such reading aloud is to give pleasure to a listening audience, an idea which can seldom enter their heads during the traditional reading lesson."

Thirdly, they suggest that the teacher read aloud with the purpose of giving pleasure - the 'essential quality'. Even here the teacher is to prepare her reading beforehand as the teacher's standard of reading aloud determines 'the quality of the reading aloud in her class.'

The Handbook goes on to comment about reading in the senior stage of the elementary school. Once children have mastered the mechanics of reading, reading development and extension will best be furthered by the children reading:

> "....the proper business of those who are ready for the Senior Stage is not learning to read, but reading."
>
> (Paragraph 13).

How contemporary psycho-linguists such as Frank Smith would have lauded this injunction! As Frank Smith notes in his book Reading:

> "....it is only through reading that children learn to read..."
>
> (p. ix)

and

> "We learn to read by reading, by conducting experiments as we go along."
>
> (Smith F. 1978 p. 97).

The Handbook endorses the Newbolt Report's call to change the reading lesson to the literature lesson (paragraph 13) and ask that teachers see three purposes in this aspect of their teaching:

(i) Reading for enjoyment.

(ii) Reading for information.

(iii) Language lessons based on reading.

It is a main thesis of this dissertation that if children associate enjoyment or pleasure with books, they will want to read and will read; that if children learn to read by reading, then the teacher, by showing children that reading is a pleasurable activity, will be doing more to improve their reading ability than any other technique or teaching strategy available.

The Handbook spends some time on the question of reading for enjoyment (paragraphs 14 to 20). It is clear that the teacher reading aloud is an important strategy:

> "Frequent reading aloud by the teacher of specially chosen passages in order to stimulate the interest of the class or to form their taste cannot be too strongly recommended as a means of enforcing the

appeal of literature."

(Paragraph 14) (Italics mine).

The importance of the teacher is stressed when the Handbook comments:

> "It is desirable that whenever possible the conduct of the reading should be entrusted to a teacher who is a lover of good literature. The appreciation of literature cannot be taught; it can only be communicated, as it were by infection."
>
> (Paragraph 16) (Italics mine).

This point is most important - that of communicating by infection - but we cannot leave the Handbook just yet. Paragraph 17 states the case with force and clarity:

> "Reading aloud is the most potent means which a teacher possesses for awakening in his scholars an appreciation of literature."
>
> (Italics mine).

It might surprise some that they see it as THE most potent means of achieving these ends. How can so simple an activity be the most potent means available ? The Handbook warns against seeing this activity as an 'easy matter':

> "(The teacher) should be on his guard against supposing that reading aloud is an easy matter, but should carefully study the principles upon which it should be based and endeavour to put them into practice."
>
> (Paragraph 17).

In 1931 the Board of Education published the Report of the Consultative Committee on the Primary School - under the chairmanship of Sir W.H.Hadow. This report reiterates the need for teachers to clarify purpose in reading activities at the senior primary level. Most children will have adequate mechanical skills by the age of seven and the emphasis in reading teaching strategies must shift to silent reading:

> "In general, reading will be individual and silent, since its chief purpose is to familiarise the children with the habit of acquiring the meaning of the printed page."
>
> (Hadow Report 1931 p. 158).

Making sense of the printed page - reading for meaning - becomes the main objective and the child must begin to read accordingly, both for pleasure and information.

The Hadow Report endorses the view that 'reading lessons' should be called 'literature' lessons (p. 158) in which the reading of stories plays an important part across the primary curriculum - a forerunner to the work of Barnes, Britton and Rosen, to name but a few.

The report discriminates "between reading and oral reading or 'reading aloud'," (p. 159). The committee saw reading aloud by children between the ages of seven and eleven as a "technical exercise" aimed at improving speech and pronunciation. Preliminary study of the passage was essential.

As a speech training exercise this may be very well - but it is not seen as a reading activity that developed and extended the child's reading ability.

As practised in schools, however, the Hadow Report felt that "'unprepared' reading (was) the source of most failures in reading." (p. 159).

The influence of the reports emanating from Britain on teaching practice in South Africa is interesting. In 1932, for example, the Department of Public Education, Cape of Good Hope, published The Primary School : Suggestions for the Consideration of Teachers. This handbook makes several references to the Newbolt Report of 1921 (The Teaching of English in England), often quoting large sections (e.g. see pp. 79 - 80; 88). The mix that emerges, however, is a foretaste of many of the inconsistencies that bedevil many of the current guides that South African teachers are asked to use - which will be examined in Part B.

The Cape of Good Hope handbook of 1932 recognised the need for a change of teaching strategy once the child had mastered adequate mechanical skills, yet goes on to give advice that a teacher during that period could be excused for thinking that reading aloud by the children was an important part of the reading lesson. How does one make sense, for example, of this statement from the

section headed The reading lesson in the middle standards ?

> "The children should be allowed to read silently, and then one of them should make the effort to read a paragraph aloud."
>
> (p. 85.)

Interpretation of such a suggestion is confusing, to say the least.

The handbook continues, immediately after that statement to say:

> "The teacher's model, if required, will come after."

But there is much in this Handbook that reflects more enlightened approaches to reading. It is recognised that the two main purposes in reading are reading for information and "....on the other hand it should minister to the personal and aesthetic delight which literature (affords)" (p. 78). The authors continue:

> "This distinction suggests at once the two main types of instruction in reading, which should be undertaken in the primary school." (p. 78).

Accordingly they suggest that once the mechanical skills have been mastered, two main avenues are to be followed: the promotion of silent reading and a concern for the growth of literary appreciation.

The authors of the handbook can be forgiven for not recognising that little real advice is offered on how to teach children to read for information (it is only

during the past three decades that real advances have been made in this area.)

In terms of the growth of literary appreciation, however, the comments are worth scrutiny:

> "In these days of massed production in print, of enslavement to purely visual reading, this higher form of reading (literary appreciation) is in grave danger of being forgotten or under-rated. The Greeks of old had more occasion to read aloud than we, and they seem also to have understood much better the charm of words beautifully spoken or read."
>
> (p. 79).

The authors suggest that for the primary school child, listening to literature is important: "....for him the beauty and grace of language must enter, if at all, by the ear."

(Though why they included the words 'if at all' is worrying.)

Unfortunately, they then confuse the main purpose -growth of literary appreciation - with growth or improvement in elocution, concluding (after several suggestions about the child's ability to read aloud) that "...in the main the child must get its style of elocution (like its pronunciation and habits of sentence structure) from the teacher's model." (p. 79).

This leads them to the importance of the teacher as a good reader - but one is no longer certain if this is

with a view to developing the child's literary appreciation or standard of elocution.

The post World War II period in Britain saw the beginnings of the demise of children reading aloud in an unproductive way. Though still practised by some, it became apparent that teachers in Britain were beginning to take heed of the calls for reform that had been so insistent. In 1951 John Cutforth's English in the Primary School (second edition 1954) was published. It is interesting to compare his observations and recommendations with his follow-up publication Children and Books which appeared in 1962.

In 1951 he wrote:

> "Interest is the keynote and for that not one but many suitable reading books are essential. The habit of ordering readers by thirties and forties is still very widespread. It is neat and convenient and if every child progresses at the same pace, a great saving of time and temper. But it is very unlikely that every child will progress at the same pace, or as more modern methods become widespread, that the class will be taken all together for reading."
>
> (Cutforth J. 1954 p. 21).

Cutforth saw 'modern methods' embracing a system where the child would be involved in three books at once. The first two books consisted of a book at his present level of reading ability, as well as a simpler book for rapid

reading (both read by the child, silently). Whatever one thinks of Cutforth's idea here is subject to debate. It is in the recommendation about the third book, however, that we see the call for the importance of the teacher reading aloud repeated yet again:

> "The third should be read to him by the teacher a book which will allow him to come to grips with words and ideas that might be beyond his capacity if he were to read it by himself."
>
> (Cutforth J. 1954 p. 22).

He goes on to mention some of the positive gains that will be had if the teacher reads aloud to the children:

> "Throughout the primary school there is much that can be done by the teacher reading to the children....(We) all can read, and with practice read aloud tolerably well. It is a most useful weapon in the armoury of a teacher. A diffident and suspicious child can be led to books he would otherwise not look at, if the beginning is read by the teacher, who, at a most exciting point, closes it with the words 'Well, if you want to finish that, it is in the library'."
>
> (pp. 25 - 26).

Cutforth recommends that the teacher read aloud for a quarter of an hour a day, and that a suitable book "treated as a serial story without comment or question" (p. 26) would, inter alia, go a long way to improving the childrens' attitude to reading.

As to where or when this should happen in the primary school, he writes:

> "Let it be done throughout the school, because too often a child is given something to read and then catechised about it and made to do exercises on it until all the initial pleasure has gone. It will do him good to feel that for a short time every day he and the teacher can meet together as equals in the solid enjoyment of a book for its own sake. It will do the teacher good as well. An examination of hundreds of time-tables leads me to the rash suggestion that time for this could easily be found[1] if the very large number of minutes devoted to Formal Arithmetic were reduced by fifteen a day."
>
> (Italics mine)
>
> (Cutforth J. 1954 p. 26).

Writing in 1962, about ten years later, Cutforth and Battersby note that "The old custom of reading round the class is mercifully dead and mourned by very few..." (p. 38). It seemed that teachers in Britain were beginning to interpret reading aloud in the classroom as a teacher directed activity where the purpose differed as a reading teaching strategy. Following on their 'death without mourning' statement, Cutforth and Battersby say:

> "...but it would be a pity if a more valuable old-fashioned habit were to disappear with (the death of reading round the classroom). It used to be accepted that at least a part of a junior school teacher's day was spent in reading to the children. By this method the teacher was able to share with them the enjoyment of a book, to provide for them a level of literature that probably meant quite a lot of reaching up on their part; and also to build up the background

---

(1) John Cutforth was an H.M. Inspector.

> of folk-tales, fairy stories, myths and legends. We have already mentioned that this excellent practice has not fallen into disrepute, but many young teachers today seem to think that it is rather a soft option, an easy way out of a difficulty, and, therefore, perhaps a little suspect."
>
> (Cutforth & Battersby 1962 p. 38).

In 1968 Donald Moyle wrote:

> "The approach wherein the whole class is given the same book and one child at a time reads in turn has largely fallen into disuse. The reasons for this are that it would seem an unrealistic approach, for few children are likely to be at the same stage in reading attainment or all share a common interest in one single text. Again it would appear uneconomical, for only one child is reading and thus only one child's difficulties are being examined while the rest of the class are playing the more passive role of following the text - if in fact they are engaged in any mental activity at all."
>
> (Moyle D. 1976 p. 136).

The questions that begin to emerge in terms of practice in the Eastern Cape, at present are

+ whether, as in the case of British primary schools, reading round the class is 'dead' ?

+ whether teachers do include the 'excellent practice' of reading aloud to their classes ?

+ whether teachers - and senior teachers as well as head teachers - see the teacher reading aloud as a 'soft option' - and therefore suspect ?

In 1967 the report of the Central Advisory Council for Education (England) published the report headed Children and their Primary Schools under the chairmanship of Lady J. P. Plowden. The Plowden Report makes no mention of children reading aloud round the classroom other than a passing comment in paragraph 596 - but it is quite clear in the need for the teacher to read aloud to the children. Their comments are worth close scrutiny, for the Plowden Report is now seen as being of monumental importance in terms of the modern primary school, alongside the growing research that followed the Plowden Report.

As to the value of reading stories to the children, the Report is unambiguous:

> "We are convinced of the value of stories for children, stories told to them, stories read to them....It is....through literature that children feel forward to the experiences, the hopes and fears that await them in adult life....As children listen to stories, as they take down the books from the library shelves, they may, as Graham Greene suggests in "The Lost Childhood", be choosing their future and the values that will dominate it."
>
> (Plowden Report 1967, paragraph 595).

If Graham Greene is right - and he is supported by the Plowden Committee - reading to children is not a matter that is 'a little suspect' or 'a soft option' when it will result in the children choosing their futures and values that will dominate their lives!

In paragraph 596 the Committee criticises those schools

that continue to read round the class:

> "Even in good schools, it is sometimes thought sufficient to allow a weekly library period, when books for reading at home may be changed, but there is little opportunity for guidance or stimulus. There has certainly been no glorious past here. Reading the same classic "round the class" for a term or more, or working comprehension exercises on passages of literary quality - a practice which still lingers - can be looked back on without nostalgia."
>
> (Paragraph 596).

Once again the importance of the teacher is seen as crucial. Teachers need to know about children's literature, and must have read children's literature:

> "In a growing number of schools, the head or one of the assistants makes himself an authority on children's books and gives advice to the rest of the staff.... The proportion of young teachers who are sensitive to quality in literature, and knowledgeable about children's books, seems to be increasing. This may well be one of the gains of the three year course and the deeper study of English and of education which it makes possible. Supported by teachers, children can reach out to stories and poetry that they could not manage unaided. But a teacher can only share with children what he understands and likes.... In schools where the place of literature is becoming stronger, teachers will give much time to reading aloud when they are introducing a book to their class. They cast their net wide in what they read...."
>
> (Italics mine) (Paragraph 598).

And the results of these teaching strategies ? Again the Plowden Report is quite certain in its recommendations:

> "When teachers read much aloud, sometimes only giving children a taste of the pleasure that

> awaits them.... the quality of children's own reading is influenced for the better."
>
> (Paragraph 599).

In 1969 Kenyon Calthrop took up the post of Research Officer on a curriculum project concerned with literature in English teaching between the ages of eleven and sixteen. The Gulbenkian Foundation awarded a grant to the National Association of the Teaching of English (NATE) in response to NATE's charge that:

> "Informed opinion at the present time is agreed about the centrality of literature (broadly conceived) in the teaching of English, and stress has rightly been laid, in many quarters, on the importance for children's personal and linguistic development of the experience they obtain from reading.... there is powerful support for the belief that much of the time now spent in the classroom on 'English exercises' and work from course books would be better spent in the reading of 'real books'. Many teachers, however, remain uncertain about the precise forms which the teaching of literature should take, and urgently need guidance as to choice of material for particular types and levels of pupil and as to the best methods of handling this material."
>
> (Calthrop K. 1973 - Introduction by Frank Whitehead).

A questionnaire was circulated to teachers (more than 600 were returned) and Calthrop then visited a number of schools in part as a check on the validity of the responses.

The results of the project are summed up in the 1971 publication Reading Together: An investigation into the use of the class reader.

It will be a main recommendation of this dissertation that, on the narrow example of evidence available (see Part C), a similar project ought to be conducted on as large a scale in South African senior primary schools - as well as including the junior secondary phase.

In terms of the shared experience of a book being read aloud by the teacher, Calthrop writes:

> "All the teachers I interviewed felt that the shared experience of reading a common book was something of great value to themselves and their classes. They regarded it as something quite different from the pleasure to be gained from individual reading and took the view that the feeling of sharing something worth-while, the common sense of enjoyment, and the resulting sense of community was a deeply educative process."
>
> (Italics mine) (Calthrop K. 1971 pp. 2 - 3).

As a 'deeply educative process', teachers reading to the children need have no fear, then, that this practice is a 'little suspect'.

The web of enchantment which is so difficult to measure or assess in terms of empirical testing is seen in Calthrop's reference to the 'intangible quality' of a shared experience:

> "....this process was something akin to the experience of a theatre audience, and that it was this which gave the reading of a book together an intangible quality which was very different from an individual reading. The whole process involved a performance by the teacher, a collective, but enjoyed and shared, response from the audience, together with a fair amount of audience participation....

> ....In introducing children to literature, some teachers felt that the child often needed a shared literary experience. Further, if the book in question related to life, the teacher was also extending the child's shared experience of life and the children could share their responses to the very relevant experience which the book provided."
>
> (Calthrop K. 1971 p. 3).

If these teachers are correct - and there is every reason to believe that they are - how very important it is that teachers plan a daily period of time to explore the real experiences of life that worthwhile literature provides.

Christopher Walker's Reading Development and Extension, published in 1974, has already been referred to but is worth closer examination. In terms of fostering the reading habit, Walker endorses the point that having taught children how to read in the first years of school, teachers at the senior primary level do not promote reading for a number of reasons:

> "One of the most significant areas of teacher failure is that though the majority of children can read, they do not in the opinion of their teachers read anything like enough. They can read, but don't.... One certain reason why children who can read hardly ever do is the competition from other forms of entertainment, notably television."
>
> (Walker C. 1974 p. 11).

He then continues:

> "In my experience not enough incentive to read for sheer pleasure is given in schools beyond the infant stage. Reading is done largely for information, to be regurgitated in topics and project work. It is used as the starting point

> for writing and other forms of activity which at their best may be described as creative but which are commonly repetitive and unoriginal. Worse, the time occupied by activity of this kind leaves little time for reading for pleasure."
>
> (Walker C. 1974 p. 12).

As will be seen in Part C, Walker is correct when he notes that a change of attitude on the part of the teachers (and authorities) is necessary if reading development and extension is to be promoted in the post junior primary phase:

> "The aims of developing critical and efficient readers who have a habit and love of reading will not be accomplished without considerable changes of attitude, not only on the part of teachers of junior, middle and secondary school-children, but also on the part of those responsible for training them."
>
> (p. 12).

This in turn will affect the organisation in the school, for reading must become recognised as a vital part of the educative process:

> "It is essential to give reading in post-infant schools the sort of status which it obviously has at the infant stage. Here, the most basic of all school subjects, it is regarded as a subject in its own right. It needs to be so regarded in junior, middle and secondary schools. It needs to have a favoured position in the timetable and to be taught regularly and systematically in periods allocated for that purpose...."
>
> (p. 13).

Though Walker's book goes on to deal in main with functional reading skills, it is an important book for all student teachers. The need to timetable - or make time for reading -

is discussed in Part C. Before leaving his book, however, it is worth quoting in full his comments about teaching strategies that were still employed by some teachers - though, as has been seen, by less teachers than was the case in the pre-war period:

> "A definite methodological pattern for teaching beginning reading has been established in the infant school. No generally recognisable pattern has yet emerged at the junior and subsequent levels of schooling. However, isolated examples of archaic practices still survive and it is essential to eradicate these in order to establish a methodology based on sound pedagogical principles... The so-called methods referred to are:
>
> 1. whole class oral reading.
> 2. group oral reading
> 3. hearing children reading individually."
>
> (Italics mine)
> (Walker C. 1974 p. 15).

The question arises as to just how isolated these 'archaic' practices are in South African primary schools by way of comparison ? Though subsequently questioned by the Oracle Project (as described later), the Bullock Report of 1975 provides some clues as to the actual practice in the British classrooms.

The Bullock Committee, it appears, did not investigate the specific area being considered in this dissertation per se, but the information available from the Tables in Part 9, The Survey, provide indicators of actual practice.

Table 49 (p. 389) records the following:

Table 49

TIME SPENT LISTENING TO STORIES READ OR TOLD BY THE TEACHER OR FROM A SCHOOL BROADCAST (RADIO OR TV) BY 6 AND 9 YEAR OLDS

	Classes spending these amounts of class time (minutes)							*All classes*	
	0	*1–30*	*31–60*	*61–90*	*91–120*	*121–150*	*151 or more*	*No.*	*%*
6 year olds									
Optional time (minutes)									
0	1	30	120	281	356	258	134	1,180	*83·3*
1–30		8	18	32	34	31	5	128	*9·0*
31–60	1	1	2	15	17	16	4	56	*4·0*
61–90		1	1	9	4	5	7	27	*1·9*
91–120				3	3	3		9	*0·6*
121–150				3	2	5		10	*0·7*
151 or more				1			6	7	*0·5*
All classes	2	40	141	344	416	318	156	1,417	
As a percentage of all classes	*0·1*	*2·8*	*10·0*	*24·3*	*29·4*	*22·4*	*11·0*		*100·0*
9 year olds									
Optional time (minutes)									
0	38	302	427	204	75	30	16	1,092	*87·2*
1–30	3	29	42	14	4	3	2	97	*7·7*
31–60	2	6	21	9	2			40	*3·2*
61–90	1	1	8	2	1			13	*1·0*
91–120			2	3	3			8	*0·6*
121–150			2			1		3	*0·2*
151 or more									
All classes	44	338	502	232	85	34	18	1,253	
As a percentage of all classes	*3·5*	*27·0*	*40·1*	*18·5*	*6·8*	*2·7*	*1·4*		*100·0*

If one takes class and optional time together, nearly 90 per cent of the 6 year olds had over an hour a week listening to stories, while 35 per cent had over two hours, which is equivalent to just over 20 minutes a day. 17 per cent of the children heard stories as an option, and it seems likely that some of this might represent time spent listening to tape-recorded stories on headsets, either individually or in small groups. Only 30 per cent of the 9 year olds had over an hour a week of listening to stories, a figure which includes about 10 per cent with more than 1½ hours. Of the remainder 40 per cent had up to an hour a week, 27 per cent up to half an hour and the rest none at all. The drop in participation in this activity at age 9 was not compensated for by an increase in optional time. Indeed listening to stories was normally seen for both age-groups as a class activity and few devoted optional time to it. By age 9, most children would be capable of reading stories independently, but the schools still apparently recognised the value for children of hearing a good story well told.

These statistics are based on a wider range of activities than covered in this dissertation (listening to stories and/or radio and television broadcasts) but it is interesting to note that not in any of the tables provided (Tables 48 to 59) is mention made of reading round the classroom. Table 55 reports on Reading Practice - but this is defined as Graded and Supplementary Readers and Phonic Practice. One cannot assume that teachers use these materials for reading aloud round the classroom.

Returning to Table 49 the key patterns in terms of this study can be reflected in these adapted tables:

TABLE I

LISTENING TIME OF 6 AND 9 YEAR OLDS

	6 Years %	9 Years %
1. No time listening	0,1	3,5
2. Up to 30 minutes per week	2,8	27,0
3. Up to 60 minutes per week	10,0	40,1
4. Up to 90 minutes per week	24,3	18,5
5. Up to 120 minutes per week	29,4	6,8
6. Up to 150 minutes per week	22,4	2,7
7. More than 150 minutes per week	11,0	1,4

If we arbitrarily see a period of listening as 30 minutes (though of course this will vary in practice from class to class and in terms of the nature of the listening demands) the teachers then claim, on average, to allow for the

following number of daily 30 minute sessions:

TABLE 2

ADAPTED 30 MINUTE PERIODS PER WEEK: 6 YEAR OLDS

Periods per week	% of classes
1	2,8
2	10,0
3	24,3
4	29,4
5	22,4
More than 30 minutes per day ..	11,0

TABLE 3

ADAPTED 30 MINUTE PERIODS PER WEEK: 9 YEAR OLDS

Periods per week	% of classes
0	3,5
1	27,0
2	40,1
3	18,5
4	6,8
5	2,7
More than 30 minutes per day .	1,4

The decrease in listening time as children move into the equivalent of our senior primary phase is thus illustrated in these bar graphs:

(See Tables 4 and 5, pages 48 and 49).

TABLE 4: NUMBER OF 30 MINUTE PERIODS - 6 YEAR OLDS.

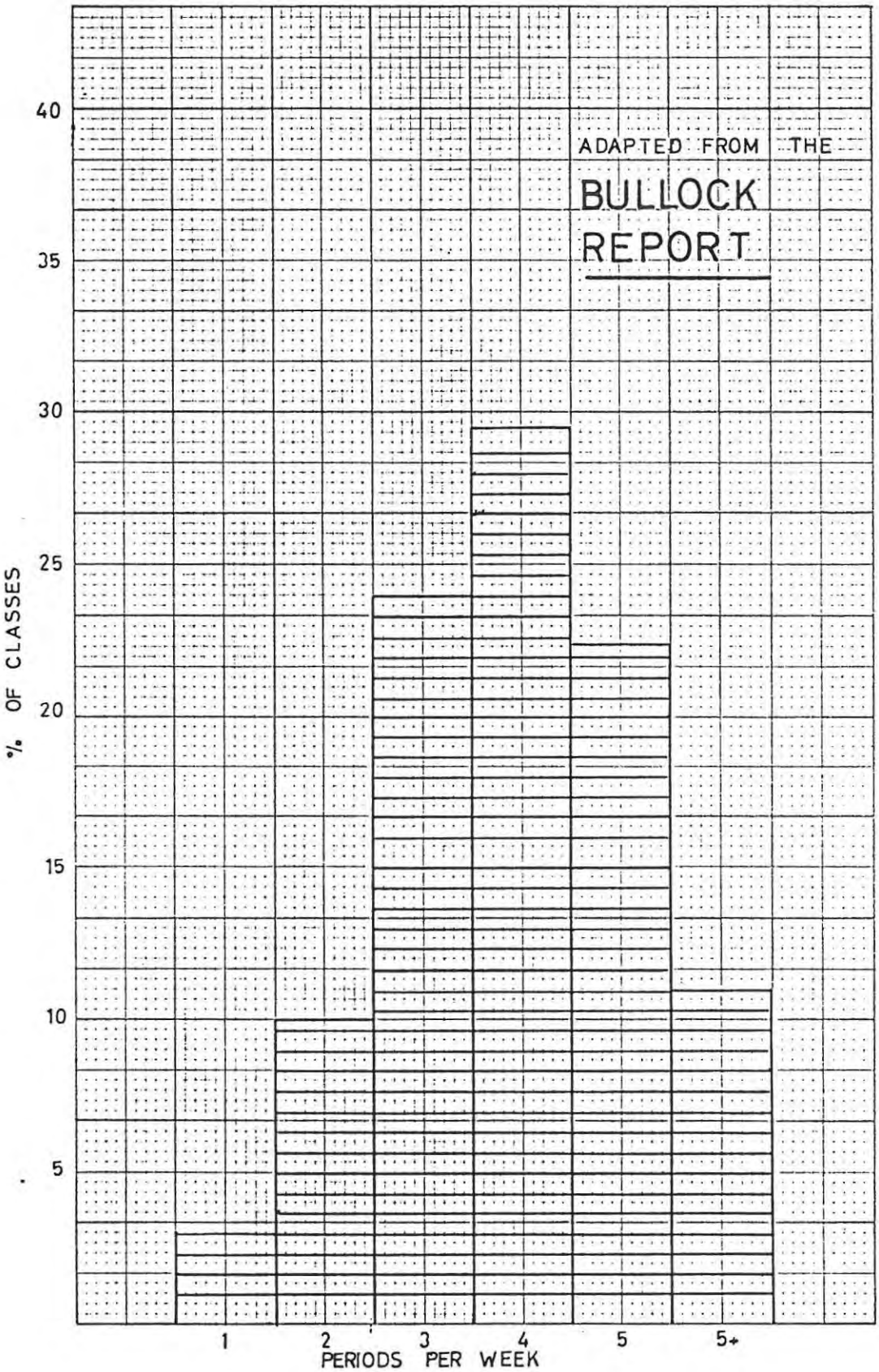
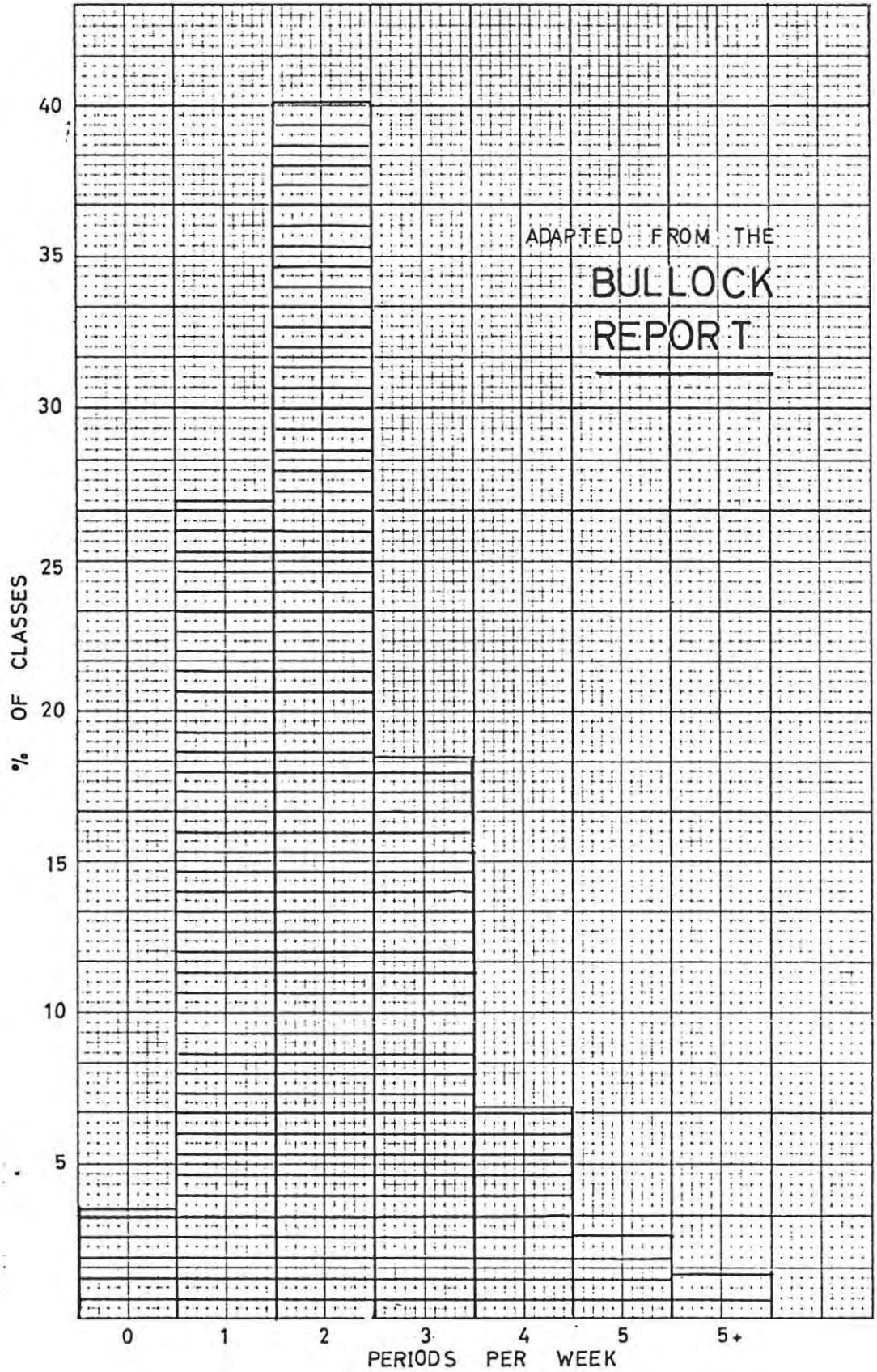


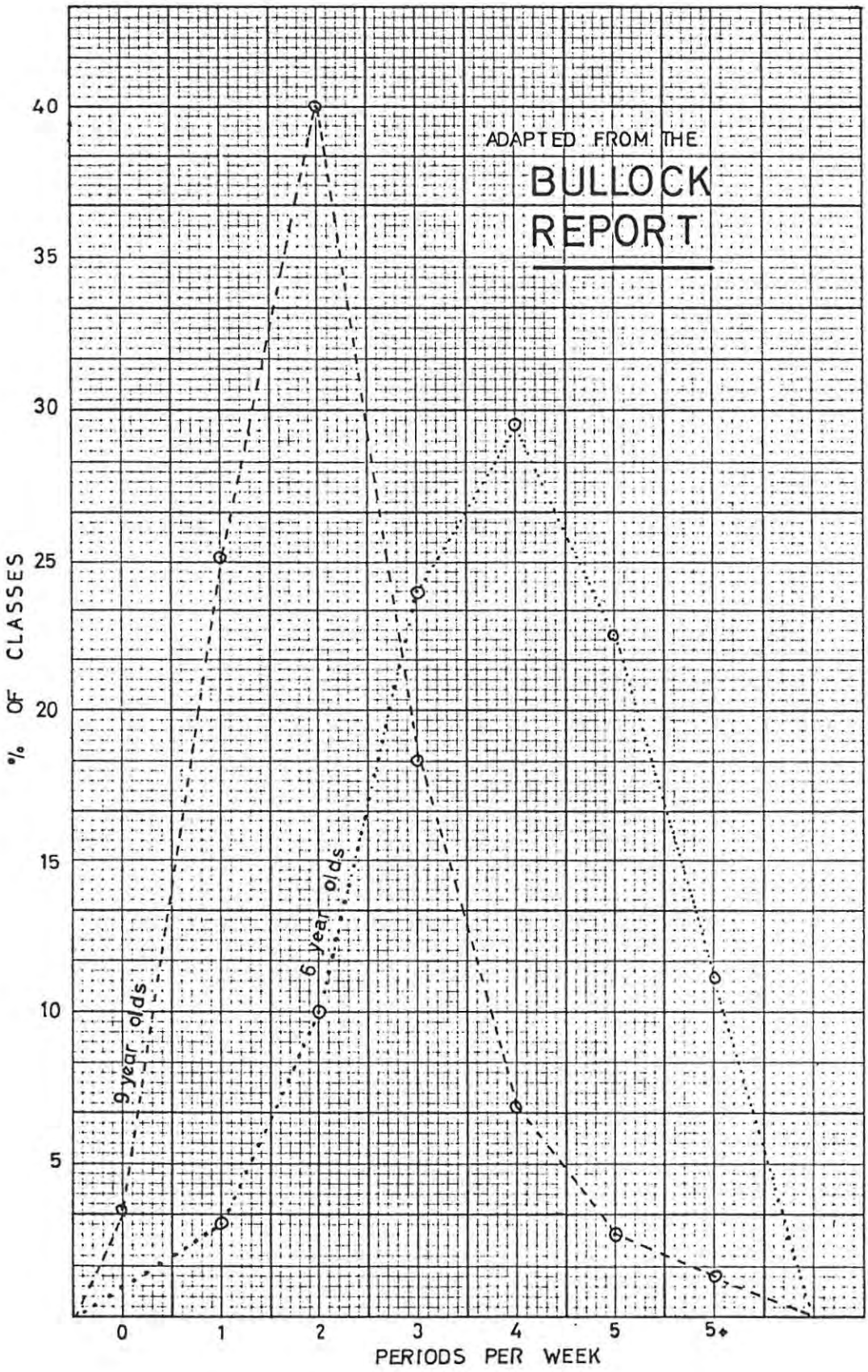
TABLE 5: NUMBER OF 30 MINUTE PERIODS - 9 YEAR OLDS.



Superimposed, the tendency to have the children listen for less periods as they move into the senior primary phase is more clearly seen on the following frequency polygon:

(See page 52).

TABLE 6 : FREQUENCY POLYGON COMPARING THE ADAPTED NUMBER OF LISTENING PERIODS : 6 and 9 YEAR OLDS.



In Part C a comparison of the Eastern Cape sample will be made.

In the Bullock Report survey it is clear then that although there is a decrease in the amount of time 9 year olds spend listening, it is significant that 96,5% of their teachers spent at least 30 minutes a week on this activity, while 69,5% spent an hour per week on it. As the Bullock Report survey comments:

> "By age 9, most children would be capable of reading stories independently, but the schools still apparently recognised the value for children of hearing a good story well told."
>
> (Bullock Report 1975 p. 389).

As mentioned previously, the problem in interpreting Table 49 in so far as this dissertation is concerned is that no breakdown is given between the amount of time spent listening to story telling, listening to the teacher reading a book or listening to radio or television. Nonetheless the Bullock Report clearly supports the need for teachers to read to their classes. In emphasising the need to promote reading for pleasure - one of the three major emphases for the middle school as far as reading is concerned (paragraph 8.1, page 115) - they go on to say: "It is a particularly effective device for a teacher to stir demand for reading out arresting passages from new books." (Bullock Report, p. 128).

It has already been said (and will be shown in Part C) that children enjoy the shared experience of a book read aloud

by the teacher. Enjoyment and pleasure are synonymous. This being the case, the Bullock Report lays great emphasis on the need for teachers to promote the idea that reading novels and stories is a pleasurable experience. We see this repeatedly:

> "....we recall a particularly telling remark from the evidence: pupils admitted to an adult literacy scheme had been asked to say why, in their opinion, they failed to learn to read at school. "Only one common factor emerges: they did not learn from the process of learning to read that it was something other people did for pleasure"."
>
> (Paragraph 9.11 p. 130).

If children are read to and experience pleasure from hearing literature read aloud, the teacher will find it easier to tempt the children to read a similar book privately and voluntarily. The consequences are significant:

> "There is no doubt in our minds that one of the most important tasks facing the teacher of older juniors and younger secondary pupils is to increase the amount and range of their voluntary reading. We believe that there is a strong association between this and reading attainment, and that private reading can make an important contribution to children's linguistic and experiential development."
>
> (Paragraph 9.4 p. 126).

The teacher has two main strategies from which to choose: either reading a part or parts of a book to tempt the children to read it in its entirety or to read a book completely and then be able to recommend similar books.

Here the teacher requires two qualities: knowledge about what is available and, secondly, enthusiasm:

> "A feature which (is important) is the teacher's knowledge of what is available, especially in good modern children's literature."
>
> (Paragraph 9.6 p. 127).

and

> "(An important) feature of this process of developing self-initiated reading is ingenuity in 'promoting' books. At its simplest and most effective level this will be a case of the teacher's knowledge and enthusiasm bringing child, book and situation together in a natural interaction."
>
> (Paragraph 9.7 p. 128).

The uses of children's literature in school.

The decade of the seventies and early eighties has seen a new debate emerge in Britain in the treatment of the class reader and children's literature. What is significant is that this debate has moved away from whole class oral reading and now centres on how teachers should 'use' children's literature when reading aloud - or whether it should be 'used' at all.

Writing in July 1970 Edward Blishen wrote: "When we speak of the uses of literature I think it is necessary for us to be sure that we are not trying to turn a book into some sort of gadget serving some wholly irrelevant convenience of our own!" (Children's Literature in Education, July 1970 p.66).

This debate could be the subject of a research project in its own right. Of concern in the Eastern Cape, however, is the impression that the teaching strategies being used by teachers have not progressed much, that whole class oral reading or group oral reading is still widely practised - and that far too many teachers are not reading aloud to their classes. It appears that we need to eradicate these 'archaic practices' and get the teachers to read aloud to their classes so that they too may enter the debate about the 'uses' of children's literature in the classroom. But how to do this remains a very real problem for as long as teachers and headteachers see reading aloud as a 'soft option', a worthless activity.

Blishen portrays this attitude which is so common in our own schools. I make no apology for quoting this anecdote in full:

> "I remember with infinite gratitude one of the first headmasters I worked with when I taught in secondary modern schools in London. He was one of those prowling headmasters, always nervously believing that something negligent was occurring somewhere. He also believed very firmly that reading aloud is a soft option both for children and for teachers, and that it should be reserved for the last afternoon of term and then only if the class has been absolutely saint-like throughout the whole year. So, having discovered myself that the only really positive thing I knew about my boys was that they were starved of words and language, and that perhaps the most important thing I could do was simply to read to them, I had to read to them without appearing to do so. And because he had this prowling habit and used to look through the glass panel in the door, I mastered the habit of appearing to be conducting a purely formal, dreary lesson of the kind that he

> thought was proper, with a piece of chalk and so on, and I would have a book on the desk and picked up the habit of being able to read two or three sentences at a time, or take them and store them in my head and walk away from the book and deliver them. It still seems to me one of the gifts of reading aloud that teachers should cultivate anyway."
>
> (Children's Literature in Education Vol. 2, July 1970 p. 67).

As lighthearted and charming as this account is, the implications are horrifying (and not unknown in many of our own schools).

It surely must be ignorance on the part of teachers and headteachers that accounts for this attitude or belief - an ignorance brought about by the fact that very few teachers were exposed to children's literature courses and books during their professional training ? Fortunately this is changing as educators begin to accept this view as expressed by Blishen as he reflects on the former experience:

> "The simple fact is that reading aloud is of the utmost importance - a truth that through its very simplicity and obviousness is sometimes in danger of being forgotten."
>
> (Italics mine)
> (Children's Literature in Education Vol. 2 July 1970 p. 67).

Further thoughts on the value of reading aloud to children.

Throughout this dissertation the reader has been presented with reasons why the teacher ought to read aloud to their classes. But because for so many teachers there is so negative an attitude towards this teaching activity - an attitude based on ignorance, misconceptions and suspect aims - it is necessary to draw together an abbreviated motivation for the teacher reading aloud. Just how suspect this activity is as viewed by some was illustrated when an outline of this dissertation was presented to several members of the academic staff at the university at which I teach.

One lecturer - who admitted having had experience in primary education - expressed the view several times that it would be very necessary to show just why or how there could be any value in the teacher reading aloud to their class. He made it known that during his experience as a primary teacher he had never been able to justify this activity in the classroom. (The meeting was recorded on tape.)

There are countless numbers of books and articles on the value of literature per se for children. It is not the intention in this dissertation to attempt a broad justification for literature in education but rather an overview of the value of the teacher reading aloud.

Just how crucial the senior primary phase is in fostering a love of reading is highlighted by Fred Schonell:

> "From 8 to 15 years - this is the vital period to develop an interest in reading, to satisfy individual tastes and to build the foundations of a love for literature that will persist through a lifetime. It may, with some looseness, be called the 'now or never' stage in helping children to develop attitudes of reading for leisure....
>
> Although strong motivation at later stages will impel adolescents to become students, yet it is extremely difficult, as experience with adolescent youth groups between 15 and 16 shows, to lead them to turn to books for satisfaction during their leisure time, if they have not learnt to read by themselves between 9 and 12.
>
> Naturally the avidity with which the boy or girl between 9 and 12 or 13 reads, may suffer a temporary decline when the demands of study in the secondary school absorb most free time, but the children who have already developed a love of books in the primary school will always return to reading for refreshment. As one young adolescent of 16, who had just passed through the arid months of preparing for a stiff examination, said to me, 'Now I can do some real reading - there are so many books I want to read in these next two months.'
>
> This junior and early adolescent period is vital in the development of an interest in reading. What should we do about it ? What degree of success is attending our efforts so far ?"
>
> (Schonell F. 1961 p. 192).

These two questions need to be asked - and answered - by every primary teacher, for, as Schonell points out, "....it is one thing to teach children to read and another to lead them to read by themselves." (Schonell F. 1961 p. 185).

In my own teaching career I have been asked so many times by parents and teachers just that question: "How do I get Mary/Johnny interested in reading ?"

Of course there are several answers or suggestions. Does the child belong to a library ? Can he get there and is he encouraged to get there ? Does he have his own book collection ? Does he belong to the Puffin Club ? Does he see you reading ? But the most potent, the most successful way of getting him to develop an interest in books and reading is so simple that parents and teachers often overlook the strategy: read aloud to the child and immerse yourselves in the web of enchantment that a well written story creates.

Thus, heading my list on the value of reading aloud to children must be:

1. It encourages the child to read and develop an interest in books.

That this is so is acknowledged by a host of authorities. Charlotte Huck, the American critic, puts it simply: "One of the best ways to interest children in books is to read to them frequently from the time they are able to listen." (Huck C. 1976 P. 172). Arbuthnot and Sutherland put it more forcefully: "Storytelling and reading aloud are the primary teacher's most powerful charms for luring children to books." (1972 p. 650). (Italics mine). Kamm and Taylor write: "These reading sessions lead children not only to read for themselves the books that they hear, but also to want to possess them." (1966 pp. 37-38). Cutforth and Battersby say: "Reading aloud to children is the

beginning, perhaps the only beginning for some, of the road to the enjoyment of books." (1962 p. 38).

Aidan Chambers (1973) says:

> "Literature in all its forms grew out of the oral tradition and we cannot emphasize enough how deeply rooted in his early oral experience is everyone's taste for reading. As for introducing books to people during their childhood and adolescence, telling stories and reading aloud are the two most effective methods, both fundamental and essentially important. The reasons why are worth isolating....
>
> To begin with, both methods are appetizers: they stimulate a desire to read for oneself what one has heard told."
>
> (Chambers A. 1973 p. 43).

In the comprehensive and authoritative Schools Council Project Extending beginning reading, Vera Southgate notes that "All teachers were interested in promoting children's interest in books. They generally regarded the practice of reading aloud to their classes as one of the best ways of motivating their pupils to undertake personal reading." (Southgate V. et al 1981, pp. 317-318).

Arbuthnot also notes how important reading aloud is for the negatively labelled 'reluctant reader' - a term used increasingly these days and regretfully carrying with it some vague, usually unfounded idea that there 'must be something wrong with the child.' Would that the teachers enter a little introspection! Whatever the case, Arbuthnot reminds us that:

> "By the time some children reach the middle grades, there may be considerable discrepancy between what they can read and what they can appreciate and enjoy. This discrepancy, if not reduced, often produces the reluctant reader - that gadfly of the classroom who has cut himself off from books and thereby pricks the conscience of every teacher. While there is no sure way to snare the reluctant reader, reading aloud is an important bait for books. Such children have been known to check out a book that the teacher has just finished reading to the class in order to read it for themselves. Because the story is already known, the reading struggle is eased somewhat."
>
> (Arbuthnot M. 1972 p. 651).

2. Reading aloud by the teacher widens the children's reading range.

Once children have adequate developmental skills, the first books they read on their own are the (usually) mundane 'supplementary' readers based on a reading 'scheme'. Frank Smith (1978, p. 145), in referring to the type of books used, describes them as "....bland and unnatural prose to which many children are expected to attend, whether recounting a boring day in the life of an insipid pair of children or relating that Sam can fan the fat cat."(!) Aidan Chambers would seem to agree when he describes this material as "....not only severely limited but too often lacks verbal and imaginal richness, the kind of anaemia evident in that unhappy 'reading scheme' called 'Janet and John', among others." (Chambers A. 1973 p. 43).

Following on this stage, many children then start reading what Charlotte Huck refers to as the 'Tom Swifties'.

Usually the children recommend to each other the Blyton-Dixon type books, and while there is value in children reading these books, the teacher's function is to capitalise on this awakened interest in reading and, through reading parts or all of the selected books, she can extend their interest into a wealth of books that most children would be unaware of. Her reading programme - and it should be planned jointly with her teaching colleagues - should ensure that the children hear and experience the riches that are to be found in the many types of excellent children's literature that are available. (This will include traditional literature such as folk tales, myths, legends and fables, modern fantasy in the form of modern fairy tales, contemporary fantasy and science fiction, contemporary realistic fiction, historical fiction and biographical works).

3. Reading aloud by the teacher is satisfying for the children when their aural-intellectual ability is in advance of their reading ability.

Unfortunately too many teachers unwittingly make learning to read difficult (refer Frank Smith, Reading, especially Chapter 7 and particularly pages 138 to 142). Children are expected to endure several years of reading activities that can hardly be stimulating (How does one make the learning of 166 phonetic rules an enjoyable, satisfying experience ? What real pleasure is there in reading from outdated, unattractive readers with titles such as

Horizons Far and Wide - even although it might have a 'controlled vocabulary' ? Of course, one might just as well include the question 'Why should it be controlled ?' Certainly the likes of Ted Hughes never worked to a list of 'controlled' vocabulary.)

With these minefields in mind, it is nonetheless generally true that during the senior primary phase most children have an aural-intellectual ability that exceeds their reading ability (Chambers A. 1973 p. 44). As one of our aims is to develop a positive attitude to reading for pleasure on the part of the children, the teacher is confronted by this problem of developmental lag. In reading worthwhile books to children the teacher is showing them that books offer stimulating ideas and experiences that are real to their present world. As their mechanical skills progress, in other words, the teacher is showing by immersion in books that they offer something of value that will be rewarding throughout their lives.

H. Blamires (1951, p. 89) points out that:

> "There are only two ways of experiencing a novel - by reading it or by hearing it read. If your class has got to such a stage that most of them are ready to read novels for themselves, your only duty as English teacher is to provide the opportunity for such reading. If, on the other hand, your class has not reached this stage, your only possibility of whetting their appetites and arousing their interest lies in reading aloud to them."

Frank Smith's advice is pertinent:

> "....the solution requires that the teacher should read for children what they cannot read for themselves...
>
> Reading on behalf of children helps to achieve three important objectives in beginning to read and continuing to learn to read:
>
> (i) Understanding the functions of print....
>
> (ii) Gaining familiarity with written language....
>
> (iii) Getting the chance to learn."
>
> (Smith F. 1978 pp. 143 - 144).

4. Reading aloud to children allows them to see what literature offers them - that in literature the web of enchantment is their's for the reading.

The sensitive, informed teacher will select books to read aloud that are appropriate and relevant for her particular class. A sensitive reading aloud of these books will stir the children's emotion and imagination as they experience the power of language in terms of mood and atmosphere. The impact on children is incredible and can hardly be described as they hang onto every word, completely caught up in the web of enchantment.

As Charlotte Huck puts it: "Literature opens windows for children that they never knew existed; it helps them to entertain new ideas, to see the world from a new perspective, and to develop their imaginations."

(Huck C. 1976 p. 706).

5. Reading aloud can influence and form the child's taste in terms of his reading experience in later years.

Quite obviously not every child will enjoy the fare read by the teacher in the same way. But in presenting a colourful cross-section of literature to her classes, individual children develop a taste for particular types of literature - and this aroused interest can have lifetime consequences in that the child then goes on to seek out similar types of books from the library shelves. (Chambers A. 1973 pp. 43-44; Arbuthnot and Sutherland 1972, pp. 660-661).

6. For many children the teacher reading aloud will be their only experience of this activity.

With television, over-demanding sport programmes and often both parents working, the reading aloud of books in the home is an experience that few children have today. For these growing number of children, the teacher reading aloud may be the only time they will ever meet this enjoyment. (Kamm and Taylor 1966, P. 49; Arbuthnot and Sutherland 1972, pp. 729-732 and 748-753; Walker C. 1974 p. 11).

7. For children who DO experience reading problems, hearing books read aloud will be the only way they can ever receive the richness of excellence that is available in literature.

(Chambers A. 1973 p. 44).

8. Reading aloud to children broadens their interests.

The skilful teacher can capitalise on the many avenues of interest that can be explored arising from the reading of children's literature. This may be planned in advance or occur through spontaneous discussion during a reading. (Calthrop K. 1971 pp. 18 - 20 and all of Chapter 3.)

9. Reading aloud to children can develop their understanding of life.

Calthrop quotes a young teacher working in a deprived area who saw in reading to children some of the following values:

"1. It helps them formulate things they've already thought about.

2. It lets them see that the same things happen to other people as to them.

3. It makes them think more carefully about things such as the woman next door.

4. I wanted them to try and gain more understanding of situations, instead of just accepting them.

5. I wanted them to be more subjective, for instance they could see a boy in America in the same situation as themselves, but it was not embarrassing to the children and did not say 'Look! You are in the same situation'.

6. I hoped it would make them foresee problems before they happen - though that is most unlikely.

7. It helps them understand their own attitudes to things, eg. 'Why do we want to stay out late ?'

'Why do you want to drink or smoke ?' "

(Calthrop K. 1971 pp. 12 - 13).

Here must be a teacher of outstanding merit.

10. Reading aloud to children promotes their language development.

Most teachers that I have spoken to seem puzzled by the claim that reading aloud to children actually promotes their language development. From the research, however, it is quite clear that this is the case (refer Annexure 2). The case is summed up by Charlotte Huck who, in referring to the research by Chomsky says:

> "This study confirms the findings of the others; evidently reading to children increases their language development, while those children who have a high linguistic competence are the ones who have been exposed to much literature. On the basis of these research studies alone, all teachers and librarians should feel a responsibility to read aloud to the children in their schools every day. For literature offers the child creative and qualitative opportunities to extend and enrich his language development."
>
> (Italics mine) (Huck C. 1976 p. 26).

11. Through the teacher reading aloud the child experiences the richness of language in terms of its rhythms, structures and cadence.

The importance of the child hearing well structured and

rhythmic language is not well understood by the majority of teachers. The value of this in terms of their secondary experience makes it vital that the primary teacher reads on a regular basis to her class. It provides the child with a 'feel' for language in its many forms:

> "As children listen to stories, verse, prose of all kinds, they unconsciously become familiar with the rhythms and structures, the cadences and conventions of the various forms of written language. They are learning how print 'sounds', how to 'hear' it in their inner ear. Only through listening to words being spoken does anyone discover their colour, their life, their movement and drama."
>
> (Chambers A. 1973 pp. 43 - 44).

12. Reading aloud by the teacher creates a bond, a feeling of trust, of shared experience between the teacher and the class.

Arbuthnot and Sutherland feel that this consequence of reading aloud to a class is reason enough in itself to do so on a regular basis:

> "....regularly scheduled storytime is a quiet period when the problems of the day are set aside. A powerful bond is established between teacher and class as, together, they follow the wonderful adventure of Taran in The High King or laugh at the hilarious antics of Mr Toad in The Wind in the Willows.
>
> The contribution to the mental health of a classroom would be justification enough for taking the time to read aloud to children. The bond of mutual enjoyment that is established between teacher and class during storytime pervades their relationship throughout the day. As a teacher reveals her understanding and sympathy with the plights of fictional characters, she also reveals her potential of understanding and sympathy for the plights of the children in her class. As she reveals her delight in a vivid phrase

> or a fresh bit of imagery, she is also revealing something very personal about herself. It is an act of trust to which children are very responsive. Once the mutual trust is established, the child finds it easier to cope with threatening moments of tension."
>
> (Arbuthnot & Sutherland 1972 pp. 651-652).

13. Time is never wasted.

It has been said to me by sceptics that there is not enough time in the primary school day to permit the 'luxury' of reading aloud to children.

Nothing could be further from the truth. In every school day there are periods of time when for organisational reasons, the children and the teacher have a few minutes to spare. Providing that the teacher is reading frequently and regularly (so as to maintain continuity with the story), these minutes can be used to continue the story. A few minutes before the break intervals, or the remaining minutes after the childrens' bags have been packed and the final bell is to ring, cumulatively provides the teacher and class with time enough to re-enter their interrupted web of enchantment. My own experience has shown me that this habit results in an amazing number of pages being read during the week.

14. Reading aloud and sharing a book provides the teacher with immense scope in terms of thematic teaching.

The teacher has in children's literature a wealth of source material for teaching. As mentioned already (see page 5) the teacher can either plan a theme around the book being read or use children's literature to enrich a theme planned around a particular topic. With more attention being paid to the importance of language across the curriculum, literature provides the teacher with many valuable opportunities and experiences for the children. (Refer Annexure 1).

The case, then, for the teacher reading aloud to the class is clear. Many of the reasons are reason enough in their own right.

Having made passing reference to how often or for how long a teacher should read to her class, this factor needs to be considered in greater detail.

THE AMOUNT OF TIME TO BE SPENT BY THE TEACHER READING ALOUD

The primary classroom is a busy room. The delight of this age-group is their enthusiasm, interest and energy. Very few primary children have become cynical about life and

school in general. Their willingness and their need to please make them extraordinarily responsive to the teacher's instructions, demands or requests.

The teachers on the other hand - sometimes in order to survive, but mainly because they enjoy working in this environment - prepare a range of activities and learning experiences for the children. Naturally these vary from area to area, school to school and class to class - but 'busyness' is a factor common to all.

The nature of the 'busyness' has been the subject of many research projects. (Perhaps the most significant one of late being the ORACLE project funded by the Social Science Research Council in Britain between 1975 and 1980 - refer Galton M. et al Inside the Primary Classroom and subsequent publications.)

This dissertation cannot concern itself with the effectiveness of the various approaches and strategies used by teachers in terms of the 'busyness' that happens in the classroom, but one thing is clear: many of the activities done by the children are of a meaningless, educationally futile nature. I refer here to the endless number of times in any given day where the children are asked to 'draw a picture' (not to be confused with an art activity) or to 'colour in' the teacher-drawn outline of a dog, or to fill in the missing words on a 'worksheet' drawn up by the teacher. These are more child-minding activities than they are

learning-growing activities.

But to admit to this is difficult for any teacher. This is understandable. What is more worrying, however, is for a teacher to believe that she has no time for reading aloud because of the demands of 'the syllabus' and thereby place educationally unsound activities ahead of what has been shown to be educationally worthwhile.

The extent to which teachers in Eastern Cape schools read aloud to their classes will be considered in Part C. It remains to consider what the situation is like in Britain for comparative purposes.

The most recent report on the amount of time teachers read aloud to their classes is that of the Schools Council Project Extending beginning reading. (Southgate, Arnold and Johnson 1981). The report focuses on children aged 7 to 9+ because the project designers felt that at age 7 most children could read and that the next two years were crucial in terms of extending the child's basic abilities. It was hypothesised that teachers did not succeed in this task.

Twenty-seven teachers were involved in the intensive study and daily logs kept of their reading activities. It is notable that all of them read aloud to their classes and that they regarded this practice as one of the best methods of motivating children to read. So interested were the teachers in this aspect of the reading programme that it was decided to enlarge the research to include a greater

number of teachers, for this part of the enquiry. Questionnaires were sent out in July 1977 concerning ways of promoting children's interest in books. One hundred and twenty-seven teachers responded.

The daily logs kept by the teachers showed that the majority of them read aloud to their classes. The researchers believed that the amount of time and number of occasions recorded was an under-estimate - and follow-up interviews confirmed this.

From the original daily logs the researchers comment that

> "....the story period usually lasted for 15 - 20 minutes, usually occurred once each week, and was generally found at the end of the day - often on Friday afternoon."
>
> (Southgate V. et al 1981 p. 151).

If we tabulate their next comment the pattern appeared to follow this table:

TABLE 7.

NUMBER OF PERIODS PER WEEK READING TO THE CLASSES

Number of weekly story sessions.	No. of classes	
	7 Years	9+ Years
1	10	4
2 - 3	4	5
Daily	1	1
Nothing recorded (age not stated)	2	

The subsequent interviews with these teachers lead the researchers to believe that "....many teachers read aloud to their classes four or five times a week in sessions of 15 - 30 minutes." (p. 151).

The results of the questionnaire in terms of analysing the daily logs showed the following:

TABLE 8

NUMBER OF OCCASIONS TEACHERS READ TO THEIR CLASS PER WEEK

	% of teachers	
No. of occasions	7 Years	9+ Years
1	2	4
2	7	12
3	23	26
4	18	25
5	41	25
6	2	4
7	-	2
8	-	2
9	-	-
10	7	-

TABLE 9

TIME PER WEEK SPENT ON READING TO THE CLASS

Time		% of teachers	
Hrs.	Min	7 Years	9+ Years
-	30	7	11
-	45	11	7
1	00	23	23
1	15	5	5
1	30	18	24
2	00	9	11
2	15	2	-
2	30	23	11
3	00	-	4
3	30	-	2
4	00	2	2

(Source: Southgate et al 1981 p. 152).

In terms of these tables they comment:

> "It can be noted from these tables that teachers of each age-group showed great variations in the amount of time they spent per week on reading to children; the range being from half-an-hour to four hours. The majority of teachers, however, spent between one hour to two-and-a-half hours per week on this activity. The figures reflect the fact that sessions usually lasted between 10 and 30 minutes and generally occurred three to five times per week."
>
> (Southgate et al 1981 p. 153).

Using the same approach as was used with the Bullock Report data, allows an approximate comparison of the surveys and a better idea of practice in British schools:

TABLE 10

ADAPTED LISTENING TIME FOR COMPARATIVE PURPOSES (As %)

	7 Years	9+ Years
No time listening	0	0
Up to 30 minutes per week	7	11
Up to 60 minutes per week	34	30
Up to 90 minutes per week	23	29
Up to 120 minutes per week	9	11
Up to 150 minutes per week	25	11
More than 150 minutes per week	2	8

TABLE 11

ADAPTED NUMBER OF 30 MINUTE PERIODS PER WEEK (As %)

Periods	7 Years	9+ Years
1	7	11
2	34	30
3	23	29
4	9	11
5	25	11
More than 5	2	8

Table 12 (page 63) is a frequency polygon comparing the Bullock Report and Schools Council Project data, as adapted by me:

TABLE 12 : FREQUENCY POLYGON COMPARING THE BULLOCK REPORT and SCHOOLS COUNCIL PROJECT DATA.

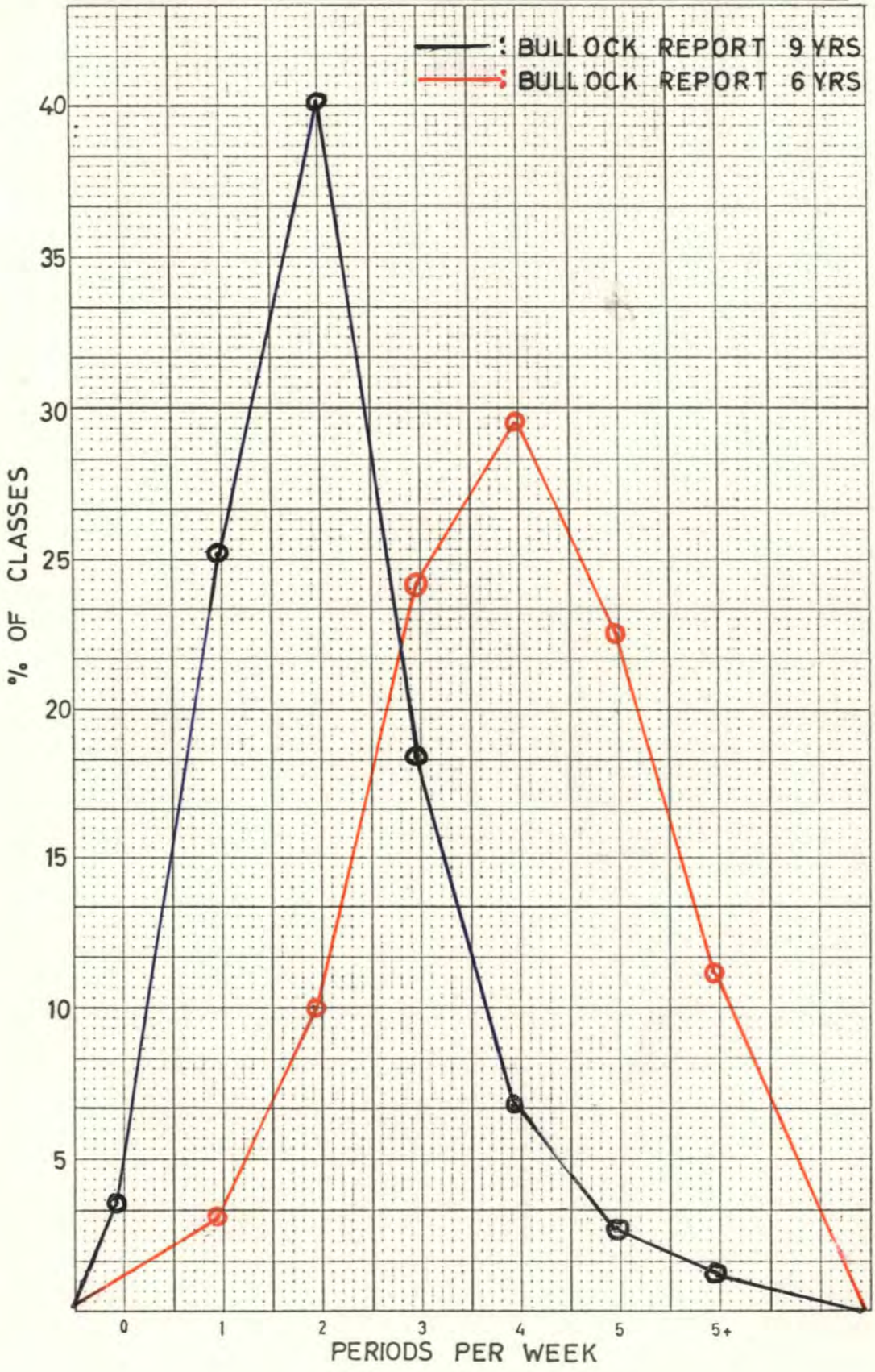
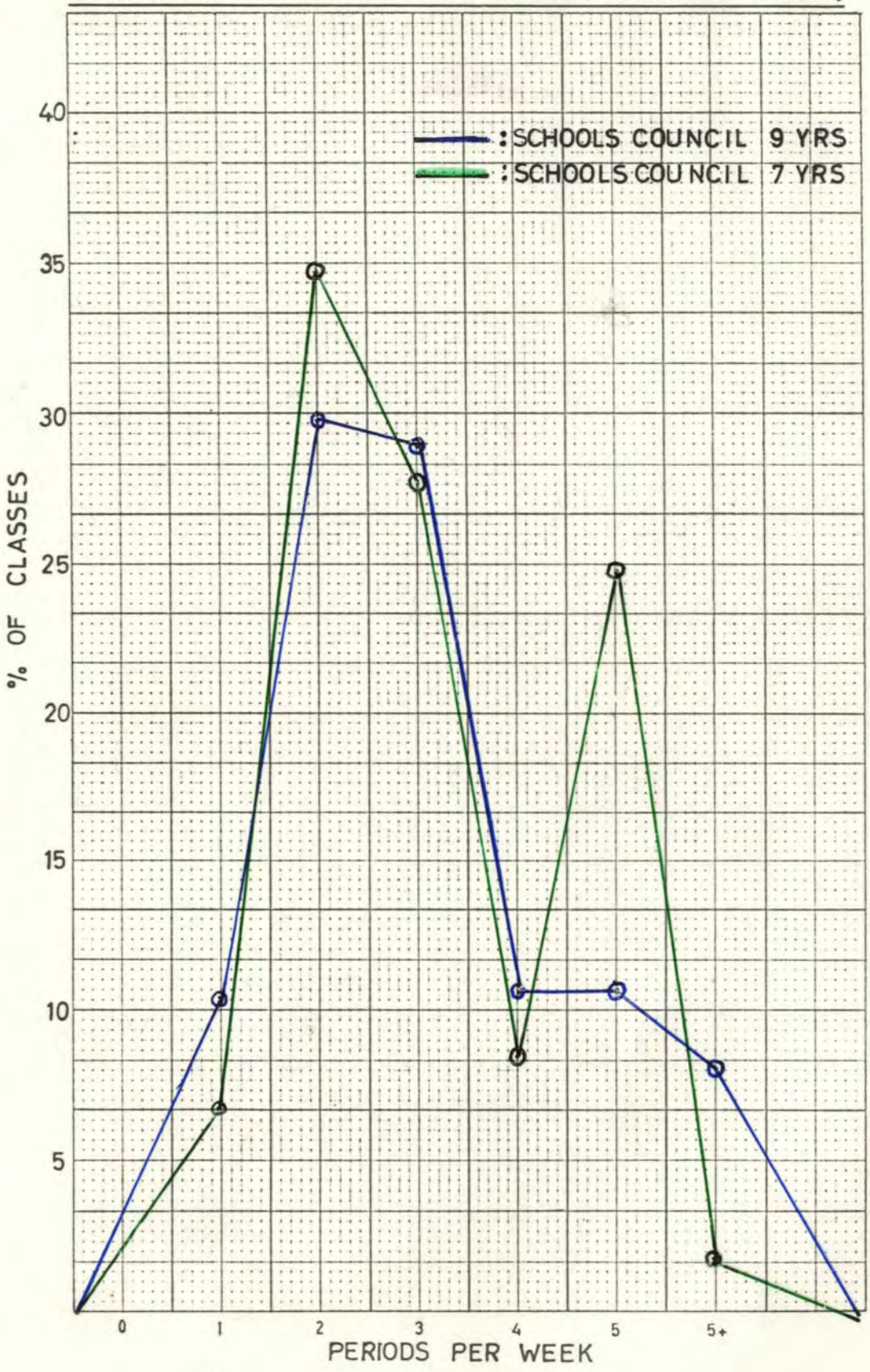


TABLE 12 : FREQUENCY POLYGON COMPARING THE BULLOCK REPORT and SCHOOLS COUNCIL PROJECT DATA.



The similarity between the two reports is remarkable.

The question of how our own schools compare with these findings is one of the central issues taken up in Parts B and C which follow.

PART B

AN INDICATION OF CURRENT PRACTICE IN SOME EASTERN CAPE SCHOOLS: AN EXAMINATION OF THE TEACHERS' GUIDE.

"By now it should hardly be necessary to condemn the practice of 'reading round the class'. Nothing is more deadening, tortuous, and degrading to children as readers as well as to the words they are allowed to garble. Yet it is still a method imposed in some schools: the lazy teacher's refuge from hard work, thoughtful planning and organization, and patience. Reading round the class is essentially so wrong because it is a method that mixes up different purposes that ought never to be mixed."

(Chambers A. 1973 o. 61).

Reference to the Cape Education Department syllabus was made in Part A, page 10, where the teacher has to provide a 'balanced' programme that includes the children being trained to read aloud as well as the need for the teacher to read frequently to her class. Comment was also made about the aims of English teaching as described in the English syllabus. A closer examination of the Cape Education Department Guide is necessary.

The syllabus itself was to be implemented in January 1981, while the Teacher's Guide was published in 1982.

No teacher can be blamed for feeling confused as they work through the Guide. The contradictions that occur are far too numerous for a document that is taken very seriously by teachers and headteachers alike - particularly those that are insecure as a result of lack of experience or who may feel that their teacher training has become out-dated in view of the many developments in primary education during the past thirty years.

Yet, in saying that teachers and headteachers tend to take official documents such as the Guide seriously or earnestly, it is paradoxical that too many of them translate the recommendations in such a rigid manner in terms of teaching strategies that they obviously overlook one of the key statements made in the introduction:

"Any syllabus must necessarily be incomplete;

> it is at best an indication, a guide, without which there may well arise vagueness and a lack of continuity. The syllabus should then be interpreted, not in any narrow prescriptive sense, but rather as directive and suggestive."
>
> (Guide 1982 p. 3).

In terms of the aims of English teaching, the Guide reiterates the importance of developing the child's ability to read in such a way that "....reading may become a source, not only of profitable information, but of life-long pleasure." (p. 4).

This is admirable - but when we next examine the recommendations in so far as 'reading aloud in the classroom' is concerned, keeping in mind the recommendations outlined in Part A of this dissertation, the confusion or contradictions become apparent. The contradictions are the less understandable because of the many sound practices advocated.

To achieve the aims of the syllabus, the Guide states that teachers must:

> "....constantly bear in mind that....
>
> (2) reading is a skill which requires practice; (A child who can read words and "bark at print" is not necessarily an efficient reader. A variety of sub-skills is involved in the reading process, starting with recognition and leading up to such useful skills as skimming, note-taking and summarising.)"
>
> (Guide 1982 p. 31).

This advice reflects the most recent research. (Walker C. 1974; Schools Council Project 1981). The examples cited

are accepted as being worthwhile in the development of functional reading skills and involve silent reading on the part of the pupil. (See Natal Education Department Guide, pp. 18 - 35 , for an interesting exposition on why the emphasis must be on silent reading in achieving these aims. Refer Annexure 6).

Frank Smith (1974) in particular would endorse the comment that it is not our function to train children to 'bark at print' for this is exactly what many children do when reading aloud round the class.

Yet in point 4 that follows, the Guide continues:

> "(4) in standard 2 reading should be taught daily for the acquisition of the necessary skills, i.e. word-attack skills, comprehension, breath control, phrasing, tempo, emphasis etc."

Breath control....tempo....emphasis - these are the skills involved in reading aloud. The teacher, surely, will interpret point 4 as being the need to include for all of the children, a programme of reading aloud ? As Chambers might say, it is the start of mixing various purposes in reading.

The Guide then moves on to The General Approach to Reading. The authors note that because most of the children will be able to read with fluency and understanding, the emphasis shifts to what they call "continuation-reading". (Wisely,

they also advise the teacher not to assume that all of the children are able to read with reasonable fluency and understanding - and that special teaching strategies are necessary for these children).

But most of the children are ready for "continuation-reading" or reading extension. This is in accord with many of the reports I have examined in Part A (see pages 24 and 53, for example). The Guide, however, then lists in detail teaching strategies that are anything but what are recognised internationally as extension procedures. It is almost as if "continuation-reading" procedures are just that - a continuation of endless hours spent in the "deadening, torturous and degrading" exercise of reading aloud. Worse, the Guide advocates a procedure that emphasises group oral reading - and we have seen what Walker had to say of this (refer Part A, p. 18). From paragraphs 1.3, page 32 to paragraph 1.5, page 37, the Guide provides details about these group procedures that is astonishing in its absurdity. Consider the following:

> "Group teaching offers many advantages:
> + the good reader is not bored by the efforts of the weak reader;"
>
> (Paragraph 1.3 p. 32).

The question that arises from this is whether it is acceptable, by implication, for the average or weak readers to be bored by their inability to read worthwhile material

aloud in their groups ?

The Guide continues:

> " + readers of comparable ability can compete with and stimulate each other."

I find this 'advantage' nothing less than horrifying. As the average or weak readers read aloud to each other, is the teacher expected to devise some sort of 'competition' along the lines of 'see how many times Peter stumbles' (cheers and joy from and for his opposition who then score 'points' at Peter's expense). What happens to the attitude towards reading of those children who inevitably go on to being the 'losers' ?

That such a recommendation be included in an official guide book is nothing less than a disgrace.

As to how readers of comparable ability then 'stimulate' each other defies explanation.

The Guide then offers advice on how to form groups. Having done so, the teacher by "regular observation of the pupils performing (my italics) in the group situation....may realise that certain pupils have been misplaced and moves are made". (Paragraph 1.5.3.). The authors continue: "Evaluation is thus taking place all the time and the teacher is aware of the progress the pupils are making at all times."

One is reminded here of Walker's note that in reality, in this situation ".... the end result is that (the teacher)

effectively loses control over the responsibility for the reading behaviour of almost the entire class." (Walker C. 1974 p. 16).

In paragraph 1.5.5. we see that

> "Heterogeneous grouping should be applied from time to time to provide a welcome change (sic), for the social benefits of such change and for the stimulating effect the better readers offer."

The question of course, is whether this implies that in other circumstances the less capable readers have been operating in a situation without stimulation ?

The paragraph continues:

> "On occasions there should be reading lessons when the class reader, or a book in possession of each pupil is used."

One might well ask what the children use at other times - or, for that matter, the justice that will be done to the 'class reader', however one interprets the latter. Besides, it is my experience that children object to a peer reading the class reader that is normally read during 'story-time' by the teacher, unless there happens to be an exceptional child in the class who does have the required skills. Even then, this type of child gets 'used' by the teachers at short notice, meaning that the child invariably reads without having prepared the reading. Charlotte Huck reminds us that "Anyone reading a story to children should be familiar with the story and should have reread it in preparation for sharing it orally. In this way the reader

can emphasize particularly well written passages, read dialogue as conversation, anticipate the timing of amusing remarks...."

(Huck C. 1976 p. 716).

As to the value of a child reading a passage from 'a book in his possession' without guidance on the part of the teacher (the preparation of which will be considerable in a class of thirty children), I cannot see how this will extend the reading ability of the rest of the group in a meaningful way.

The teacher is then offered advice on how many children make up a group:

> "A bright group could conceivably consist of ten pupils, while there might be only four pupils in the weaker group. In practice it is recommended that there be no more than six pupils in a group."
>
> (Paragraph 1.5.7 p. 34).

Apart from the glaring contradiction in this paragraph, the teacher is then advised to

> "....spread the groups around the room - and adjacent areas - so that the noise level doesn't interfere with concentration."
>
> (Italics mine)

The groups, thus, are now reading aloud 'round the ring'. During this lesson the teacher, meanwhile, in the classroom and adjacent areas somehow must "....monitor all groups.... but spend more time with the weaker readers, encouraging them and helping them." (Paragraph 1.5.7).

Groups will be divided into three categories ("fluent, intermediate, and weak readers."). Amazingly,

> "The groups should be kept fluid, with pupils moving as the need arises. Weaker readers should never (my italics) be allowed to feel that they are inferior (despite the earlier idea of 'competitions') and will be in the bottom group permanently. Regular re-grouping will obviate any feeling of inferiority or failure."

Other than 'sharing' the shame of being in the 'weak' group by 'demoting' the intermediates at times, just how does the teacher achieve these ends ?

Equally astonishing, "the Fluent Group need (sic) little help." I have yet to meet a child in the senior primary phase who cannot benefit from sound reading teaching strategies. The authors continue, with reference to the fluent group:

> "From the reader's expression and use of punctuation you can detect weaknesses or lack in comprehension. Allow the pupils of this group the pleasure of reading at their own pace silently."

I cannot help wonder if there has been a printing or publishing error in this incredible paragraph ?

The fluent group is to be 'used' in other ways as well:

> "Use these children to be "helpers" to listen to and help with the intermediate group's reading. Give them some form of badge or identification so that the others will know who the helpers for the day are. They wear the badge with pride and this is a good incentive for the intermediate group who may be very close to this position and privilege."

The question that arises is whether the less 'able' 'readers' are to be given a badge or some form of identification that they are not the successful readers ? On the other hand, perhaps the absence of a badge is identification enough.

Evidently the responsibility and task of the teacher is lessened by virtue of the qualities and abilities of the badge-wearing elite:

> "The Intermediate Group still need help but are able to cope on their own with the help of members of the Fluent Group. They need much practice in reading aloud (with a helper). They need prompting. They use contextual clues as well as the phonic method. There must be someone to reinforce or prompt, otherwise no progress is made."

Thus, the members of the 'fluent group' act as

+ prompters
+ teachers capable of providing contextual clues
+ teachers providing the phonic skills and knowledge to allow the 'intermediates' to unlock words that are not recognised
+ reinforcers (where necessary).

The case for the 'weak readers' differs. For them a daily dose of reading aloud to the teacher is recommended, along with a further session with their ever-suffering parents (assuming the parents are available and if so, prepared to listen to their unfortunate 'weak reader' in a sympathetic, understanding way):

> "The Weak Readers are in every class and need DAILY reading to the teacher. They need much practice to

> gain confidence. Much positive reinforcement should be given to keep reading a happy experience....These pupils may read aloud to their parents at home, but ONLY with the teacher's choice of reading material. It must be ensured that the parents are not harsh but keep the reading time happy."

(Though how the teacher monitors and controls the last statement is not covered.)

The authors of the Guide used the Neale Analysis of Reading Ability test as a source for noting common errors that occur in reading aloud. (Unfortunately they do not acknowledge this). They point out that:

> "Common errors made by all three categories and requiring the teacher's help are mispronunciations, substitutions, refusals/hesitations, additions, ommissions and reversals."

How the teacher is to monitor all of these performance factors amongst all the children and provide meaningful teaching to correct them (if they need correcting) is not suggested. In practice, even the fluent group will make these 'errors' - and no teacher could provide a programme to overcome these 'difficulties'.

Worse is the fact that these categories of 'error' are arrived at by the prostitution of this well known reading test - which is designed for application in a one-to-one situation of teacher and pupil.

The Guide, as was said earlier, also provides recommendations that are in keeping with the advances made elsewhere in the strategies available for real reading extension to take place. Reading aloud to a teacher is a practice widely used for

assessing reading ability or for diagnostic purposes (Daniels and Dyack 1977). But if the purpose of the teacher is to

1. promote and develop functional reading skills; and

2. promote reading for enjoyment (Bullock Report p.115),

then reading aloud is left behind once the child has adequate skills to read with meaning and enjoyment. As pointed out by Aidan Chambers, it would seem that the authors of the Guide have not given enough thought to purpose in reading teaching strategies, because they follow on the recommendations already described with sound advice.

In paragraph 1.6 they begin by acknowledging that reading aloud by the pupil to the teacher is a diagnostic tool:

> "It is widely accepted that reading aloud, in the Senior Primary phase, is an aid to the teacher enabling him to judge in what measure the pupil has progressed in the complex operation of turning written symbols into language and to ascertain in what respects he needs help in comprehending the written text."

However, as will be seen in the tables that follow, half the teachers in the senior primary phase from our sample continue to have the children read aloud despite the Guide's recommendation that:

> "As the pupil masters the basic reading skills, so reading aloud becomes increasingly less necessary as a control and the emphasis in teaching falls more and more on the mastery of the advanced reading techniques which will ensure that the pupil becomes more competent in grasping the

content of reading material."

(Guide paragraph 1.6 p. 37).

(What is overlooked is that reading aloud, to be effective, is one of the most advanced skills in reading. This accounts for the fact that student-teachers require considerable training in this skill - refer Annexure 3).

Contrary to the detail listed in the five pages preceding paragraph 1.6, the Guide then continues:

> "Until quite recently the emphasis in teaching fell upon the acquisition of the ability to read aloud. The aim of reading has little by little undergone a change of emphasis from reading aloud to silent reading for pleasure or information. However a limited amount of reading aloud remains necessary throughout the primary school because of the clear diagnostic indication it gives."

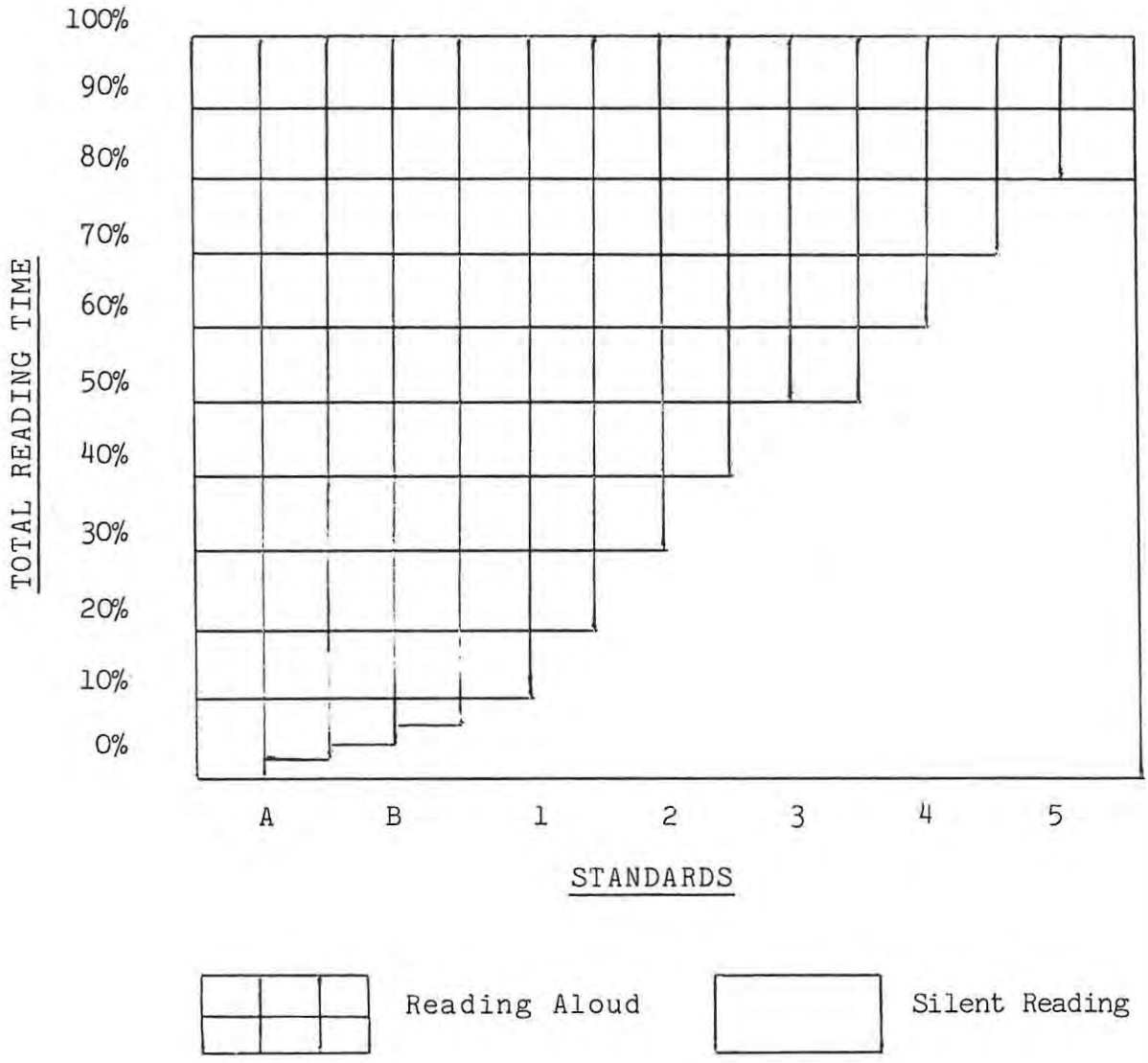
It is almost as though the authors of paragraphs 1.1 to 1.5 and paragraph 1.6 are different people.

Unfortunately the Guide then considers the amount of time to be devoted to reading aloud as compared to silent reading, in a statistical approach that denies the complexity of reading advancement within a class of thirty-or-so individual children:

> "The question arises of what the relationship of time devoted to reading aloud to time for silent reading should be. The graph herewith gives an approximate representation of the relationship. From this it is apparent that reading aloud decreases in a measure while silent reading

increases correspondingly. It is recommended that from Std. 2 the time devoted to silent reading be progressively increased until in Std. 4 about 75% of the time available for reading instruction be given to silent reading".

RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN PUPILS' SILENT READING AND READING ALOUD



This means that the official recommendation is that of the time available for reading instruction, the teachers should

devote the following to reading aloud by the pupils:

Standard 2 .....70%
Standard 3 .....50%
Standard 4 .....40% - 25% (see graph)
Standard 5 .....20%

In the light of the overwhelming evidence that reading aloud by the children in this phase should be phased out for all but those children requiring remedial reading teaching (Part A of this dissertation), these recommendations are unsound and outdated.

The confusion of purposes is furthered in paragraph 1.7, where, in the dying minutes of a reading lesson, drama techniques may be introduced:

> "A few minutes at the end of a reading lesson can be profitably set aside for individuals or groups to read aloud to the rest of the class. A useful technique here is dramatised reading, as it allows a greater number of pupils the opportunity of reading aloud. In a dramatised reading one pupil reads the narrative while others read the words spoken by various characters in the story. For this sort of reading an extract with much direct speech is necessary. This also gives the pupil the opportunity to give expression to the words he is reading."

Read closely, the implementation of these recommendations becomes hightly suspect. Firstly, any knowledge about drama as a learning medium abrogates this misuse of drama techniques (Wagner B.J. 1979). Secondly, for individuals or groups to carry this out requires much more than a 'few

minutes' at the 'end of a lesson'. Thirdly, for effective reading aloud by children, considerable preparation is required if it is to be successful. Fourthly, how does the teacher ensure that at the end of the lesson the children happen to have a passage that has the required 'amount' of direct speech ? Fifthly, if the children have been reading aloud, was it done without expression if this technique as recommended has as one of its virtues the "opportunity to give expression to the words" ?

The confusion of purposes is then augmented as, in the same paragraph 1.7, the Guide now turns to the question of the teacher reading aloud:

> "Good recordings may be used to serve as models for the pupils, but the teacher's own reading aloud should be a constant example for the pupils to follow."

Evidently, then, we must see reading aloud serving as a model, an example, for the children's own reading aloud. In Part A of this dissertation this was not one of the many reasons why there is value in the teacher reading aloud.

The confusion of purpose continues as the paragraph continues, though at last the reasoning is sound:

> "Few activities can be more valuable than the skilful reading aloud by the teacher of works that he and/or the pupils enjoy."

(The "and/or" is unfortunate - refer Part A pp. 8-9. Both the teacher and the children should enjoy the book being

read by the teacher. There certainly is a wide enough choice of material if the teacher makes it her business to know about and read children's literature.)

The Guide continues:

> "Even (sic) older children enjoy having stories read to them. This is also an excellent way of introducing new books to the pupils, especially if the story is started and then put aside at a most exciting, "cliff-hanging" part. This may well be the means of guiding a reluctant reader in the choice of a book. Frequently the reluctant or wary reader is not really reluctant to read: he doesn't know what to read."

At last the recommendations are focussed on what is accepted as being a worthwhile purpose for the teacher reading aloud. But the improvement is short-lived. In the very next sub-paragraph, the Guide then confuses purpose yet again as it turns once more to the pupils reading aloud - and note again the last sentence in terms of organisation:

> "Ordinary fluent, clearly audible, natural reading should be encouraged at all times. To assist pupils practise the techniques of effective presentation and voice projection in audience situations, they may be given the opportunity of reading the passage of Scripture at the School Assembly. Play readings and choral work are useful. Time may be set aside at the end of reading lessons for these activities."
>
> (Guide paragraph 1.7 p.40).

Having dealt with The General Approach to Reading, the Guide turns to section 2: "Reading and comprehension activities - higher order reading skills."

In this section there is much that is commendable in the

promotion of functional reading skills. Unfortunately, however, it is left to the teacher to sort out those activities to do with functional reading from those to do with recreational reading (Refer Bullock Report paragraph 8.1 p. 115.)

Under "Reading activities" the teacher is immediately confronted with the need to have the children reading aloud:

> "2.2.1 READING ALOUD
>
> The reading aloud of the text by one person is followed by class reaction to the questions. This is a whole class activity. Alternatively class discussion may be followed by written answers."
>
> (Guide paragraph 2.2.1 p. 42).

Thus, once the teacher has deemed her whole class ready for higher order reading skills (though how the 'weak readers' achieved this growth in so short a time is not made clear), the teacher then has one child read a passage aloud, to which the whole class now responds by answering questions orally or, worse still, in writing.

The Guide then lists some very worthwhile activities such as cloze procedure, but reading aloud by the pupils is to reappear yet again in paragraph 2.2.5:

> "READING ALOUD.
>
> Members of a group are given an extract to prepare to read aloud to the class at the end of the lesson. This also affords the teacher the opportunity of assessing the pupils' ability to read aloud and

> overall comprehension and interpretation of the extract."

Again the question that emerges is how the members of the groups are to do this at the end of the lesson. Even if each child in an average class of thirty children was to read for as little as a minute, the logistics are bound to fail the teacher. Then too, the authors say this also affords the teacher assessment opportunities - but the question remains: 'also to what ?'

In section 3 Reading skills applied the second reference is made to the need for the teacher to read aloud. The pity is the brevity of the recommendation:

> "Always have a book in the classroom from which to read to the class. Encourage membership of public libraries as well as use of the school library."
>
> (Paragraph 3.1 p. 47).

Finally, the Guide provides a list of the "levels of reading skills which should be developed" (p. 49). In it is found a repetition of the need for the teacher to plan for the children to read aloud - and the survival of 'archaic practices' in so many of our schools. Thus in standards 3 and 4 the teacher must ensure that

> "Oral reading should be fluent, with expression. This is largely confined to drama and verse."
>
> (p. 50).

The Guide on the evaluation of reading.

In most Cape Education Department schools, considerable importance is attached to tests, examinations and marks.

(The consequences of this on the primary school should be the subject of a major study in terms of the effect this has on the teaching programme - particularly as we have the British experience of the '11+ syndrome' as a model for reflection and comparison).

Most of our primary schools, because of departmental recommendations, ask of the teacher a 'mark' for 'reading', amongst the other considerable lists of marks that must be submitted. Quite obviously the teachers will teach in such a way as to arrive at a mark for the activity to be reported on. Thus, if the official Guide calls for a mark for reading aloud, reading aloud there shall be. And therein lies one of the major reasons for the retention of a practice that is elsewhere "....mercifully dead and mourned by few." (Cutforth and Battersby 1962 p. 38).

If the amount of detail in a guide is an indicator of the importance attached to an activity, then it is reasonable to suppose that teachers will interpret reading aloud by the children as very important. The Guide is explicit in its detail. The Guide's recommendations are shown in Annexure 8. The recommendations are so unsound that they deserve no further comment. What is of concern is that most teachers will carry out these procedures. The extent to which they will do so is highlighted by a 'refinement' of the recommendations as seen in the following scheme. This scheme of assessment was given to one of my student-teachers at a

school during a teaching practice period. Surely the scheme tests ability in voice production and dramatic techniques rather than reading ?

AFRIKAANS / ENGLISH : FIRST / SECOND LANGUAGE

READING : 20

A SUGGESTED BASIS FOR ASSESSMENT

1.	INTERPRETATION How did the reader interpret the passage read ? Expression, phrasing, vocal tone and colour	10
	Excellent:	8, 9, 10
	Very Good:	7
	Good:	6
	Average:	4, 5
	Weak:	1, 2, 3
2.	ACCURACY	5
	No mistakes:	5
	Thereafter: For prepared reading deduct 1 mark and for unprepared reading deduct 1/2 mark For each major error, including mispronunciation.	
3.	AUDIBILITY	3
	Good, clear, strong, audible reading:	3
	Not loud enough or too loud:	2
	Too soft:	1
	Inaudible, listener has to strain to hear:	0
4.	SPEED	2
	Just the correct speed:	2
	Too fast or too slow:	1

To summarise, the Guide suggests that group oral reading is a major reading teaching strategy. The findings of Dr Joyce Morris in the Kent Reading Survey provide a perspective that outlines why the Guide requires urgent revision:

> "Dr Joyce Morris (1966) comments that, in the observations of reading instruction made during the preparation of the Kent Reading Survey, she and her colleagues felt group reading to be the very least productive approach to the teaching of reading....The disadvantages are many and often I have observed lessons where the teacher spent more time and energy in keeping the children in their places and following the text than in helping them with their reading. I felt in fact that the major object was to exhibit the authority of the teacher. Disciplinary difficulties will always arise when the interests and abilities of the children are not being catered for. The width of interest and attainment even in a small group can be quite wide and some will limp through the book with great difficulty whilst another is impatiently wanting to race ahead. Reading speeds in children of equal attainment vary greatly and the child reading aloud usually falls behind those reading silently, for most people can read more quickly than they can speak. Thus the group situation lacks motiviation, for the silent readers are waiting for the oral readers and soon begin to lose interest. The silent reading speed of the children will probably be reduced by constantly being held back. If a more able child is given the position of group leader he can only tell the child the word he does not know, he cannot devise activities to help the child memorize the word he does not know, nor can he keep a record of the help which any child needs. Further if the better readers are used in this way continuously we do them a great injustice by not providing material which will extend their own attainment. If the children are all of roughly the same attainment the only really valuable part of the lesson will be when they have the attention of the teacher."
>
> (Moyle D. 1976 p. 138).

PART C

ACTUAL PRACTICE IN SOME SCHOOLS IN THE EASTERN CAPE

In my own teaching, colleagues and I often express concern about the possible gulf or gap between the theory and practice we teach and the reality confronting the student-teachers when they enter the schools. Research into primary education in South Africa has not been as extensive as that conducted in the United Kingdom or the United States of America and methodology lecturers are compelled to use the findings of others beyond our borders. This is not necessarily a handicap for it provides us with a perspective that permits reasoned reflection on our own educational philosophy, principles and procedures.

In an attempt to make the students aware of the reality in schools while they study the theory and principles of sound primary teaching at university, we use the periods they spend at schools to make them aware of the procedures they will have to adapt to once they qualify as teachers. To this end it is common for lecturers to set assignments where students observe the teaching strategies employed by serving teachers. The students are not permitted to comment on the personal qualities of the teachers; the student's task is to observe teaching strategies in terms of how teachers teach. So as to make their observations more accurate or meaningful, assignments are set in such a way as to achieve these ends. Their observations are focussed on various

aspects of teaching. On returning to the university, considerable discussion is held as to how and where the theory is applicable in the realities of the school situation.

In the Children's Literature course, the students focus on reading aloud in the primary school. A structured observation schedule is maintained - refer Annexure 4. This information is used to provide background for written assignments and group discussion.

Using the data from these schedules and by interviewing students where necessary, some idea of the actual practice in schools becomes possible. The number of schools involved as well as the geographic spread means that the information available, the comment made and conclusions reached are limited to the sample. At the outset, then, it is necessary to point out that a survey of a larger sample is necessary and, as will be shown, a full investigation is required along the lines of the research project conducted by Kenyon Calthrop (1971).

1. Preliminary training of the student-teachers.

Prior to the student-teachers placement in schools, they were given instruction on the points to observe as listed in Annexure 4. Definitions were provided as to the meaning of each category. Every student had prior experience of reading aloud to children as part of their training.

2. The sample.

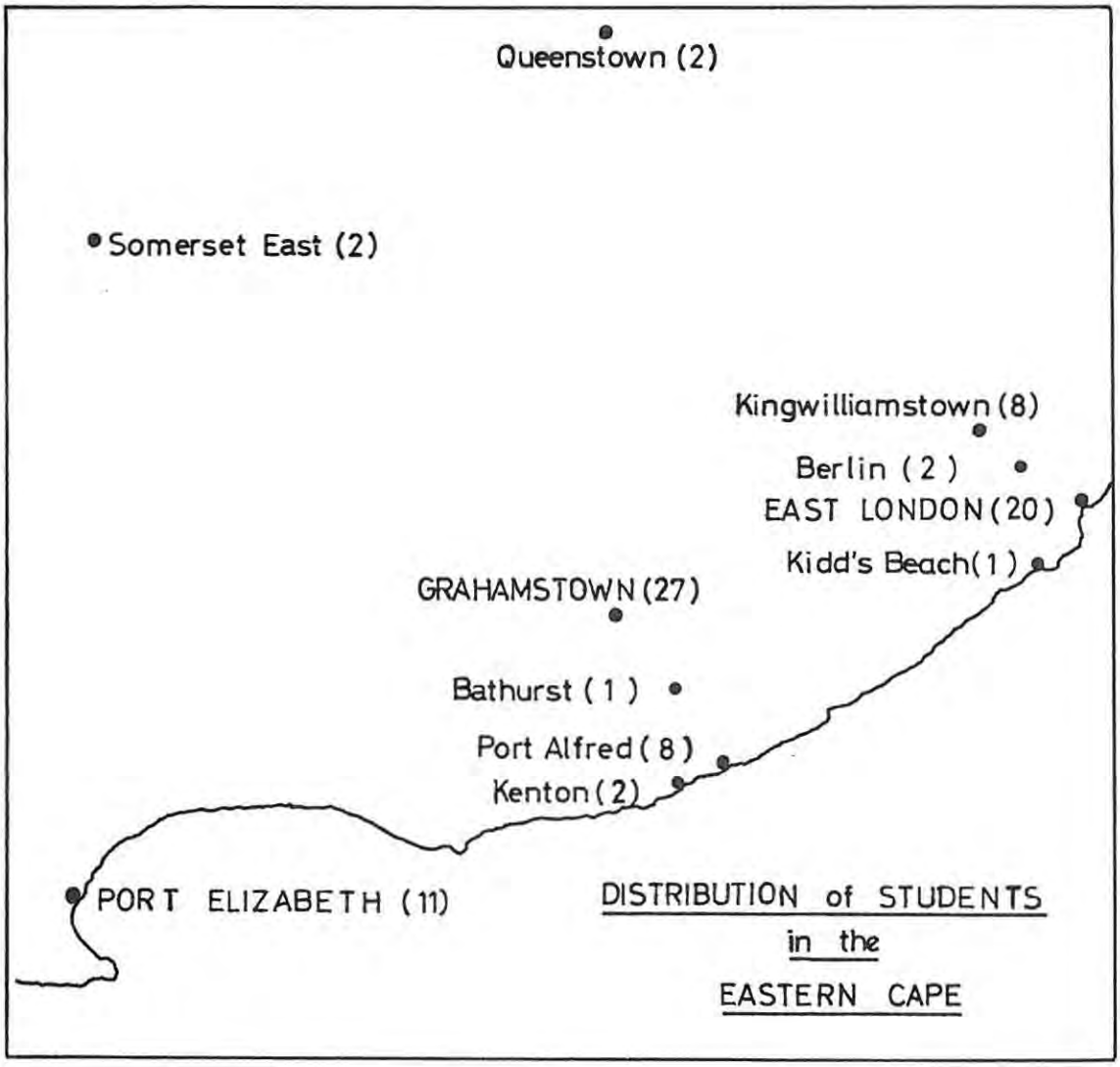
The student-teachers were placed in 84 primary classrooms in 21 schools, ranging from Substandard A to Standard 5. The distribution is shown in Table 13:

TABLE 13

NUMBER OF STUDENTS IN PRIMARY CLASSROOMS

Substandard A	8
Substandard B	12
Standard 1	5
Standard 2	18
Standard 3	17
Standard 4	15
Standard 5	9
TOTAL	84
Total Junior Primary	25
Total Senior Primary	59

The schools include urban, suburban and village schools distributed as follows (with the total number of students placed in each centre):



The sample includes government, private and Department of Internal Affairs schools.

3. Periods of observation.

The student-teachers were in the schools for two 3 week periods from the 25th April 1983 to the 13th May 1983 and again from the 25th July 1983 to the 12th August 1983.

4. Reading to children in the Junior Primary Phase.

While the main emphasis in the Junior Primary phase is on teaching the children how to read, the importance of the teacher reading aloud to the children, as defined in Part A, page 10, in no way differs from that which ought to take place in the Senior Primary phase. (Huck C. 1976, Arbuthnot & Sutherland 1972).

Table 14 shows how many teachers read to their classes during the periods of observation:

TABLE 14

NUMBER OF CLASSES WHERE STUDENTS OBSERVED THE TEACHERS READING ALOUD TO THEIR CLASSES.

Class	Total	Did not	Did
Sub A	8	1	7
Sub B	12	6	6
Std 1	5	2	3
	25	9 (36%)	16 (64%

Of concern here is the fact that 9 of the teachers observed (36% of the sample) were never observed reading stories to their classes during the two observation periods. Also notable is the decrease in the number of teachers who read aloud during an age when they should be showing the children that in reading 'real' books, a world of pleasure awaits them. (Huck C. 1976).

Even more disconcerting is the number of occasions that the teachers read to the children. Bearing in mind that this data concerns only those who were observed reading to the children, the picture that emerges is less than satisfactory:

TABLE 15

NUMBER OF OCCASIONS TEACHERS WERE OBSERVED READING TO THE CHILDREN (OF THOSE WHO WERE OBSERVED READING).

Class	Ideal	Average/week
Sub A	5/week	3,1
Sub B	5/week	2,5
Std 1	5/week	2,3
	5/week	2,7

(Note: The ideal is based on the need for the teacher to read to the class at least once per day.)

Reading aloud to the children is so important that it should be recommended that teachers read to the children every day. In terms of the observations recorded it is noted that on average the teachers who do read aloud are doing so half as often as they ought to. Secondly, the number of occasions decreases as the age of the child increases. The reverse should be the case - as the child becomes more skilful at reading so the incentives to read should increase.

A further consideration is the amount of time spent on this activity during each reading session. For the purpose of comparison with the British data available and the senior

primary phase in the Eastern Cape, I have arbitrarily set 30 minutes per day as the ideal goal. It is recognised that children in this junior primary group might not be able to listen attentively for such a period of time. On the other hand, the junior primary teacher can and should read to the children for this length of time by planning for two sessions per day - such as after break and again before the children leave school at the end of the day.

Table 16 shows how far the teachers are from the ideal. It is also worth noting how the period of time decreases as the children get older - yet it is commonly accepted that their listening skills and concentration span increases. If anything the pattern should reflect more time spent on this activity as the children get older:

TABLE 16.

JUNIOR PRIMARY CLASSES : AVERAGE AMOUNT OF TIME SPENT READING BY THE TEACHER TO THE CHILDREN (OF THOSE THAT WERE OBSERVED READING ALOUD).

Class	Recommended time per week.	Recorded average per week.
Sub A	150 min.	54,0 min
Sub B	150 min.	51,3 min
Std 1	150 min.	39,8 min

Class	No. of 30 minute periods per week	Actual No. of periods
Sub A	5	1,8
Sub B	5	1,7
Std 1	5	1,3
Average	5	1,6

5. Reading aloud in the classroom: Senior Primary Phase.

In part A of this dissertation it was shown why the children reading round the class or reading aloud in groups is now seen by a host of authorities as a worthless reading teaching strategy once the children have achieved the ability to read with meaning and enjoyment. On page 38 the question was posed as to whether teachers in the Eastern Cape still have their children reading aloud in this unproductive way, as well as whether the teachers are reading aloud to the children.

Based on the student-teachers' observations, the picture that emerges is very unsatisfactory.

It appears that just over half of the teachers in the sample continue to use the whole class oral reading strategy, as reflected in Table 17:

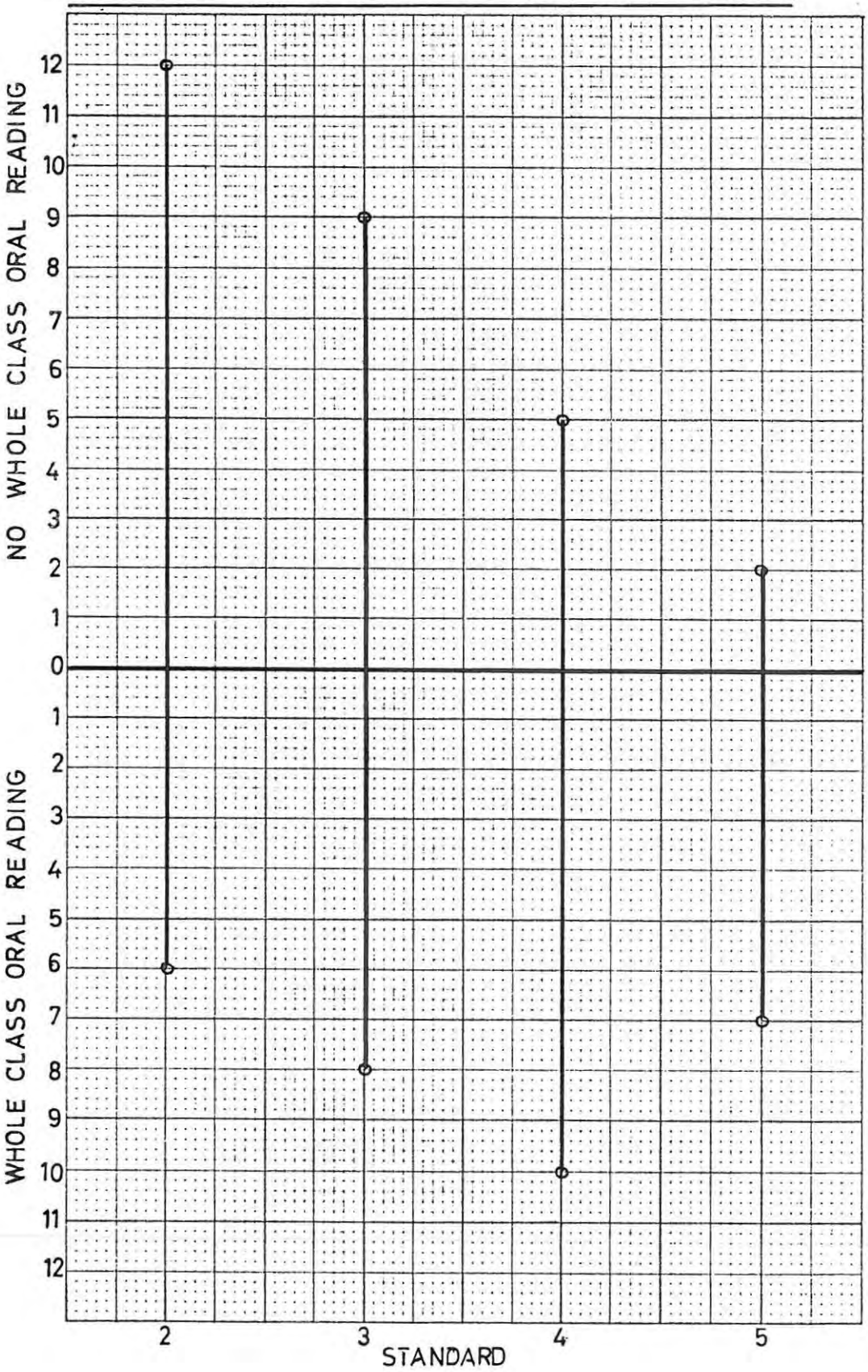
TABLE 17.

WHOLE CLASS ORAL READING (READING ROUND THE CLASS)

Std	Total	No. who do	No. who don't
2	18	6	12
3	17	8	9
4	15	10	5
5	9	7	2
Total	59	31	28
Average		7,8	7
Average %		52,5%	47,5%

Unfortunately the situation worsens as the children become older. Again, if anything the pattern should reflect the opposite to what it is:

TABLE 18: PATTERNS OF WHOLE CLASS ORAL READING.



It has been seen how the Guide places considerable emphasis on group oral reading, despite the consensus of opinion and research findings that this is unwise (Moyle D. 1976, Walker C 1974). The student-teachers report that just over half the teachers (58%) use this strategy in the senior primary phase, as reflected in Table 19:

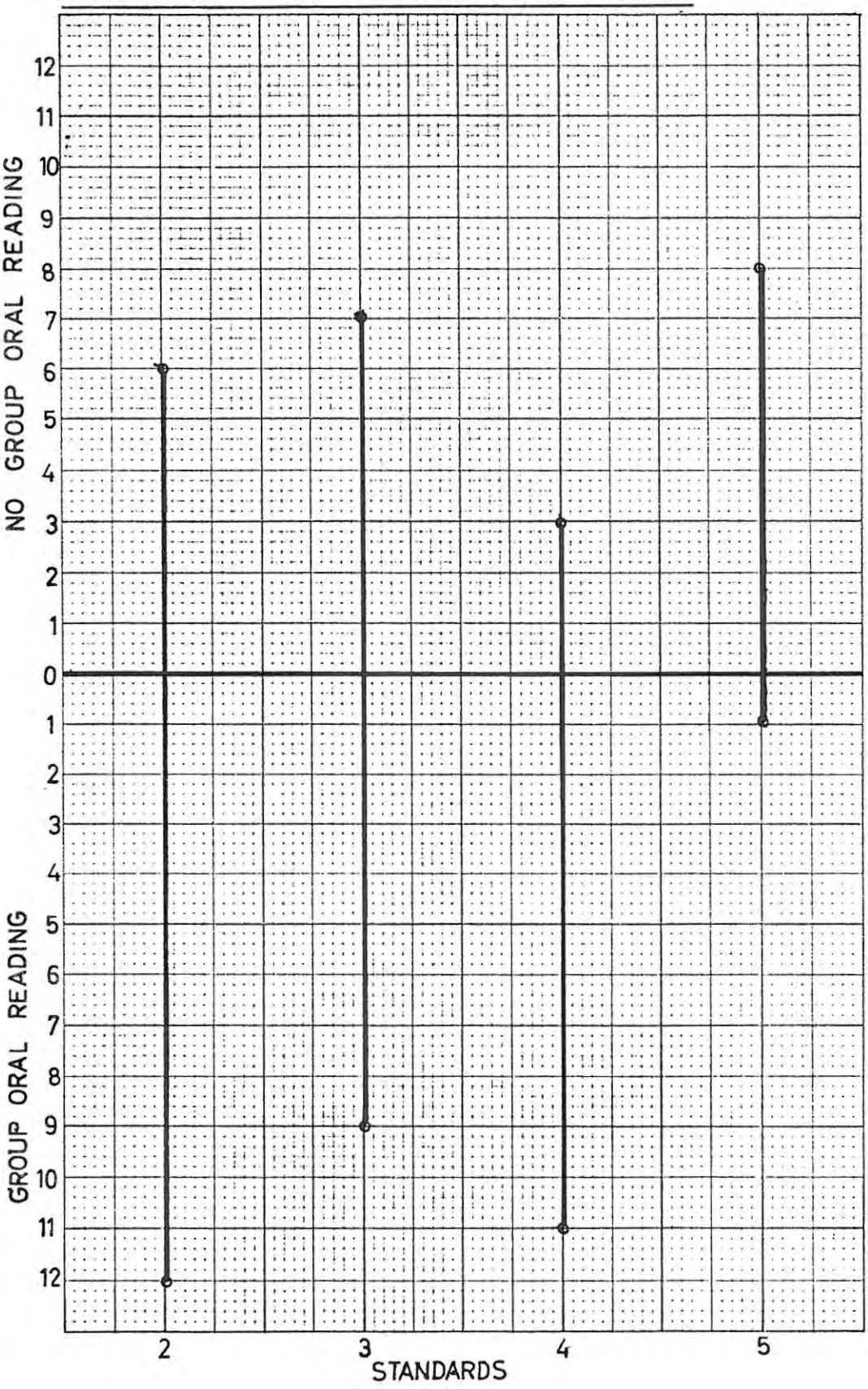
TABLE 19.

GROUP ORAL READING

Std.	Total	No. who do	No who don't
2	18	12	6
3	16	9	7
4	14	11	3
5	9	1	8
Total	57	33	24
Average		8,25	6,0
Average		58%	42%

Table 20 illustrates the pattern and balance between those that use group oral reading strategies and those that do not. Again, the pattern should be reversed, or for that matter, show a negative return for group oral reading.

TABLE 20: PATTERNS OF GROUP ORAL READING.



The practice starts falling away in Standard 5 (which is the first year of the junior secondary phase) but the senior primary phase seems to have adopted this strategy to a large extent (two-thirds of the teachers in standards 2, 3 and 4).

The data for standard 2 is particularly alarming. These children have only just completed the junior primary phase (with its main emphasis on mechanical reading skills) and should be receiving instructional programmes that further develop their functional reading skills as well as their interest in reading for pleasure. Instead, as we have seen from the recommendations in the Guide, many of the children will receive 'tuition' from each other as the teacher concentrates, in main, on the 'weak' group (refer Part B page 89). It surely cannot be claimed that even the 'fluent' group of nine-year-olds have the knowledge, skills and maturity to assist their peers in reading instruction ? What is required is a research study of the growth in reading ability that takes place in these standard 2 classes compared with classes where this practice is not followed.

As has been shown, reading aloud in the classroom should be conducted by the teacher. The importance and value of this activity is such that informed planners should set aside time for this, particularly where schools operate within the framework of a timetable. (Every school in the sample observed did operate according to a timetable). As will be seen, (Table 34), the main reason for teachers not reading

aloud to their classes is a claimed shortage of time (70% of teachers felt this) followed by the fact that reading aloud by the teacher is not timetabled (39%).

The reason for not setting aside time for reading aloud by the teacher is partly one of attitude on the part of time-table planners and partly one of ignorance about the teaching of reading. When teachers do timetable this activity it appears that most of the teachers set aside one period per week, usually for the last period on Friday afternoon.

Table 21 reflects how many teachers do timetable at least one period a week for the teacher reading to the class:

TABLE 21.

SENIOR PRIMARY CLASSES THAT TIMETABLE READING ALOUD FOR AT LEAST ONE PERIOD PER WEEK.

Class	Total	None	Once per week
2	17	16	1
3	17	10	7
4	14	9	5
5	8	3	5
Total	56	38	18
Average		9,5	4,5
Average %		67,8%	32,2%

Once again, the most disturbing feature is that only one of 17 teachers in standard 2 made provision for a set period of time.

If we examine the senior primary group only (i.e. Standards 2, 3 and 4), the figures are worse: 73% of these teachers do not timetable reading aloud to the children.

Of course reading aloud to the children can be fitted into the day without it appearing on the timetable (see Part A, page 70). The advantage, however, of timetabling reading aloud by the teacher is that it ensures a certain minimum amount of time being allocated. Left entirely to chance opportunities, less progress is made in the reading of a book. Secondly, a planned period of time says to the children that reading and sharing books is as important as arithmetic, physical education or any other planned activity.

Three key questions in the student's assignments were whether the teachers:

A. did in fact read to the children ?

B. if so, how frequently ? and

C. for how long ?

In reporting on whether teachers did read aloud, Table 22 does not indicate how frequently or for what periods of time the teachers read to their classes. The glaring area of concern before we consider even the latter variables of frequency and time is the fact that 49% of the teachers were never observed reading on a single occasion during the six week period.

TABLE 22.

SENIOR PRIMARY TEACHERS WHO WERE OBSERVED READING ALOUD TO THEIR CLASSES ON AT LEAST ONE OCCASION DURING THE SIX WEEK PERIOD OF OBSERVATION.

Standard	Total	Did not	Did
2	16	8	8
3	17	6	11
4	15	9	6
5	9	5	4
Total	57	28	29
Average		7	7,25
Average %		49%	51%

In terms of the primary school as a whole, from Substandard A to Standard 5, the evidence shows that as many as 43% of the teachers never read to their classes for enjoyment during the six week period:

TABLE 23.

THE PERCENTAGE OF PRIMARY SCHOOL TEACHERS WHO READ ALOUD TO THEIR CLASSES (SUBSTANDARD A TO STANDARD 5)

Class	Did not	Did
Sub A	12,5	87,5
Sub B	50,0	50,0
Std 1	40,0	60,0
Std 2	51,0	49,0
Std 3	35,3	64,7
Std 4	60,0	40,0
Std 5	55,5	44,5
Total	304,3	395,7
Average %	43,4%	56,6%

If these figures are representative of schools throughout the Province, one wonders if the fears expressed by Cutforth and Battersby are being realised when they wrote in 1962:

> "....it would be a pity if a more valuable old-fashioned habit were to disappear...It used to be accepted that at least a part of a teacher's day was spent in reading to the children."
>
> (Cutforth & Battersby 1962 p. 38.)

Comparing the two primary phases it is apparent that children are read to less as their reading skills improve:

TABLE 24

A COMPARISON OF THE JUNIOR PRIMARY AND SENIOR PRIMARY PHASES - READING ALOUD.

	Did not	Did
Junior Primary	36%	64%
Senior Primary	49%	51%

The irony here is that the junior primary teachers teach the children how to read, while the senior primary teachers should capitalise on this and devise strategies that encourage the children to use their newly acquired reading skills. It follows that the senior primary teacher should encourage and promote reading for pleasure - and one of the most successful ways of doing this is by reading aloud to the children (refer Part A, pp. 60, 61). Therefore, if anything, the pattern should be the reverse of that in Table 24.

Of those teachers in the senior primary phase who did read to their classes, the next question is how often they did this. Table 25 shows this:

TABLE 25.

NUMBER OF OCCASIONS TEACHERS READ TO THEIR CLASSES (SENIOR PRIMARY PHASE).

Standard	Recommended (3 weeks)	Avg/3 weeks	Recommended (1 week)	Avg/week
2	15	5,4	5	1,8
3	15	6,1	5	2,0
4	15	3,3	5	1,1
5	15	6,7	5	2,2

Ideally the teachers should read every day - even if only for five or ten minutes, if that is all that is possible, given the many activities that make up a day in the primary school. (Cutforth and Battersby 1962).

Table 25 shows that this is not being achieved by a long margin. Worse, the number of occasions decreases to 1,1 per week in the final year of the senior primary phase - and we are reminded here that this concerns only those classes where teachers were observed reading to the children.

The next variable that must be considered is the amount of time actually spent reading to the children. The student-teachers recorded the times on the grid in Annexure 4. These have been

totalled and averaged. Then, based on a 30 minute period for the purpose of comparison, the actual number of periods per week is calculated:

TABLE 26.

AVERAGE AMOUNT OF TIME READING ALOUD IN MINUTES, AS WELL AS NUMBER OF THIRTY-MINUTE PERIODS (SENIOR PRIMARY CLASSES)

Class	Recommended 3 weeks	Average 3 weeks	Recommended per week	Average per week	No. of periods recomm.	Actual No of periods
2	450	125,3	150	41,8	5	1,4
3	450	133,2	150	44,4	5	1,5
4	450	116,7	150	38,9	5	1,3
5	450	248,0	150	82,7	5	2,8
Average	450	153,1	150	51	5	1,7

Thus, keeping in mind that these figures are concerned only with the teachers who did read to their classes, the following appears to be the case if each teacher was to read once or twice a day, totalling 30 minutes per day in all:

TABLE 27

PERCENTAGE OF TIME TEACHERS ARE READING TO CHILDREN IF 100% = 30 MINUTES PER DAY

Class	%
2	27,9
3	29,6
4	25,9
5	55,0

The standard 5 returns are the most favourable. From interviews and discussions with the students it would appear that this can be accounted for by the fact that some of the teachers are implementing the junior secondary syllabus which includes the following:

> "Reading
>
> (a) Aims:
>
> .....4. to encourage reading for enjoyment
>
> .....6. to introduce the pupil to some critical study of literature suitable to his stage of development."

Worthy of note is this injunction:

> "Few activities can be more valuable or stimulating than the skilful reading aloud by the teacher from the works that he and the pupils enjoy."
>
> (C.E.D. Junior Secondary Syllabus for English - First Language) (p. 6.)

This is followed by the requirement that in the study of literature the class must cover prescribed works consisting of a one-act play, fifteen poems, a novel and a non-fiction work such as biography (C.E.D. Syllabus for English - First Language - 1973 pp. 5 - 6).

The teachers are thus directed and encouraged to read aloud and share books with their classes. The question that follows is whether it might be worthwhile to include in the senior primary syllabus as clear a statement as found in the junior

secondary syllabus ?

For standards 2, 3 and 4 it is noted in Table 27 that the teachers who did read to their classes only spend an average of 27,8% of the time on this activity if they were to read for thirty minutes per day doing so - a figure that seems far too low.

For the purposes of comparison, the amount of time spent reading by teachers in the senior primary phase is shown in Table 28:

TABLE 28.

NUMBER AND PERCENTAGE OF SENIOR PRIMARY CLASSES IN TERMS OF THIRTY MINUTE CATEGORIES WHERE READING ALOUD OCCURS.

	Std 2	%	Std 3	%	Std 4	%	Std 5	%
0	8	50	6	35	9	60	5	56
0-30 min.	4	25	5	29	2	13	0	0
31-60 min.	2	12,5	3	18	4	27	0	0
61-90 min.	2	12,5	3	18	0	0	3	33
91-120 min.	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	11
120-150 min.	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
150 +	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0

The age of the majority of children in Standard 2 is 8 or 9 and in Standard 3, 9 or 10. This is the nearest equivalent to the Schools' Council Project's second group that they classified as "9+". Thus it is possible to draw a comparison between our Standard 2 and 3 sample with that of the Schools' Council Project,

as well as the 9 year age group from the Bullock Report sample. The results are as follows:

TABLE 29.

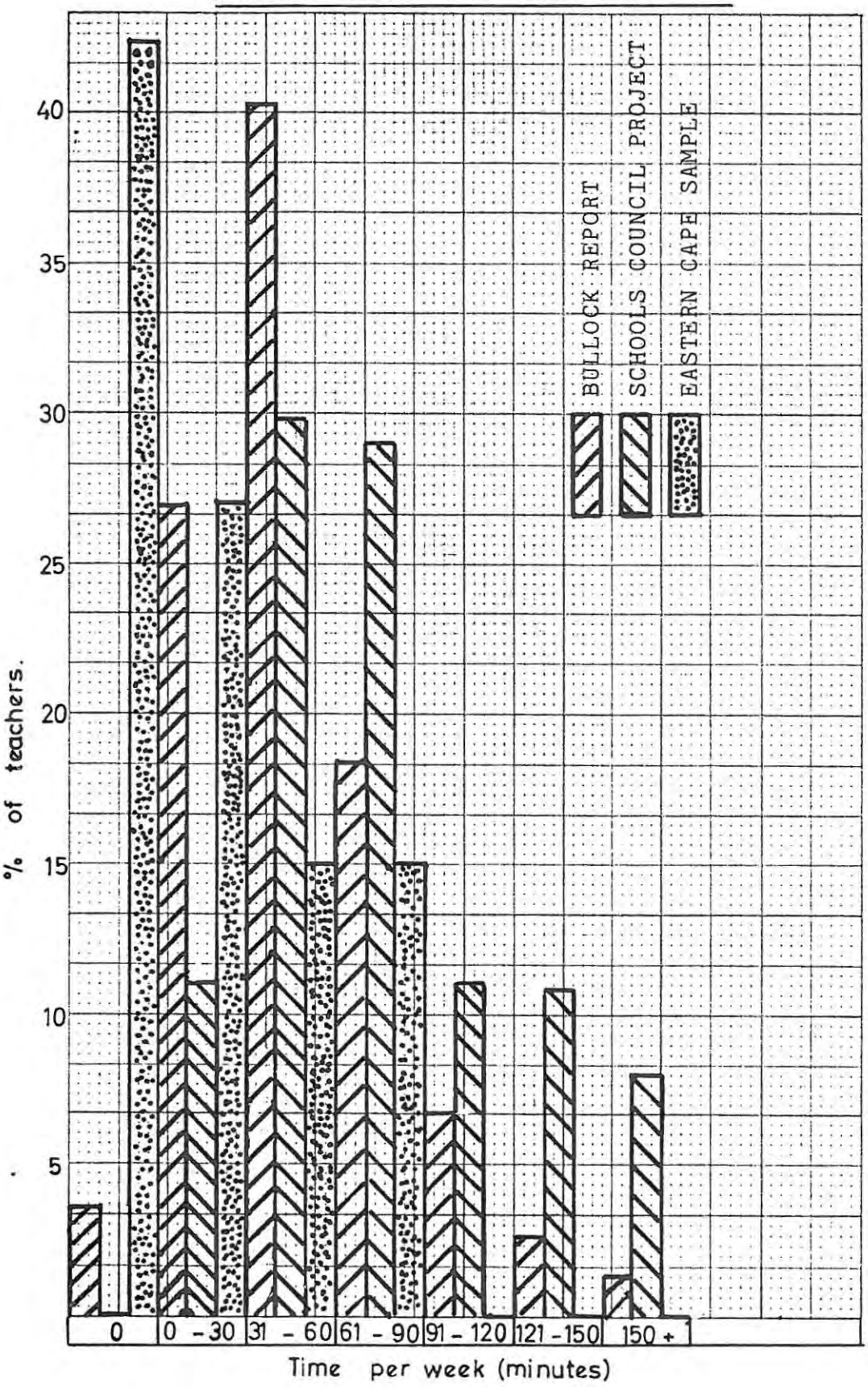
A COMPARISON OF LISTENING TIMES OF 9 YEAR OLDS (as %)

Time	Bullock Report	Schools Council Project	Eastern Cape
0 minutes	3,5	0	42,4
0 - 30	27,0	11,0	27,2
0 - 60	40,1	30,0	15,2
0 - 90	18,5	29,0	15,2
0 - 120	6,8	11,0	0
0 - 150	2,7	11,0	0
150 +	1,4	8,0	0

Demonstrated as a graph, the comparison is clear:

(See graph, page 123.)

TABLE 30: A COMPARISON OF THE TIME SPENT READING ALOUD BY TEACHERS.



Quite clearly, our teachers are not reading aloud to the children as often as their British counterparts.

Table 31 lists the reasons offered by the teachers interviewed by the student-teachers as to the choice of books that were read aloud to the children. This is a subject for a dissertation in its own right. Annexure 5 lists the titles read to the children and is another variable to be considered when discussing the effectiveness or otherwise of the class reader. For the purposes of this dissertation, this discussion is limited to the reasons for title choice. It is hoped that this list will provide any researcher with a platform that could initiate further research.

TABLE 31.

REASONS FOR BOOK CHOICE OF THOSE READING ALOUD AND INTERVIEWED BY THE STUDENT-TEACHERS.

Number of teachers responding: 24
(Note: some teachers offered more than one reason)

1.	Remembers the book as a child	6
	A child recommended it	6
	The teacher enjoyed reading it	6
4.	The book has always been a favourite with her classes	5
5.	As a result of in-service training	4
6.	As a result of initial training	2
7.	Recommended by another teacher	1
	Recommended by a librarian or teacher-librarian	1
8.	The book was on the Eisteddfod list	1

Table 32 provides some idea of the purpose behind the reading aloud of a book from the sample of teachers interviewed. That 78,5% of the teachers said it was purely for pleasure is admirable. On the other hand it appears that selecting books to read aloud and purpose are inter-linked. In part A, pp. 4 - 9 criteria for book selection were outlined. Annexure 9 provides further guidelines for the teacher on book selection as well as 100 books to read aloud (Huck C. 1976 pp. 712 - 715). The main issue to emerge from Table 31 is the practice of teachers reading books to the class that were recommended by a child. As Huck points out:

> "Usually, the teachers will not select books that children in the group are reading avidly on their own. The story hour is the time to stretch their imaginations, to extend interests, and to develop appreciation of fine writing."
>
> (Huck C. 1976 p. 712).

But to return to the purpose for reading a book aloud to the children; the question being debated in Britain and the United States of America is whether the teacher should 'use' children's literature as a source for learning activities or whether the reading of a worthwhile book is of value in that sense alone.

In our sample it appears that very few teachers are using children's literature for thematic work. Annexure 1 provides the reader with a series of articles on how the teacher might use the experience of sharing literature in such a way as to provide the children not only with meaningful, integrated

learning activities, but also the experience of returning to the book in such a way that their understanding of life as reflected in the book is deepened.

Table 32 reflects the purpose behind the reading aloud of books to the children and shows that very few of our teachers are using children's literature as a source for thematic teaching or as a source within a theme:

TABLE 32.

PURPOSE FOR READING BOOKS TO CHILDREN

Number responding: 28

			%
1.	For pleasure	22	78,5
2.	As a source for isolated lessons..	4	14,5
3.	As a source for a theme	1	3,5
4.	As part of a theme	1	3,5

One of the dilemmas facing teachers who do read aloud to their classes is whether to read all or parts of a book to them. There can be no definite answer because the teacher has to consider the nature of the book as well as the nature, experience and interests of the children in her class.

The dilemma is one where the teacher wants to expose the children to as many books as possible in the time available, yet many books need to be read in their entirety because of many possible factors such as the structure of the plot -

and because the children - once into a story - do not like the teacher leaving out parts! Charlotte Huck's comments are worth bearing in mind:

> "Middle grade teachers may present parts of many books to their students during book talks or as teasers to interest children in reading the books. But how many books will teachers read in their entirety ? An educated guess might be that starting with 8-year-olds - when teachers begin to read longer, continuous stories to boys and girls - an average of some four to five books are read aloud during the year. This means that for the next four years, when children are reaching the peak of their interest in reading, they may hear no more than twenty books read by their teachers!"
>
> (Huck C. 1976 p. 173).

This is a sobering thought - and as half of the sample did not read aloud at all, the situation for our pupils is even worse.

The case for careful selection is also highlighted. As Huck continues: "Certainly those books must be selected with care in terms of their relevance for the particular groups of boys and girls and for the quality of their writing." (p. 713).

In the sample of teachers observed by the students, of those who were reading to the children, 92% read all of the novel, as reflected in Table 33:

TABLE 33.
ALL OR SELECTED READING OF PARTS OF THE BOOK

Number responding: 25		%
1. Reads all of the novel	23	92
2. Reads selected parts.....	2	8

Surely teachers should be using both approaches in their teaching ? Time should be found not only to read all of a novel that justifies such treatment, but also time for the reading of part or parts of books as a parallel activity. The Guide, to its credit, makes provision for this:

> "3.1 Reading for pleasure
>
> + always have a book in the classroom from which to read to the class....
>
> + Pupils should be introduced to books in a weekly session of reader guidance."
>
> (Guide 1982 p. 47).

One of the most significant points that emerges from the students' observations is the fact that half of the teachers observed did not read aloud to their classes. Equally important and just as disturbing are the reasons for this. Of those teachers asked why they did not read aloud to their classes, sixteen said that there was inadequate time for the activity. The reasons are listed in Table 34:

TABLE 34.

REASONS FOR NOT READING ALOUD
(SENIOR PRIMARY)

Number of teachers responding: 23

(Note: some gave more than one reason)

Reason offered	No.	%
1. Inadequate time available	16	70
2. Not timetabled.....	9	39
3. It is non-examinable	4	17
4. It is not viewed as 'work'	3	13
5. Does not see it as important	2	9
6. It is not school policy	1	4
7. The children have different levels of interest	1	4
8. Children read on their own	1	4
9. The teacher has not considered it	1	4

This correlates very strongly with the research findings of Chow Loy Tom, as reported by Huck. In an unpublished dissertation titled "What teachers read to pupils in the Middle Grades", (the Ohio State University, 1969), Chow Loy Tom found that 'inadequate time' was the main reason given for not reading aloud:

> "Unfortunately, the practice of daily story in the middle grades is not as common as in the primary grades. Chow Loy Tom found that less than 40% of the middle-grade teachers in the nation read aloud to their students once a day. This percentage decreased in grades five and six to 27 percent and 26 percent. The most frequent reason that the teachers checked for not reading aloud was that they did not have enough time."
>
> (Huck C. 1976 p. 712).

(One cannot compare these figures with those in Table 22, as the figures provided from Chow Loy Tom's study are based on whether the teachers read aloud once a day. Table 22, on the other hand, records whether the teacher read aloud at all - even on an irregular basis. An examination of the returns submitted by the students in our sample shows that not a single teacher from Standards 2 to 5 read aloud to their classes once a day every day!)

Thirty-nine percent of the teachers in our sample listed the fact that reading aloud is not timetabled and that they therefore did not read aloud. This seems quite incredible and points to the urgency of the need for education authorities and planners to correct the matter if they believe that reading aloud by the teacher is important.

Attitudinal problems also exist. It appears that some teachers do not read aloud because the activity is non-examinable or not seen as 'work' - or simply not deemed important. This also correlates with Chow Loy Tom's findings as reported by Huck:

> "Frequently, respondents expressed guilt over taking time to read in an overcrowded curriculum:
>
> > I feel guilty in a way, when I let the curriculum slide - and "steal" time for reading. Yet enjoyment and interest... and discussion later is much higher here.
>
> Obviously, many of these teachers equate reading aloud to children with entertainment rather than education."
>
> (Huck C. 1976 p. 712).

Huck's next comment provides a perspective that ought to be acted upon by all education authorities and teachers alike:

> "We know that the two most important motivating factors in helping children become readers are:
>
> 1. Time for reading books of their choosing
>
> 2. Hearing good books read aloud by an enthusiastic teacher."
>
> (Huck C. 1976 p. 712).

Again, Blishen might have said it all when he said "That's all!"

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This dissertation has attempted to highlight current approaches to the interpretation of 'reading aloud in the classroom'. Two aspects of the situation in the Eastern Cape have been examined: the English Guide for senior primary teachers and, secondly, the practice followed by a sample of teachers in the Eastern Cape.

The following conclusions may be drawn from this study:

1. Research has shown that whole class oral reading, group oral reading and hearing individual children read aloud is an unproductive teaching strategy as a reading extension and enrichment procedure.

2. The practice of whole class oral reading originates from assessment procedures when teachers in the United Kingdom were 'paid by results'.

3. The Cape Education Department Guide of 1982 endorses reading aloud by the senior primary pupils - an endorsement that runs contrary to major reports and publications reported on in this dissertation, dating back to 1905.

4. The value of the teacher reading aloud to children is widely endorsed by authorities in this field as well as by the authors of major projects and Committees of Inquiry.

5. In terms of actual practice, the Bullock Report and

Schools Council Project Extending Beginning Reading show a remarkably similar pattern in which the vast majority of teachers in their surveys do read aloud to their classes on a regular basis.

6. The Cape Education Department Guide presents a mixture of sound and unsound viewpoints that are often exclusively diammetrical in terms of enrichment reading.

7. The practice recommended by the Guide (1982) heavily favours group oral reading procedures. The recommended methodology and rationale for this is most questionnable.

8. From the sample of classes in the Eastern Cape observed by the student-teachers, the following practices emerge (senior primary and Standard 5 classes):

   (a) Just over half the teachers still use whole class oral reading.

   (b) Just over half the teachers still use group oral reading.

   (c) Two-thirds of the teachers do not plan for time to read to the children in their classes.

   (d) As many as 49% of the teachers observed never read to their classes on a single occasion during the six week period that students were in their classes.

   (e) Of those teachers who did read aloud to their classes, most do not do so often enough.

   (f) The main reason offered for not reading to their classes is lack of time (70%), followed by the

fact that the activity is not timetabled (39%), is non-examinable (17%) and is not viewed as 'work' (13%).

RECOMMENDATIONS.

The following recommendations seem pertinent:

1. that the Cape Education Department appoints a committee to examine the Guide in terms of the criticisms raised in this study;

2. that research be conducted into actual teaching practices in the schools using a larger sample and over a longer period of time than was possible in this project;

3. that the implications of any further research be the subject of scrutiny and action on the part of all those concerned with the training of primary school teachers; and

4. that the implications of any further research becomes an important part of the in-service training programme of serving teachers, should this prove to be necessary.

The Annexures which follow and the List of References apply to the whole dissertation.

Part C has been removed and bound separately for the Rhodes University Library.

INDEX TO ANNEXURES.

ANNEXURE 1.

THE 'USES' OF CHILDREN'S LITERATURE IN THE TEACHING PROGRAMME.

As mentioned in the dissertation, one of the debates in the United Kingdom concerns what the teacher ought or ought not to 'do' with literature. The question is taken up by John Cheetham in his article Quarries in the Primary School (Annexure 1.1). Terry Johnson provides thoughts on Presenting literature to children (Annexure 1.2) while Jack Ousbey recalls a delightful event in the life of a school in his article Celebrating with story (Annexure 1.3).
Also useful are Geoff Fox's ideas in Twenty-four things to do with a book (Annexure 1.4).

The reader is also referred to Charlotte Huck's Children's Literature in the Elementary School for some interesting ideas on theme teaching, with useful examples (refer pp. 721 - 725).

The uses of children's literature is beyond the scope of this dissertation, but is an area that deserves investigation by some researcher in the context of South African primary schools.

John Cheetham is a senior adviser in Lancashire Education Authority with a particular responsibility for English throughout the country. He was previously head of a secondary modern school but now works with children of all ages and with teachers at the primary and secondary levels.

John Cheetham

'Quarries' in the primary school

When the Tutankhamen Exhibition was held in London almost every primary school in Lancashire – and perhaps the British Isles – was engaged on a project on ancient Egypt. Huge photographs of the king's death mask dominated classroom walls; there were models of pyramids and reed boats; hieroglyphics told stories on corridor walls; and long, illustrated accounts of ancient Egypt were pasted into scrapbooks. Since then we have had Pollution, Space Travel, Wildlife and the World Cup Project with its attendant world maps, flags and what it is like to live in Haiti or Zaire. The immediacy of important events is seized upon to supply the motivation, the energy of the project, in the conviction that last night's television news holds a strong fascination for children. In the primary school the Project has become sanctified: here there are no subjects: all is integrated. Children are busily engaged on a wide variety of activities that are designed to develop skills, interests and talents. Many of the projects in schools occupy timetable space that would, on a subject division, be devoted to geography, history, social studies and nature study.

A nagging question often arises – what part do novels and poetry play in all this business? There was no evidence that literature played any part in the projects I have described. Putting my fears before a group of primary teachers at an in-service course, I asked them these questions:

1 When we have taught children to read, how do we develop their reading ability?
2 How do we teach literature in a primary school?
3 How much time do we devote to literature?
4 Having read a book to a class, what do we *do* with it?

In the silence, I felt like a heretic or like the man who shouted 'Everybody out' at the Stock Exchange.

Then one experienced headmaster rose to his feet and slowly, carefully explained the heresy, the insensitivity implicit in my questions.

'In the primary school we read for enjoyment. To do anything with a story would mean the destruction of that story. Children would soon cease to be interested in books. We do not teach literature (as you call it) – such work we leave to the secondary school. Story reading during the last twenty minutes of every day is a regular and accepted diet in our schools.'

This statement opened the floodgates of criticism.

'We have a marvellous selection of books in the Library . . . children are encouraged to read books. They can take books home . . . ' 'I think any discussion of a book destroys its imaginative power – I know it did for me in the fifth form . . .' 'We cannot spend long on literature because we have too many other things to do . . . '

During a lull I asked, 'Why don't you have set-books in the upper junior school – at least one copy between two?' A derisive laughter swept my audience.

'But you are asking us to become secondary teachers . . .' 'We can't afford such luxuries . . .' 'Children should have a wide variety of books.'

When the furore died down I was asked why I had presented my original questions.

During my visits to schools over the past four years I had never seen a project based on a novel. I wondered why this was so, because a well-chosen novel could stimulate many varied and interesting activities; it could be the mainspring of creative work in writing, art, drama and music. Such work could surely help the children to enjoy the book on many levels, increase their understanding and develop their imagination.

Some weeks later, during a school visit, a head said he had something to show me. On our way to the classroom we walked down a corridor where the walls were covered with coats of arms and a large display of the technical language of heraldry. In the hall were two large models – an attack of a castle and a jousting tournament. Along another corridor were models of a banquet and a medieval market, and on the end wall a lovely collage of a procession of knights and their ladies, soldiers, acrobats and peasants. In the classroom itself the walls were covered with the children's paintings, poems, stories. In pride of place was a large homemade book entitled 'Our Book of *Ivanhoe*'. The children were eight to nine years old.

Walter Scott
Ivanhoe

When I realized that the inspiration of all this work had been a classic (although the teacher could have chosen a book from among the many modern novels written for children), I naturally had many questions to ask. I summarize the information the teacher gave me:

1 She had been on the course and thought that she would try out the idea.
2 She had chosen *Ivanhoe* because she had always liked the book. There was a similar story being serialized on television. She thought 'it would be

something completely outside the children's experience'. (The school was in the heart of a Lancashire mill town. What price Leila Berg?) Also, the story was full of action.

3 She had used a simplified version in the Kennet Series of abridged classics. She had only one copy.

4 She read the book to the children every day: she read the first chapter four times (so that the children would really understand it).

5 They had discussed the various episodes as a whole class, and she had helped their understanding by direct explanation and teaching.

6 She read the book through 'for enjoyment'.

7 The work that had come from the book was instigated partly by the enthusiasms of the children and partly by the teacher. The language work, the teacher said, was designed to foster vocabulary and to develop story writing and poetry. Comprehension was mainly oral. There were also spelling lists of newly discovered words.

8 The children worked in groups or as individuals. All had to do some writing, but apart from that, free choice was given to pursue any interest. One boy, who was not very able, had tried to make a long boat from an elderberry bush, others had made models and some had painted or created collages. One little girl said that she would much rather write about her new puppy.

9 The work was done in the time allotted to 'Activities', i.e., every afternoon.

There was no doubt, as I discovered during my conversations with them, that the children had enjoyed the book; several had reread it at home, and many had had asked if 'this man has written any more like it'. They knew the book and talked to me at great length about the characters whom they liked and why. Some of their own stories had obviously borrowed many ideas from *Ivanhoe*, and these stories had been bound in 'Our Book of *Ivanhoe*'.

Jack London
The Call of the Wild

Charles Dickens
A Christmas Carol

Barbara Sleigh
Carbonel

Since then these children have 'done' *The Call of the Wild, A Christmas Carol* and *Carbonel, the King of the Cats*. The last time I visited the school they were trying to write their own class novel.

Many articles in *Children's literature in education* seem to be aimed at secondary schools, but there is a real need to look at the place and function of literature in primary schools. The questions to the teachers on the course were deliberately provocative because it seems to me that primary schools are obsessed with the teaching of reading but have made few attempts to explore the possibilities of using literature as a vital part of the children's experience. The approach to literature is altogether too casual; children are not exposed to literature often enough and for long enough. There is no doubt that the junior school that produces lively, interesting, sensitive writing has a firm basis in poetry and fiction, introduced and used by the teachers. Connie and Harold Rosen, in their book *The Language of Primary School Children*, found evidence similar to my own.

Connie Rosen and Harold Rosen
The Language of Primary School Children

During the past decade an attitude seems to have been encouraged and developed in junior schools that to do other than read poetry and novels to children would sound the death knell of enjoyment, that children are so vulnerable, and that literature is such a delicate thread in their lives that it cannot be used with the same rigour as other aspects of the curriculum. Perhaps this attitude sprang from the way poems and novels were analysed and dissected in schools a quarter of a century ago, and this form of teaching may be responsible for the present-day attitude that forbids close examination of poems and novels. A side effect of this is that children are no longer encouraged to learn poetry by heart.

Geoff Fox introduction to Anne Taylor 'Travelling in time – towards a project' in *Children's literature in education*, 13, 1974.

Geoff Fox's editorial comment to the article 'Travelling in time' in *Children's literature in education*, intrigued me.

> The project-approach is increasingly popular in schools determined to work across the divisions of conventional subjects. Not all teachers of literature are convinced of the value of such work. They fear that fiction may become a quarry-face, hacked about by well-meaning social studies teachers . . . .

His comment may apply to secondary schools, but in junior schools many teachers do not even seem to be aware that there is a 'quarry-face'. The end-of-the-day reading, as propounded by the headmaster, is not good enough. I am convinced that the 'quarry-face' of literature should be excavated by junior children.

May I suggest two ways of careful excavation (as opposed to indiscriminate 'hacking'):

1 Whatever may be the purists' fears, an injection, deliberate and planned from the beginning, of a liberal element of literature into every project or topic.
2 The use of a novel as the centre of a project.

The first is fairly obvious and open to all the criticism implicit in Geoff Fox's comment, but the second may need more elaboration.

It is illuminating to sit with teachers who are planning the next school project. Perhaps the subject chosen is 'Flight'. Within ten minutes we have ranged over the Wright Brothers, balloons, the science of flight, the mathematics of world airways, holidays abroad, seagulls and gliders. Everything comes within the scope of the project. This might be called the umbrella approach.

A subtler, and I think better, development begins from one interesting fact or even casual mention in the classroom that captures the children's imagination. Such incidents can come in any lesson. From this small beginning the children, directed by the teacher, explore the various leads. This might be called the evolutionary approach, which illustrates my proposal that a novel or series of poems become the starting point of a project.

To return to the article 'Travelling in time': The project undertaken by the students is not what I have in mind. This is a typical geography/history project, and one wonders whether the work done by the students enhanced their understanding and appreciation of the novel. The research undertaken by them was really the research done by the author before he wrote the novel. I do not decry research that a book may inspire, but I think we should explore elements in a novel that will help children toward a greater understanding of the novel and a greater understanding of themselves. As Geoff Fox suggests, to treat a novel as an excuse for social studies is misguided. 'We must remember that *Treasure Island* is not a handbook on piracy, nor is 'Hickory Dickory Dock' about the nocturnal habits of mice.'

The elements of a novel that need to be explored are:

1 The story – the incidents and episodes that capture the children's imagination.
2 The various characters and their relationships.
3 The relationship between people and incidents in the book and the children's own lives and experiences.
4 The physical settings and changing moods of the novel.

The work prompted by the novel should come from these elements, which become the touchstones of the project; however far one may go in the creative work there must be constant return to the novel. The aim of the project is the better understanding and enjoyment of the novel, and the criterion for all work done by the children is that it furthers this end.

Meindert de Jong
The Wheel on the School

I should like to illustrate my points by using the novel *The Wheel on the School* by Meindert de Jong. The book tells the story of how the children in a small seaside village in Holland realize that storks never nest on the roofs of their houses. They discover that a wagon wheel placed on the roof of the school would make an excellent platform for the storks' nest. The story tells of the adventures of the children's search for a wagon wheel and how they involve the whole village in their plan.

I should use this book with fourth-year junior children because it has all the elements of excitement, danger, humour and the possible experiences that, in different settings, children in the class may have had. It is about children in a community and their relationships with adults; it is the story of a realistic problem that children could solve; it is well written, and the details are sharply observed.

There are two main phases of work with the book:

A *Basic:* The book is read by the teacher for the enjoyment of the class. During the reading there will be discussion about various aspects, either in groups or as a class. There will certainly be 'positive' teaching periods by the teacher, e.g., the elucidation of such matters as the migration of birds or the

function of dikes. Much of the 'comprehension' will be oral, and some episodes may be used to stimulate writing of various kinds. New words will be collected.

Having read the book I would not put up a list of such project topics as: The Migration of Birds, Fishing in Holland, Storks, Dikes in Holland, Why Holland Is Flat, Life in a Dutch Village, The School System of Holland, etc.

Neither would I assemble a resources bank of material on Holland, because the book is not about Holland. It sets problems: how to put a wagon wheel on the school and how to enlist the help of adults in the village. It is a book about relationships and how the children discover things about themselves and the older people.

B *The Project:* The emphasis will be on creative work inspired by the story: the novel becomes the real reference book and will be referred to constantly. The various aspects of creative work I would suggest are:

1 *Themes related to the children's own lives*
   a Relationships with teachers.
   b Enlisting the aid of adults.
   c Understanding old people (grandparents).
   d Meeting difficult, awkward people.
   e Joint solving of a problem.
   f Understanding our parents.
   g Why adults help children.
2 *Art work*
   a A class collage of Shora, the village.
   b Paintings of the schoolhouse.
   c Painting of the children and characters in the book.
   d Pictures of exciting episodes.
   e The dike and the sea.
   f A collage of storks, roofs, wheels, chimneys.
3 *Drama*
   a Life in a village: an imaginary village or Shora.
   b Improvisation based on certain episodes: the search for wagon wheels, the storm, helping people in dangerous situations.
   c Improvisation of a problem perhaps suggested by the children, e.g., making an adventure playground.
4 *Writing*
   a Writing about people we know.
   b Trespassing in forbidden areas.
   c People in dangerous situations.
   d Exploring new areas – new woods or paths.
   e Observation work on common everyday things, e.g., light on a tree.
5 *Music* (Perhaps not as easy to define as other aspects of creative work)

a Music background to their own writing, e.g., the sea.
b Making storm music.
c Describing tension in musical terms.

The suggestions outlined above show, I hope, that the creative work, partly directed by the teacher (because he knows what the aim of the project is) and partly following the children's enthusiasms or interests, would constantly take the children in and out of the book, referring to the text to clarify details of episodes, people and settings that help them in their own creative work. Of paramount importance in all this are the searching questions carefully devised by the teacher, for example: How would you have solved the problem? Did the finding of the wheel change anyone in the village? These questions could be put to the children either formally, in a class situation, or informally with groups of children, whilst engaged on various tasks. When doing such creative work the teacher must be sensitive to suggestions by the children and encourage the 'offbeat' idea which may arise. If a boy, for example, really gets 'hooked' on the migration of birds, one would use this motivating interest and, for a time, give it free rein.

When the project is finished what have the children gained? My hope would be that they have experienced the enjoyment of really knowing a book, a development of skills, a greater understanding of relationships between individuals, a desire to read other books with greater insight, and the development of imagination. Perhaps this is asking too much, but this is what literature is all about, and I should like the children to have this opportunity of a shared experience.

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Presenting literature to children

As long as Alice, Peter Rabbit, or Little Tim remain shut in on the bookshelf, literature will not happen. My own definition of literature is something that happens in the mind of a human being when that person reads or listens to a story. Adults who work with children serve as a vital link between the world of books and their intended audience. It is most important that these adults be conversant with ways to share books with children which, on one hand, increase the child's appreciation, but, on the other, do so without marring the enjoyment of the work. I am sure every reader can identify at least one book, poem, or play that was ruined by overenthusiastic or misguided "analysis."

The role of the parent and librarian is relatively easy. Parents should read to their young children and share opinions about books read by their older children. Discussions should be low-key, voluntary, and free from pressure. Librarians need to indicate the options available to a child choosing a book and follow much the same process as parents with regard to what happens after the book is read.

Teachers work with relatively large groups of children. Unlike librarians, they often do not have time to discuss each book read with each child, as they also have the responsibility of teaching something about the material presented. Teaching arithmetic is pretty straightforward. You show children how to do a particular arithmetical process and then see if they can do it. Each example is neatly, objectively, and satisfyingly right or wrong. Because the same pressure to teach is operant when literature is introduced into the classroom, the same kind of thinking is sometimes applied. An author may have striven to convey the ambiguity of shifting motives as a given character struggles with an important decision. Such trifles may be given short shrift in the classroom. "Why did Alexander abandon the cat? Check A, B, C, or D."

In rejecting such travesties of education, some teachers have swung too far in the other direction. Stories are merely presented and no guidance is offered. While there is some benefit to be gained through the "exposure-only"

approach, there remains the problem of merely presenting in class a story that many of the children could have acquired just as easily through the public library or the home. What particular benefit have such children derived from encountering that particular story in the company of that particular teacher? Teachers cannot justify their salaries on the basis of being mere purveyors of children's stories. Children are already well served in that regard via radio, television, librarians, and parents.

A third unsatisfactory option is the mindless association of stories and activities. This might well be called the Pin-the-Tail-on-Squirrel-Nutkin Syndrome. One young student-teacher enrolled in my children's literature class, when required to produce a classroom activity associated with a story of her choice, produced a large, pale facsimile of Squirrel Nutkin replete with detachable tail. The idea was, having listened to the story, children would, in turn, be blindfolded and attempt to reunite Squirrel Nutkin with his scissile tail. While such an activity may give limited amusement to children at a party, it does little to enhance one's appreciation of Beatrix Potter's story. Mary White makes the same point:

Mary Lou White, *Children's Literature: Criticism and Response*

> Too often, the activities proposed for use with Children's literature lead to merely surface responses. Games and arts and crafts projects are frequently tangential to the literature but do not enable children to make any in-depth responses to books.

The key to selecting activities that will help children to develop greater appreciation of the stories they encounter under the guidance of a teacher lies in an understanding of what literature does that no other discipline does.

When asked why literature should be taught in schools teachers typically respond with answers such as, "To develop a love of literature, to increase reading ability, to gain knowledge, to develop aesthetic awareness, to become acquainted with one's cultural heritage, to discover more about oneself." Although such goals are worthwhile, they do not reach the heart of the literary experience. In the first place, literature is not the sole means of achieving them. One may be acculturated through travel, observation, and conversation. Self-awareness may be developed through various forms of psychotherapy, and so on. The first and second of the goals listed above are only incidental by-products of the literary experience; if one reads a great deal of literature one may well come to love it and, in the same process, become an adept reader.

Elizabeth Ann Parker offers one of the most succinct statements of the unique perceptions offered by fiction. She begins by contrasting fiction to informational writing.

Informational writing presents the reader with facts, but does not interpret them. For example, take this description by Glen Bough:

Glenn O. Blough, *Who Lives in This Meadow?*

> The lower part of the rabbit's hind leg is long. The upper part is short. This makes the leg just right for running and jumping.

Bough does not tell the reader how it *feels* to have legs just right for jumping. But the author of *Rabbit Hill* does.

Robert Lawson, *Rabbit Hill*

> His legs were like coiled springs of steel that released themselves of their own accord. He was hardly conscious of any effort, only of his hind feet pounding the ground, and each time they hit, those wonderful springs released and shot him through the air.

To put the matter even more briefly, a good writer of literature puts the reader inside the rabbit—or hobbit, or war orphan, or castaway, or delinquent. Other disciplines (e.g., science, history, geography, etc.) make the reader an observer of the phenomena discussed. Only fiction puts the reader within the situations presented. Observing that fiction offers unique perceptions of the world is not to suggest that such perceptions are superior. The views of the priest, poet, or politician may be of equal validity.

Appreciation of the uniqueness of fiction offers some guidance as to the ultimate role of the teacher in teaching literature. Fiction offers myriad opportunities to gain insight into the human condition. Because children are lacking in worldly experiences they tend to miss some of the more subtle effects intended by the author to communicate such insights. The teacher's role is to help children to develop a deeper insight into the stories that they encounter. Through repeated guidance with particular stories it is hoped that the principles underlying the guided experiences will be internalized, generalized, and applied to future reading experiences of the child's own choosing. The art of teaching involves developing such insight without making the process coercive or unpleasant, thereby creating a dislike of the work under discussion which eventually generalizes to all literature.

Insofar as each piece of literature is unique, the teaching opportunities provided by a given story are also unique. For this reason, lists of teaching tips should be approached with caution. There are no universally good ideas for teaching literature. For example, if the children have listened to *The Fisherman and His Wife* and have not seen an illustrated version it may be useful for them to review the descriptions of the increasing opulence of the wife's dwellings and interpret what they heard or read through drawing and painting. Visualization evoked by verbal descriptions will continue to be a useful asset to a reader in many other reading situations. But to have children draw scenes from *A Snowy Day* or *Charley, Charlotte and the Golden Canary* would produce little more than slavish imitations of the magnificent imaginings already present in these works.

Any planned activity associated with a piece of literature should result from considering three things in relationship to one another: the story, the nature of the children to whom the story is to be presented, and the manner of its presentation.

When considering the teaching opportunities by a particular story it is necessary to distinguish between a literature lesson and lessons in other subject areas that may be enriched by literature. Teachers should resist temptations such as the use of *Charlotte's Web* to engender an interest in spiders or *Treasure Island* to teach map-reading skills. Such gimmicks may enhance the study of science or geography but they will not result in greater appreciation of stories so used. In order for classroom activities to develop literary insights, it is necessary that they send the reader/listener back into the story either via memory or by rereading. For example plotting out the events depicted in *Joseph's Yard* on a time line requires the reader/viewer to look more closely at the illustrations and reconsider how long it must have taken for the roses to grow, bloom, wither, and die. Engaging in such an activity will result in the appreciation that the events must have taken place over at least two years. In this way, the young child's perception of the story may be deepened.

Appreciation of literary structures can be developed through some activities, but a word of caution is in order. In suggesting that young children as early as the infant years can be helped to appreciate some literary structures, it is not being suggested that children can comprehend such ideas in their abstract form. It *is* being suggested that even very young children can identify the particular problem of a particular character in a particular story. High-level generalization of such abstract principles is not likely to occur until the mid-teens. But such levels of appreciation will occur more readily at that age if the child has had a wealth of repeated concrete experiences with such matters.

William Steig, *Sylvester and the Magic Pebble*

William Steig's *Sylvester and the Magic Pebble* offers a splendid opportunity for helping school-age children to appreciate plot. A class of seven-year-olds listened to a reading of *Sylvester* and viewed the illustrations as they did so. When the story was finished, the children were invited to halt a visual review of the story when the pictures showed Sylvester's problem. Right on cue they identified the encounter with the lion. They were then asked to identify "the part of the story that made you feel the happiest or best." Once again, they noted the reunion of Sylvester with his family. In passing, various individuals noted mood changes in the story. When the winter scene was reshown, one little girl said, "That was the worst part. I felt awful when you read that." The spontaneous reaction of the children (e.g., gasps, squeals of excitement, standing up, crowding closer) occurred during the review of

the picture as Sylvester's reunion with his mother and father was approached. Their behaviour indicated that they were responding to the rising action. At no time were technical terms used, and yet those children were engaged in thinking about plot, mood, problem, rising action, and denouement.

The dramatization of a story is a flexible strategy but one that must be used judiciously. Acting out *Where The Wild Things Are* will very likely help children come very close to the psychological key to the story. Like Max, they may begin to experience the relief that comes with the reassurance that one's night fears are controllable. But acting out a cumulative rhyme such as *The House That Jack Built* and *Drummer Hoff* would serve little purpose. Such works call for activities that will bring out their rhythmical repetitition and building tension. Choral speaking with new voices added as new characters enter would tend to enhance the major literary characteristics of these works.

The means of presenting the story can also influence the activities that make literary sense. An excellent way to get children involved in a story is to encourage them to predict what is going to happen next or how the story will eventually turn out. On the basis of knowing only the title, and/or having an opportunity to see one picture, the children are invited to speculate as to the nature of the story. At first hypotheses are wide-ranging and general. As more information regarding the story is acquired, some hypotheses are confirmed and others rejected. The technique is highly involving and creates a tremendous motivation for proceeding further into the story. It works best when the teacher reads aloud from a single copy of a story that is unfamiliar to all the listeners. Timing of intervention such as pregnant pauses and cliff-hanging chapter endings so often maximizes the tension that it is an indispensible skill in the reader's repertoire.

The children's predictions may range from the next word or phrase the author is going to use to speculation about the eventual resolution of the problem. Predictions may involve no more than a breathless guess as to the identity of the dark figure looming in the doorway (confirmed one-half second later by the continued reading of the text) or develop into fifteen-minute discussions at chapter breaks as to how certain situations will work out as new problems arise.

Joan Aiken, *The Wolves of Willoughby Chase*

There is quite an art to asking anticipatory questions. A good example will include a review of the potentially relevant information gleaned from the story thus far plus a question that invites speculation in a productive direction. For example, if one is reading Joan Aiken's *Wolves of Willoughby Chase* aloud to the class and the point where Grimshaw is seen in the library

with Miss Slighcarp has been reached, the following question might be posed: Grimshaw rescued Sylvia from the wolves. Now he's seen with the awful Miss Slighcarp. Whose side do you think he will be on? The pros and cons of Grimshaw's behavior up to this point should be reviewed and weighed. Children should be asked to support their predictions.

A less effective question would be, "Do you think Bonnie's father and mother will return to rescue them?" This question asks for blind guessing since there have been no clues provided to suggest that they might. Moreover, it is not an area of productive speculation as the story does not, in fact, turn out that way. Asking the listeners if they think Simon will help the girls escape from Miss Brisket's School is too informative. A better question at that point would be, "Do you think the girls will escape?" followed by a supplementary "How?" question.

As with all the other techniques presented, the long-term intent is that such attitudes and expectations with regard to narrative fiction will become internalized and applied, consciously or unconsciously, by the individual in his or her own private reading.

The way in which character is handled depends very much on the maturity of the children. With very young children, who tend to see things in black and white, one may wish to do little more than have them classify characters as "good" or "bad." Such an activity would require the use of a story where the characters are clearly definable in positive and negative terms. Fairy stories offer a wealth of opportunities for such categorization. Perhaps the next step toward greater maturity would be the indecision or divided opinion experienced when more-fully developed characters are encountered.

In deciding how to draw special attention to particular words or phrases, teachers should bear in mind that language conveys meaning via a web of associations. Full understanding may be said to occur when every word or meaningful phrase is familiar to the listener/reader and the whole relates in some meaningful way to some aspect of a real or imagined world. However, most of us can manage on less than total comprehension. Unfamiliar words and phrases or familiar words and phrases used in unfamiliar ways represent holes in the web of language, but such losses do not always produce a complete loss of understanding of the complete work.

Indeed it is by noting the "shape" of the hole caused by such a loss that new words are learned. Readers unfamiliar with the word "temblor" will have little difficulty in understanding the sentence, "A temblor measuring 6.5 on the Richter Scale was recorded in Chile today." Moreover the reader will acquire some understanding of the new term as a result of understanding the

sentence. Children are quite accustomed to hearing and being addressed in language that contains many unfamiliar terms.

Teaching the meanings of unfamiliar words is a matter that requires delicate handling. Some teachers have a tendency to pick out all the difficult words and explain their meanings so that they will be understood when encountered in the story. In many cases this is a mistake. The meaning of words is largely determined by the context in which they occur, as for example, in the sentences.:

1. We will have to compromise if we wish to avoid further argument.
2. The judge found himself in a compromising position.

The word *compromise* takes on quite different meanings. In many cases, even the meaning and pronounciation of the word is affected by its context, e.g., refuse (rubbish or rejection), wind (bind up or moving air), lead (a metal or the act of showing the way).

In general,, it is better to leave the words alone and let the children encounter them within the meaningful flo·v of language. When an unknown word prevents them from understanding something in which they are interested, they will ask. Two reasons support this somewhat cavalier approach:

1. Struggling to understand a word encountered in the flow of meaningful language is the usual, normal, and natural way that children acquire new vocabulary
2. It gives the children practice in doing what they must do when they encounter unfamiliar words in their private reading. No one will have "prepared the vocabulary" for them and there may not even be an adult to answer questions. The only resources they have are their own abilities and the context.

It is important to recognize that the child will not have a complete understanding of a word the first time it is encountered. When a child first meets the word "barque" it may be sufficient to appreciate that it is a boat. A later encounter may reveal that it is a sailing ship. Further refinements may involve the poetic or rhetorical uses in modern English. Recognition of this developmental sequence means that teachers must have the patience to accept the child's limited understanding and trust that, given a stimulating educational environment, the child will indeed reencountered and thus refine his or her meaning of the word. Furthermore, teachers should recognize the developmental process described as one in which they share. If the teacher continues to be a learner, he or she will also come across deeper, more subtle, or variant meanings of familiar words.

On some occasions authors will use language by one character that mystifies

Robert C. O'Brien, *Mrs. Frisby and the Rats of NIMH*

the protangonist. For example, O'Brien in *Mrs. Frisby and the Rats of NIMH* has Dr. Schultz, a neurologist, say:

> The A Group is now three hundred per cent ahead of the control group in learning and getting smarter all the time. B Group is only twenty per cent ahead. It's the new DNA that's doing it. We have a real breakthrough, and since it is DNA we may well have a true mutation, a brand new species of rat.

There is much in this speech that many junior school children will not understand. But it is artistically important that the young listener/reader *not* fully understand the doctor. In order to get his reader to identify more closely with his protagnists, O'Brien tries to mystify his young reader as the rats themselves are mystified.

The only occasion when advanced preparation of vocabulary is required is when certain key words or phrases are present whose understanding is crucial to the understanding of the story. For example, the repeated spell of supplication in *The Fisherman and His Wife* needs to be understood before the full story is comprehensible:

Freya Littledale, *The Fisherman and His Wife*

> Flounder, flounder in the sea
> Prythee, hearken unto me.
> My wife, Ilsebil, must have her own will,
> And sends me to beg a boon of thee.

Similarly a simple explanation of the work of a miller may be necessary if young children are to understand the reason for the wolf's visit to the miller in the story of *The Wolf and the Seven Little Kids.*

Concluding with a summary we note that adults who come into contact with children are crucial to the child's joyful and productive entry into the world of literature. Teachers have a special responsibility since they must help the child appreciate literature more fully without damaging enjoyment of literature.

The development and selection of meaningful activities associated with literature must take into account the nature of the work, the maturity of the children and the manner in which the story is presented. Vocabulary should be prepared in advance only if a lack of understanding of certain words seriously disrupts appreciation of the story. Literature may be used to enrich other subjects but activities for the development of literary appreciation must send the child back into the work for reconsideration.

The argument presented here in some detail for vocabulary may be applied to phrases, sentences, paragraphs, chapters, stories, novels, and all other language structures. The child's breadth and depth of apprehension will

increase with repeated encounters. Mere practice will go far to increase the child's growth in understanding, but full realization of each child's potential requires guidance of sensitive, concerned and informed teachers.

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Celebrating with story

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If you ask a primary school teacher about the place and function of literature in the curriculum, more often than not you will find that "story" is used as end-of-the-day reading, and that the objective behind its use are bound up with enjoyment and corporate experience. Serious attempts to look at other possible uses of literature—as a way of examining and reshaping experience, as a means of promoting personal response, as a direct and powerful influence on language development—have been the concern of a few committed enthusiasts rather than a feature of school language policies.

The Bullock Report was an enquiry into the teaching of language and reading in state schools set up by the Secretary of State for Education, which resulted in the publication of *A Language for Life* (1975).

Perhaps the Bullock Report was to blame; maybe it failed to show how the child's imagination, his inner world of the spirit, can be stirred and motivated by story so that his thinking and talking, his writing and painting, his way of shaping and expressing experience are all affected. Ted Hughes knows all about the dramatic energies of story:

Ted Hughes "Myth and Education"

> A child takes possession of a story as what might be called a unit of imagination. A story which engages, say, earth and the underworld, is a unit correspondingly flexible. It contains not merely the space and, in some form or other, the contents of those two places; it reconciles their contradictions in a workable fashion and holds open the way between them. The child can re-enter the story at will, look around him, find all those things and consider them at his leisure. *In attending to the world of such a story there is the beginning of imaginative and mental control.* There is the beginning of a form of contemplation. And to begin with, each story is separate from every other story. Each unit of imagination is like a whole, separate imagination, no matter how many the head holds.

A group of junior school teachers in a Nottinghamshire school decided to spend some classroom time trying to strengthen this basic type of imagination. They determined that their children's work would be coloured and patterned by close encounters with story and that plenty of time

would be given to establishing reflective contact with the chosen texts. During the planning stage and, later, whilst the work was being developed, the teachers were given positive encouragement and support by a head teacher who knew that the surest way to achieve a real intimacy with words is through good poems and stories.

The teacher with a responsibility for language work in the school had taken part in a university day conference some months before, on which occasion she had presented work her fourth year pupils had done on a novel by Helen Cresswell, *Winter of the Birds*. The author was present at the conference and was impressed and delighted with the range of creative activities which her story had promoted. The idea of a "Helen Cresswell Day" began to take shape.

Six teachers agreed to take part in the project; only two of them had worked in this kind of way before. It was decided that the work would be done during the Spring term and that those teachers who were less experienced would be able to seek help and advice from the others. Five of Helen Cresswell's stories were chosen, the two fourth year teachers selecting the same book but working on it in different ways. The stories and year groups were:

A Gift from Winklesea	a first year class	(7-8 year olds)
The Piemakers	a second year class	(8-9 year olds)
The Sea Piper	another second year class	(8-9 year olds)
A Game of Catch	a third year class	(9-10 year olds)
The Bongleweed	two fourth year classes	(10-11 year olds)

The fourth year teacher for whom literature-based explorations were a new experience was beset with early doubts. She wrote:

> My first reading (of *The Bongleweed*) passed a rather boring train journey in an enjoyable way. However, if you had asked me then what I was going to do with the class you would have been disappointed with the answer. At this stage it was still not obvious to me how such a topic was going to develop. The main action in the story centred on a plant, and a very strange plant at that, therefore some kind of natural history would seem to be involved. Magic suggested itself vaguely and there could always be some art and craft (drawing the weed, or making paper flowers) but was this the idea of a literary topic? It all seemed rather ordinary to me.

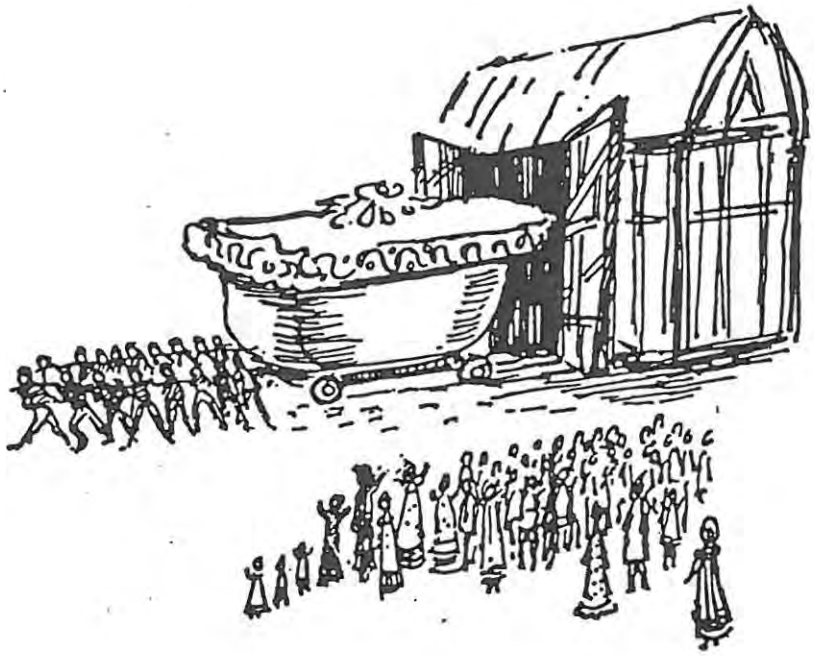
In fact, for this teacher, the security of fairly formal work in the early stages was helpful. Handwriting practice and factual description led to more adventurous undertakings. She continued:

From *The Bongleweed* (Reproduced by kind permission of Faber & Faber).

The writing about "smells" stimulated by Becky Finch's love of the smells in the potting shed was enjoyable and productive. The children and I were warming to the topic and many additional, privately-owned copies of the book appeared when a story session began. I read on through the book again, spotting ideas for myself and, from then on, developing the topic along my own lines.

For the teacher of the third year class, *A Game of Catch* proved to be a happy choice. Though it is about children living in the present, it has a link with the past, and this was a useful way of helping the class to achieve some kind of historical insight which they could link with their history project. But, more importantly, as the class teacher pointed out:

Its length was ideal for what was a first venture on my part upon a



From *The Piemakers* (Reproduced by kind permission of Faber & Faber).

literature-based exploration; that is, it was just long enough to last for the short spring term, so the story wasn't lost or too drawn out whilst we worked upon the ideas it gave, yet it was really rich in these ideas. There were far more openings for work than I used, and I should like to read the book to another class and use some of these to produce quite a different result.

The book has a strong yet uncomplicated storyline, that lingered in the children's minds and was not confused when we used parts as springboards for discussions, illustrations and writing. It is an unpretentious story but, when you consider the descriptive passages, characterisations and subtle themes, is beautifully drawn. Furthermore, *A Game of Catch* has not been produced in paperback so none of the class was familiar with the story.

A third teacher, using that most engaging tale *The Piemakers* with her second year children, planned to end her work with a Grand Pie Day, involving all the children and a group of mothers. The main feature of Pie Day was to be a procession and presentation of home-made pies by teams of junior pie-makers. Programmes, poems, stories, recipes, and invitations were to be written, music was to be composed, and costumes were to be designed and made so that the occasion would have the ritual trappings and sense of ceremony proper to such a splendid idea. The chief guest and leader of the pie-tasting judges would, of course, be Helen Cresswell herself.

Each group began work then, knowing that the author of the book they were studying would be spending a day in the school and that she would want to read their stories, look at their work, and listen to the accounts of what they had been doing. As one teacher said:

> Helen Cresswell's visit was the highlight of the project with children having worked to an even higher standard than usual with the thought that she was coming to see their efforts. This was definitely writing with a purpose and for an audience other than the class teacher.

The method of working a literature-based exploration depends not only on the book and its themes, but also on the teacher's interests and sensitivity to story. Some teachers will never see beyond the familiar topic links identified at surface level: the story has an Elizabethan setting, therefore the assignments will direct children to examine different aspects of Elizabethan life. Good stories, however, generally uncover attitudes, ideas, and experiences which can be inspected and considered by young people and against which they can measure their own moods and feelings. Books help children to grow up inside themselves and to cope with a range of changing emotions which is, and will be, a feature of their daily lives. A familiarity with language as a written form, as distinct from spoken language, is also made available through the class story, and children who are brought into regular contact with books of real worth have an opportunity to make sense of the constantly changing relationship between words and facts, between words and meanings. The living language of story is accessible, persuasive, variable, and compelling in its direct influence.

The teachers in the Helen Cresswell project adopted strategies which recognised these factors, and their pupils were quick to acknowledge the motivation which story brought to their activities. Consider the written comments from a few of those involved:

> I read two chapters at a reading – a repeat of the one the children had heard before and a fresh one. The children liked to hear a chapter again. It re-set the scene before the next episode; they had a further insight into the mysterious nature of the story; it tickled them to spot the passage or quotation we had used since the last reading. We wrote the quotations in our project books and I was delighted to discover that, incidentally, many children had learnt them by heart.
>
> *(a teacher)*

> I enjoyed doing the work as most of it was stories which I like to do. The best part of the topic was the end, not meaning I didn't enjoy the

book because I did, but the end of a book is always the best as you can sum up all that you have read and all that you liked and disliked, places that could be improved and places that were perfect. The end of this book was exceptionally good. It could never be improved.

(a pupil)

One thing that I especially enjoyed was having a talk before we did the writing. I preferred the story writing to the other kinds we did.

(a pupil)

Having a topic based on a book is a very good idea. I thought the book seemed more interesting by working on it. I thought it would be a piece of work to do in spare time but I was wrong.

(a pupil)

When Helen Cresswell came to school it made me more interested in the book because I had actually met the author. At the beginning I thought the book was a bit slow and if I had been reading it I would have put it down, but I'm glad I wasn't reading it because it got much better.

(a pupil)

If we take a look at the way one teacher planned some of her work on *The Bongleweed* we may see more clearly how story can act as a natural mechanism for triggering off personal responses, and how variety in oral, written and other expressive assignments can be managed. This teacher read through the book jotting down page numbers, noting particular phrases, and suggesting, for her own guidance, possible ways of using these (the page references are from the Faber & Faber hardback text):

P. 10 "Well," said Becky, "he'd be bound to, wouldn't he? Being a Harper."

Do people expect things of you because of who you are? How does this affect the way you behave?

Oral and written work–poems, perhaps. Small groups, individual.

P. 11 "A good deal of his conversation was normally carried on by nods and shakes."

Oral work. In groups plan to communicate a phrase or sentence without using words.

P. 12 "Lousy little littermongers."

Make up your own alliterative phrases about people or events you know well.

Oral and written work, leading to production of class book. In pairs or groups of three, then individual.

P. 18 "Not that it was really a parlour–it couldn't be–no-one had a parlour these days. But that was what they called it, though she herself called it the lounge whenever her friends from the new houses in the village came round."

Make a collection of "old and new" alternative words. Consult parents, grand-parents, adults.

Individual investigations.

P. 22 "But it's as much to save him getting into trouble, she had told herself, easing her conscience a little."

Do you do things for yourself and pretend it is really for others?

Class discussion.

P. 26 "The Doc's off to Timbuktoo, I shouldn't wonder, collecting date palms to cross with parsley. Or bananas with runner beans."

Paintings of "crossed" plants or animals.

P. 27 "He is like forced rhubarb. With spectacles."

Paintings or drawings of self, or relative, or acquaintance, looking like a fruit or a vegetable.

P. 31 "Too clever by half."

Collect sayings that use fractions, or measurements, or numbers of some kind. Write a story showing how one of these sayings came about.

Groups of three or four.

P. 41 "Witches don't grow on trees, you know."

Make a 'witch-tree.'

Groups or whole class.

When the teacher selects assignments like these she is making an active and personal choice governed by her knowledge of the children in her class, her awareness of the need for variety in the type of activity, and her recognition that children need opportunities to work in groups of different sizes. The aim here is to give children a real chance to examine and express the ideas and feelings which the story brings into their consciousness. They are being asked to try out different ways of expressing such experiences, to use shapes and colours and movements as well as words, in the belief that they are not mechanical shovels who need to be driven towards great heaps of facts, but that "knowing" involves the individual—mind and body—with his own particular history of experience, his own view of the world, his own need to make meaning for himself.

A good story brings coherence to this kind of work. It establishes the boundaries and painlessly taps the energies and enthusiasms of young children. It helps to confer a sense of community on their endeavours, particularly if it has as its culmination a day of celebration. Helen Cresswell has recorded her own view of the day she spent with the children at Radcliffe school:

> On the day I visited Radcliffe-on-Trent Junior School I think I came as near seeing my own creations made flesh, root, witch, ghost, snow or gravy as ever I will, or deserve to. My invitation requested me to attend, and assist in judging, The Radcliffe Rollers Grand Pie Contest, which sounded like a good idea, whichever way you looked at it, but nothing prepared me for the Alice in Wonderland quality of the day ahead.
>
> I was ushered into the headmaster's study. I sat awaiting his arrival with the sense of trepidation that any such environment still evokes in me, and as I looked about me spied, with real shock, a long, waving tendril of undeniable Bongleweed poking its fiery head over the top of the door and advancing by the minute. This so unnerved me that I requested an immediate visit to the Ladies'. When I got there, the Bongleweed was there before me. (I am reliably informed that it had got into the Gents' as well.)
>
> From then on, anything could happen—and it did. Every classroom I visited was filled to overflowing with some of the most exciting creative work I have ever seen produced by children, and in each case "triggered" (though marginally, I'm sure) by one of my books. I saw a wide-branched tree fruited with dangling witches ("Witches don't

grow on trees, you know"–or do they?). I saw magic casements opening on to frozen landscapes, I read poems of a quality that made the spine tingle, viewed exuberant dinosaurs, ingeniously decorated stones, mysterious plants being raised on windowsills–in the hopes, presumably, that one of them would prove capable of taking over Radcliffe-on-Trent and, with any luck, Nottingham. I saw so much that I could not take it all in, and had to go back the following day to reassure myself that I had not dreamed it all. I even now wish I had had time to read all the words.

The Grand Pie Contest itself was after school dinner–which, I swear, I half expected to consist of mince with slices of quince, or some such, but in the event proved to be a very respectable roast. I was later to regret not having skipped this meal.

The Pie Contest was grand beyond all dreams. In a hall filled with salivating children, mothers, dinner ladies and teachers, a herald with a bugle announced the entry of the king. A more genial crowned head than Terry Waites' (the headmaster) can never have officiated at any Pie Contest, ever. We were then regaled by a rousing Pie Song, composed especially for the occasion by the Radcliffe equivalents of Poet(s) Laureate and Master(s) of the King's Music.

And then the pies! Preceded by aromas of steak, herbs and hot pastry they were borne in and laid on a table the length of the M1 Motorway. Behind each stood groups of proudly flushed Radcliffe Rollers in tall chef's hats understandably askew.

First the pies were judged for size and appearance. Terry Waites, Jack Ousbey and myself went down the line reading the scrolls that bore the recipes (which ran to some very nice lines in herbs and seasonings), admiring the coats of arms intricately worked on the crusts in pastry trimmings, and sniffing–most particularly, and fallibly, sniffing.

Then came the actual tasting. And I want it to be made known here and now that I am available to judge any similar pie contest any day of the year . . . and will travel any distance to do so. The tasting was in true gourmet style–clean plate and fork for every single pie, in case the flavour of one lingered into that of another. We were fortunately not required, as in wine tasting, to roll our portions about in our mouths and then spit them out. We swallowed them.

As the three of us neared the end of the line, we unanimously decided that we had become confused, and that the only thing for it was to go back to the beginning and have another taste. This was not a popular decision with the aforesaid hall full of salivating spectators, but we had an important job to do, and judges must not expect to be popular.

> The only invidious part of the whole proceedings was having to decide on an actual winner. I now wonder how on earth we did this, but we did, and the due plaudits followed.
>
> And then came the moment when every single person there lined up with fork and plate and received a portion of pie (some of the more ingenious amongst them, I observed, contriving a further slice). It was incredible. I had to keep reminding myself that I was in a *school*. It was the most truly social occasion I have ever attended. It was as if those pies, with all the hours of meticulous preparation that had gone into them, all the loving attention to detail, miraculously drew everyone there together, forged a living community.
>
> I left for home with no intention of eating anything else for at least a week, and feeling that I had eaten not only my own words, but also humble pie. Because all I have ever done is sit down and write one or two books. And the joy, enthusiasm and creativity I had shared that day would have furnished an entire library. And a library worth fighting to get a ticket for. (Never end a sentence with a preposition. Nor, for that matter, begin one with "because" or "and." And that says it all.

It was inevitable that the Pie Making Contest would dominate the day. A presentation of this kind is more accessible to inspection and observation, having an immediate coherence which can be grasped fairly easily. What we did not know at the time was that the Contest was only the culmination of dramatic activities prompted and supported by the story. Groups of children had already recreated the conference, held by the Roller family in the tale, at which the planning of the pie had taken place. In their dramatic interpretations they referred to the story account for setting, role, and properties. The fascinating thing about these dramatisations is that they gradually merged into a real ceremony, with real pie-makers, and a real audience of villagers who joined in the celebration. The fact that the other stories did not lead into this sort of work does not lessen their impact. It is simply an indication that each one has an individual quality which is brought to life by each class in a different way.

There will, of course, be objections to this kind of approach – we have a responsibility to teach children the basics; we cannot afford to spend that amount of time playing around with stories; where is the objective evidence that literature does all the things that are claimed for it? – and no amount of proselytizing will change such determined rigidity. How can we be certain that motivation, delight, interest, absorption, the willingness to reflect and discuss experiences of story, are present? And are we to assume that because they cannot be graded and quantified they do not exist, or are less significant in the education of young children? The good teacher

The opinions expressed in this article are those of the writer and do not necessarily reflect the policy of the Nottinghamshire Local Education Authority.

knows these are fundamental needs and is sensitive to their presence; the good teacher knows that watching, listening to, and working with children are sound ways of finding out whether such things are happening. The mother who told us that the story project was an immense success, involving, as it did, pupils, parents, staff, and outside visitors, and that she felt the children had had a chance to take part in real group activities which called for discussion and the taking of important decisions also knows that real education can be found in activities which are shared and enjoyed by the participants.

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Editorial note

An earlier version of "Translation and internationalism in children's literature," by Marianne Carus (*Cle*, Vol. 11, No. 4, 1980), was presented at the Children's Literature Institute Conference at Simmons College in Boston in July 1979.

Geoff Fox

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Twenty-four things to do with a book

During a summer workshop course, a group of teachers in British Columbia recently considered ways of encouraging the response of readers in their classes. Time was limited, and their ideas reflect a sustained 'brainstorming' session rather than an attempt to produce a definitive list. More-idiosyncratic ideas which depended upon the peculiar skills of individual teachers have been omitted, as have highly specific illustrations relating to particular books. A dance drama version of Watership Down, *for example, was not seen as a readily transferable classroom activity.*

The suggestions below are for individual work, for work in pairs, groups, or with the whole class. The Canadian teachers were concerned to confirm a climate in which books were readily handled, shared and exchanged as a central and regular practice of the class.

* * *

Reading is normally a private activity: a transaction between reader and writer in which the experience and sensitivities of the reader fuse with the printed text. Reading in school classrooms is a more public matter. At its worst, fiction is used as a superfluous preface to other work: a novel about the relationship between a grandfather and his grandson becomes the stark demand on a work-sheet, "What can we do to help old people?" A recent study carried out by student teachers at Exeter University involving conversations with one hundred children in twenty different schools revealed that only one out of every ten readers said that books 'done in class' were amongst the five favourite titles.

If a teacher is concerned to foster the unique response of his pupils, he may well provide much time in which his children are 'just reading'; ideally amongst an abundant and various supply of books. He may further provide space through exploratory writing and talk for a reader to define and examine his own response to a book. However, the sharing of a book in a public fashion—with a partner, in small groups, or as a class—can have its value. Some activities may lead to a

closer reading and a deeper relishing of a book, a refinement of the individual's own response. The ideas which follow are drawn from the group's practical experience.

For Individual Readers

1. Keep a 'reading log' – possibly in a special notebook printed by a school's resources centre. The record might include: title, author, when and where the story takes place, notes on the main characters, the part which was most enjoyed, further reflections.
2. Write a description of one of the characters in the book 'as if he or she were coming through the door now,' or at a particular moment in the story. Do a drawing or painting that is consistent with the text to set alongside the writing.
3. Write a letter to a friend about a book which you especially liked. This activity is most successful (and educationally justifiable!) if there is a real recipent of the letter in another school. The scheme might best be run therefore by two teachers in different schools, perhaps as part of a wider exchange of letters, information, tapes, etc.
4. Write a letter to the author of a book (via the publisher) containing questions, criticism, expressions of enjoyment, etc. The general experience of this activity is that children's writers are not merely long-suffering, but welcome the contact with their rather elusive audiences.
5. Make a poster for the 'film-of-the-book'; stars, what-the-critics-say, etc.
6. Redesign and make a cover (including front, spine, and back) for a new edition of the book. Include the title, author, publisher's blurb.

For Pairs, Small Groups or the Whole Class

7. Begin each lesson with a three-minute (maximum) reading, *prepared beforehand,* by a member of the class. Initially the extracts are chosen simply from a book the reader has enjoyed. Sometimes the class may talk about the reading, sometimes not. If the daily ritual is popular, and continues for several weeks, it may be useful to give the topics of the readings a focus; for example, the reading should be 'exciting,' 'about an event in the past,' 'funny,' 'about someone you admire or envy,' 'about a family,' 'about someone alone.'
8. Ask a local author to come to the class and talk about his books; ideally, at least some members of the class should have read some of them.
9. In a book where a journey is important (as is the case in many books for young readers), create one or several large wall maps on which the movements of the characters are plotted and perhaps illustrated by groups in the class.

10. Another journey idea is a long collage or painted background on which the class places characters, pictures of episodes, etc., as the story develops.
11. For historical fiction or novels with complex relationships, family trees either in two dimensions or as mobiles can help understanding.
12. Set aside a corner of the room, or even transform the whole room, in order to recreate aspects of the book there. Have maps, collages, models, or writing about the book. In a neighbourhood school with younger children, it may be possible to aim for a 'display day' straight after school for parents and siblings.
13. Draw or paint a series of pictures mounted on a long sheet of paper (e.g. wall paper) so that a 'strip cartoon' of episodes can be put on a roller and displayed.
14. Have a taped 'Book Programme' in which a group discusses one book or each member contributes a short review of different titles.
15. Retell a short extract from the story as a radio play onto tape recorders (include sound-effects, introductory music, etc.). Play it back to the rest of the class or to other (younger) classes.
16. Make the sound-track of a very short extract from a novel. Action-packed pieces are most fruitful and enjoyable for this work, which promotes very close reading of a text: for example, Grendel's arrival at Heorot as the warriors sleep off the previous evening's feast, and his ensuing murder of Hondsciow and struggle with Beowulf.
17. Assign groups to work either on the same book or on different books. The task is to promote the book to readers of their own age—the group is, as it were, hired as an advertising agency by the publishers. Their promotions can be written, spoken, or taped. The effectiveness of the groups is evaluated by another class to whom their efforts are offered. A rank order might be produced by the listening class's votes.
18. Tape a simulated 'Phone-In' programme with 'calls' either to characters in a book, asking about their motives, attitudes, actions, etc., or to the author. The teacher can judge how heavily he needs to become involved in this, depending on the abilities of his class and how accustomed they are to this sort of work.
19. Write a set of 'opening-out' questions about a book (*not* mere factual checks) for the use of individuals and groups in younger classes.
20. Retell a fairly short extract from the story with puppets (short because it seems better to become immersed in a close and thorough reading rather than spreading energies too thinly).
21. The group is employed by a movie tycoon to 'vet' possible sources for scripts. Would the book under consideration make a good film? Has it

box office appeal, and for what kind of audience? Is the subject likely to be interesting *to look at*? Will the dialogue as it stands in the book sound like 'real speech' or will it have to be rewritten? Do any stars immediately seem appropriate for any of the roles?

22. Select some events or one major incident from a book. Using these episodes, compose a page from a newspaper that could have been printed where the story takes place. Include appropriate headlines, news stories, interviews, pictures (drawn or photographed with a Polaroid camera using 'staged' subjects), advertisements, etc.

23. Divide students into pairs—'A' is a librarian, 'B' is a borrower who likes to know what a book is about before taking it home. Have 'B' cross-question 'A' about plot, characters, setting, and 'the way it's written.' This is a useful exercise to introduce books to potential readers or to deepen understanding of a book.

24. Conduct a *post mortem*, having members of a class discuss *in role as characters in the novel* the parts they have played. This activity fosters close examination of motivation. For example, a character who has been a 'victim' in the plot now has the opportunity to challenge the actions of more powerful characters. Discussion should be consistent with the text.

ANNEXURE 2: Charlotte Huck:Children's literature in elementary education.

Language Development

Characteristic of the development of all children is the phenomenal growth of language which occurs during the pre-school years. Chukovsky,[24] a Russian poet, refers to the tremendous "speech-giftedness of the pre-school child" and maintains that "beginning with the age of two, every child becomes for a short period of time a linguistic genius."

While there are different points of view concerning how children acquire language, most language theorists would subscribe to the importance of providing a rich language environment for the young child. Cazden maintains that the child's oral language develops "when a richly supplied cafeteria [of language] is available from the beginning. . . ."[25] While it is not the purpose of this text to give a detailed description of language acquisition, it is appropriate to discuss the role literature plays in developing the language power of children. Recent research has highlighted this function of literature.

One study by Irwin[26] indicates that the systematic reading of stories to infants over an eighteen-month period will increase the spontaneous vocalizations of 2½-year-old children. Mothers of the experimental group spent fifteen to twenty minutes daily reading and talking about the story and pictures with the child. Few differences were noted during the first four months of the experiment, then the differences became significant in favor of the experimental group. Cazden[27] contrasted two methods of providing young children with adult language input. One treatment was to expand the child's short telegraphic utterance into a complete sentence. For example, when he said "Dog bark," the mother replied "Yes, the dog is barking." The other treatment focused on the idea of the child and extended it through discussion and reading stories. A third group of children in the experiment received no treatment. Contrary to Cazden's expectations, the second group of nursery-school-age children gained the most on all six measures of language development. Cazden points out the value of reading to the young child in a review of her study:

> Reading to an individual child may be a potent form of language stimulation for two reasons. First, the physical contact with the child and second, such reading seems inevitably to stimulate interpolated conversation about the pictures which both adult and child are attending to.[28]

Cohen's study[29] showed the positive effect that reading aloud had on twenty classes of 7-year-olds in Harlem in New York City. In this study the ten teachers in the experimental classes read for twenty minutes daily from a carefully selected list of children's books. Following the reading of the story, the children were asked to do something with the book to make it a memorable experience for them. This involved discussing it, dramatizing it, or interpreting it through art or music. At the end of the year the experimental classes had gained significantly in their vocabulary and reading comprehension scores. A group of researchers from New York University[30] extended the Cohen study to include five hundred black children from kindergarten through third grade in four New York City schools. The experimental group participated in a literature-based oral language program which included the daily story followed by creative dramatics, role-playing, story-telling, puppetry, or discussion. The control groups participated in the literature program, but not in the language activities. The conclusions of the study were that the use of literature did expand the language skills of both groups significantly, but the experi-

[24] Kornei Chukovsky, *From Two to Five*, translated by Miriam Morton (Berkeley, Calif.: University of California Press, 1963), pp. 7, 9.

[25] Courtney B. Cazden, *Child Language and Education* (New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1972), p. 138.

[26] O. C. Irwin, "Infant Speech: Effect of Systematic Reading of Stories," *Journal of Speech and Hearing Research*, Vol. 3 (June 1960), pp. 187-190.

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[29] Dorothy Cohen, "The Effect of Literature on Vocabulary and Reading Achievement," *Elementary English*, Vol. 45 (February 1968), pp. 209-213, 217.

[30] Bernice E. Cullinan, Angela Jaggar, and Dorothy Strickland, "Language Expansion for Black Children in the Primary Grades: A Research Report," *Young Children*, Vol. 29 (January 1974), pp. 98-112.

mental group made the larger gains. Also, the greatest gain was evident among the kindergarten group, suggesting that such a program should start at as early an age as possible.

In Durkin's studies[31] of children who learned to read before entering school, family respect for reading was found to be a significant factor. This was evidenced by the fact that all her early readers had been read to from the age of 3 or before.

All of these studies show the effect of planned exposure to literature on improving language or reading facility in children. Chomsky[32] measured the language acquisition of thirty-six children between the ages of 6 and 10 and found a high positive correlation between their linguistic stages of development and their previous exposure to literature, as measured by a simple inventory of their literary backgrounds.[33] She concluded that a valid relation between reading exposure and linguistic stages exists.

This study confirms the findings of the others; evidently reading to children increases their language development, while those children who have a high linguistic competence are the ones who have been exposed to much literature. On the basis of these research studies alone, all teachers and librarians should feel a responsibility to read aloud to the children in their schools every day. For literature offers the child creative and qualitative opportunities to extend and enrich his language development.

ANNEXURE 3.

IMPLICATIONS FOR TEACHER TRAINING

It goes without saying that a well balanced teacher training course for primary teachers will include the teaching of developmental reading and reading extension and enrichment. Children's literature would be included in the latter. (An example of such a basic language course is provided in the Bullock Report, 1975, pp. 343 - 344.)

The issues raised in this dissertation with respect to sound practice in the interpretation of 'reading aloud in the classroom' should be examined by our students in the light of the findings in this dissertation. The articles and extracts in Annexure 2 point, in turn, to the need for the teacher in training to receive guidance and help in the art of reading aloud and story-telling.

The advent of the instant replay video camera facility has opened a new range of possibilities in providing guidance and help for the student-teacher. Having tried this with our own students during the period in which this dissertation was being written, the possibilities seem very real in terms of the student-teacher being able to identify weaknesses and act upon them. Despite their initial trepidation about being 'filmed' while reading aloud, the students subsequently reported that they were unanimous in thinking that the exercise had been most beneficial for them. There is a limited amount of instructional theory one can provide for a student in how to read aloud - what matters is the student-teacher practising, as well as being able to see and hear their performance so that areas that require improvement can be identified.

As a first step students practise reading aloud in a micro-teaching situation, to their peers. This is then followed by reading aloud to small groups of children, culminating in reading to a whole class.

Of course the student-teachers also have to make a study of children's literature, which includes the reading of a range of books written for children. At the university at which I teach, our course includes the following:

Rhodes University : Children's literature course outline.

1. What literature offers the child.

   (a) Discussion: what is meant by children's literature ?
   (b) The value of children's literature.
   (c) Child development and children's literature.
   (d) Criteria for the selection of books.

2. Categories of children's literature.

   (a) First experience books.
   (b) Traditional literature.
   (c) Modern fantasy.
   (d) Historical fiction.
   (e) Contemporary realistic fiction.
   (f) Biography.
   (h) Animal stories.
   (i) Poetry (separate course).

3. Artists and children's books.

4. The literature programme in the school.

   (a) The role of the teacher.
   (b) Working with parents.
   (c) Making books available.
   (d) Literature in the curriculum.

(e) Reading aloud by the teacher.

(f) The 'uses' of children's literature.

(g) Promoting silent reading.

(h) Group reading, group discussion.

5. Use of the school library.

A brief course in library science at school level.

6. A study of selected books.

(a) Throughout the literature course students are grouped and asked to read a range of titles (6 copies of each title are available). A discussion guide is completed by each student on his own and during workshops the students come together to discuss and share their thoughts about the book they have just read.

This is the most important component of the course.

(b) Professional recordings and film-strips of books are made available to the students and appropriate assignments set.

(c) Book lists are provided and discussed.

The following articles and extracts provide some idea of the importance of training the teacher to fulfil their role as a catalyst in the child's reading experience:

Annexure 3.1. Kenyon Calthrop (1971) on the shared experience of children's literature, the teacher reading and the implications for teacher training.

Annexure 3.2. Aidan Chambers (1973) on the need for student-teachers to receive guidance and help in the art of story-telling and reading aloud.

Annexure 3.3. Frank Clements on Children's literature in the education of teachers, published in the journal Children's literature in education No. 4, March 1971.

Annexure 3.4. Rhodes University Education Department working document for students to complete once they have read a novel. This is then used for discussion purposes.

From: Kenyon Calthrop Reading together - an investigation into the use of the class reader.

A SHARED EXPERIENCE

All the teachers I interviewed felt that the shared experience of reading a common book was something of great value to themselves and to their classes. They regarded it as something quite different from the pleasure to be gained from individual reading and took the view that the feeling of sharing something worth while, the common sense of enjoyment, and the resulting sense of community was a deeply educative process.[1] It is perhaps significant that these teachers see this as very much a reciprocal process, i.e. an atmosphere in which the children respond to the teacher and the teacher responds to the class.

A few teachers went so far as to suggest that this process was something akin to the experience of a theatre audience, and that it was this which gave the reading of a book together an intangible quality which was very different from an individual reading. The whole process involved a performance by the teacher, a collective, but enjoyed and shared, response from the audience, together with a fair amount of audience participation. As one very successful grammar school teacher put it, somewhat flippantly perhaps, 'Any successful English teaching involves an element of mountebankery. I do enjoy the mountebankery bit myself and I can dignify it as a "shared experience".'

In introducing children to literature, some teachers felt that the child often needed a shared literary experience. Further, if the book in question related to life, the teacher was also extending the child's shared experience of life and the children could share their responses to the very relevant experience which the book provided. One teacher summed it up thus: 'The process of common response to a common book is deeply educative, not by brainwashing, but by the initiative coming from them [i.e. the children]. They couldn't have the same experience without a common book.'

Another very successful and committed teacher, in charge of the C Stream children in a large mixed urban secondary modern school, felt this very strongly, thinking particularly of the kind of child he was directly concerned with.

A lot of the secondary modern child's difficulties come through isolation. They're timid in sampling new words, they

[1] One Head of Department in a secondary modern school I visited, felt that this process of drawing in the children together was of such value that it helped in the discipline in the school, throughout the notoriously difficult third year.

tend to go round in a rut. In a world of competition they're going to fail—a lot of them think they're failures anyway. It is very important that they have co-operative ventures—shared experiences. It is normal for an infant teacher to read her children a story, this is a shared experience which they enjoy. In many families reading can be a shared experience, older children read to younger—everyone stops and listens. With a class, such as the one you saw this morning—a shared experience, but more than this, we all have the book for points of reference. A shared experience where they have a copy [of the book] makes them happier, even where they don't fully understand it. Think of the young child in a family who can't read, holding his book for the reader.

READING ALOUD

The Teacher Reading

Despite the analogy drawn by the teacher above, it is doubtful whether enough children, at whatever age, experience much family reading. 'Children love a story and will willingly listen to a good one—possibly this is something they don't get from their parents'; this from a teacher of younger grammar school children in a very deprived area. Other teachers I spoke to (of whatever age!) remembered very clearly the intensity with which they listened to the teacher reading during their own primary school days.

Clearly this affectionate retrospection has something to do with the shared experience I have already referred to, but there are other considerations. Some teachers held that the sound of the written words was important. The sound of literature should be in the ears as well as in the mind, as this has a great deal to do with the quality of understanding. Put more simply, this gives the book an extra dimension which children reading to themselves are unable to find. A skilled reader can bring out the qualities of a book in a way which the children are unable to do for themselves—this reading need not necessarily come from the teacher, it could be on tape, and the number of gramophone records suitable for this purpose is slowly increasing (e.g. Longmans Series of recordings of short stories—some read by the authors themselves). A good reading can also enable the children to experience literature which would otherwise be beyond their understanding. One comprehensive school teacher mentioned for example the Muriel Spark short story *You Should Have Seen the Mess*, the irony of which would be appreciated fairly readily by the middle-class sophisticated child, but which needed a 'performed' reading to be understood at all by his pupils.

There are times when, for one particular purpose or another, perhaps in using a short story or an extract from a longer book, the teacher will have the only copy. However, at other times, and probably more frequently, the children ought to have their own copies in front of them. The less able the child, the more important this is, since the linking of the heard reading with the printed word helps them with their own inner reading.

There are implications here for teacher training. 'It is amazing when Miss X reads, but when Miss Y reads, it just comes out like a string of words.' Some of the teachers I spoke to had the courage to admit that their own 'public' reading was not as effective as they would have liked it to have been; several senior and highly experienced English teachers felt that most teachers' reading was simply not good enough.

From: Aidan Chambers Introducing books to children.

Most people, children as well as adults, 'read too much' too bittily and too quickly; they have no gears in their reading. Many of them make a thin response because they give little body - in terms of tone, manner, emotion, and so on - to their eye-reading; their inner ear is almost dead. They need to hear literature read well, and to practise reading it aloud'.* You can read satisfactorily for information without knowing about this, but you cannot appreciate and get full pleasure from literature without it. Story-telling and reading aloud are, therefore, more than good teaching methods by which to introduce books; they are essential, formative factors in everyone's literary education.

But another point must also be considered: the capacity of children to comprehend and enjoy language is frequently ahead of their ability to read. Most obviously this is true of those troubled with reading problems; but it is no less true, only less obvious, of most children, if not all, right up to adulthood (and through adulthood for some people). Listening to books read aloud bridges that gap, making available to children books they are mature enough to appreciate but which they cannot yet read with ease for themselves. Those with reading difficulties, of course, might never acquire enough skill; hearing books read will then be the only way they can receive the great body of the best literature in their native tongue.

Techniques common to both methods.

In story-telling and reading aloud the principal instrument is the voice. An ugly voice, one that is monotonous or grating,

*Richard Hoggart, 'Teaching Literature to Adults' in Speaking to Each Other, Vol. Two, About Literature, Chatto & Windus, 1970, p. 220.

weak in power, incomprehensible or strained, is never likely to receive and retain anyone's attention for long. On the other hand it is not necessary to have a superb actor's voice in order to succeed. Given practice, some careful thought, and perhaps a little training, every voice, except those physically defective, can be made serviceable; and certainly teachers who use their voices as tools of their trade should have no trouble in reaching a competent standard. Considering how necessary vocal control is to the profession, it seems to me very strange that student-teachers in most cases receive no guidance or help in their colleges on this subject, a state of affairs in need of reform.

The first thing to be learnt is how to listen to yourself. Unless you can hear what your voice is doing, you can never be sure it is doing what you want it to do. At first, as in playing the violin or riding a bike, the story-teller or reader is so busy concentrating on the mechanics of the business that he has no time to think about his effect on other people. But after a while, when the mechanics have become second nature, he begins to refine his skill and can be both performer and listener at the same time. In getting this far a tape recorder is a great help and is afterwards a useful aid in rehearsing material to be told or read.

Very quickly, beginners discover the importance of breathing in voice control. Shallow breathing from the chest produces a thin sound that lacks resonance and energy as well as duration: breath comes, as the boy said, in short pants. Rather, the air

should be brought from the diaphragm so that the voice gains richness and power, and passages requiring long breaths can be sustained without loss of control. Practice is the only way to come by this facility, and texts like Shakespeare, the Authorized Version of the Bible, Milton, Wordsworth, Shaw and Eliot are the kind to work with because they make the biggest demands on depth of breathing as well as on the reader's skill in organizing the phrasing of the words.

It is little use, though, cultivating a well-controlled voice if what it says is incomprehensible. No one likes that artificial over-precise articulation acquired by meticulously elocuted people who hang words on the air like so many ice-cubes. But lazy delivery, when the words are slurred and poorly shaped, or a thick accent difficult for people from outside the region to understand are just as bad. It is quite possible to achieve clarity while preserving the personal and local flavour of your speech.

Breath control and clarity of articulation play major roles in projection, the ability to direct vocal sounds to the whole of an audience. This is not difficult to do in a confined space with only a few people present, but as soon as double figures are reached in the audience (as, for example, in a normal-sized class of children) in a room of more than domestic proportions attention must be paid to whether everyone present can hear comfortably. The instinct of unskilled speakers is to add volume, to shout. That is a mistake. They may make themselves heard, but they also coarsen the quality of the sound they produce, limiting the range and vocal colour. Projection

is really a matter of energy rather than volume, and the energy comes from the diaphragm, which propels the breath like stones from a catapult so that the words are 'lobbed' from the speaker to listeners. This is how actors on stage make themselves heard at the back of the auditorium even when speaking very quietly. Supporting the technique is an indefinable element: a consciousness of the audience and a desire to reach out to everyone in it, as though to touch them with sound. Projection also has to do with confidence. You have to want to communicate and feel capable of doing so. Self-effacing nervousness causes the epiglottis to tighten, strangling the words in the throat and stiffening the diaphragm so that it is like pulled-out elastic unable to propel anything. The story-teller has, in fact, to be something of a showman, a performer, before he gets anywhere.

Experience allied with self-criticism develops the art. But preparation - knowing what you are going to do and how you are going to do it - is indispensable to complete success. In preparing material the first thing to decide is the kind of vocal treatment each piece needs. Leacock's prototype goonery in Soaked in Seaweed, or Upset in the Ocean, one of the hilarious parodies included in Nonsense Novels, suits very well an exaggerated style of delivery, with caricatured voices in the dialogue, mock-heroic narrator, and moments of fast-paced farcical melodrama, yet all performed with total seriousness and belief. As the actor said, never play farce as though it were funny. Folk tales, on the other hand, benefit usually from the conversational manner, the round-the-fireside tale told

nevertheless with careful attention paid to rhythm and phrasing, pace and subtlety of vocal tone: a very different approach to the Leackock ebullience. Sendak's Where the Wild Things Are, when read aloud to young children as they look at the unrivalled pictures, needs a firm, quiet voice, until that glorious wordless pictorial passage showing the 'wild rumpus', when at least one reader has discovered it is necessary 'to perform like a one-man band while the pictures are being absorbed and (I) have found that my own grotesque variations on the galumphing passage from the Great C Major fit the case admirably.' *

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*Brian Alderson, 'Bodley Head Wild Things on the Horizon', Children's Book News, Vol. 2 No. 2, 1967, p. 54.

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Frank Clements

Children's literature in the education of teachers

In recent months a need has been expressed for an information service to be provided covering the approaches to children's literature in teacher education. It was suggested that this journal should provide such a service but the facilities are not available and so it was decided to provide a survey of these approaches from information submitted to the journal. This article is the first of such surveys covering courses offered in colleges of education, an institute of education and the education department of a university.

Unfortunately not enough information has been received as yet for a clear picture to emerge as in some cases the information provided has been confined to an outline syllabus. Even so it is apparent that there is a growing interest in the field of children's literature and where these courses are offered as options it is encouraging to learn that these are heavily subscribed.

The time devoted to these courses varies but no real conclusions can be drawn as in two examples no time allocation was stated, and in two cases the choice of option affects the time devoted. The time element varies from two terms to half term units and this obviously affects the depth of coverage within the courses. In many cases it is also not clear as to the amount of time that students are expected to devote outside the formal time allocation. An option is offered to the main course English students at Nottingham College of Education in which the time devoted to children's literature can be a half term unit or a full term with the former being the sole allocation for curriculum students. A similar period of time is given at Bingley College of Education with an allocation

of two sessions each week for a term as one assignment in the English course, whilst a term is the length of the optional course offered by the education department of Exeter University.

The half term unit is favoured by the Milton Keynes College of Education with second and third year students taking advanced curriculum courses for one morning a week. The course option covering children's literature is always heavily subscribed. The Worcester College course is the longest course about which any information has been received as this covers two full terms of one full day a week. Even so this is considered by the English department to be inadequate to cover the ground properly and it seems as if the course will have to be concluded in the second year.

The depth of coverage in each of the courses is of necessity linked with the duration of the course and also to the assignments which the students are required to produce in their own time. Once again information is too uneven for any general pattern to emerge although it is evident that some good work is undertaken in this area.

The course at Worcester is a combination of discussion themes with student participation in lecture time accompanied by student assignments. Initially the course begins with an examination of the story in its historical context together with a consideration of the different types of story and their functions and relevance. This is followed by a study of the language and behaviour found in stories for juniors using extracts and written reviews provided by the students. Students are then asked to provide oral reviews to be discussed by the groups which is related to the consideration of what constitutes a good story.

An interesting component of the course is the way it evolves from this examination of the story and the preparation of written and oral reviews to the art of story telling. Initially the art of story telling is treated by the reading of stories chosen from published sources to other members of the group but without reference to the text. After each telling the content and delivery are assessed by the other members of the group. At a later stage in the course this is reinforced by the students preparing their own stories to be read to the group. This is linked to an examination of the teacher's attitude towards reading and writing. Between these two aspects of story telling the students are asked to consider the functions and effects of other types of writing for children such as comics and Enid Blyton. The consideration of this type of writing is followed by a section dealing with the lore and language of children and how this can be related to their personal development. A valuable feature of the

course is a component which deals with motivation to listen and read. This is dealt with by considering the books that children in fact read and the effects that age, class and sex differences have upon the child's reading. This part of the course also endeavours to guide the student in book selection, the school library and the ordering of books. Other parts of the course deal with the classics, the function of legends and parables, and the psychological and social value of stories. The course concludes with a discussion of the course by students which, it is hoped, leads to an improvement in the quality of the course.

A similar pattern is adopted by the Milton Keynes College of Education which aims to survey the whole range of reading matter available to children, including comics, magazines and annuals, as well as those works grouped under the heading 'literature'. The aims detailed above are investigated by means of formal lectures which introduce each subject followed by discussion and student assignments. The course is always conducted with the practical realities of the school situation as the first consideration and each part of the course is allowed to find its own level within the general framework.

A more detailed breakdown of the aims of the Children's Reading Course has been supplied by the lecturers concerned and consists of the following components:

a) to evaluate the nature of comics and similar material
b) to examine critically certain selected children's authors regarded as of merit
c) to note the changes in reading habits from pre-school age to early adolescence
d) to examine critically adult attitudes to children's literature which result in awards, such as the Carnegie Medal, and to attempt to see if these coincide with the actual preferences of children
e) to explore library facilities, sources of information about books, and purchasing schemes likely to be of use to the teacher
f) to examine methods of presenting books in schools and methods of book selection
g) story telling and the writing of stories

As the above indicates all of the important areas are considered and it is felt that all of the objectives are adequately covered during each half term.

The first student assignment deals with book selection from the premise that the teacher often has to make a quick choice for his class or school library from a

mass of material. The students each select a book from the children's section in the college library and with the assistance of the librarian attempt to master the art of 'skip reading'. After a fifteen minute reading each student has to give a short critique of the book giving enough detail as to plot, age range and production to justify a decision about its purchase. The centre piece of the course is the student assignment dealing with the presentation of papers on specific children's authors or of writing original stories. This assignment can be done individually or in groups and a fortnight is allowed for the preparation of papers. The students selecting specific authors as topics choose these from a list which ranges from Enid Blyton to Alan Garner and the assignment deals largely with description and criticism of the authors' works and, most importantly, with ideas as to how they might be presented in schools.

Whilst the students are engaged upon these assignments other components of the course are dealt with covering various topics. A visit is made to the Buckinghamshire County Library Headquarters where the schools' library adviser talks about the functions and facilities of the service followed by an inspection of the county's permanent book exhibition. A morning is also devoted to the consideration of comics and magazines with a period of reading followed by discussion. Individual courses often include surveys of reading habits in schools and the inviting of children into the college to discuss books.

By the fourth week of the course the students present their papers and these are considered to be the heart of the course both from the content and the discussion that they generate. It is felt by the tutors that the individual student's work shows an understanding and a pleasure in the subject which has led to the compilation of an anthology of the stories so far presented. The course concludes with a comprehensive exhibition of children's books mounted by the college supplier.

At Bingley College of Education each student takes English for two one and a half hour sessions each week from term two to term six and one of these assignments deals with children's literature. This occupies a term with the students presenting papers after the following vacation. At the beginning of the term each student is presented with a book list which each tutor uses as the basis for the introductory session. Students are asked to read about a dozen books from the list avoiding those books that they already know and sampling various types of fiction, discussion of these takes place in tutorials. The tutorials begin with general discussions as to why children's books are read and the criteria for assessing them. In these tutorials students are encouraged to raise for discussion any questions which have arisen out of their reading from the initial booklist.

At the same time full scale lectures are given on 'Children's fiction up to 1914' and 'Children's fiction since 1914' with the occasional use of outside speakers. From this point onwards the amount of time devoted to children's books varies with each individual tutor as some turn to a consideration of literature at the students' level. The essays which the students present after the vacation do not follow topics which have been laid down as students are encouraged to pursue their own interests. Although not every essays deals with it the question of how to treat the books in class is dealt with and discussed together with their use for follow-up work and their connection with projects.

The English main course at Nottingham College of Education has the option of a half term or whole term course in children's literature which is offered to all certificate students. The first half term deals with the history of children's literature including the place of fairy tales, myth and legend in children's literature. The second half term deals with modern fantasy and includes studies of Tolkien, Garner, Philippa Pearce and Mary Norton.

The option has proved to be very popular so far but it does not extend to B.Ed. students. A voluntary course is also offered which is devoted to reading and discussing contemporary writing for children but only a small number of students are involved in this course. It is hoped that in future more time will be allocated to the study of children's books.

An experimental project course is run by the University of Liverpool Institute of Education based at the C. F. Mott College. The course is in English literature and the consideration of children's literature forms part of the course. The course is divided into five main sections with one main section devoted to children's literature and parts of the other sections have components dealing with children's books. Amongst the topics covered within these sections are writing and a study of its use with children and improvisation and other speech/drama work including play making. The main section dealing with children's literature is in two parts with provisions for a study of what children of all ages can profitably read and the class/school library or a special study on a topic chosen in consultation with the tutor.

A different pattern is followed by the education department of Exeter University which has a ten class course for graduates. The course consists of a consideration each week of a different book which has resulted in the development of fairly rigorous criticism. The course involves about fifteen graduates and has considered, amongst other books, *Marianne Dreams*, *Smith*, *Sand*, *The Cold Flame* and *The Weathermonger*. It is apparent from the courses which have

Catherine Storr
Marianne Dreams
Faber 1968
Penguin 1964

Leon Garfield
Smith
Constable 1967
Penguin 1968

William Mayne
Sand
Hamish Hamilton
1964
Penguin 1967

James Reeves
The Cold Flame
Hamish Hamilton
1967

Peter Dickinson
The Weathermonger
Gollancz 1968

been considered that a great deal of interest exists in the approaches to children's literature in teacher training. It is evident that the method of approach varies from institution to institution though certain features like story telling are constant topics being considered. Undoubtedly courses of a similar nature are being offered at other institutions and some of these will be surveyed in a future article.

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Sidney Robbins

Afterword

The first of Frank Clements' surveys shows how the study of children's literature is becoming in many colleges part of the work in English for teachers during their initial and, in some places, further training. The information already received indicates a wide variety of ways of organizing such study.

But this growing feeling that children's literature should be given specific attention is, of course, only one of the many pressures being felt by English departments at the present time. There is also, for example, the realization that we need to escape from our isolations and collaborate more genuinely with colleagues of other disciplines. As the good primary teacher knows almost instinctively, work is enriched when English draws upon a close association with art and craft, history, environmental studies, music, religious education and other areas of study. A shared awareness of the resources of literature for children should be one element in this greater co-operation; the historian who draws upon the work of Henry Treece, Rosemary Sutcliff, C. Walter Hodges and upon books like *Children of the House* by Brian Fairfax-Lucy and Philippa Pearce and the R.E. specialist who is at home with all the wealth of myth and folk and fairy story should readily find common ground with the English teacher.

Brian Fairfax-Lucy and Philippa Pearce *Children of the House* Longman 1968

The danger facing us today is that our response to the multiplicity of pressures working for change could easily be one of ad hoc adjustment, a tinkering with existing course structures in order to fit in new areas of emphasis. It is in any

case inevitable and desirable that much will depend upon individual enthusiasm. But something more radical may be required, and our attention will need to be focused on our basic assumptions and hopes if necessary changes are to take place comprehensively and with reasonable coherence.

F. R. Leavis introduction to *The Image of Childhood* Peter Coveney Penguin 1967

For me a comment by F. R. Leavis upon Blake provides an illuminating pointer to a possible coherence of assumption involving all the functions of an English department; Leavis takes as his starting point Blake's insistence upon the primacy of the individual response – 'To generalize is to be an Idiot':-

> It is a disastrous illusion that we can attain to the real by any abstracting process, or that perception is a matter of passive exposure to an objective world of which science gives a true report. The eye is part of the brain, and the brain is a representative of the living whole, an agent of the psyche: perception is creative. This truth, clear and indisputable for Blake, had for him its full context of significance. The elementary truth that can be demonstrated experimentally, and very simply, was for him a demonstration of the comprehensive truth that life is essentially and inescapably creative: perception is not an isolated and readily circumscribed function. There is a continuity from the inevitable everyday creativeness of the ordinary individual life to the creativeness of the artist.

As we reorganize our work in English the question to keep in mind might well be, does the student's total experience with us suggest that continuity of creative activity that Leavis points to in his last sentence? Are there for the student clear links in his experience and understanding between

a) the adult literature he studies – probably as part of his so-called 'academic' work
b) the literature that, it is to be hoped, he is writing for himself
c) the literature written by adults with a child audience in mind
d) the literature that children are writing for themselves ?

For, although there may be differences of consciousness and deliberation between these four activities, they are all manifestations of our human capacity to explore through language the world outside and within us.

The question posed is not an academic one and it would present a radical challenge to some patterns of college organization. There are still colleges in which the English department confines itself to English literature almost

exclusively and anything suggestive of children or teaching is hived off to the education department. A similar fragmentation of function can separate the members of a department even when the one department acknowledges responsibility for both academic and professional work. Whatever the advantages may have seemed in the past of giving the student an essentially schizoid impression of English studies, something more integrated and flexible seems essential today. The way in which barriers are breaking down can be gauged by developments in arrangements for the B.Ed. At least one university is already allowing candidates to write on aspects of children's literature for their dissertation in English.

There are bound to be many ways of arranging a student's work in English; the one essential requirement should be that it expresses this sense of a continuity across the whole gamut of expressive language activity. If this is happening, the future teacher should always be aware that his primary concern is to respond sensitively and with discrimination to language in all its diverse uses. If that is the basis of his experience and if he develops both a delight and a confidence in language, there is every hope that he will be able to recognize and foster the linguistic development of the children he teaches and enable them to draw with enthusiasm upon the full resources of literature for both adults and children.

A RESPONSE TO CHILDREN'S LITERATURE

NAME: _____

DATE: _____

COURSE: _____

"Starting with 8 year olds... an average of some four to five books are read aloud during the year. This means that for the next four years, when children are reaching the peak of their interest in reading, they may hear no more than 20 books read by their teachers! Certainly those books must be selected with care...."

(Charlotte Huck.)

"Ultimately what we have to do is bring literature and children together. And in bringing about this union, one of the greatest skills that we who are concerned with children and literature can cultivate is that of reading aloud. Again, it is simple. Again that's all."

(Edward Blishen)

_____

BOOK TITLE: _____

AUTHOR: _____

3. What kind of book is this:

3.1 Picture book . _____

3.2 Traditional literature as:

3.2.1 Folk tales _____

3.2.2 Fables _____

3.2.3 Myths _____

3.2.4 Epic _____

3.3 Modern fantasy as:

3.3.1 Fantasy (modern) _____

3.3.2 Modern fairy tale _____

3.3.3 Science fiction _____

3.4. Poetry _____

3.5 Contemporary realistic fiction as:

3.5.1 Becoming one's self _____

3.5.2 Concerning human society _____

3.5.3 Living in a pluralistic society _____

3.5.4 Realistic fiction as:

3.5.4.1 Animal story _____

3.5.4.2 Humorous story _____

3.5.4.3 Sports story _____

3.5.4.4 Mystery _____

3.6. Historical fiction as:

3.6.1 Story of prehistoric times _____

3.6.2 Story of the Old World _____

3.6.3 Story of the New World _____

3.6.4 The World at War _____

3.6.5 Based on general history _____

3.6.6 Based on a true story or legend _____

3.7. Biography _____

3.8 Autobiography _____

3.9 Other (specify) _____

---

4. How do you imagine a child will react to:

4.1. The title:

[Intriguing] [Stimulating] [Enticing] [Dull] [Indifferent]

4.2. The cover design:

[Attractive] [Enticing] [Dull] [Indifferent]

4.3. Size of print:

[Too large] [Too small] [Right]

4.4. Illustrations:

[Outstanding] [Average] [Poor] [None]

4.5. Blurb:

[Enticing] [Indifferent] [Dull]

4.6. Opening page:

[Captivating] [Indifferent] [Dull]

5. To what standard (class) would you read this book ? _____

5.1. To what age would you recommend this book for silent reading on their own _____

6. Is this book suitable for reading aloud to

6.1. Boys and girls _____

6.2. Boys _____

6.3. Girls _____

7. Plot:

7.1. Does the book 'tell a good story'?:

[Outstanding] [Quite good] [Fair] [Poor]

7.2. In terms of pace is the development of the story:

Just right	Too fast	A bit dragged out	Too slow

7.3. Is the plot | original | cliched |

7.4. Is the plot plausible and credible:	Yes	No
7.5. Is there a logical series of happenings:	Yes	No
7.6. Is cause and effect acceptable:	Yes	No
7.7. Is there a climax:	Yes	No

7.8. Is the climax:

Well developed	Too sudden	An anti-climax

8. Setting.

8.1. Is the setting in terms of place | clear | not clear |

8.2. Is the place | generalised | particular |

8.3. Does the author clearly establish the time	Yes	No
8.4. Does the setting (place and time) affect the action	Yes	No
characters	Yes	No
theme	Yes	No

9. Theme

9.1. Does the story have a theme	Yes	No

9.2. Briefly describe the theme, if applicable:

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

9.3. Does the theme [emerge naturally]

or is it [stated too obviously]

	Yes	No
9.4. Are there sub themes		

9.5. Briefly describe the sub theme/s:

_____

_____

_____

9.6. List any other books you know of that concern themselves with the main theme:

_____

_____

10. Characterisation.

10.1. How does the author reveal character:

10.1.1. Through narration _____

10.1.2. In conversation _____

10.1.3. Through the thoughts of others _____

10.1.4. Through the thoughts of the character _____

10.1.5. Through the characters actions _____

	Yes	No
10.2. Are the characters convincing and credible		
10.3. Do we see their strengths and weaknesses	Yes	No
10.4. Is there evidence of growth in character	Yes	No
10.5. Is the behaviour of the characters consistent with their age	Yes	No
10.6. Is the behaviour of the characters consistent with their background	Yes	No
10.7. Does the author show causes of character development or behaviour	Yes	No

11. General

11.1 Do you consider the book for reading as:

11.1.1. Outstanding _____

11.1.2. Very suitable _____

11.1.3. Not suitable _____

11.2. Do you consider the book for reading by the children, silently, as

11.2.1. Outstanding _____

11.2.2. Very good _____

11.2.3. Good _____

11.2.4. Not to be recommended _____

11.3. Comment on your answers to 11.1 and 11.2:

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

12. If you were to read aloud a part of the book to entice the children into reading it themselves, what passages or pages would you select ?

_____

13. Class meeting.

13.1. Compare your responses and discuss differences and /or

13.2. Read your passage from 12 aloud to your group and/or Discuss how you might use this book as a springboard to a theme for classroom teaching.

Be prepared to report back as a group.

_____

ANNEXURE 4.

CHILDREN'S LITERATURE ASSIGNMENT : RHODES UNIVERSTIY : SENIOR PRIMARY

Student's name: _____

Class taught: _____

Number of children: _____ Boys: _____ Girls: _____

1. Do the children 'read around the class'? | Yes | No |

2. Do the children sit in groups and 'read around the ring? | Yes | No |

3. Title of book read in 1 or 2 above: _____

4. Author of book recorded in 3: _____

5. Date of publication: _____

6. Is time for the reading aloud of children's literature, by the teacher, timetabled ? | Yes | No |

7. If 'Yes' to 6, on what days of the week and at what times ?

Days: _____ Time: _____

_____ _____

8. If 'No' to question 6, ask your host teacher if there are any reasons why not:

_____

_____

_____

_____

9. Is the 'English' teacher the 'class teacher' | Yes | No |

10. What subject does the teacher of English in your class NOT teach to this class ?

_____

11. Does this class have 'Book Education' as a timetabled subject ?

Yes	No

12. If YES, who teaches Book Education ?

12.1. The class teacher	
12.2. The librarian	
12.3. The English specialist	
12.4. The 'Book Education' specialist	

12.5. Other (specify) _____

13. Briefly describe the main activities of the children during Book Education:

_____

_____

_____

_____

14. Is the teacher (class or specialist) currently reading a novel or 'story book' (i.e. children's literature) to the class ?

Yes	No

15. If NO to 14, ask the teacher if this is because

15.1. There is inadequate time	
15.2. It is not important enough to justify the time	
15.3. It is not timetabled	
15.4. It is not in accordance with school policy	

Elaborate: _____

_____

_____

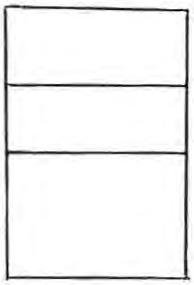
_____

_____

15.5. The teacher has interests in areas of English teaching other than children's literature

15.6. It is a non-examinable activity

15.7. The activity of reading aloud for pleasure is not seen or viewed as 'work'



15.8. Other (specify) _____

_____

_____

16. If the teacher is reading children's literature aloud to the class, what is the book's

Title: _____

Author: _____

17. List the title/s and author/s of book/s already read to the class this year:

_____

_____

_____

18. If the teacher plans on reading other children's literature to the class, what are their titles and authors ?

_____

_____

_____

19. Concerning the book being read to the class AT PRESENT, why did the teacher select this particular book ?

19.1. The teacher remembers enjoying the book as a child	
19.2. The teacher has always found it to be a firm favourite with her classes	
19.3. The teacher read the book privately for the first time, quite recently, and enjoyed it	
19.4. The book was recommended as suitable by	
(a) another teacher	
(b) the librarian	
(c) a child	
(d) as a result of initial training	
(e) as a result of in-service training	

(f) other (specify) _____

_____

_____

20. What is the PURPOSE for reading the novel/book/

(a) for the listener's pleasure

(b) as a vehicle for isolated lessons

(c) as a source for a theme

(d) as a part of a larger theme

21. If the teacher is reading a work classified as children's literature to the class at present, does she read

21.1 all of the novel

21.2 parts of the novel

21.3 a part of the novel and then place it on the shelf for the children to follow up if necessary ?

22. From your own observations, briefly describe the children's reaction to the experience of being read to aloud:

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

23. From your own observations, briefly describe the children's reaction to the particular book being read:

_____

_____

_____

_____

24. ANY other comment re this exercise: _____

_____

_____

_____

_____

TIME OUT.

TIME	7.30-8.30	8.30-9.30	9.30-10.30	10.30-11.30	11.30-12.30	12.30-1.30	1.30-2.30	TOTAL	TIME OUT	READING
M										
T										
W										
TH										
FR										
M										
T										
W										
TH										
FR										
M										
T										
W										
TH										
FR										
M										
T										
W										
TH										
FR										
EXAMPLE	8.00-8.15	(15)				11.45 -	12.15 (30)	45		

NAME: _____

STD: _____

TIME SPENT READING CHILDREN'S LITERATURE

ANNEXURE 5.

A LIST OF BOOKS READ ALOUD BY TEACHERS IN THE EASTERN CAPE SAMPLE REPORTED ON IN PART C OF THE DISSERTATION

This list is not comprehensive. Many of the stories read to the children were not listed, particularly in the junior primary phase. However the list does give some idea of the books selected by the teachers.

The choice of book titles is a further variable in assessing the effectiveness of the work being conducted by the teachers who are reading aloud to their classes. Clearly this area is another that presents itself as worthy of investigation by research workers.

As an example of this, it might be concluded from this very narrow sample that:

(1) Our children will not lack for exposure to Enid Blyton's books.

(2) Roald Dahl has arrived.

3. The chances of a child hearing the same book read again years later in a primary school are very real.

4. The choice of titles reflects a very shallow grasp of what is available in the world of children's literature.

Substandard A

Blyton E.	The wishing chair again.
"	The Magic Faraway Tree.
"	The Enchanted Woods.
"	The Third Holiday Book.
Smith D.	Daggie Dogfoot
Redgrave J.	Peeps into storyland
Southgate V.	Snow White and Rose Red.
Johnstone J.	The Three Little Pigs
"	The Three Bears.
Courtney R.	I am a lamb.
Browning R.	The Pied Piper of Hamelin.
Disney Productions	The Haunted House.
Hunia L.	The Magic Stone.
Dahl R.	Charlie and the chocolate factory.

Substandard B.

Blyton E.	The tale of a tail.
"	The wrong bus.
"	Never mind.
"	Untidy William.
"	Tales after supper.
"	Mr Pink Whistle and the tricky goblin.
"	Enchanted wheel.
Anderson H.	The little mermaid.
Elliott G.	The singing chameleon.
"	The long grass whispers.
Grove H.	Little lost slipper.
Raimondo J.	Dimmy the globe.
Dahl R.	Charlie and the Glass Elevator. (2 classes)
"	The B F G
"	The Magic Finger.

Standard 1

Blyton E.	Well really, Mr Twiddle.
"	Ten minute tales.
"	The children of Cherry Tree farm.
Anderson H.	Big Claus and little Claus
Lewis C.	The lion, the witch and the wardrobe.
White E.B.	Charlotte's Web.

Standard 2

Blyton E.	Stories from Brer Rabbit.
"	The Magic Faraway Tree.
London J.	Call of the Wild. (Two classes)
Secombe H.	Katy and the Nergla.
Carroll L.	Alice in Wonderland.
Gallico P.	The Snow Goose.
Shennan C.	The Toymakers Dream.
Kipling R.	The Jungle Book.
Hughes S.	Here comes Charlie Moon.
White E.B.	Charlotte's Web.
Lewis C.	The lion, the witch and the wardrobe.
Dahl R.	Charlie and the Glass Elevator.

Standard 3.

Burnford S.	The Incredible Journey.
Dorbois D.	Agosson : his life in Africa.
Seed J.	Warriors in the hills.
Harvey J.B.	Tutti and the magic bird.
Kemp G.	The turbulent term of Tyke Tiler.
Dahl R.	Charlie and the chocolate factory.

Standard 4

Ellin E.	The children of Clearwater Bay.
de Saint-Exupery A.	The little prince.
Farre R.	Morning seal.
Weir R.	The foxwood flyer.
Dahl R.	Charlie and the great glass elevator.

Standard 5

Adamson J.	Born Free.
Haggard R	King Solomon's Mines. (Two classes)
Hautog E.	The Endless Steppe.
Price W.	Cannibal Adventure.

From: Natal Education Department Guide to the Syllabus for English First Language in the Senior Primary Phase, 1978.

READING

NOTE: The numbers in brackets refer to the relevant sections of the English syllabus.

The new syllabus appears at a time of world-wide interest and research into the teaching of reading, not the beginning-reading which occurs in Phase 1, but rather the development of reading which is necessary at all levels of education.

The teaching of reading skills, which began in Phase 1, must be continued in Phase 2, and should consist of not only remedial work with the slower readers, but also the development and extension of the reading ability of all pupils. It may be thought that the "A" pupils do not need extending; they appear to have little difficulty with the mechanics of reading, they perform adequately in answering the type of questions set in the traditional comprehension exercise and can carry out self-study tasks requiring individual research. Indeed, the programme of reading development is of most benefit to the brighter pupils for it is these children who have the potential to proceed to the higher levels of education where fluent, critical reading is essential. Is it not these children, whom we should encourage to carry into their private lives a love and appreciation of our heritage of literature, who therefore need to be trained in those reading skills which allow them to become efficient silent readers? All children in the Senior Primary Phase can be helped to improve the quality of their reading.

The emphasis on silent rather than oral reading must not be dismissed as the swing of the pendulum, but rather as progression toward a more efficient reading programme, based on research during the last decade.

Oral group reading cannot be accepted as a useful activity for all pupils, and should be replaced by silent reading activities as pupils progress from Std 2 to Std 4, except for retarded readers who are unable to take part in developmental reading activities because of poor word attack skills.

In every class there will be a wide range of reading ability and there will be a need for individual, class and group activities, both ability and mixed ability grouping being utilised.

Assessment of Reading Ability

The administration of reading tests has become an annual ritual in some classrooms, little thought being given to the reasons for testing, or the suitability of the test. Testing of reading does nothing to enhance the pupils' reading skills, and no test has been devised which tests "Reading"; those available test certain aspects of reading and may be useful for initial screening, but even this appears unnecessary, if a comprehensive reading

record accompanies the child then he enters a new class. The previous teacher's observations and experience of each child's performance in various reading activities provides a more objective assessment than a "reading age" scored from the regular use of a reading test.

If it is desired to check certain reading skills then excellent tests are available for these purposes, but these tests diagnose difficulties; they do not assess reading ability, and of course, are valueless if not followed by some programme of remediation.

Reading Purposes

Spache (1963) says "..... most ineffectual or superficial reading is due to lack of purpose in the mind of the reader."

If the pupil knows the purpose for which he is reading, he can:

(a) use this to guide him in the handling of the material;

(b) judge the relevance of the material;

(c) make his reading independent, goal-directed and efficient;

(d) apply the appropriate skills to the reading;

(e) select the most suitable material.

"Furthermore, to define one's purposes for reading is a prerequisite for the development of efficient reading skills. For the efficiency of skills can only be assessed on the context of the purpose for reading. If the reader has a limited conception of the range of purposes, his range of skills will be consequently limited. And if the teacher has a narrow view of the variety of purposes that can be met through reading, she will be unable to develop her pupils' reading skills."

(Reading Purposes, Comprehension & the Use of Context: The Open University)

See Pages 27, 28 and 29 for examples of reading purposes. Ensure that the pupil understands his purpose before he starts reading the material.

Training Comprehension Skills (2.2.4)

Reading development is hierarchical in structure. The apex is the ability to read critically, efficiently and habitually.

Ruth Strang identifies three levels of reading comprehension which she has termed :

A. Reading on the lines

Comprehension at the explicit level. It involves recognition and location of ideas and information which are explicitly stated.

B. Reading between the lines

Comprehension at the implicit level. It requires the use of ideas and information which are explicitly stated together with personal experience, background information and intuition as the bases for conjectures and hypotheses, e.g. interpreting figurative language, comprehension of implied ideas, etc.

C. Reading beyond the lines

Evaluation. It involves recognising and discriminating between judgement, facts, opinions and inferences, e.g. author's bias, fact or opinion, drawing logical conclusions, anticipating outcomes, etc.

This is power in reading - the ability to use the information gained from comprehension, to form concepts, and to gain insight into new relationships. The reader is active and questioning. This is creative reading.

The teacher's role in a reading situation is to provide information, feedback and encouragement.

Information - because the child must be presented with suitable reading material from which he can reduce uncertainty and gain experience in selecting significant details.

Feedback - because the child needs to know if he is right or wrong. The teacher must be on hand to supply him with the right kind of information, when he needs it. It is important for the teacher to realise that instructive feedback is the most valuable part of her role. Being told that he is "wrong" and why, is just as informative to the child as being told that he is "right".

Encouragement - to continue aiming for proficiency. The child will risk mistakes if he knows that the teacher is not only tolerant, but will encourage him to try again.

The teacher must know her pupils and provide positive steps to train the potential of each one.

Example 1 - Training Reading for Meaning by the Teacher

Discussion of a passage - prose or poetry

Approach

1. The group read a passage silently.
2. The teacher, with judicious questioning, guides the pupils to explore and interpret the passage. Discussion and continual reference to the text helps the pupils reach a conclusion. At no time does the teacher provide the answers. This is an oral activity. Questions should cover the three levels of comprehension as outlined on page 2.
3. The passage is read aloud at the close of the analysis by the teacher or the pupils.

Passage

DEATH

When he arrived, it was all over. The first buzzard sat on the pony's head. Jody plunged into the circle like a cat. The black brotherhood arose in a cloud, but the big one on the pony's head was too late. As it hopped along to take off, Jody caught its wing tip and pulled it down. It was nearly as big as he was. The free wing crashed into his face with the force of a club, but he hung on. The claws fastened on his leg and the wing elbows battered his head on either side. Jody groped blindly with his free hand. His fingers found the neck of the struggling bird. The red eyes looked into his face, calm and fearless and fierce; the naked head turned from side to side. Jody brought up his knee and fell on the great bird. He held the neck to the ground with one hand while his other found a piece of sharp white quartz. The red fearless eyes still looked at him, impersonal and unafraid and detached. He struck again and again, until the buzzard lay dead. He was still beating the bird when Billy Buck pulled him off and held him tightly to calm his shaking.

Carl Tiflin wiped the blood from the boy's face with a red bandana. Jody was limp and quiet now. His father moved the buzzard with his toe. "Jody", he explained, "the buzzard didn't kill the pony. Don't you know that?"

"I know it," Jody said wearily.

From: "The Red Pony" by John Steinbeck.

Talking Points

Factual and explicit : What is a buzzard? Do we have buzzards in this country
What birds in this country behave like a buzzard?
What did Jody do to the buzzard?
Which buzzard was it?
Where were the buzzards?

Implicit: : Describe a buzzard using the information from the passage.
Who are the "black brotherhood"? Why does the author describe them in this way?
Can you describe a buzzard's strength? Where is this information to be found in the passage?
Why does the writer say the eyes were "impersonal and unafraid and detached"?
Whose pony was it? Does it say so in the passage? How do you know? What was the matter with the pony?
Whose blood was on Jody's face? What is a bandana?
"Jody was limp and quiet." What picture do you have in mind?

Evaluation :

Why did Jody attack the buzzard?
Why did he carry on until Billy Buck pulled him off?
Why was he shaking?
"I know it", Jody said wearily. What does this mean?
Why wearily?
Does the writer want us to like buzzards? Why?
What are your feelings about Jody? How does the writer influence your feelings?

Example 2 : - Training Reading for Meaning by the Teacher

Prediction Exercises

Approach :

i) The group are given short instalments of reading matter in sequence. Each pupil has his own copy.

ii) After each instalment, which is read silently, the group make comments on the material in order to predict the major outcomes.

Questions asked by the teacher could be :

(a) What do you think?
(b) Can you prove that? Read out the part that proves it.
(c) Any other comments?
(d) Let me sum up so far.
(e) Now read the next instalment.

iii) After each instalment predictions are verified or discarded and fresh predictions made with the additional information.

Type of material to use

Fiction or factual reading material.

Short stories or self-contained extracts are the most suitable.

Warning

Do not preteach any aspect of the material e.g. vocabulary. The value of this exercise lies in the fact that vocabulary and concepts are clarified through discussion by and with group members.

Story HOW MA SHWE SAVED HER CALF

First instalment :

One evening, when the Upper Taungdwin River was in a heavy spate, I was listening and hoping to hear the boom and roar of timber coming from upstream. Directly below my camp the banks of the river were steep and rocky. About forty-five metres away on the other side, the bank was made up of ledges of shale. Although it was already nearly dusk, by watching these ledges being submerged one after the other, I was trying to judge how fast the water was rising.

Second instalment :

I was suddenly alarmed by hearing an elephant roaring as though frightened. I realised at once that something was wrong. I ran down to the edge of the near bank and there saw Ma Shwe (Miss Gold) with her three-months-old calf, trapped in the fast-rising torrent. She herself was still in her depth, as the water was about two metres deep. But there was a life-and-death struggle going on. Her calf was screaming with terror and was afloat like a cork. Ma Shwe was as near to the far bank as she could get, holding herself against the raging and increasing torrent, and keeping the calf pressed against her massive body. Now and then the swirling water would sweep the calf away; then, with terrific strength, she would encircle it with her trunk and pull it upstream to rest against her body again.

Third instalment :

There was a sudden rise in the water, and the calf was washed clean over the mother's hindquarters and was gone. She turned to chase it, like an otter after a fish, but she had travelled about forty-five metres downstream and, plunging and sometimes afloat, had crossed to my side of the river, before she had caught up with it and got it back. For what seemed minutes, she pinned the calf with her head and trunk against the rocky bank. Then, with a really gigantic effort, she picked it up in her trunk and reared up until she was half standing on her hind legs, so as to be able to place it on the narrow shelf of rock, nearly two metres above the flood level.

Having accomplished this, she fell back into the raging torrent, and she herself went away like a cork. She well knew that she would now have a fight to save her own life, as, less than 275 metres below where she had stowed her calf in safety, there was a gorge. If she were carried down, it would be certain death. I knew, as well as she did, that there was one spot between her and the gorge, where she could get up the bank, but it was on the other side from where she had put her calf. By that time, my chief interest was in the calf. It stood, tucked up, shivering and terrified, on a ledge just wide enough to hold its feet.

Fourth instalment :

While I was peering over at it from above, wondering what I could do next, I heard the grandest sounds of a mother's love I can remember. Ma Shwe had crossed the river and got up the bank, and was making her way back as fast as she could, calling the whole time. It was a defiant roar, but to her calf it was music. The two little ears, like little maps of India, were cocked forward, listening to the only sound that mattered, the call of the mother.

Any wild schemes which had raced through my head of recovering the calf by ropes disappeared as fast as I had formed them, when I saw Ma Shwe emerge from the jungle and appear on the opposite bank. When she saw her calf, she stopped roaring and began rumbling, a never-to-be-forgotten sound, not unlike that made by a very high-powered car when accelerating. It is the sound of pleasure, like a cat's purring, and delighted she must have been to see her calf still in the same spot.

Fifth instalment :

As darkness fell, the muffled boom of floating logs hitting against each other came from upstream. A torrential rain was falling, and the river still separated the mother and her calf. I decided that I could do nothing but wait and see what happened. Twice before turning in for the night, I went down to the bank and picked out the calf with my torch, but this seemed to disturb it, so I went away.

It was just as well I did, because at dawn Ma Shwe and her calf

were together - both on the far bank. The spate had subsided. No one in the camp had seen Ma Shwe recover her calf, but she must have lifted it down from the ledge in the same way as she had put it there.

Five years later, when the calf came to be named, the Burmans christened it Ma Yay Yee which means 'Miss Laughing Water'.

From: Elephant Bill by J.H. Williams

EXAMPLE 3

A GROUP LEADER / GROUP ACTIVITY

Reading Study / Discussion

Approach

(i) The group read the passage silently - they do NOT have a copy of the questions. (This is in order to discourage answer hunting and to encourage comprehension of the whole passage.)

(ii) After studying the passage silently the group leader presents the questions one by one. Possible answers are offered and by consensus of opinion a "best" answer is chosen. This answer is written down by the group leader each time.

(iii) Questions should demand comprehension at all three levels as explained above.

(iv) At the close of discussion the passage should be read aloud by a member of the group.

(v) The teacher should consult with the group at the close of the activity in order to provide feedback on any question that might have caused problems.

NOTE:

Selected passages from text books are useful for this activity; but suitable questions will have to be drawn up by the teacher as, generally speaking, questions in text books are of an explicit nature.

PASSAGE

A TANTALISING TREASURE STORY

While the Eighth Kaffir War was being fought there was a large garrison stationed in a village on or near the coast in the Eastern Province. The military pay office was an old building with a strong-room, always guarded by a sentry.

One day the sentry noticed that the pay clerk was in the habit of hanging the strong-room keys on a peg near the door. The sentry plotted with several friends; they waited their chance, and at last the absent-minded clerk left the key on the peg and went home.

Feverishly the soldiers worked to remove nearly forty thousand pounds in gold coin from the strong-room. They filled the wooden boxes with sand, leaving a top layer of coins, then screwed up the boxes again.

That day a child had been buried in the little graveyard near the powder magazine. The thieves opened the grave, and above the coffin they buried bucket after bucket of golden sovereigns. Before day-break the grave had been closed, the strong-room swept, keys replaced on the hook.

It seemed the perfect crime. Even when the theft was discovered soon afterwards (owing to an unexpected request for money from an outlying fort) the men on guard could not be shaken in their story that they knew nothing of the missing gold. At the court martial, however, the sentries were convicted of failure to carry out their duties while on active service, and every man was sentenced to transportation to Tasmania.

Twenty years later a map reached the Eastern Province from one of the convicts, showing where the money had been buried. A syndicate was formed, the graveyard (no longer in use) was located. They opened every grave in search of the treasure, but not one coin was found. Someone had been there before them.

From: South African Beachcomber by L.G. Green.

Questions

Reading on the lines - explicit level

1. Why were so many soldiers stationed out in the country at this time?

2. Were the sentries convicted of theft; negligence or failure?

3. What happened to the sentries?

Reading between the lines - implicit level

4. Choose the word which best describes the pay-clerk: vague; careful; cautious; distracted

   Use your dictionaries if necessary.

5. For what reason were the boxes filled with sand?

6. What word in the passage tells us that the sentries worked quickly when stealing the money?

Reading beyond the lines - evaluation

7. Would you consider this account fact or fiction? Give a reason for your answer.

8. Why do you think the word "tantalising" is an apt word in the title? Use your dictionary to help you if necessary but try and reason it out from the story first.

9. Did this seem to be the perfect crime because:
   the theft was never discovered or
   the sentries were never convicted or
   the thieves were never convicted ?

EXAMPLE 4

A GROUP LEADER / GROUP ACTIVITY

Cloze Procedure (Deletion Exercise)

Cloze procedure derives from the term closure used by Gestalt psychologists to complete missing parts of a pattern.

Omissions which follow a numerical pattern may be anything from every fifth to every tenth word, depending on the difficulty of the passage and the ability of the pupils. Initially, omissions should not be commenced until about the hundredth word (later the fiftieth word), giving the pupils the opportunity to tune in to the author's style and intent.

Approach

(i) Pupils read through the selection silently.

(ii) Sub-groups of two, three or four pupils prepare their solution. Each participant may suggest a possible solution for each omission: he must be prepared to support his choice by convincing his partners that his suggestion is better than theirs on grounds of grammatical accuracy, correctness or meaning appropriate to the context, and general compatibility with the author's vocabulary and the language patterns.

(iii) The sub-groups then read their completed passage aloud (quietly) to hear if their choices "make sense".

(iv) The group leader or teacher then calls the sub-groups together to thrash out a final version.

(v) The original version may then be offered for comparison BUT notions of "right" and "wrong" must be avoided. The post-mortems are probably the most valuable part of the activity for it is at this stage that rival views are expressed and contested, errors are discussed, and occasionally discoveries are made that certain solutions are as good as, if not better than, the original choice of word. The presence of the teacher is an advantage at this stage.

PASSAGE (Every seventh word has been omitted)

OBSERVATIONS

Suddenly I stopped, for I saw a slight movement in the long grass about sixty yards away. Quickly focussing my binoculars, I saw that it was a single chimpanzee, and just then he turned in my direction. I recognized David Greybeard.

Cautiously I moved around so that I could see what he was doing. He was squatting beside the red earth mound of a termite nest, and as I watched, I saw him carefully push a long grass stem down into the hole in the mound. After a moment he withdrew (1) _____ picked something from the end with (2) _____ mouth. I was too far away (3) _____ make out what he was eating, (4) _____ it was obvious that he was (5) _____ using the grass stem as a (6) _____ .

I knew that on two occasions (7) _____ observers in West Africa had seen (8) _____ using objects as tools: one chimp (9) _____ broken open palm-nut kernels by (10) _____ a rock as a hammer, and (11) _____ group of chimps had been observed (12) _____ sticks into an underground bees' nest (13) _____ licking off the honey. Somehow I (14) _____ never dreamed of seeing anything so (15) _____ myself.

For an hour David feasted (16) _____ the termite mound, and then he (17) _____ slowly away. When I was sure (18) _____ had gone, I went over to (19) _____ the mound. I picked up one of David's discarded tools and carefully pushed (20) _____ into the hole myself. Immediately I (21) _____ the pull of several termites as (22) _____ seized the grass, and when I (23) _____ it out, there were a number (24) _____ termites clinging to it.

I stayed (25) _____ the site, but it was another (26) _____ before I was able to watch (27) _____ chimpanzee "fishing" for termites again. Twice (28) _____ arrived, but each time they saw (29) _____ and moved off immediately.

by J. van Lawick - Goodall

Author's Version:

1. and
2. his
3. to
4. but
5. actually
6. tool
7. casual
8. chimpanzees
9. had
10. using
11. a
12. pushing
13. and
14. had
15. exciting
16. at
17. wandered
18. he
19. examine
20. it
21. felt
22. they
23. pulled
24. of
25. at
26. week
27. a
28. chimps
29. me

EXAMPLE 5

A GROUP LEADER / GROUP ACTIVITY

Different Reading Purposes on the same Extract (Literary)

Approach

(i) The pupils are divided into suitable groups.

(ii) All groups are given the same reading material BUT with a different purpose in the studying of it.

(iii) When the groups have completed their particular assignment a report back session is held with the whole class. The teacher takes this opportunity to lead the children to a deeper insight of the printed word.

Reading Purposes

Group 1: While reading this poem think about the rhythm.

What sort of rhythm is it?
Why does the poet use this rhythm?
How do the rhyming words help the rhythm?
Why is the chorus in the first and last verses effective?
If you had to read the poem aloud how would the rhythm help you? Or would it spoil your reading?
One member of the group can now read the poem aloud.

Group 2: Read the poem and think how best to present it as choral verse.
Discuss effective use of voices and actions.
Prepare the poem for presentation to the class as choral verse.

Group 3: What is contraband? (Use your dictionaries).
Now read the poem first to yourself and then aloud and say why this word fits it.
What things mentioned in the poem are contraband?
Why is the title suitable?
Why brandy for the Parson and tobacco for the Clerk?

Group 4: Read the poem to yourself. Now someone read it aloud.
Why could the title have been "Warnings"?
Who are the "Gentlemen"?
Who are "King George's Men"?
Can you say what period of history this is?
What country is this? Why?
Why were they smuggling?

PASSAGE

A SMUGGLER'S SONG

If you wake at midnight, and hear a horse's feet,
Don't go drawing back the blind, or looking in the street,
Them that asks no questions isn't told a lie.
Watch the wall, my darling, while the Gentlemen go by!
Five and twenty ponies
Trotting through the dark -
Brandy for the Parson,
'Baccy for the Clerk,
Laces for a lady, letters for a spy,
And watch the wall, my darling, while the Gentlemen go by!

Running round the woodlump if you chance to find
Little barrels, roped and tarred, all full of brandy-wine
Don't you shout to come and look, nor use 'em for your play.
Put the brushwood back again - and they'll be gone next day!

If you see the stable-door setting open wide;
If you see a tired horse lying down inside;
If your mother mends a coat cut about and tore
If the lining's wet and warm - don't you ask no more!

If you meet King George's men, dressed in blue and red.
You be careful what you say, and mindful what is said,
If they call you 'pretty maid', and chuck you 'neath the chin,
Don't you tell where no one is, nor yet where no one's been!

Knocks and footsteps round the house - whistles after dark -
You've no call for running out till the house-dogs bark.
Trusty's here, and Pincher's here, and see how dumb they lie -
They don't fret to follow when the Gentlemen go by!

If you do as you've been told, 'likely there's a chance,
You'll be give a dainty doll, all the way from France,
With a cap of Valenciennes, and a velvet hood -
A present from the Gentlemen, along o' being good!
Five and twenty ponies
Trotting through the dark -
Brandy for the Parson,
'Baccy for the Clerk.
Them as asks no questions isn't told a lie -
Watch the wall, my darling, while the Gentlemen go by.

Rudyard Kipling.

EXAMPLE 6

DIFFERENT READING PURPOSES ON THE SAME EXTRACT
(Information retrieval)

Approach

As for Example 5. (Each group has a different reading purpose).

Reading Purposes

1. Read to find who travelled the roads regularly in the Middle Ages.

2. Read to find out what sort of entertainment there was in the Middle Ages.

3. Read the text below as quickly as possible in order to find out from where the word holiday comes.

4. Read to find out why St. Christopher became the patron saint of travellers.

5. Read to decide whether any social welfare word was carried out in the Middle Ages.

PASSAGE

TRAVELLERS ON THE ROADS

In the Middle Ages bands of musicians called minstrels travelled the roads. They entertained people at feasts and at fairs, in castles, inns and manor houses. They played various musical instruments, such as violas, tambourines, harps, horns, trumpets and bagpipes. They performed plays, told jokes, and recited stories and poems about noble deeds.

Other Entertainers

Many other entertainers travelled the roads in medieval days. Bands of jugglers, mummers and play-actors, and men with dancing bears or performing monkeys went from town to town and village to village, giving performances which delighted their spectators.

Plays were usually acted in the afternoons of holy days, when everyone was given a day off work. This is where the word holiday comes from.

Beggars

Less welcome visitors to the towns and villages were the rough, badly dressed beggars who wandered from place to place, begging for a living.

They usually carried a staff, and a wooden or pewter bowl in which to collect money and food.

Lepers

Even less popular were the lepers. These were people suffering from leprosy a disease which, it was thought, infected soldiers had brought back from the Crusades.

As this terrible disease was easily caught, lepers were prohibited from entering the towns. Food was put outside the town walls for them, and they were forbidden to drink water from the streams which the townspeople used. They had to carry bells and shout, "Unclean! Unclean!" so that other travellers were warned of their approach, and had time to move out of the way.

Robbers and Outlaws

Robbers and outlaws made travelling during the Middle Ages dangerous.

The robbers were often soldiers who had returned from wars in France or from the Crusades to the Holy Land. They made a living by robbing merchants and other wealthy travellers as they journeyed along. Outlaws were people who had been banished or exiled. Robin Hood, who was supposed to have robbed the rich and given the money to the poor, is the most famous of these.

To prevent robbers hiding by the roadside, all trees and bushes were supposed to be cleared on either side of a road but this was seldom done. Consequently, few people ventured out after dark.

It was during this period that the idea of a patron saint of travellers developed. It was such a dangerous time that the monks felt it necessary to ask St. Christopher to take care of travellers.

(Travel and Transport in the Middle Ages : MacMillan)

Reading for Enjoyment (2.1 and 2.2.9)

"We can sum up by saying that whatever else a pupil takes away from his experience of literature in school, he should have learned to see it as a source of pleasure, as something that will continue to be a part of his life. The power to bring this about lies with the teacher ..... Bullock Report."

It must not be assumed that all children come to Phase 2 as voluntary readers. During the vital pre-school years, the parents may have neglected to introduce their young child to the world of fantasy, folk-lore and fairy tale. Then later, at school, learning to read may have been a mechanical, word-repeating process which failed to impart a love of reading.

When it is remembered that in the Third Phase, children are launched on to a language course almost entirely literary in content, the responsibility of the Senior Primary teacher will be acknowledged. There is cause for real concern if one accepts the research which has suggested that there is an optimum period in the child's development, when he can be led to enjoy fantasy literature. Just before the onset of puberty a child is most concerned with factual information, and if by this time he is not an inveterate reader, there may be arrested development, girls remaining at the level of dreamy romance and boys at dashing thrillers and war stories. The optimum period is the Senior Primary Phase.

Fortunate indeed is the child who spends these years in classrooms where there is easy access to suitable, attractively displayed books, with teachers who themselves enjoy reading, who enjoy talking about what they have read, and who read to the class each day. Even the weakest readers are able to forget the symbols, and be carried away by the narrative, to meet - "the typical, the abnormal, the beautiful, the terrible, the awe-inspiring, the exhilirating, the pathetic, or the merely piquant" (C.S. Lewis)

All this may be of no avail however, if in other areas of the syllabus, a misuse of literature is practised: the use of selected passages for language study; "word-grubbing" exercises; and comprehension exercises set at the literal level only. Books have acquired such an integral place in education, especially since the increased use of self-study tasks, that there is a danger that children may associate books solely with school. Far too often reading is seen as a searching for facts at the teacher's instigation, rather than an enjoyable experience as a voluntary exercise. Literature must be regarded as an experience, not merely as a resource.

Listening Skills (Note (a) under READING)

Many researchers have emphasized the necessity to strengthen the association between print and sound. Listening while reading is a means of acquiring literacy through exposure to the printed word. Stimulating reading with rich language will directly assist the child's language development.

The cassette recorder is a valuable aid in the training of listening skills. Both published and teacher prepared material serve the purpose. Some publications are included as suggestions.

The recorder can be used in many ways.

1. Listening for pleasure:

The pupils relax and listen.

Aim:

(i) to introduce pupils to the idea that reading can be a pleasure;

(ii) to stimulate an interest in literature;

(iii) to train the more "active" pupils to sit still and listen.

2. Listening while reading

The children listen while following in the book.

Aim :

(i) to promote reading for pleasure;

(ii) to encourage left to right eye movement;

(iii) to help increase reading rate of slow readers;

(iv) to promote particular books;

(v) to aid comprehension of the story.

e.g. The Balaclava Story; Knock-out Series; Longmans. (Stories and cassette)

3. Listening, reading, discussing

The pupils follow in the book while listening to the story. The pupils discuss points arising from the story. The points for discussion are prepared by the teacher.

Aim:

(i) to promote reading for pleasure;

(ii) to promote discussion about what one reads;

(iii) to evaluate and apply the experience to other situations;

(iv) to encourage reading for meaning.

e.g. The Storyhouse Books; Jackson & Pepper; Oxford University Press. (Storybooks, Teacher's Manual & storytapes)

4. Listening skill training

The pupils listen to the tapes and do the worksheets. Various activities have been designed for this purpose.

e.g. SRA Listening Laboratory
Learning Through Listening (Tape A); A. Wilkinson et al; Macmillan.

5. Play reading and recording

Pupils prepare the play and then record it for their own pleasure and the listening pleasure of the other pupils.

Aim :

(i) to encourage interpretive reading;
(ii) to encourage good speech;
(iii) to promote an interest in drama.

e.g. The Take-Part Series of plays. (pub. Ward Lock Educ.)

6. Listening in preparation for writing/oral work

The pupils listen carefully to the recording, e.g. descriptions of people.

Aim :

(i) to prepare pupils for describing people in their own essays or oral work;

(ii) to give them experience of how good descriptions are written.

7. Teacher reading/pupil following - for retarded readers

The teacher reads pages from the child's reader while the child follows; then the child reads with the teacher; then the pupil records his independent effort. The advantage here is that the pupil can work alone at this task as the teacher has pre-recorded her reading.

Word Attack Skills (2.2.2)

The effective reader must be an expert in word attack skills. He must be able to "unlock" any unfamiliar words by applying the appropriate skill:

(a) Phonics - the ability to deduce the sound of the word by combining the units of sound represented by the letter symbols. At its simplest level this is the combining of single sounds (b + a + g = bag), consonant blends (e.g. br, ch, st) and digraphs (e.g. oi, ee, ai). At a more sophisticated level it is the combination of syllables (e.g. com + bin + ing) or roots and affixes (e.g. ex + plain + ing).

(b) Context - by studying the sentence/s the reader can, at times, predict what the unknown word is. This skill is usually the privilege of the linguistically favoured child, e.g. Most people fear poverty, so they work for a living.

(b) Syntactic knowledge - a reader, experienced in the grammar of his language, will at least have a feeling of the type or word or part of speech which the unknown word must be, this will then reduce the number of possibilities.

Study Skills

Reading for information and researching effectively require particular skills. Donald Moyle lists the group of skills:

(a) skimming (moving eyes quickly over passages to isolate particular information), scanning (reading only isolated bits of information) and intensive reading.

(b) the skill of selecting relevant questions to guide the reading, e.g. What's the main thought?
Where is the main thought found?

(c) the skill of reading in line with the writer's approach and the thought patterns of the subject, i.e. following the development of the exposition, tuning in to the specialised vocabulary and the register of the language.

(d) the ability to precis information or ideas in an economical manner directly related to the purpose for which the reading was undertaken, i.e. by picking out only the relevant pieces of information.

Reading in the Content Subjects

Books written on specific subjects have a special reading style and technique. For the reader to gain comprehension of the text he needs to know:

(a) his purpose for reading the text;
(b) his goal in reading it;
(c) the special vocabulary used in it;
(d) the study skills necessary to analyse the data.

EXAMPLE OF READING IN THE CONTENT SUBJECTS

One way in which a pupil can be trained to gain comprehension of a text is through a clear teacher-structured "inventory" of a chapter or piece of factual writing. This permits pupils to work individually on assignments. The inventory maps out the purpose, goal and vocabulary of the chapter. Note that the initial questions encourage the pupil to reflect on what he has read - this makes his

reading effective - it is more an exercise of enquiry than a 'getting the information' exercise. Having the pupil make his own notes or perhaps give a lecturette allows him to apply the necessary skills to analyse the data. The following outline on "Fish" can be adapted to suit other subjects.

A. Keep these questions in mind while reading this chapter. Try and answer them when you have finished the chapter.

a) Why do we study fish?
b) How does an understanding of fish help you explain balance?
c) A human being is the most highly developed animal. Explain this idea.

B. Survey the chapter. (Read the first and last paragraphs, look at the pictures and their captions, read the title.)
Skim each section of the chapter until you find the information needed. When you have located the information you think will provide an answer to the question, read that material carefully. Write your answers down.

1. Define: vertebrate; invertebrate gills; dorsal; ventral; scale (in the context of this chapter); aqua

2. Fish are the only completely _____ vertebrate animals.

3. Fish live in two different types of water; _____ or _____.

4. List the things a fish has in common with the higher animals.

5. How does the fish breathe?

C. Now read the whole chapter through.

D. Make your own notes on fish listing the most important points. Draw a fish and lable it carefully.

E. Can you answer a, b and c above?

For another approach to Reading in the Content Subjects see Example 6 on page 29.

Reading Rate (2.2.11)

It is most desirable that each pupil develops his reading rate to a maximum consistent with his thinking rate. The reading programme should help him to attain a "ceiling" and then give practice in developing flexibility between his 'floor' which is the rate of speech, and his 'ceiling', which is his rate of thinking.

Too much attention to oral reading could interfere with the development of flexibility

From: The Cape Education Department Teachers' Guide for English (First Language), Volume 2, Senior Primary Phase, 1982.

READING AND COMPREHENSION

> "Reading is the key to primary school, and, indeed, to later education. As such, its teaching demands the utmost care and thoughtful planning if it is to serve its broadest purpose as an aid to child growth and development." (G.A. Pappas)

Reading, the most complex of skills acquired by the pupil, is not "caught" in some magical fashion but must be presented in a balanced, integrated, step by step fashion. For this reason it is essential that the teacher be clear in his own mind as to what is to be achieved in EACH reading lesson. He should be conversant with the different skills and with their relative importance.

Books can change personalities and reading affects the personality (c.f. the Syllabus 2.1; 2.2.10, 11, 12, 13). Do not introduce negative emotional forces into the lesson by criticising a child's efforts negatively. The healthier the self-image of the pupil the greater his desire to read more. The teacher should be aware of the physical factors involved, viz. the pupil's health, visual acuity, visual perception, auditory acuity and auditory perception. (Remember that slight loss can be more dangerous than great deficit as it tends to go unnoticed.)

It is <u>essential</u> that the teacher draw up a Reading Programme charting the course he intends to follow over the year, remembering that reading needs to be taught not merely exercised. It should be indicated when the teacher intends introducing phrasing exercises, when comprehension from contextual clues will be taught, etc. This will ensure that the pupils receive a balanced programme over the year and that the teacher will know where he is going and what he has achieved.

The/....

The aims of the reading programme are clearly stated in the syllabus. In planning their programmes to achieve these aims, teachers must constantly bear in mind that -

(1) reading involves <u>interpretation</u> rather than mere <u>recognition</u> of words;

(2) reading is a <u>skill</u> which requires <u>practice</u>; (A child who can read words and "bark at the print" is not necessarily an efficient reader. A variety of sub-skills is involved in the reading process, starting with recognition and leading up to such useful skills as skimming, note-taking and summarising.)

(3) reading lessons should never be isolated from other aspects of language development; (The pupils should be given ample opportunity of developing the various facets of language ability as well as practice in comprehension skills.)

(4) in Standard 2 reading should be taught daily for the acquisition of the necessary skills, i.e. word attack skills, comprehension, breath control, phrasing, tempo, emphasis, etc.

1. <u>THE GENERAL APPROACH TO READING</u>

1.1 With his promotion to Standard 2 the pupil is passing from the sphere of beginner-reading to that of continuation-reading. The Standard 2 teacher must guard against making mistaken assumptions with regard to the pupils' abilities. Most of them will be able to read with reasonable fluency and understanding, but it must be accepted that there will be variations in that fluency, the eyespan will be limited, the vocabulary simple and the inflection limited. It is imperative that the reading level of each pupil be established and that he be taught at that level. In each class cognisance should be taken of the

different/....

different levels of reading and the programme should be planned to cater for them.

1.2 Teachers should realise that some pupils will have reading difficulties and weaknesses which they should take positive steps to diagnose and endeavour to remedy. Early diagnosis is important. Pupils with these difficulties should be discussed with the Remedial Teacher and serious cases should be referred to the Psychological Services.

1.3 It is recommended that reading be taught in groups. This will enable the teacher to meet the varying needs of the different pupils in the class. In Standard 2 it helps the pupil in his transition from the Junior to the Senior Primary Phase. Group teaching offers many advantages:

+ the good reader is not bored by the efforts of the weak reader;

+ readers of comparable ability can compete with and stimulate one another;

+ the teacher can devote more time to helping the weak readers;

+ weak readers develop greater confidence and progress better while the progress of better readers is not retarded;

+ reading material of a suitable level can be chosen to match the abilities of the groups with the result that pupils enjoy their lessons and progress more rapidly;

+ evaluation of the pupils is facilitated.

1.4/....

1.4 Careful attention must be given to the division of the class into the reading groups if the system is to be really effective. A careful evaluation of each pupil at the beginning of each year is of prime importance. Evaluation must never be considered as something that is done when a mark is needed for a report. Evaluation should take place at the commencement and at the end of each teaching situation. Initial evaluation establishes where to begin, while the final evaluation indicates what has been accomplished. Between these two points there should be a great deal of thorough, purposeful teaching.

1.5 The following steps are recommended when a class is to be divided into groups:

1.5.1 At the beginning of the year when a new class is taken over the teacher should study all the available records - the class schedule, record cards, reading records and any other written record available.

1.5.2 Each pupil is required to read a short passage individually, while the rest of the class is busy with silent reading or other set tasks. The level of each pupil is established thus and with the help of the records referred to in para. 1.5.1. (N.B. It is recommended that for this initial test a parallel reader from a "different" reading series be used, or a selected passage from a book of comparable difficulty, so that the content and vocabulary will be fresh to the pupil.)

1.5.3 A provisional division of the whole class is thus made and this will serve as a starting-point for teaching reading. Figures (e.g. 1, 2 and 3) or letters (e.g. a, b and c) identify the groups and indicate relative ability. By regular observation of the pupils performing in the group situation

the/....

the teacher may realise that certain pupils have been misplaced and moves are made. Pupils may be moved to another group at any time during the year where this will benefit their progress. Evaluation is thus taking place all the time and the teacher is aware of the progress the pupils are making at all times.

1.5.4 Once the class has been divided into groups of approximately 6 pupils and the teacher has established who the weak pupils are, attention can be given to the reading difficulties of individual pupils.

1.5.5 Heterogeneous grouping should be applied from time to time to provide a welcome change, for the social benefits of such change and for the stimulating effect the better readers offer. On occasions there should be reading lessons when the class reader, or a book in possession of each pupil, is used.

1.5.6 Teachers using the S.R.A. Reading Laboratory will be able to divide their classes into reading ability groups once the Starting Level has been established through the Guide. There are also various diagnostic and standardised tests available which will give the teacher an indication of the pupils' levels of reading.

1.5.7 Reading in ability groups demands a degree of organisation and is not always readily applied in large classes. However, with careful planning, it is possible and once pupils have fallen into a regular routine, lessons proceed smoothly and without waste of time.

It is difficult to prescribe how many groups there should be or how many pupils there should be in a group. This is determined by the needs of the class and what the teacher regards as

controllable./...

controllable. A bright group could conceivably consist of ten pupils, while there might be only four pupils in the weakest group. In practice it is recommended that there be no more then six pupils in a group. The groups should be spread around the room - and adjacent areas - so that the noise level doesn't interfere with concentration. The teacher should monitor all groups during the session, but spend more time with the weaker readers, encouraging them and helping them.

Pupils will fall into three broad categories, the fluent, intermediate and weaker readers. There will, in all probability be more than one group in each category. The groups should be kept fluid, with pupils being moved as the need arises. Weaker readers should never be allowed to feel that they are inferior and will be in the bottom group permanently. Regular re-grouping will obviate any feeling of inferiority or failure. In the words of Peter Young: "The first and essential aim in teaching retarded readers must be to give them success. It is not enough to diagnose difficulties; we must seek sources of success. It is not enough to know what a child can't do, we must find out what he can do and help him to excel in it..... Success builds upon success."

The Fluent Group need little help. From the reader's expression and use of punctuation you can detect weaknesses or lack in comprehension. Allow the pupils of this group the pleasure of reading at their own pace silently. This group is able to tackle projects and informational reading, so vary the reading period activity. Use these children to be "helpers" to listen to and help with the intermediate group's reading. Give them some form of badge or identification so that the others will know who the helpers for the day are. They wear

the/..

the badge with pride and this is a good incentive for the intermediate group who may be very close to this position and privilege.

The Intermediate Group still need help but are able to cope on their own or with the help of members of the Fluent Group. They need much practice in reading aloud (with a helper). They need prompting. They use contextual clues as well as the phonic method. There must be someone to reinforce or prompt, otherwise no progress is made.

The Weak Readers are in every class and need DAILY reading to the teacher. They need much practice to gain confidence. Much positive reinforcement should be given to keep reading a happy experience. The groups should be small to allow "promotion", so that "progress" is fast and builds positive self-concept. If the Reading Age is considerably below the Chronological Age the help of the Remedial Teacher should be sought. These pupils may read aloud to their parents at home, but ONLY with the teacher's choice of reading material. It must be ensured that the parents are not harsh but keep the reading time happy..

Common errors made by all three categories and requiring the teacher's help are mispronunciations, substitutions, refusals/ hesitations, additions, omissions and reversals.

When books are being selected the two factors of reading age and interest level should always be borne in mind. There is no point in giving a boy of 13 with a R.A. of 10 a book on fairies and pixies. There are books for the reluctant reader and they should be found. A book based and centred around his interest will always

start/....

start him reading, e.g. a keen rugby player will look at a non-fiction book on rugby. From this start you move him on to fiction based on his sport. For reluctant readers any stratagem should be used to get them reading.

1.6 As well developed reading ability is the keystone to progress in every subject in the curriculum, a purposeful and well balanced reading programme is of the first importance. There is a tendency to stop systematic tuition in reading too soon after the early years. The development of the pupils' reading ability must be persevered with in the Senior Primary Phase just as purposefully as in the Junior Primary Phase and in doing so to master the more advanced techniques of reading.

It is widely accepted that reading aloud, in the Senior Primary Phase, is an aid to the teacher enabling him to judge in what measure the pupil has progressed in the complex operation of turning written symbols into language and to ascertain in what respects he needs help in comprehending the written text.

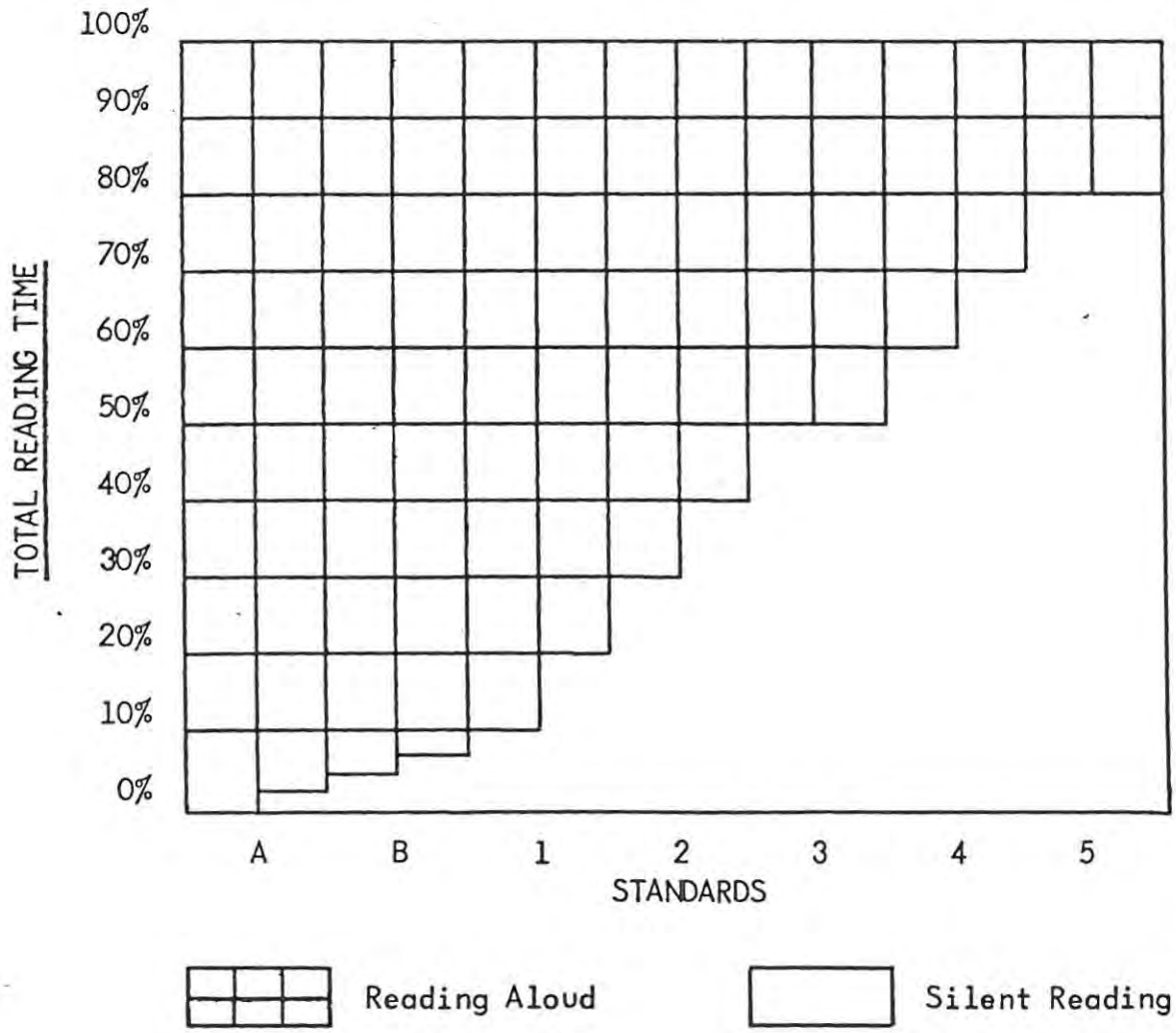
As the pupil masters the basic reading skills, so reading aloud becomes increasingly less necessary as a control and the emphasis in teaching falls more and more on the mastery of the advanced reading techniques which will ensure that the pupil becomes more competent in grasping the content of reading material.

Until quite recently the emphasis in teaching fell upon the acquisition of the ability to read aloud. The aim of reading has little by little undergone a change of emphasis from reading aloud to silent reading for pleasure or for information. However, a limited amount of reading aloud remains necessary throughout the primary school because of the clear diagnostic indication it gives. It remains the only way in which reading problems such as word-for-word reading, substitution, the omission of words, weak phrasing, guessing, non-observance of punctuation, etc. can be established.

The/....

The question arises of what the relationship of time devoted to reading aloud to time for silent reading should be. The graph herewith gives an approximate representation of the relationship. From this it is apparent that reading aloud decreases in a measure while silent reading increases correspondingly. It is recommended that from Std 2 the time devoted to silent reading be progressively increased until in Std 4 about 75% of the time available for reading instruction be given to silent reading.

RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN PUPILS' SILENT READING AND READING ALOUD



Besides/....

Besides opportunities for reading aloud and silent reading, a well balanced reading programme will also make provision for the development of study techniques, reading for information and for pleasure, the quickening of interest in newspapers and magazines and the cultivation of a sound taste in reading. Pupils should be allowed freedom of choice in their reading matter, though the teacher will make tactful suggestions. Opportunities should be given pupils to discuss in class books they have read and enjoyed. Book "reviews" could become part of the written English programme and these should, if possible, be displayed in the classroom or library. Teachers must, however, be wary of expecting so much written feed-back on every book read, that reading becomes a chore to be avoided at all costs. The teacher should endeavour to keep abreast of children's literature and new publications and avail himself of the services offered by the School Library Service and the Model Library.

1.7 A few minutes at the end of a reading lesson can be profitably set aside for individuals or groups to read aloud to the rest of the class. A useful technique here is dramatised reading, as it allows a greater number of pupils the opportunity of reading aloud. In a dramatised reading one pupil reads the narrative while others read the words spoken by various characters in the story. For this sort of reading an extract with much direct speech is necessary. This also gives the pupil the opportunity to give expression to the words he is reading.

Good recordings may be used to serve as models for the pupils, but the teacher's own reading aloud should be a constant example for the pupils to follow. Few activities can be more valuable

than/....

than the skilful reading aloud by the teacher of works that he and/or the pupils enjoy. Even older children enjoy having stories read to them. This is also an excellent way of introducing new books to the pupils, especially if the story is started and then put aside at a most exciting, "cliff-hanging" part. This may well be the means of guiding a reluctant reader in the choice of a book. Frequently the reluctant or wary reader is not really reluctant to read: he doesn't know what to read.

Ordinary fluent, clearly audible, natural reading should be encouraged at all times. To assist pupils practise the techniques of effective presentation and voice projection in audience situations, they may be given the opportunity of reading the passage of Scripture at the School Assembly. Play readings and choral work are useful. Time may be set aside at the end of reading lessons for these activities.

1.8 The more proficient readers should be given the opportunity of increasing their reading speed. However, comprehension must not give way to speed. The pupils should not compete with one another to achieve greater reading speeds: any competition should be self-competition; an attempt to improve one's own previous reading speed without any loss of comprehension.

The reading speed of many pupils can be appreciably increased without the use of any mechanical apparatus (and these should be used with great caution because of the effect they have on some pupils) simply by treating certain of the more obvious "mistakes" in silent reading.

These/....

These mistakes fall into three possible categories:

immaturity,
bad habits, and
symptoms of a possibly serious disability.

Where the last is suspected the assistance of the school psychologist or remedial teacher should be sought.

Encourage pupils to concentrate closely on their reading and to exclude other thoughts.

Research claims that speed is increased if one reads just above the line and not directly on it. They claim that the eyes then move more smoothly and phrases are read more quietly.

1.9 Every teacher is, in effect, a language teacher. The English teacher, however, should liaise closely with the teachers of other subjects, so that teaching the pupils to read specialised vocabulary is not left to chance.

1.10 For the teacher who wishes to make a success of teaching reading the demands are heavy indeed. He will have to acquire a knowledge of the reading interests and needs of pupils at various stages of development on the one hand and to have a clear sense of purpose in his teaching on the other. Although the class reader affords an important starting-point, the aim must continually be to promote the intellectual development of the pupil. This will be accomplished through the wise use of supplementary reading material.

2./....

2. READING AND COMPREHENSION ACTIVITIES - HIGHER ORDER READING SKILLS

The suggestions listed in this section are recommended approaches and are not prescriptive. The aims, however, should constantly be borne in mind.

2.1 AIMS

2.1.1 to teach pupils to read at the explicit level. This has been called reading on the line and involves teaching the pupil to comprehend information and ideas, setting, period, etc. as stated in a passage of literature.

2.1.2 to teach the pupil to read between the lines. This involves training the pupil to interpret information given, implied ideas and figurative language.

2.1.3 to teach the pupil to read beyond the lines. (i.e. to evaluate and discriminate between judgments, facts, opinions, inferences; to predict a logical outcome or conclusion; to recognize an author's bias.)

Teachers should ensure that all comprehension exercises are suitably graded and appropriate to the ability, age and interests of the pupils.

2.2 READING ACTIVITIES

2.2.1 READING ALOUD

The reading aloud of the text by one person is followed by class reaction to the questions. This is a whole class activity. Alternatively class discussion may be followed by written answers.

2.2.2/....

2.2.2 SILENT READING

Silent reading is followed by oral questions asked by the teacher. Included here would be group discussion of the text. Silent reading may also be followed by written answers to questions.

2.2.3 INDIVIDUAL READING/GROUP DISCUSSION

Individual reading is followed by group discussion of the text and questions of an open-ended nature. This is where the pupils analyse what they have read and is followed by the synthesis stage, where the teacher discusses the group's answers, correcting where necessary. Various techniques are possible in this teacher-pupil activity.

2.2.3.1 CLOZE PROCEDURE: Here, every "nth" word is omitted. The group reads the passage and discusses which words could be used in the blank spaces. These are written down. During the synthesis stage the teacher discusses the different words chosen by the members of the group. The author's words are given and compared with those chosen by the group. The whole extract is then read with the inclusion of the author's words.

A simple variation of this technique is to give the pupils a duplicated passage from which certain words have been omitted. A list of words including those left out of the text is given underneath. The group discusses which words belong in the spaces.

This is a useful way of reinforcing language teaching. For example: Omit all prepositions or adjectives or adverbs from a passage.

2.2.3.2/....

2.2.3.2 NUMBERED LINE TECHNIQUE: Here, the lines are numbered, and the questions refer to specific lines. This makes for easy reference to the text. Generally, every fifth line is numbered.

2.2.3.3 RECALL: The whole group reads an extract individually. Only the group leader has the question sheet. He reads the questions to the others, who have closed their books. The answers are written down, without reference to the text and then discussed. Marking is done by reference to the text.

2.2.3.4 READING NEWSPAPERS AND MAGAZINES: This involves the discussion of reports and advertisements and the use of language in them as well as the drawing up of original advertisements or the writing of reports.

2.2.4 S.R.A. READING LABORATORY

This is a valuable aid to the teaching of reading and comprehension skills. Two advantages are that the pupil can work and progress at his own pace and all correction is done by the pupil himself. The teacher must nevertheless be intimately involved in the reading activities at all times. Many facets of language and comprehension skills are included in the laboratories. Teachers using them are urged to give their pupils a thorough training in their use so that they can work with them with confidence and pleasure. It is recommended that the Reading Laboratory be intensively used over the limited period indicated by the compilers.

The S.R.A. Pilot Laboratories run parallel with the Reading Laboratories and consist of graded books of thirty to forty pages each. These complete stories can be effectively used with reluctant readers.

2.2.5/....

2.2.5 READING ALOUD

Members of a group are given an extract to prepare to read aloud to the class at the end of the lesson. This also affords the teacher the opportunity of assessing the pupils' ability to read aloud and overall comprehension and interpretation of the extract.

2.2.6 PLAY-READING

The group is given a short one-act play or extract from a play. The members are, at the appropriate level, required to discuss the plot, characterization, etc. and then to read the play to the rest of the class.

2.2.7 READING FOR INFORMATION

This involves reading about the given subject and then compiling a short "mini-assignment". This activity involves the study skill of note-taking. At a simpler level, pupils could be given assignment cards containing questions relating to a specific chapter of a book, which they have to read.

2.2.8 READING IN THE CONTENT SUBJECTS

Here, the group is given a section of a class textbook to read and discuss. Set questions are answered and corrected during the synthesis stage with the teacher. Specialized vocabulary is discussed.

2.2.9 WORD ATTACK SKILLS

Skills such as phonics and syllabification should be included.

2.2.10/....

2.2.10 WORD GAMES

Games such as Scrabble and Spellbound are useful, particularly with weaker groups. Games played with the dice and based on a system of forfeits and advantages are useful. The pupils do, after all, have to read and understand the rules!

2.2.11 LISTENING AND FOLLOWING

The pupils listen to an extract while following the printed word. This is most useful, as it involves an auditory and a visual process. Weaker groups, especially, will benefit from hearing and following. A junction box, connecting a casette recorder and headphones, will enable this to be practised as a group activity.

2.2.12 READING KITS

The various reading kits or laboratories can be effectively used as part of the teacher's reading programme but they should never be used as a substitute for the teaching of the subject.

2.2.13 QUIET READING

A daily session of "quiet reading" lasting not more than 10 minutes is useful as a settling down period after break. Pupils are allowed to enjoy a book of their own choice. As this is quiet reading no interruptions are allowed.

2.2.14 NOTE

(1) Pupils learn to read by reading. They should be encouraged and given the opportunity to read as often as possible. They should be given the opportunity to become acquainted with as many

different/....

different types of printed material as possible.
THE PRINTED WORD MUST BE SEEN TO BE OF GREAT IMPORTANCE TO THE TEACHER IF THE PUPILS ARE TO DISCOVER THE TRUE JOYS OF LITERACY.

(2) As with all teaching, the teacher must make no assumptions. No class is uniform with regard to reading levels and attitudes to reading. There will always be pupils who find difficulty in reading even at the simplest level. The teacher helps the pupil at <u>that</u> level.

3. READING SKILLS APPLIED

3.1 READING FOR PLEASURE

+ Always have a book in the classroom from which to read to the class. Encourage membership of public libraries as well as use of the school library.

+ Form Book Clubs in the class and encourage Book Exchanges.

+ There should be much reading matter around the classroom and on the walls. This should be changed frequently to keep it alive. It should include much material produced by the pupils themselves.

+ Pupils should be introduced to books in a weekly session of <u>reader guidance</u>.

+ Make reading a <u>habit</u>.

+ Play readings/broadcast plays/poetry reading/choral verse-speaking.

3.2/....

- 3.2 FUNCTIONAL READING

To reinforce and consolidate reading techniques, introduce pupils to -

+ the media centre (library) - arrangement, catalogues and card systems;
+ tables of contents;
+ the index;
+ the telephone directory (good practice in scanning);
+ encyclopaedias;
+ dictionaries;
+ time tables, schedules;
+ signs, maps, graphs and diagrams;
+ forms; and
+ information from newspapers.

3.3 FURTHER TECHNIQUES

Pupils should learn to adjust their reading speed and technique to -

+ scan a page to select a relevant word or passage;
+ skim to glean the gist of a passage and give this in a single sentence;
+ read carefully, making brief point notes and then collate these notes to make a summary;
+ ascertain the tone or implied meaning of a passage;
+ find contextual clues to the meanings of unusual words;
+ detect colloquialisms;
+ appreciate enriched word-meanings;
+ detect connotations, (e.g. he slurped his soup. Is he ill-mannered?);
+ appreciate the sensory appeal of words.

4./....

4. A GUIDE TO THE LEVELS OF READING SKILLS WHICH SHOULD BE DEVELOPED

4.1 STANDARD 2

+ In word attack the pupil will use both phonics and contextual clues.

+ The pupil should have a well-developed sight vocabulary.

+ The pupil may keep individual word-banks to extend vocabulary.

+ Silent reading should be carefully checked by questioning and by the pupil giving information to the teacher.

+ The pupil should be able to select salient facts from a passage.

+ The pupil should be able to use reference books to look up information.

+ The pupil should be involved in private reading, which should be encouraged by all means available.

+ As Standard 2 sees the introduction of textbooks, the teacher should instruct the pupils in the use of these.

4.2 STANDARDS 3 AND 4

+ In word attack the pupil should be able to cope with most new words.

+ Practical reading skills should now include understanding of instructions and notices with which pupils are likely to come into contact.

+ Reference/....

+ Reference skills are further developed and the pupil can work independently in the library, using catalogues, tables of contents and index systems. (Correlate with Book Education.)

+ Extended skills which enable pupils to follow detailed instructions, e.g. the construction of models, should be developed.

+ The pupil should be taught to take notes and report back.

+ Private reading should be encouraged until the habit is formed.

+ Oral reading should be fluent, with expression. This is largely confined to drama and verse.

+ Project work may be extended, starting with mini-projects and developing into full projects with well structured directives given by the teacher. Maps, tables and graphs should be used as well as books.

+ Dictionary work should be exercised and be speeded up.

+ Vocabulary enrichment continues, based now on the classification of words, e.g. synonyms and antonyms.

+ The pupil should be capable of critical appreciation of the writing of others and of his own writing.

+ Skimming and scanning techniques should be introduced.

5./....

5. DIAGNOSTIC - REMEDIAL WORK

5.1 Reading is an extremely complicated skill, the product of many sub-skills, and reading problems can rarely be ascribed to a single factor alone. Correct teaching methods are in themselves a potent factor in the solution of problems. However where pupils merely exercise their ability without any teaching, as seen for instance in the classroom where "reading" means one pupil after another reading a sentence/passage from the classreader, the problems and weaknesses remain. Every pupil who reveals a weakness should receive special treatment, for without such help there is little hope of the pupil overcoming his weakness on his own.

The arranging of pupils in groups has already been dealt with (see para. 1.5) and once this grouping is in operation a start can be made with diagnosing the problems of individual pupils. The key to this is close observation of the reading habits/ abilities of each pupil. Standardised reading tests which are available are:-

Neale Analyses of Reading Ability (Holborn)

The Standard Reading Tests by J. Daniels and H. Diack (Hart-Davis Educational)

5.2 When planning a remedial reading programme the following should be borne in mind:-

5.2.1 Help the pupil to develop a basic sight vocabulary - general configuration and visual clues may be a help.

5.2.2 Provide practice in visual and auditory discrimination so that the pupil is able to distinguish differences in the visual forms and in the sounds of words. (Draw attention to similar beginnings and endings of words etc.).

5.2.3/....

5.2.3 Help the pupil to acquire the correct left-to-right eye movement.

5.2.4 Provide language experiences that will lead to a richer environment; train the pupil to carry out verbal instructions; teach the pupil to use complete sentences, etc.

5.3 Below is a list of the type of errors encountered when reading. These errors should be identified and treated for correction.

5.3.1 READING ALOUD

Word-for-word reading

All the words receive the same emphasis which results in monotonous reading

Incorrectly placed emphasis which reveals lack of comprehension

Incorrect phrasing

Poor or incorrect pronunciation

Ignores punctuation

Frequently loses his place

Marked head movements

Omission of certain words

Repetition or substitution of certain words

Reversals or inversions

Basic sight vocabulary not up to standard

Consonant or vowel sounds not known

Blends, digraphs or diphthongs not known

Structural analysis poor

Unable to use contextual clues

Guesses at unknown words

Poor reading tempo - unsuitable for the type of reading material

Interpretation which is so poor that the listener cannot understand the reader

5.3.2 SILENT READING

Poor comprehension

Low rate of speed

Inability to scan or skim

5.4/....

5.4 Where pupils evince serious reading problems, they should be referred to the remedial teacher, a school psychologist or the school clinic as soon as possible.

5.5 Should a child appear reluctant to read or reveal a more readily discernible reading problem, the teacher must ascertain the level at which the difficulty occurs.

5.5.1 At the level of primary reading skills the pupil has difficulty in discriminating between letter shapes and has difficulty in decoding. This child needs testing and could be in need of help from the clinical remedial teacher.

5.5.2 A weakness in the intermediate reading skills involving speed and fluency can usually be rectified by giving the pupil extra practice in reading in a didactic remedial situation. It is most important that reading material be carefully selected so that it is of interest to the child. Only in this way can we provide the necessary incentive to read. Correct attitudes through motivation are very important. If this remedial treatment is combined with a programme of language enrichment the two functions will complement each other and improve the pupil's overall language patterns. The earlier in the Senior Primary standards that this treatment is given, the better the chances of its being successful.

5.5.3 Poor higher order reading skills indicate a lack of opportunity for practising them. These skills of study, finding information, applying information, critical and appreciative reading are assumed to be part of the armoury of every pupil who moves to senior school. As these are the study skills, essential for the effective use of textbooks, it is imperative that in the Senior Primary classes nothing is assumed, but that the pupils are given many opportunities for these skills to be exercised, strengthened and utilised.

5.6/....

5.6 Teachers will find the following checklist useful in assessing pupils' reading abilities and in establishing areas in which help or further practice is necessary.

5.6.1 Word Recognition Skills:

Adequate sight vocabulary

Blending skills

The use of contextual clues

5.6.2 Word Meaning Skills:

The use of structural analysis

An understanding of prefixes, suffixes and roots

Observance of punctuation

Ability to use a dictionary

Ability to use an index

Understanding of technical words

5.6.3 Comprehension Skills:

Ability to recognise the main idea

Ability to recognise relevant details

Awareness of the relationship between the main ideas

Ability to organise ideas in sequence

Ability to follow directions, read maps, tables, etc.

Ability to draw inferences

5.6.4 Reading Behaviour:

Holding of the book at the proper distance

Fluency of reading

The appropriate use of voice

Absence of finger-pointing, head movement, loss of place

Confidence shown when reading

Motivation to read independently

6./....

From: The Cape Education Department Teachers' Guide for English (First Language), Volume 2, Senior Primary Phase, 1982.

6. EVALUATION OF READING

6.1 Generally speaking it is not advisable for pupils to be assessed for marks while they are reading to the class.

6.2 Weak readers should not, in any case, be given opportunities of reading to the class as this will lessen class enjoyment of the book, impair the effectiveness of the lesson and in most cases embarrass the reader.

6.3 The best way to arrange for practice for the weak reader is to have all reading done by such pupils - and reading done for marks by any pupil - performed in a group or one-to-one situation.

6.4 The teacher can attach himself to a specific group when a pupil is to be assessed for reading and comprehension of what has been read.

6.5 READING ALOUD (30 marks in Stds 2, 3 and 4)

6.5.1 There are a number of schemes available for the assessment of oral reading. Most of these feature aspects such as interpre= tation, fluency, accuracy, articulation and rapport with the audience. These aspects feature largely in the equipment of the artist participating in an Eisteddfod and imply performance before an audience.

In paragraph 1.7 it was stressed that the basic reading skills in oral reading in the primary school are fluency, clarity and naturalness. There is thus a difference between this and the assessment of a "performance".

Where/....

Where the teacher has divided the class into ability groups relative to the above three criteria and along the lines suggested in paragraph 1.5, and where a careful watch has been maintained over the pupils' reading abilities, evaluation should present no difficulty.

It is quite unnecessary for the work of the class to be disrupted for periods on end while each pupil reads a passage for a mark. Evaluation should be an on-going process. The teacher knows what his pupils are worth and can, without special testing, award marks on the following simple scale (out of 30):

Excellent	:	25 - 30
Good	:	21 - 24
Average	:	16 - 20
Weak	:	12 - 15
Very weak	:	0 - 11

6.5.2 One of the more recently developed scales is shown below. The scheme consists of 6 criteria which are evaluated on a 5-point scale. It is accepted that the evaluation takes place in a reading-group situation and that the teacher will, under point 5, test the pupil's comprehension of text and context orally. It will be unnecessary to have a further silent reading test for comprehension. Criterion 1 involves the pupil's grasp of the general tenor, spirit and tone of the passage and his success in conveying these to his audience. Criterion 6 raises the important aspect of the pupil's attitude to reading.

EVALUATION/....

EVALUATION SCALE FOR READING

FIRST LANGUAGE : STDS 2 - 4

1. Meaningful grouping of words indicating textual comprehension	1	2	3	4	5
2. Accuracy and acceptable pronunciation	1	2	3	4	5
3. Fluency of reading	1	2	3	4	5
4. Intonation and emphasis	1	2	3	4	5
5. Textual and contextual comprehension	1	2	3	4	5
6. Reading attitudes: i.e. willingness, enthusiasm	1	2	3	4	5
	TOTAL: 30				

6.5.3 GENERAL REMARKS

6.5.3.1 There is no prescriptive evaluation scale. All evaluation of reading (even when a reading scale is used) remains subjective and schools are free to use any acceptable approach. It remains important, however, that in devising their scheme for evaluation, principals give due consideration to the requirements for good reading and the criteria set out in this Guide.

6.5.3.2/....

From: Charlotte Huck

Children's Literature in the Elementary School.

READING TO CHILDREN

One of the best ways to interest children in books is to read to them frequently from the time they are able to listen. Pre-schoolers and kindergarten children should have an opportunity to listen to stories two or three times a day. Parent volunteers, high-school students, college participants—all can be encouraged to read to small groups of children throughout the day. Children should have a chance to hear their favorite stories over and over again at a listening center. The child from a book-loving family may have heard over one thousand bedtime stories before he ever comes to kindergarten; while some children may never have heard one. Equal opportunity should be readily available for all.

Teachers accept the idea of reading a story at least once a day to the primary-grade child. Increasingly, the daily story hour is advocated by almost all authorities in reading. The research done by Cohen[12] and replicated by Cullinan, Jaggar, and Strickland would support this practice.

Unfortunately, the practice of a daily story in the middle grades is not as common as in the primary grades. Chow Loy Tom found that less than 40 percent of the middle-grade teachers in the nation read aloud to their students once a day.[13] This percentage decreased in grades five and six to 27 percent and 26 percent. The most frequent reason that the teachers checked for not reading aloud was that they did not have enough time. Frequently, respondents expressed guilt over taking time to read in an overcrowded curriculum:

> I feel guilty in a way, when I let the curriculum slide—and "steal" time for reading. Yet enjoyment and interest . . . and discussion later is much higher here.[11]

[12] *See* Chapter 1, p. 25.
[13] Chow Loy Tom. "What Teachers Read to Pupils in the Middle Grades" (Unpublished Dissertation, The Ohio State University, Columbus, Ohio 1969), p. 174.
[11] *Ibid.*, p. 163.

Obviously, many of these teachers equate reading aloud to children with entertainment rather than education. We know that the two most important motivating factors in helping children become readers are:

1. Time for reading books of their choosing.
2. Hearing good books read aloud by an enthusiastic teacher.

In these middle grades many children still do not have the ability to read the books in which they are interested. Most modern television-reared children have developed interests and appreciation levels above their reading-ability levels. Once a child has heard a good book read aloud, he can hardly wait to savor it again. Reading aloud thus generates further interest in books. Good oral reading should develop a taste for fine literature.

Selecting Books to Read Aloud

Teachers and librarians will want to select books to read aloud in terms of the children's interests, background in literature, and the quality of the writing. Usually, the teachers will not select books that children in the group are reading avidly on their own. The story hour is the time to stretch their imaginations, to extend interests, and to develop appreciation of fine writing. If children have not had much experience in listening to stories, begin where they are. Appreciation for literature appears to be developmental and sequential. Eight- and 9-year-olds who have had little exposure to literature still delight in such stories as *Harry the Dirty Dog* by Zion, *Mike Mulligan and His Steam Shovel* by Burton, and *Stevie* by Steptoe. Other children of this same age who have had much experience with literature are ready for longer stories—such as *James and the Giant Peach* by Dahl, *The Bears' House* by Sachs, or *The 18th Emergency* by Byars.

In the writer's experience, children tend to enjoy fantasies if they are read aloud. The subtle humor of Milne's *Winnie the Pooh* may be completely lost when the child is reading alone; when shared by an appreciative teacher-reader, the awkward but well-meaning Pooh and the dismal Eeyore become real personages to 8- and 9-year-olds. The quiet but moving story of *The Mousewife* by Rumer Godden becomes more

meaningful if read aloud and discussed with children. Its theme of the importance of freedom and vision (if only in a little mousewife) needs to be shared with children.

There is a real place for sharing some of the beautiful picture books with older children as well as younger ones. *Dawn* by Uri Shulevitz creates the same feeling visually as one of Emily Dickinson's clear, rarefied poems. It is a visual experience for all ages, but particularly for anyone who has felt "at oneness" with the world before the sunrise. Keeping's unusual story of what a city child views *Through the Window* is only appropriate for children in the middle grades. They will respond to its stunning artwork and its somber overtones.

Many of the folk tales and myths and legends have been beautifully illustrated as single tales and should be shared with 8-, 9-, 10-, and 11-year-olds. The exquisite details of Nancy Burkert's illustrations for *Snow-White* by Jarrell might be lost upon young children. The complex Russian folktales of *The Firebird* illustrated by Bogdanovic, and Uri Shulevitz's *The Fool of the World and the Flying Ship* and *Soldier and Tsar in the Forest* would all make a rich contribution to the literature program in the middle grades. Marcia Brown's fable *Once a Mouse* and Barbara Cooney's *Chanticleer and the Fox* are more appropriately shared with older children. Tomaino's *Persephone, Bringer of Spring,* with its stunning illustrations by Ati Forberg, would make an excellent introduction to a study of Greek myths. Most of these books are "too good for children to miss" and need to be shared with them.

The teacher should strive for balance in what is read aloud to children. Children tend to like what they know. As they are introduced to a variety of types of books, they will broaden their base of appreciation. If 12-year-olds are all reading contemporary fiction, the teacher might read *Enchantress from the Stars* by Engdahl or *The Nargun and the Stars* by Wrightson to extend children's interest to fantasy. A study of the American Revolution could be enriched by the teacher reading the story of *Johnny Tremain* by Forbes or *Early Thunder* by Jean Fritz. However, there is a real danger that middle-grade teachers will choose to read aloud only those books which will support the social studies program. Chow Loy Tom[15] found this to be the case in her national study of what middle-grade teachers read aloud to their students. Some 70 percent of the teachers who did read aloud reported that they chose titles that would correlate with social studies. This practice can destroy the whole notion of broadening children's interests in a variety of types of literature and providing a kind of balance in the selection of materials shared with children.

Primary-grade teachers will read many books to their children, certainly a minimum of one a day. Middle-grade teachers may present parts of many books to their students during book talks or as teasers to interest children in reading the books. But how many books will teachers read in their entirety? An educated guess might be that starting with 8-year-olds—when teachers begin to read longer, continuous stories to boys and girls—an average of some four to five books are read aloud during the year. This means that for the next four years, when children are reaching the peak of their interest in reading, they may hear no more than twenty books read by their teachers! Certainly those books must be selected with care in terms of their relevance for the particular groups of boys and girls and for the quality of their writing. A suggested list of books to read aloud is included in this chapter to serve as a possible guide to selection. Notice that the age groups overlap deliberately. There is no such thing as a book for 5-year-olds or 10-year-olds. It is important to stress that. Only a teacher who knows the children, their interests, and their background of experience can *truly* select appropriate books for a particular class.

Teachers should keep a record of the books that they have shared with the children they teach, and a brief notation of the reaction of the class to each title. This would enable teachers to see what kind of balance is being achieved, and what the particular favorites of the class are. Such a record would provide future teachers with information as to the likes and dislikes of the class and their background of exposure to literature. It also might prevent the situation that was discovered by a survey of one school in which every teacher in the school, with the exception of the

[15]Chow Loy Tom, *Ibid.*

kindergarten and the second-grade teachers, had read *Charlotte's Web* aloud to the class! *Charlotte's Web* is a great book, but not for every class. Perhaps teachers in a school need to agree on what is the most appropriate time for reading particular favorites. Teachers and librarians should be encouraged to try reading new books to children, instead of always reading the same ones. But some self-indulgence should be allowed every teacher who truly loves a particular book, for that enthusiasm can't help but rub off on children.

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100 BOOKS TO READ ALOUD

3-, 4-, and 5-year Olds

Asbjornsen, P. C., and Jorgen E. Moe. *The Three Billy Goats Gruff*. illustrated by Marcia Brown. Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1957.

Brown, Margaret Wise. *Goodnight Moon*, illustrated by Clement Hurd. Harper & Row, 1947.

———. *The Runaway Bunny*. Illustrated by Clement Hurd. Harper & Row, 1972 (1942).

Burningham, John. *Mr. Gumpy's Outing*. Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1971.

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