HOW DO CHILDREN WITH READING DIFFICULTIES LEARN TO READ IN FIRST CLASS?

by

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Appendix 1 (i) Glossary of Terms and (ii) Acronyms

(i) *Glossary of Terms*

Alphabet – A set of letters/symbols that represents the sounds of speech and the writing system of a language. The letters are used to represent one or sometimes more than one phoneme.

Alphabetic principle –The alphabetic principle is an insight into the orderly relationship that exists between written symbols/letters and the sounds that make up the English language, that is, letters represent sounds in a predictable system, and words are comprised of patterns of letters and corresponding sounds. "It is the idea that written spellings systematically represent spoken words" (Snow et al., 1998, p.4.).

Auditory perception – Auditory perception is the ability to recognise, interpret and process information that is heard. Auditory perception encompasses the following subskills: phonological awareness, auditory discrimination, auditory blending, auditory memory and auditory sequencing.

Automaticity – In cognitive learning theory, the condition in which learning has become almost subconscious and therefore requires little processing effort (Lerner, 2003).

Basal readers – Basal readers are a sequential and interrelated set of books and supportive materials which provide the basic material for the development of fundamental reading skills. A basal reading series consists of graded readers that gradually increase in difficulty. Each graded reader relies on a controlled introduction of a small number of new words. The books increase in difficulty in vocabulary, story content and skill development (Lerner, 2003).

Chunking strategies – Chunking strategies are a means of helping children decode words. It is easier to decode and remember groups of letters than isolated letters, for example, *carrot* can be decoded by decoding *car* first and then *rot* and then combining the two to decode the complete word.

Classroom ecology – Classroom ecology refers to the various environments within the classroom, for example, social groups, relationships with peers and school personnel, and classroom culture, which influence a child's desires and ability to learn. The classroom environment encompasses more than teaching and learning academic subject matter. Children also encounter the hidden curriculum of expected values and behaviours. Learning, attitudes and progress can depend on positive interactions with the environment.

Coaching – Coaching is a means of helping children learn and put into practice various reading strategies and skills, for example, the teacher takes on the role of coach, giving instruction and demonstrating specific skills, and the child becomes the partner and

learns the skill. Essential elements of the coaching method include demonstrations by the teacher, practice by the child and transfer of the skill into the process of reading. The goal of coaching is to intervene just enough to scaffold the reading process for the child.

Codes – A code is defined as "the most basic segment or element of the raw data or information that can be assessed in a meaningful way regarding the phenomenon" (Boyatzis, 1998, p. 63).

Code-breaking skills – This is the systematic explicit teaching of decoding skills relating to the elements of the alphabetic code, for example, phonics. In a written alphabetic language such as English, the code involves a system of mapping or seeing the correspondences between letters and sounds. Once a child learns the mappings, the child has broken the code and can apply this knowledge to figure out plausible pronunciations of printed words (Beck & Juel, 1995).

Combining word-recognition cues – Encouraging children to use the word recognition cues such as phonics, sight words, context clues and structural analysis.

Comprehension monitoring - Comprehension monitoring involves a process of readers self-listening (monitoring) or listening to others read aloud in order to become aware of their own understanding during reading (Block & Pressley, 2002).

Concept of print – Concepts of print include knowing what a book is, what a book is for, what a book looks like, the direction that print is read - from left to right and from top to bottom, that print represents meaning, that words are groups of letters surrounded by spaces and that letters correspond to sounds.

Constructed spelling as approximation – Constructed spelling is the beginning writer's attempt to write words by attending to their sound units and associating letters with them in a systematic although unconventional way.

Contextual cues – Contextual cues help children recognise a word through the meaning or context of a sentence/paragraph in which the word appears.

Continuum of reading ability and disability - Reading ability is best conceptualised as occurring along a normal distribution of reading skills, while children vary in their level of reading difficulty along a mild-to-severe spectrum, with the majority of children with reading disabilities falling at the mild end.

Critical comprehension – Critical or evaluative thinking is a part of higher level comprehension, where the readers develop a point of view about the material they have read and evaluate the information in light of their thinking and experiences (Richek, Caldwell, Jennings & Lerner, 2002).

Cuiditheoir – Primary teachers seconded by the DES to assist schools in the devlopment of school policies and practices.

Decoding – Decoding is a term for the process of making the connection between the sound (phoneme) and the written letter symbol (grapheme), that is, the process of unlocking words into component sounds.

Developing conceptual knowledge – Building children's knowledge of the concepts that underlie the words they are reading.

Developing thinking processes/metacognition – Developing reader's ability to think about thinking (cognition), for example, thinking about how to understand a passage.

Diagnostic assessment – Assessment that provides in-depth information about a child's strengths and needs in reading. The answers to the following four key questions are sought: What can the child already do without help? What can the child do if given a little prompting and guidance? What gaps exist in the child's previous learning? What does the child need to be taught next in order to progress? (Westwood, 2004, p.89).

Error analysis – Error analysis consists of the systematic analysis of the kinds of errors that children make. This analysis gives teachers information for making decisions about a child's reading ability. Error analysis is useful in pinpointing specific gaps in a child's current reading skills. The error analysis procedure involves listening

to a child read aloud on several occasions, using reading material which is reasonably challenging but not at frustration level, and analysing it using a running record sheet, for example, marking when the child self-corrects, substitutes, omits or repeats words.

Expressive language - The process of producing spoken language is called oral expressive language. Speaking and writing are expressive language skills in which ideas originate in the brain and are sent outwards to be expressed in spoken or written form.

Evaluative assessment - The process of using assessment information that is collected in various ways to make judgements about, for example, a child's reading. Evaluation occurs after the assessment information has been collected, synthesised and thought about, because this is when the teacher is in a position to make informed judgements.

Event sampling - Event sampling observation involves recording behaviours of interest as they occur.

Familiarity with books – Children's awareness of how books and text are organised, incorporating concepts of print which include knowing what a book is, what a book is for, what a book looks like, the direction print is read - from left to right and from top to bottom, that print represents meaning, that words are groups of letters surrounded by spaces and that letters correspond to sounds.

Formal assessment – Formal assessment instruments, such as tests and other procedures for measuring children's learning, complement and supplement the teacher's informal observations and judgements. They are normed (standarised) on large populations of children and therefore allow comparisons to be made between children. Formal measures must be administered in the same way to all children. Formal tests allow teachers to compare a child's performance to others of the same age or class level. They provide scores that are familiar to parents and other professionals. They help teachers make objective decisions about a child's performance. They provide data which informs policy makers. The results of formal assessment are important when making decisions with regard to the appropriate education of children with special educational needs.

Formative assessment – Formative assessment is used to monitor learning progress during instruction and its purpose is to provide continuous feedback to the teacher and the child. Formative assessments guide teachers' decisions in the teaching/learning process and are used to alter or improve instruction while it is going on.

Grapheme – Graphemes are printed letters.

Grapheme-phoneme correspondence - The relationship between printed letters and the sounds in language.

Graphic/semantic organisers - Graphic/ semantic organisers are visual representations of concepts, knowledge or information that incorporate both text and pictures to make material easier to understand. They display relationships of ideas with diagrams, pictorial devices or story maps, thereby, helping children to learn about text structures and to focus on concepts.

Guided oral reading – Guided oral reading provides opportunities for the reader to engage in reading experiences and to learn effective strategies for understanding text. In guided reading, the teacher combines reading with strategy instruction that teaches the children how to read. In a reading strategy, children learn how to read as they are actively reading so as to consciously monitor and control their own reading processes (Richek et al., 2002).

High incidence special educational needs –High incidence SEN are those SEN that present frequently in schools, for example, learning support needs. Irish primary schools get a general allocation to meet the needs of children with high incidence special needs. (Note that low incidence special educational needs are defined later in the glossary).

Home Literacy Environment – Home literary environment is characterised by the variety of literacy resources and opportunities provided to children, as well as the parental skills, abilities, dispositions and resources that determine the opportunities for them.

Inclusion – "Inclusive education describes the process by which a school attempts to respond to all pupils as individuals by reconsidering and restructuring its curricular organisation and provision, and allocating resources to enhance equality of opportunity. Through this process the school builds its capacity to accept all pupils from the local community who wish to attend" (Sebba & Sachdev, 1997, p.9).

Independent reading – Opportunities for children to engage in reading for enjoyment when not under the direct supervision of a teacher.

Inferential comprehension –This form of comprehension consists of the inferences or implied information that readers draw from a text.

Informal assessment - Informal measures refer to assessment tools and procedures, other than published instruments with prescribed procedures, which can be used to collect information about a child's learning. Information gathered through informal assessments can be modified to suit the needs of children. Unlike formal tests, the informal assessments have not been normed or standardised on large populations of children. Therefore, informal assessments cannot be used to compare one child's performance with another. Informal assessments are flexible. Because they have not been standardised, the teacher is free to make modifications in test procedures, adapting them to serve the specific needs of the teaching/diagnostic situation.

Interpretation – The process of interpreting or explaining text, for example, encouraging children to think about why something happened in a story.

Knowledge of the alphabet – knowledge of the alphabet involves recognising and naming the letters of the alphabet.

Language experience approach – The language experience approach is a method that builds on the child's knowledge and language base, linking different forms of language, that is, listening, speaking, reading and writing. This approach uses the child's own experiences and language as raw material. The child dictates stories which the teacher writes down and the stories become the basis for the reading instruction.

Learning support – The term learning support replaced the term remedial education in the Learning Support Guidelines (DES, 2000). It consists of providing extra support for children experiencing low achievement and /or learning difficulties.

Letter formation – The ability to form alphabetic letters correctly.

Listening skills – Listening differs from hearing, which is a physiological process that does not involve interpretation. Listening demands that a child selects appropriate meanings and/or organises ideas according to their relationships. It also calls for evaluation, acceptance or rejection and internalisation of the ideas expressed. It is the

foundation of all language growth and is a basic skill that can be improved through practice

Literal comprehension – Understanding the information stated directly in a piece of text, for example, answering factual questions about a story.

Logographic phase – In the logographic phase of reading, children are able to recognize familiar words by attending to salient graphic or written features, for example, the two circles in the middle of *look*, but they do not use phonology or letter sounds as a way to identify printed words (Frith, 1985).

Low incidence special educational needs – Low incidence SEN are those that occur less frequently in Irish Primary Schools. They include hearing impairment, visual impairment and autistic spectrum disorders among others. Irish primary schools must make an individual application for resource teaching hours for children with low incidence special needs.

Macro level – Overall, large scale level, for example, at the Department of Education and Science (DES) level.

Mainstream –Mainstreaming in education, also known as inclusion, is the process of grouping children with SEN along with general education pupils in the classroom.

Metacognition – The ability to facilitate learning by taking control and directing one's own thinking process; the reader's ability to think about how to understand a passage.

Micro level – Small scale level, for example, an individual school within the education system.

Modelling – The teacher explicitly teaches by demonstrating or modelling the reading skill or strategy, for example, showing the children how he/she does it.

Motor co-ordination – The ability to control and use motor functions efficiently. Difficulties with motor co-ordination can manifest themselves in poor fine motor and/or poor gross motor co-ordination. Motor co-ordination is important for writing.

Non-responders – Not all children respond even to the most effective reading interventions. Researchers have reported that 20% to 30% of children at risk for reading difficulties (Blachman, Ball, Black & Tangel, 1994; Brown & Felton, 1990; Mathes, Howard, Allen & Fuchs, 1998; Torgesen et al., 1999) and more than 50% of children with disabilities (Fuchs et al., 2001; Torgesen et al., 2001) do not appear to benefit from generally effective early reading intervention. Such children have been called non-responders.

Onset and rime – The term onset and rime refers to the way in which single-syllable words can be broken into a beginning sound (onset) and a unit comprising the vowel and all that follows it (rime).

Oral language activities – Activities that enable children to develop their expressive and receptive language skills.

Oral reading guided by the teacher - The term oral reading guided by the teacher refers to practice in oral reading that is directed and guided by the teacher.

Orthographic phase – In the orthographic phase, children recognise new words instantly by attending to their distinctive orthographic or spelling patterns (Frith, 1985).

Paired reading - A method of fostering reading where two children read in pairs, providing reading practice for both children.

Phoneme – A phoneme is the smallest unit of sound. "Phonemes are speech phonological units that make a difference to meaning" (Snow et al., p.52, 1998).

Phonemic awareness – Phonemic awareness is the ability to identify the different sound units within spoken words. It is "the insight that every spoken word can be conceived as a sequence of phonemes. Because phonemes are the units of sound that are represented by the letters of an alphabet, an awareness of phonemes is key to

understanding the logic of the alphabetic principle and thus the learnability of phonics and spelling" (Snow et al., p.52, 1998).

Phonemic blending – Phoneme blending is the ability to combine different phonemes, for example, blending sounds into words.

Phonemic deletion – Phoneme deletion is the ability to remove phonemes from words, for example, finding new words by taking away a letter sound.

Phonemic segmentation – Phoneme segmentation is the ability to divide groups of letters/words into component sounds, for example, segmenting long words into syllables.

Phonics – Phonics refer to instructional practices that emphasise the relationship between printed letters (graphemes) and the sounds (phonemes) in language and how spellings are related to speech sounds in systematic ways. Children must learn to decode the printed language, to translate print into sound and to master the alphabetic principles of symbol-sound relationships.

Phonological awareness – Phonological awareness refers to the general ability to attend to the sounds of language as distinct from its meaning and it is a more inclusive term than phonemic awareness (Snow et al., 1998, p. 52). It involves the metalinguistic ability to recognise that the words we hear are composed of individual sounds within

the word and it is developed by means of such skills as recognising syllables, rhyming, alliteration, segmentation, blending and isolation of sounds within words.

Phonological processing – The ability to process phonological information.

Portfolios – A portfolio is a systematic collection of a child's work. A portfolio can serve a variety of instructional and assessment purposes. It can demonstrate the child's skills and accomplishments and it includes teachers' evaluations and the child's self-reflections. Portfolio assessment is a method of evaluating the child's progress by analysing samples of his/her work.

Practice in oral reading – Strategies and approaches, for example, oral reading guided by the teacher, guided oral reading and re-reading, which give the child practice in oral reading leading to the development of reading fluency.

Practice in writing – Strategies and approaches which give the child practice in writing, for example, using text as a source of writing opportunities, the child responding to text in his/her own words and the completion of teacher-made/commercial worksheets/workbooks.

Question generation – Readers self-question while reading a text, for example, children are encouraged to ask questions about the material they are reading.

Rapid naming – The ability to quickly and automatically name objects and to recall the correct word for an object.

Reading and writing integrated – Strategies for responding to narrative and informational text which allow children opportunities to reflect about their reading and to respond to it. They are important in integrating writing into reading instruction. The strategies can include journals and rewritten stories. Writing their thoughts about texts and materials that they are reading helps children to achieve greater comprehension.

Reading comprehension – Reading comprehension refers to the reader's ability to understand the meaning of what he/she has read.

Reading fluency – The ability to recognise words and passages readily and smoothly. Fluent reading implies that word recognition is sufficiently automatic and accurate so that a reader's attention is focused on the meaning of the text (Hiebert, 2006).

Reading skills – Reading skills are automatic actions that result in decoding and comprehension with speed, efficiency, and fluency and usually occur without awareness of the components or control involved (Afflerbach et al., 2008).

Reading strategies – Reading strategies are deliberate, goal-directed attempts to control and modify the reader's efforts to decode text, understand words, and construct meanings of text (Afflerbach et al., 2008).

Reading/writing connection – The process of integrating reading and writing instruction. Connecting reading and writing is important as research has consistently shown that strong ties exist between reading and writing (Tierney, 1990; Johnston, 1997). Writing provides support for reading development and reading influences children's writing.

Receptive language –Understanding and comprehending spoken and written language. Listening and reading are receptive skills that feed information into the cerebral cortex of the brain.

Remedial education – Remedial education is defined as a "part of education which is concerned with the prevention, investigation and treatment of learning difficulties from whatever source they emanate and which hinder the normal development of the student" (NARE, 1977, p.5).

Repeated reading – The re-reading of passages of text typically four times or with a criterion set for speed, accuracy, comprehension or expression. After four readings or when the criterion is met, the reader proceeds to the next section or to a new passage (Samuels, 2006). Repeated reading is a strategy for giving children repeated practice to improve their oral reading fluency.

Re-reading – Re-reading of text that has already been read.

Resource teaching – Resource teaching is additional teaching support that is provided for children with SEN who have been fully integrated into mainstream schools.

Round robin – Unrehearsed oral sight reading with turn taking that is used as a format for practising reading.

Running records – Running records provide an assessment of text reading. They capture what readers said and did while reading continuous text and allow the teacher to review how the child read, which informs teaching/learning. The teacher observes the child reading and notes his/her reading behaviour, for example, substitutions, reversals, omissions and refusals.

Scaffolding – Scaffolding describes the supports that the teacher provides for the child at the early stages of learning a task that is beyond the child's level of competence, and the supports are removed when they are no longer necessary.

Schools designated as disadvantaged – Schools designated as having disadvantaged status are assessed and prioritised on the basis of socio-economic and educational indicators such as unemployment levels, housing, medical card holders and information on basic literacy and numeracy. Schools so designated receive funding and resources under the DEIS initiative.

Shared reading – A method of fostering reading fluency where the beginning reader reads with an adult who provides a model of reading for the child.

Sight vocabulary (sight word learning) – Sight words are words that are recognised instantly, without hesitation or further analysis. Fluent reading requires that most words in a text are sight words.

Single text - The use of a single text, for example, a basal reader, on which to organise a reading lesson and the component skills being taught.

Special educational needs – SEN mean a restriction in the capacity of the person to participate in and benefit from education on account of an enduring physical, sensory, mental health or learning disability, or any other condition which results in a person learning differently from a person without that condition (Epsen Act, 2004).

Spelling as a window into phonic knowledge – The process of incorporating the teaching of spellings with the development of phonic knowledge.

Story structure – Story content is systematically organised into episodes and a story plot unfolds over a set of episodes. Knowledge of episodic content helps a reader to understand the who, what, where, when and why of stories and to infer causal relationships between events (Block & Pressley, 2002).

Structural analysis – Structural analysis refers to the recognition of words through the analysis of meaningful word units such as prefixes, suffixes, root words, compound words and syllables.

Sublexical skills - Sublexical skills include letter identification, letter-sound knowledge and phonological awareness. They are a first step in learning to read.

Summarisation – The ability to discern and stress central and important ideas, and to generalise and minimise less relevant details in order to create a summary of what has been read. Summarisation rules include the identification of topic sentences, deletion of redundant sentences, recognition of superordination and the invention of a topic sentence.

Supplementary instruction - Instruction that occurs outside the mainstream classroom.

Syllabic awareness – The awareness that a syllable is a unit of language that can be spoken. "In English, a syllable can consist of a vowel sound alone or a vowel sound with one or more consonant sounds preceding and following" (Snow et al., 1998).

Systematic phonic instruction – Systematic phonic instruction is instruction that is based on proactive, rational planning of the teaching of phonics, which follows a logical step-by-step approach.

Talking books - A recorded reading of a book.

Time sampling - Time-point sampling occurs where behaviour is coded at regular intervals and it is assumed that these points are representative of others.

Visual perception – Visual perception is the ability to recognise, interpret and process visual information. It incorporates a broad scope of subskills which include visual discrimination, figure-ground discrimination, visual closure, letter recognition among others.

Vocabulary development – Vocabulary is the way of naming the things we know about. Vocabulary development is a vital part of reading instruction and has implications for reading fluency and reading comprehension as the language we understand is the natural limit of our reading ability (Richek et al., 2002).

Whole language approach – A whole language approach is "an integrated approach to teaching reading, writing and oral language, whereby reading, writing and spelling are not seen as separate activities but are integrated with oral language"(Mc Phillips, 2003, p.169). Whole language instruction is a literature-based approach to teaching reading which emphasises that children should be surrounded by a world of books and should have many experiences with listening to stories, reading books and writing.

Whole school approach – An approach whereby the whole school community, including parents/guardians, children and staff, are involved in initiatives.

Word recognition – Reading requires the ability to recognise words. Readers must learn to recognise words easily and quickly. Word identification needs to be an automatic process. Once a child develops facility in word recognition, he/she can concentrate on the meaning of text. The reader can use phonics, sight words, context clues and structural analysis to identify words.

Word attack skills – The ability to use the various strategies to decode unknown words.

DE   Department of Education

DEIS   Delivering Equality of Opportunity in Schools

DES   Department of Education and Science

EBASS   Ecobehavioural Assessment Systems Software

ERC   Educational Research Centre

EPSEN   Education for Persons with Special Educational Needs

FIAC   Flanders Interaction Analysis Categories

HLE   Home Literacy Environment

ICE   Instructional Content Emphasis Instrument

ICT   Information and Communication Technologies

INTO   Irish National Teachers' Organisation

IPLP   Individual Profile and Learning Programme

IQ   Intelligence Quotient

JI   Junior Infants

LIFT   Literacy Initiative From Teachers

LSA   Learning Support Assistant

LSG   Learning Support Guidelines

MS-CISSAR   Mainstream Version of the Code for Instructional Structure and Student
             Academic Response

NAER   National Assessment of English Reading

NAPS   National Anti-Poverty Strategy

NARE   National Association for Remedial Education

NCCA   National Council for Curriculum and Assessment

NEPS   National Educational Psychology Service

NRP   National Reading Panel Report

OS   Observation Schedule of Reading Approaches and Methods Used to
             Teach Children with Reading Difficulties

PALS   Peer Assisted Learning Strategies

PSC   Primary School Curriculum

RLOF   Reading Lesson Observation Framework

RR   Reading Recovery

RTI   Response to Intervention

SEN   Special Educational Needs

SERC   Special Education Review Committee

SI   Senior Infants

SNA   Special Needs Assistant

TES   Teacher Education Section

UK   United Kingdom

USA   United States of America

Appendix 2: Morris, Bloodgood, Lomax and Perney's Reading Model: Time Phases and Components

Time one occurs at approximately four years, the beginning of junior infants. At this stage, the model features *alphabet knowledge* and *beginning consonant awareness*. Young children vary on how much alphabet knowledge they bring to school. Upon entering junior infants, some children have little or no alphabet knowledge, others know a few letters in their name, and still others can recognise (and write) many alphabet letters. Alphabet knowledge tends to precede and to facilitate children's attention to the beginning consonant sound in words.

At time two, four and a half to five years approximately, middle of junior infants, the *concept of word in text and spelling with beginning and ending consonants* come to the fore. Instruction over the first half of the junior infant year will lead many children to master the alphabet and to develop beginning consonant awareness. They can then use this knowledge to make further advances in reading and writing. As the child's concept of a word in text stabilises, that is, begins to stand *still for analysis*, he or she can begin to process other letter sounds in the word, particularly the ending consonant (Morris, 1993).

At time three, five to five and a half years, end of junior infants/beginning of senior infants, *phoneme segmentation,* the ability to segment each sound in a consonant-vowel-consonant (cvc) word, is the targeted ability. During the second half

of the senior infant year, the children who can finger-point read and attend to beginning and ending consonants in words are in a good position to refine their phoneme awareness, that is, to begin to attend to the medial component of words. The medial vowel is the hardest phoneme for the young reader to process (Ehri, 1998), but a stable concept of a word, with the consonant boundaries processed, frames the vowel *for* conscious attention. Because of the inherent difficulty in phoneme segmentation and dependence on reading and writing experience, children tend not to demonstrate this ability before they are five/six years approximately, the end of senior infants.

Time four refers to approximately six/seven years, first class; *word recognition* is the ability of interest. Armed with phoneme awareness and benefiting from direct reading and word study instruction, achieving readers in first class will demonstrate word recognition ability after a few months into the school year. Moreover, children in first class, who are able to decode and remember printed words by October, should be strong readers at the end of the school year. Therefore, at time five, end of first class, *contextual reading ability* is measured.

Appendix 3: Plain Language Statement and Letters of Consent Format

Plain Language Statement

My name is Bairbre Tiernan and I am a lecturer in Special Education in St. Angela's College of Education, Sligo. I am currently pursuing a Doctorate in Education in St. Patrick's College, Dublin. The research that I am undertaking for my thesis is titled: *How do Children with Reading Difficulties Learn to Read in First Class?*

Learning to read is important for all children but especially for those in the learning support/resource teacher's caseload. This research is designed to highlight most effective practice in the teaching of reading for these children.

The research will comprise an in-depth study that explores how children who are having difficulty in learning to read are supported in schools by the learning support/resource teachers, class teachers, principals and any other relevant personnel, for example, the home school community liaison teacher and special needs assistants. Children from first class who are experiencing difficulty in learning to read will be involved in the case study. The research will involve the observation of learning support/resource teachers and their corresponding first class teachers as they teach reading to these children. This observation will span a time period of up to four months. The observation schedule will be negotiated with individual teachers and principals.

The teachers and other relevant school/community personnel who are involved in supporting the teaching of reading to the children will be interviewed during the course of the research study; the parents/guardians and their children will also be interviewed. The children will be asked to take part in group interviews. Interviews will take up to 45 minutes.

I invite you to participate in the research. Your involvement will be totally voluntary. You have the right to withdraw at any time if you so wish. All information received will be dealt with confidentially; every effort will be made to ensure anonymity and non-traceability throughout the research within the limits of law.

The research will be used by me to support my work as lecturer in special education at St. Angela's College. I also hope to publish the research if it is appropriate.

I enclose an *informed consent form* which requests you to indicate your agreement to participate in the research. Please sign and return this form in the enclosed envelope.

If you have any questions about the above research, please do not hesitate to contact me. My email address is tiernanbairbre@eircom.net and my mobile number is (086)6095344.

Informed Consent Form for Learning Support/Resource Teachers and Class Teachers

My name is Bairbre Tiernan and I am a lecturer in Special Education in St. Angela's College of Education, Sligo. I am currently pursuing a Doctorate in Education in St. Patrick's College, Dublin. The research that I am undertaking for my thesis is *How do Children with Reading Difficulties Learn to Read in First Class?* I am writing to you to invite you to participate in my study.

Participation will involve me visiting the school and allowing me to observe the teaching of reading to two children in First Class who are identified as experiencing difficulty in learning to read. This observation will span a time period of up to four months and the observation schedule will be worked out in collaboration with you.

Informal discussions will take place regularly to explore how you approach reading when teaching these children, and a more formal interview will be involved which will be scheduled at your convenience. The purpose of the interview is to explore the teaching of reading to children who experience difficulty in learning to read, the duration of the interview will not exceed 45 minutes and you will receive the interview questions in advance. You will also be asked to give me access to your plans, programmes and assessments that relate to reading for the identified children.

The benefits from the research will not only highlight effective practice for children who are experiencing difficulty with learning to read but will also yield valuable evidence regarding effective organisation of learning support,

individualisation of programmes according to the needs of the children and collaboration of learning support/resource teachers with class teachers, parents/guardians and other relevant personnel, with reference to improving the reading attainments of the children

Your involvement will be totally voluntary. All information received will be dealt with confidentially; every effort will be made to ensure anonymity and non-traceability throughout the research within the limits of law. You are free to withdraw from the research at any stage.

If you require further clarification at any stage in your involvement with the research, please do not hesitate to contact me. My email address is tiernanbairbre@eircom.net and my mobile number is (086)6095344.

I agree to participate in the research study set out in this document. I am aware that I can withdraw at any time, that my involvement is voluntary and that information will be dealt with confidentially.

Signature:_____

Date:_____

Researcher's signature:_____

Date:_____

My name is Bairbre Tiernan and I am a lecturer in Special Education in St. Angela's College of Education, Sligo. I am currently pursuing a Doctorate in Education in St. Patrick's College, Dublin. The research that I am undertaking for my thesis is *How do Children with Reading Difficulties Learn to Read in First Class?* I am writing to you to invite you and your school to participate in my study.

Participation will involve me visiting the school and observing the teaching of reading to two children in First Class who are identified as experiencing difficulty in learning to read. This observation will span a time period of up to four months and the observation schedule will be worked out in collaboration with you and the teachers.

The research will also involve an interview with you, which will be scheduled at your convenience. The purpose of the interview is to explore the whole school approach to the teaching of reading to children who experience difficulty in learning to read, and how the school supports the work of the learning support/resource teacher and class teacher as they teach reading to these children. The duration of the interview will not exceed 45 minutes and you will receive the interview questions in advance. You will also be asked to give me access to whole school policy with regard to learning support, especially with reference to reading.

The benefits from the research will not only highlight effective practice for children who are experiencing difficulty with learning to read but will also yield

valuable evidence regarding effective organisation of learning support, individualisation of programmes according to the needs of the children and collaboration of learning support/resource teachers with class teachers, parents/guardians and other relevant personnel, with reference to improving the reading attainments of the children

Your involvement will be totally voluntary. All information received will be dealt with confidentially; every effort will be made to ensure anonymity and non-traceability throughout the research within the limits of law. You are free to withdraw from the research at any stage.

If you require further clarification at any stage in your involvement with the research, please do not hesitate to contact me. My email address is tiernanbairbre@eircom.net and my mobile number is (086)6095344.

I agree to participate in the research study set out in this document. I am aware that I can withdraw at any time, that my involvement is voluntary and that information will be dealt with confidentially.

Signature:_____

Date:_____

Researcher's signature:_____

Date:_____

Informed Consent Form for Other School Personnel

My name is Bairbre Tiernan and I am a lecturer in Special Education in St. Angela's College of Education, Sligo. I am currently pursuing a Doctorate in Education in St. Patrick's College, Dublin. The research that I am undertaking for my thesis is *How do Children with Reading Difficulties Learn to Read in First Class?* I am writing to you to invite you to participate in my study.

Participation will involve an interview, which will be scheduled at your convenience. The purpose of the interview is to explore your role in supporting the teaching of reading to children who experience difficulty in learning to read. The duration of the interview will not exceed 45 minutes and you will receive the interview questions in advance.

The benefits of the research are that findings will highlight most effective practice for teaching reading to children who are experiencing difficulty in learning to read.

Your involvement will be totally voluntary. All information received will be dealt with confidentially; every effort will be made to ensure anonymity and non-traceability throughout the research within the limits of law. You are free to withdraw from the research at any stage.

If you require further clarification at any stage in your involvement with the research, please do not hesitate to contact me. My email address is tiernanbairbre@eircom.net and my mobile number is (086)6095344.

I agree to participate in the research study set out in this document. I am aware that I can withdraw at any time, that my involvement is voluntary and that information will be dealt with confidentially.

Signature:_____

Date:_____

Researcher's signature:_____

Date:_____

Informed Consent Form for Parents/Guardians

My name is Bairbre Tiernan and I am a lecturer in Special Education in St. Angela's College of Education, Sligo. I am currently pursuing a Doctorate in Education in St. Patrick's College, Dublin. The research that I am undertaking for my thesis is *How do Children with Reading Difficulties Learn to Read in First Class?*

You are invited to give consent for your child to participate in the research study. This will involve observation of your child being taught by his/her learning support/resource teacher and class teacher for the purpose of observing the approaches and methods that are used to teach him/her reading. It will also involve your child being interviewed with a group of children by me on how he/she feels about reading and how he/she is learning to read. Finally, your child's assessments regarding his/her progress in reading will be considered.

Your child will be part of his/her learning support class/ mainstream class as normal. He/she will not be singled out during the observation in any way. I will observe the class and collect information on how reading is taught over a period of up to four months.

You are also invited to participate in the research. You will be invited to give your views on how your child is reading and your involvement in supporting him/her in learning to read.

The benefits of the research are that findings will highlight most effective practice for your child and yield valuable evidence regarding reading instruction for other children.

Your involvement and your child's involvement are voluntary. All information collected will be dealt with confidentially; every effort will be made to ensure anonymity and non-traceability for you and your child throughout the research within the limits of law. You or your child are free to withdraw from the research at any stage.

If at any stage you require further clarification, please do not hesitate to contact me. My email address is <u>tiernanbairbre@eircom.net</u> and my mobile number is (086)6095344.

Firstly, I agree to let my child _____ **participate in the research set out in this document. I am aware that I can withdraw my child at any time, that his/her involvement is voluntary and that information will be dealt with confidentially.**

Secondly, I agree to participate in the research study set out in this document. I am aware that I can withdraw at any time, that my involvement is voluntary and that information will be dealt with confidentially.

Signature:_____

Date:_____

Researcher's signature:_____

Date:_____

My name is Bairbre Tiernan and I am a lecturer in Special Education in St. Angela's College of Education, Sligo. I am currently pursuing a Doctorate in Education in St. Patrick's College, Dublin. The research that I am undertaking for my thesis is *How do Children with Reading Difficulties Learn to Read in First Class?* I am writing to you to invite you to take part in my study.

Participation will involve an interview, which will be scheduled at your convenience. The purpose of the interview is to explore how you support the work of the school in teaching reading to children who experience difficulty in learning to read. The duration of the interviews will not exceed 45 minutes and you will receive the interview questions in advance.

The benefits of the research are that findings will highlight most effective practice for these children and also yield valuable evidence regarding reading instruction for other children.

Your involvement will be totally voluntary. All information received will be dealt with confidentially; every effort will be made to ensure anonymity and non-traceability throughout the research within the limits of law. You are free to withdraw from the research at any stage.

If you require further clarification at any stage in your involvement with the research, please do not hesitate to contact me. My email address is tiernanbairbre@eircom.net and my mobile number is (086)6095344.

I agree to participate in the research study set out in this document. I am aware that I can withdraw at any time, that my involvement is voluntary and that information will be dealt with confidentially.

Signature:_____

Date:_____

Researcher's signature:_____

Date:_____

Plain Language Statement for Children

My name is Báirbre and I work in St. Angela's College, which is a big school (college) for girls and boys who want to become teachers. Other teachers also come to St. Angela's to learn how to help children who find it difficult to learn to read. I am trying to find out how some children learn to read. As part of my study, I am going to visit some schools to see how children learn to read. I hope to visit your classroom and watch and listen as you learn to read with your teachers. Would you let me visit your classroom? Later on, I would also like to talk to some of you about reading. Would you let me visit your classroom for a few weeks, and, perhaps, talk to some of you?

Informed Consent for Pupils

(The research project will be explained orally to the children in the class)

I agree to let Bairbre sit in on my reading classes and talk to me about reading.

Signature:_____

Date:_____

Researcher's signature:_____

Date:_____

Appendix 4: An Observation Schedule of Reading Approaches and Methods Used to Teach Children with

Reading Difficulties

An Observation Schedule of Reading Approaches and Methods Used to Teach Children with Reading Difficulties

LS Teacher __ C Teacher__ School _____ Date_____

1.Organisation of Reading Instruction	a. Learning support classroom	b. Mainstream classroom
1.Withdrawal of children in small groups		
2.Withdrawal of children on a one-to-one basis		
3.Team/co-operative teaching		
4. Whole class teaching		
5. Small groups (flexible groups – interest/ability)		
6. Individual (instructional/ independent)		
7. Other		

Approaches, Skills and Methods of Teaching Reading

2. Overall approach to the teaching of reading observed	
1.Individual skills instruction,	
2.Whole language approach	
3. Combination of skills and whole language approach	
4.**Assessment:** Use of frequent formal and informal assessment to monitor progress of children and influence reading programme design	

3. Oral language activities	Child's interaction, involvement and response to teaching	Teacher's interaction with child	Teacher transmitting information	Questions	Strategies	Resources	Emphasis	Non-teaching	Other	Timing and sequence
1.Vocabulary development, *for example, building a speaking vocabulary*										
2.Receptive language, *for example, building an understanding of spoken language*										
3. Expressive language, *for example, developing the ability to formulate more complex sentences, learning linguistic patterns*										
4. Listening skills, *for example, developing listening comprehension skills*										

317

4.Pre-reading skills	Child's interaction, involvement and response to teaching	Teacher's interaction with child	Teacher transmitting information	Questions	Strategies	Resources	Emphasis	Non-teaching	Other	Timing and sequence
1. Visual perception, *for example, developing visual discrimination and visual memory skills*										
2. Auditory perception, *for example, developing auditory memory and auditory discrimination skills*										
3. Motor co-ordination, *for example, developing fine motor skills*										
4. Familiarity with books, *for example, directionality of print*										
5. Knowledge of alphabet, *for example, ability to recognise and name letters of the alphabet*										

5. **Phonological awareness** (developing the ability to recognise that the words we hear are composed of individual sounds within the words)	Child's interaction, involvement and response to teaching	Teacher's interaction with child	Teacher transmitting information	Questions	Strategies	Resources	Emphasis	Non-teaching	Other	Timing and sequence
1. Syllabic awareness, *for example, clapping games, teaching nursery rhymes*										
2. Onset and rime, *for example, rhyming words, same or different games*										

6. Phonemic awareness (developing awareness of the smallest units of sounds that distinguish words from each other)	Child's interaction, involvement and response to teaching	Teacher's interaction with child	Teacher transmitting information	Questions	Strategies	Resources	Emphasis	Non-teaching	Other	Timing and sequence
1. Phonemic awareness in isolation										
2. Phonemic awareness in context										
3. Phoneme segmentation, *for example, segmenting long words into syllables*										
4. Phoneme blending, *for example, blending sounds into words*										
5. Phoneme deletion, *for example, finding new word games*										

7. Alphabetic principle	Child's interaction, involvement and response to teaching	Teacher's interaction with child	Teacher transmitting information	Questions	Strategies	Resources	Emphasis	Non-teaching	Other	Timing and sequence
1.Letter names										
2.Letter sounds										

8. Phonics (the relationship between printed letters and sounds in language)	Child's interaction, involvement and response to teaching	Teacher's interaction with child	Teacher transmitting information	Questions	Strategies	Resources	Emphasis	Non-teaching	Other	Timing and sequence
1. Teaching initial letter sounds										
2. Teaching final letter sounds										
3. Teaching long and short vowel sounds										
4. Following a systematic phonic programme										
5. Phonics in isolation										
6. Phonics in context										

9. Word attack skills other than phonics (strategies which help children decode unknown words)	Child's interaction, involvement and response to teaching	Teacher's interaction with child	Teacher transmitting information	Questions	Strategies	Resources	Emphasis	Non-teaching	Other	Timing and sequence
1. Use of picture cues										
2. Use of contextual cues (context cues help children recognise a word through the meaning or context of a sentence/ paragraph in which the word appears)										
3. Use of structural analysis (structural analysis refers to the recognition of words through the analysis of meaningful word units such as root words and syllables)										

323

10. Sight vocabulary (words that are recognised instantly, without hesitation)	Child's interaction, involvement and response to teaching	Teacher's interaction with child	Teacher transmitting information	Questions	Strategies	Resources	Emphasis	Non-teaching	Other	Timing and sequence
1. Common sight words										
2. Personal dictionary of important words/ personal vocabulary lists										
3. Word families *(phonological families)*										
4. Concept driven vocabulary instruction										
5. Vocabulary from text										

11. Combining word-reeognition cues (encouraging children to use all of the word-recognition cues)	Child's interaction, involvement and response to teaching	Teacher's interaction with child	Teacher transmitting information	Questions	Strategies	Resources	Emphasis	Non-teaching	Other	Timing and sequence
1. Combining word-recognition cues										

12. Reading fluency	Child's interaction, involvement and response to teaching	Teacher's interaction with child	Teacher transmitting information	Questions	Strategies	Resources	Emphasis	Non-teaching	Other	Timing and sequence
1. Reading fluency with comprehension										
2. Provision of opportunity to read independently										
3. Repeated reading										
4. Re-reading										
5. Guided oral reading										
6. Paired reading										

13. Reading comprehension	Child's interaction, involvement and response to teaching	Teacher's interaction with child	Teacher transmitting information	Questions	Strategies	Resources	Emphasis	Non-teaching	Other	Timing and sequence
1. Vocabulary development										
2. Developing thinking processes, *for example, encouraging children to think about what might happen next in the story*										
3. Developing conceptual knowledge, *for example, building children's knowledge of the concepts underlying the words they are reading*										
4. Comprehension monitoring, *for example, encouraging children to be aware of their understanding of what they are reading*										
5. Use of graphics/ semantic organisers, *for example, teaching children to draw pictures of the stories they are reading*										
6. Question answering										
7. Question generation, *for example, encouraging children to ask themselves questions about the material they are reading*										

	Child's interaction, involvement and response to teaching	Teacher's Interaction with child	Teacher transmitting information	Questions	Strategies	Resources	Emphasis	Non-teaching	Other	Timing and sequence
8. Story structure, *for example, teaching children to recognise the beginning, middle and end of the story*										
9. Summarisation, *for example, modelling to children how to integrate ideas and generalise from text information*										
10. Literal comprehension, *for example, asking factual questions about stories*										
11. Interpretation, *for example, encouraging children to think about why things happen in a story*										
12. Critical comprehension, *for example, asking children to make judgements on the actions of characters in a story*										
13. Inferential comprehension, *for example, encouraging children to draw insights about material they are reading*										

327

14. Reading/ Writing connection	Child's interaction, involvement and response to teaching	Teacher's interaction with child	Teacher transmitting information	Questions	Strategies	Resources	Emphasis	Non-teaching	Other	Timing and sequence
1. Constructed spelling as approximation- the beginning writer's attempt to write words by attending to their sound units and associating letters with them in a systematic although unconventional way.										
2. Spelling as a window into phonic knowledge										
3. Response to texts in child's own words										
4. Completion of teacher-made/ commercial worksheets/ workbooks										
5. Reading and writing integrated (*text as source for child's writing opportunities*)										
6. Letter formation										

(i) *Introduction*

Observation is used in the research as a method of collecting data and an observation schedule was developed for conducting the classroom observation. The key assumption that underlies the development of the observation schedule is a belief that by entering into interaction with teachers and children in their classrooms, one can better understand their beliefs, motivations and behaviours, compared with any other approach (Hammersley, 1992).

(ii) *Definition and Description*

Classroom observation is defined as "non-judgmental description of classroom events that can be analysed and given interpretation" (Gebhard, 1999, p.35). Observation can often be difficult and complex, but it is also one of the most versatile ways of gathering information (Simpson & Tuson, 2003). Systematic observation in classrooms is considered to be one of the most developed forms of quantitative observational research (Croll, 1986). It involves classification of classroom behaviours according to categories in an observation schedule. It can be combined with qualitative approaches that aim to describe school life through detailed narratives which emphasise social meaning and cultural context. Key features of qualitative approaches include flexibility and a minimum of pre-structuring within the observation.

Foster (1996) points out that the two approaches are frequently combined: quantitative techniques can be applied to qualitative narratives and the latter can be used to evaluate the former. An observation schedule to conduct systematic classroom observation and supporting field notes will be used in the research to maximise the value of combining qualitative and quantitative data from directly observing teachers and children in the classroom. This particular observation will extend over a period of up to four months and will be intensive in that each child will be observed twice a week in their mainstream and learning support classrooms, bearing in mind that the more detailed the level of evidence, the sharper, more specific and more important is the level of comment on classroom practice (McPake, Harlen, Powney & Davidson, 1999). As reading instruction cannot be observed in isolation, it is important that classroom ecology, child and teacher behaviour are observed over time, as they are variables which are under the control of classroom teachers as components of their instructional interactions with children. Thus, classroom observation can be seen to be a research method which enabled the researcher to address the research questions (Chapter One).

(iii) *Value of Classroom Observation*

Since the 1970s, several methods of classroom observation have been tried and tested in conducting research into what takes place in classrooms in terms of instruction, of how children with SEN are supported in general and with reference to reading development. Valuable information about what is happening in classrooms has been elicited, heightening awareness of how the different components of reading and elements of reading instruction influence classroom events. For example, Taylor, Pearson, Clark and Walpole (2002) found from observation in fourteen schools that

children in primary grades make the greatest growth when a high proportion of their reading instruction is delivered through small achievement groups rather than whole class teaching, and when they have ample time to read and to learn skills and strategies. They also report that more accomplished teachers engage in more small-group than whole-class teaching; they involve children to a greater degree, encourage more high-level thinking related to reading and prefer coaching to telling when interacting with them. A child's baseline also affects how well they respond to reading instruction and it is significant that Foorman and Schatschneider (2003), who spent a year observing reading and language arts in order to quantify time spent on various reading/language arts behaviours, reported that children's performance affects teachers' decisions about the allocation of instructional time.

In relation to children with SEN, Croll and Moses (1985) found that the children spent an unusually high proportion of time distracted from their work, distracted on their own rather than in interaction with other children. Their involvement in their work was shown to be influenced by the teaching approaches used. Thus, the need to monitor and maintain children's interest and engagement in their work is stressed. Juel and Minden-Cupp (2000), in their observation study of first grade classrooms, found that differential instruction may be helpful in first class and, interestingly, that phonics are critical for some children but may not be helpful for others. This reflects the need to develop individualised reading programmes for children that are based on their strengths and needs.

In the USA, observational studies have pointed to an explanation for the limited success of supplementary support programmes. They have highlighted that

331

there can be an incongruence between the theoretical, philosophical and instructional bases of general and remedial classrooms (Glynn, Bethune, Crooks, Ballard & Smith, 1992; Allington, 1994). This lack of congruence "leads to confusion and further difficulties for children who are already struggling to learn to read" (Klenk & Kibby, 2000, p.675).

Overall, it is evident from research that the use of classroom observation yields rich insights into classroom teaching and learning.

(iv) *Types of Observation*

Classroom observational systems range from descriptive frameworks and narrative descriptions to the coding of teacher-child communication and time/event sampling of discrete behaviours. Time-point sampling approaches gained recognition as a significant classroom observational technique with Stallings, Robbins and Presbrey's (1986) finding that time spent on task predicted achievement. Time-point sampling occurs where behaviour is coded at regular intervals and it is assumed that these points are representative of others. While time-point sampling approaches are useful, particularly in that they tend to be clear, precise and value-free, it is the researcher's judgement that an event sampling observation, where behaviours of interest are recorded as they occur, is more suitable for her research study. An event-sampling observation is flexible and it facilitates the recording of the components of reading instruction, that is, approaches, methods and skills which are used in the classrooms, as well as noting the interactions between the children and their teachers. Field-notes will be used to record any activity not catered for in the observation schedule.

Table A.5.1 outlines some of the observation schedules/frameworks/instruments which were found to be useful in researching the development of the observation schedule that was designed for use in the research. The possibilities and limitations of these instruments are briefly outlined.

Table A.5.1: Observation Instruments

Author	Name	Description	Type of Observation Instrument
Flanders, N. (1970)	Flanders Interaction Analysis Categories (FIAC)	FIAC operates by means of classifying teacher-children interaction into 10 categories; 7 categories refer to aspects of teacher talk and 2 to aspects of children's talk. The remaining category is that of Silence or Confusion. The coding procedure is virtually continuous as the observer keeps a constant record of interactions. Observers code at rate of 20 to 25 codings per minute or about 1 every 3 seconds.	Time-point sampling
Sylva, Roy & Painter (1980)	Target Children Observation Schedule	30 categories for coding children's classroom activities, language and social interaction.	Time-point sampling
Greenwood, Carta, Kamps & Delquadi (1993) (Ecobehavioural Assessment Systems Software) (EBASS)	Mainstream Version of the Code for Instructional Structure and Student Academic Response (MS-CISSAR)	Runs on a laptop and prompts the observer to record events every 10 seconds. Contains student (academic response, task management, inappropriate responses), teacher (teacher definition, teacher behaviour, approval and teacher focus) and ecology (setting, activity, task, physical arrangement and instructional structure) categories.	Time-point sampling
Henk, Moore, Marinak & Tomasetti (2000)	Reading Lesson Observation Framework (RLOF)	Descriptive Framework. Consists of a set of expectations for teaching behaviours during reading/ language instruction time, seven domains with 5-11 indicators in each. Responses recorded in one of 4 ways: observed and of satisfactory quality; observed and of very high quality; not observed or of unsatisfactory quality, and not applicable.	Time-point sampling
Edmonds & Briggs (2003)	The Instructional Content	Observers focus on describing each instructional activity in	Event sampling

	Emphasis Instrument (*ICE*)	reading, defined as a distinct or unique activity in which the grouping and materials are coordinated around a certain domain or component of reading. These detailed descriptions are coded into 4 prescribed dimensions, each with several subcategories for classifying reading instruction: *main instructional category, instructional subcategory, grouping, and materials.* The instrument contains categories for coding how long the activity lasts, that is, content emphasis, how well the children attend to what is being presented, that is, student engagement, and a separate set of indicators for rating the overall instructional quality of the entire observation. Space is provided for recording the amount of time spent on noninstructional activities.	

The *Flander's Interaction Analysis Category* (FIAC) system (1970), with its ten categories and three second-time sampling practice, records the verbal behaviour of the teacher and the class, using pre-coded categories presented in a time-point sampling matrix (Flanders, 1970). The Flander's observation approach is criticised for focusing on a narrow range of behaviours, selected because they could be reliably recorded rather than because of a basis in some theoretical view of teaching and learning style. However, it is a good example of a focused, time-sampling instrument.

The FIAC system was used by Croll (1986) in *A Study of Schooling*. The *Study of Schooling* comprises a series of interaction schedules, including some of the FIAC categories, which are conducted for a five minute period within every fifteen minute classroom observation period. The interaction schedules comprise four blocks of data - Who does... What... To whom... and How... - including categories of behaviour and people. The systematic data recording schedules are representative of

time-point sampling where behaviour is coded at regular intervals and it is assumed that these points are representative of others. In addition to the five-minute interaction schedules, the *Study of Schooling* methodology also includes regular scans of what is taking place in the classroom. The schedules which are used for scanning provide some pre-defined categories to prompt the observer and so may be used for checklist-style data capture. However, this scan may be used in a less structured way and comments on other activities may also be noted. The systematic nature of the scanning is reflected in its regularity with scans conducted every fifteen minutes. While the criticism of the narrowness of the FIAC is valid, its use in the *Study of Schooling,* where a defined instrument is combined with a more flexible method of observing events, is regarded as useful for observing how children are supported in learning to read.

The *Reading Lesson Observation Framework* (RFOL) (Henk, Moore, Marinak & Tomasetti, 2000) is an example of a descriptive framework that is used to observe reading classes. The RFOL consists of a set of expectations for teaching behaviours during reading lessons and is made up of seven domains, that is, classroom climate, pre-reading phase, guided reading phase, post-reading phase, skill and strategy instruction, materials, tasks of the lesson and teacher practices, with 5-11 indicators in each. An essential element of the RFOL is that classroom observations are rated and responses are recorded in four ways: observed and of satisfactory quality; observed and of very high quality; either not observed or of unsatisfactory quality, and not applicable. On closer analysis, it is apparent that the use of such ratings can vary from observer to observer. Therefore, a limitation of this instrument is the difficulty

regarding standardisation that may affect validity of research results, particularly those which pertain to ratings of teachers and children.

A more recent instrument, the *Instructional Content Emphasis Instrument* (ICE) (Edmonds & Briggs, 2003) is essentially a quantitative system for coding the qualitative nature of classroom reading instruction. It allows for the capture of multiple aspects of the classroom, including the components of reading instruction, grouping patterns, materials used for instruction, child engagement and the emphasis on content during instruction. Detailed descriptions of reading classes can be coded with the aid of the ICE instrument, using four prescribed dimensions, each with subcategories for classifying reading instruction. The first two dimensions describe what is being taught, the third dimension how it is being taught and the final dimension describes the materials being used to teach reading. However, the authors acknowledge that decisions regarding the scope and specificity of the ICE's main dimensions were restricted by practicality. A major limitation of the instrument, when considering its use for an Irish research study, is that it was developed for use in Texas and its list of instructional topics includes only those instructional topics that appeared in the Content Standards of that State.

While many observation schedules focus on the teacher, the observation schedule developed for *Literacy Initiative From Teachers* (LIFT) (Hurry, Sylva & Riley, 1999) focuses on the child. LIFT is a structured programme for the development of early reading; it combines a whole language approach with a structured classroom organisation which includes a high level of direct teacher instruction. LIFT uses an observation schedule, based on a modification of the Target

Child Observation Instrument (Sylva, 1997), to investigate the teaching of reading in classrooms over a period of twenty-seven hours. The methodology influenced the design of the research study in that the observer in the LIFT study sat in a chair as unobtrusively as possible and focused on one target child at a time before focusing on the second child. The teacher's behaviour was coded in so far as he/she interacted with each focal child, either individually or in a group. The researcher adapted the methodology of LIFT so that two children were consecutively targeted during each classroom observation period.

Codes developed for the research observation schedule are influenced by the LIFT observation method (1999) and by the research conducted by Topping and Ferguson (2005). The LIFT codes include *organisational setting* which describes the child's immediate teaching environment, the *adult teaching* codes which describe the behaviour of the teacher, and the *children's learning activity* codes which are finely differentiated into different activities, for example, reading to the teacher (text), among others. Topping and Ferguson explored whether highly effective teachers of reading used teaching behaviours that were independent of any specific programme, whether behaviours were consistent between teachers and different reading teaching contexts, and whether teachers' perceptions corresponded with what was observed of their behaviour. They derived an observation schedule from previous research on the behaviours of effective teachers (Wray, Medwell, Fox & Poulson, 1999), general classroom observations (McPake et al., 1999) and effective strategy instruction (Pressley & Woloshyn, 1995). Observable behaviours were grouped into five macro categories: transmitting information, interaction with children, questioning, non-teaching and formal assessment. While the macro headings of this work are mainly

adopted and supplemented in the research observation schedule, they are adapted to move the focus of the observation on to the child as well as the teacher. Therefore, the teacher's actions and interactions with the child will be observed and recorded with reference to the child and his/her responses.

In summary, an observation schedule is developed for the research study which incorporates elements of the reviewed research studies that were deemed to be appropriate. The aim of this schedule is to allow the spontaneous events of the children being observed to be recorded as they are taught to read, while minimising the opportunities and possibilities of inferences arising from any inadequacies in its design. It was influenced by the literature, for example, the additional use of field notes with an observation schedule was influenced by Croll's (1986) use of both quantitative and qualitative methodology. The content of the observation schedule in terms of reading categories, while somewhat similar to the ICE instrument, differs considerably from it in its organisation, range of categories and coding system. As mentioned previously, the coding is influenced by the LIFT study (Hurry, Sylva & Riley, 1999) and to a greater degree by the research of Topping and Ferguson (2005). The importance of including the ecology of the classroom, suggested by McDonald-Connor, Morrison and Petrella (2004), is incorporated as the classroom organisation will be mapped out in the field notes, noting where the focus children are sitting and how materials and resources are displayed.

Finally, criticisms have been levelled at observation frameworks, which refer to lack of *standardisation* and agreement about definitions of events. Therefore, every

338

effort is made to ensure that definitions are provided in the observation schedule, and, where it is appropriate, examples are included to clarify subheadings.

(v) *Conclusion*

In conclusion, observation has an important role to play in helping researchers explore and investigate what occurs in the classroom. There is a wealth of research findings on effective teaching of reading and classroom interactions. It is hoped to add to this by highlighting what occurs in Irish classrooms as children who are experiencing reading difficulties are supported in learning to read.

Appendix 6: Classroom Observation Codes in Respect of the Observation Schedule

Codes	*Coding*
Child's interaction and involvement	
Child working alone	(Al)
Child working in a pair/group	(P/G)
Child working in a pair /group but not interacting	(P/GX)
Child engaged in task	(E)
Child unengaged in lesson/task	(U)
Child being helped by another child	(H)
Teacher's interaction with child	
Answering child initiated question	(Aq)
Accepting or using child's ideas (building)	(B)
Praising or encouraging learning	(P)
Observing (listening or watching child at work)	(O)
Generalising (helping child to generalise learning)	(G)
Repeating information	(R)
Teacher transmitting information	
Explicitly stating purpose of activity/task	(P)
Providing factual information	(F)
Providing strategy instruction (explicit)	(St)
Demonstrating technique/strategy	(D)

(implicit or explicit)

Summarising main points   (Su)

Questions

Closed   (C)

(for example, recall information)

Open   (O)

Encouraging children to:

- Explain how they had accomplished a task   (At)

- Use a strategy to solve a comprehension failure   (Cf)

- Use a strategy to solve a decoding failure   (Df)

- Activate prior knowledge   (Pk)

- Give an opinion   (Go)

- Summarise main points   (Su)

- Make inferences   (Mi)

Strategies

Use of explicit teaching strategies, involving clear explanations   (Et)

Use of modelling strategies when teaching   (M)

Use of scaffolding strategies when teaching   (S)

Development of individualised programmes   (I)

designed according to the needs of the particular child

Use of regular assessment to monitor the progress   (A)

of the child

Use of encouragement and corrective feedback	(E)
to motivate the child	
Provision of opportunity to practise reading skills	(P)
Support of risk-taking	(R)
Revising/revisiting work	(Rev)
Recapping	(Rec)

Resources

Use of the following:

Appropriate reading material	(A)
(for example, high interest/low level books, predictable books)	
Multi-sensory material (for example, tactile letters)	(Ms)
ICT packages (for example, talking books)	(ICT)
Teaching materials (for example, flash cards	(Mt)
and sentence building strips)	
Reading programmes (for example, Wellington Square)	(Rp)
Teacher-made worksheets based on material taught	(Tw)
Narrative texts	(N)
Expository texts (factual or information texts)	(E)
Structured phonics scheme	(Sps)
Big books	(B)
Workbooks/worksheets	(W)
Classroom resources (for example, blackboard, copies)	(Cr)

Emphasis

Emphasis on the following:

Connection between reading and writing   (Crw)

Spelling when teaching reading and writing   (S)

Child using the reading skills he/she is developing,   (U)

whether decoding, comprehension or other, when reading independently

Active learning   (A)

Non-teaching

Managing learning tasks   (Mlt)

Managing non-learning tasks   (Mnt)

Maintaining discipline/dealing with pastoral issues   (D)

Doing something unrelated to work   (U)

Appendix 7: Piloting of (i) Observation Schedule and (ii) Interview Schedules

(i) *Piloting the Observation Schedule*

The OS was piloted in two schools outside the main study. The two schools comprised a large rural school with thirteen teachers and a small rural school with three teachers. Permission to observe the reading classes was received from school authorities, teachers, parents/guardians and the children in first class in the two schools.

Piloting encompassed five visits to the two schools, comprising three visits to the large school and two visits to the smaller school. The visits occurred from the end of March to early May, 2007. The length of the visits to each classroom varied as they depended on the duration of the reading lesson; the maximum length of time spent in a classroom was forty-five minutes.

It was found that the OS as initially developed facilitated and enabled the observation and coding of the reading lessons. However, the OS was adapted and improved after each school visit. For example, a column heading, *timing and sequence,* was added to enable the sequence of events of the reading lesson and the time spent on the activity to be noted. A column heading, *other,* was also included to allow any unforeseen events to be noted. *Letter formation* was added under the section *reading/writing connection.*

Many insights were gained during the piloting. The researcher found that she needed to resolve her professional role as supervisor of trainee teachers with that of researcher. Rather than focusing on elements of teaching practice as in the case of supervising a trainee teacher, she had to focus on the two children and observe how they participated in the reading lesson, responded to the teacher and showed evidence of involvement in the reading process. The OS was difficult to negotiate during the first visit; it was necessary to be fully familiar with its layout and to know the coding system thoroughly. The researcher's position for the purpose of observing the two children during the course of the lesson, influenced how successfully she was able to observe and record by coding the reading lesson in the learning support and mainstream classrooms.

The coding system worked well but required additions and adjustments. For example, under *child's interaction, involvement and response,* it was necessary to add codes for the situation where the teacher was not working with the child and also where another child was helping the observed child. Under *teacher's interaction with child,* a code for repeating information was added. A code relating to encouraging use of strategy was added to *teacher transmitting information.* Codes for revising/revisiting work and for recapping were added to *strategies.* The use of workbooks/worksheets, the use of materials such as paper, scissors and glue, as well as the use of classroom resources such as blackboards, were included under *resources.*

The importance of the writing up of field-notes into a log/diary for the purpose of complementing and supplementing the OS was recognised during piloting. It enabled the researcher to record both insights and unusual events, for example,

external interruptions to the reading lesson by a visit of the school photographer. Overall, the OS was found to enable the researcher to capture the teaching/learning of the reading process.

(ii) *Piloting the Interview Schedules*

The interview schedules were piloted with personnel outside the research study. They included a learning support teacher in a small rural school, a class teacher and a principal of a large urban school. A child in first class and a parent of the child were also interviewed. It was found that interviews took approximately 30-45 minutes to complete. Piloting of the interview was found to be very beneficial. When listening to the tape of the first pilot interview, the researcher found that she tended to intervene and make comments far too quickly as the interviewer and that she did not give the interviewees sufficient time to respond. If pauses occurred, she quickly filled them. She had to become conscious of this and learn to wait and to listen to the interviewees.

On the whole, the interview schedules proved satisfactory. Some areas for discussion where added, for example, the heading *planning for the teaching of reading* was introduced in order to focus teachers on discussing how they planned for the teaching of reading and whether they consulted with colleagues, parents/guardians and outside professionals. The heading *issues* was included in the parent/guardian's interview schedule as a result of parent/guardian feedback during piloting, so as to ensure that parents/guardians were given every opportunity to address their concerns during the interview. One of the researcher's concerns around the children's interview

schedule was whether or not it was pitched at a suitable level, but it was found to be appropriate during the piloting.

Appendix 8: Example of (i) Observation Script and (ii) Completed

Observation Schedule for Scoil Eoin

(i)   *Scoil Eoin: Observation Script*

26/09/07

Time: 9.30 a.m.

Learning support observation.

Four children in group.

Each child brought a folder of work with them; these folders are very neat and organised.

Settling in discussion –Patrick had bought a big box of crayons in the shop and all the children were interested in them. However, Patrick remained preoccupied by his trip to the school shop during the session. He referred to it a few times and the teacher had to explain three times that the shop was shut and therefore he could not go again. He held his Euro change carefully in his hand for a lot of the session. This did not prevent him from being engaged in the session, especially as the teacher ensured that he remained on task. Ms. White commented on the fact that concentration is one of the issues that has affected his performance in school to date.

Individual skills instruction with an emphasis on overlearning of sight vocabulary. When the teacher was teaching, Ann and Patrick were engaged most of the time; they

participated in all the activities, waited their turn to say words... and generally remained on task except for the times that Patrick referred to shopping.

9.33: Sight Vocabulary

Common sight words (from Dolch list).

The teacher's interactions with all the children included praising and encouraging them, and repeating the words to reinforce them. The teacher transmitted the purpose of the activity to ensure that the children knew the words. She also encouraged strategy use, for example, looking at the words, sounding out the letter sounds. She helped the children to remember the words, referring to work covered in Tuesday's (unobserved) lesson, for example, Ann got stuck on the word *away*, the teacher referred to the *ay* family and asked the children to tell her words from it *–way day may pay.* Ann was encouraged to make the connection between the words. The teacher also encouraged the children to put the words into sentences and modelled this activity. They also had to think of rhyming words for some of the words, she also modelled this. Questions were closed, for example, *what does the word begin with?* Resources included flashcards of the words.

Patrick was asked the following words, *at after away* .He said *down* for *brown.* Ann was asked, *are all away came but big.* She hesitated on *are* and said *or.*

9.40: Practice in writing

Completion of commercial worksheet.

Both children engaged for the activity.

The teacher began the activity by explicitly stating the purpose of the activity and by demonstrating what the children had to do. She sets up the task and carefully provided step-by-step direction.

The activity was a cloze type worksheet where the children had to fill in the word from the top list into sentences. These words were the sight vocabulary that they had just revised. The words on the first page were *blue big but came brown* and on the second page *be by away call black.* Sentences included *My house has a black door* and *Do not run away from me.*

The children took turns to read the words and they read the sentences and filled in the correct word. The teacher repeated the sentence and demonstrated by sounding the initial letter sounds of the target word. She then directed the children to fill in the sentence. They completed each sentence before going on to the next one. The children completed two sides of the worksheet.

Questions were closed, relating to the work on hand. Strategies used by the teacher were explicit teaching and modelling. The teacher intercepted the mistakes as they occurred; one child (D) had difficulty reading some of the words, the teacher supplied the word only after giving the child time to decode the word and encouraging him to sound the word out or think of a rhyming word which might help him decode the word. The emphasis was on encouraging the children to use the reading skills that they were developing, as well as an emphasis on establishing the connection between reading and writing.

Resources included a commercial worksheet from *Easy Learn*. Ann uses her finger to follow the other children reading. Both Ann and Patrick were well able to read the words and the sentences. Patrick read *brown* correctly at this point. Both children have neat handwriting and correctly formed letters.

The teacher observed the children working and intervened when necessary, for example, when Patrick became distracted by his wish to return to the school shop. At one point, Ann was filling in the wrong word in the sentence. Ms White intervened, corrected, and then praised her and repeated information as necessary. The children appear to have a good relationship with the teacher, for example, Ann volunteered information about meeting C at another child's birthday party yesterday. The children commented that they completed task faster today than yesterday. Ms. White agreed and said that this was because they knew what they were doing as they had done a similar worksheet yesterday.

9.50: Phonics

Following a systematic phonic programme – medial vowel sounds/three letter words. The children were engaged. Ms. White praised and encouraged throughout task, observing the children working and repeating and sounding out words / letters as necessary (modelling). The teacher demonstrated to the children what they had to do as she outlined the purpose of the lesson.

She gave the children cards with pictures of objects that are made up of three letters. There was a three box grid under the picture with a blue, red and blue dot in each box, respectively. The teacher gave the children letter blocks. The consonant letters were

blue and the vowels all red. The activity was scaffolded in that the children knew from the card which colour letter block was for which section of the grid. The emphasis was on developing decoding skills and active learning was observed. Patrick had to make *cat* and *bus* which he managed quickly before becoming distracted with his shopping. Ann had to make *mop* and *zip*. She hesitated each time at the medial vowel and waited for the teacher's attention to ensure that she picked the right letter. The teacher encouraged her to look at the word, say the name of the object and listen to the middle sound. The teacher also sounded out the word for her. Ann was more comfortable with the beginning and end letters and selected them herself without help. This activity ended with the teacher recapping on all the words the children had made.

9.58 Practice in writing

Reading and writing integrated.

Children wrote the words that they had made into their copies. They only wrote two as the time was up. The teacher called out *cat* and *bus*. Patrick was delighted as these were the words he had made. Both children engaged. Teacher observed the children working and stepped in when she saw that D was having difficulty, that is, when he wrote *c* backwards.

Again, the emphasis was on the children using their decoding skills and establishing the connection between reading and writing. The teacher modelled decoding strategies, for example, sounding out words.

10.00: session ended.

in group

folders very organised

An Observation Schedule of Reading Approaches and Methods used to teach Children with Reading Difficulties.

LS Teacher ✓ C Teacher __ School Eoin Date 26/09/07

1.Organisation of reading instruction	a. Learning support classroom	b. Mainstream classroom
1.Withdrawal of children in small groups	✓	
2.Withdrawal of children on a one-to-one basis		
3.Team/co-operative teaching		
4. Whole class teaching		
5. Small groups (flexible groups – interest/ability)		
6. Individual (instructional/ independent)		
7. Other		

Settling in discussion – Patrick has bought new crayons.

353

Approaches and methods of teaching reading

2. Overall approach to the teaching of reading observed	
1.Individual skills instruction,	✓
2.Whole language approach	
3. Combination of skills and whole language approach	
4.Assessment: Use of frequent formal and informal assessment to monitor progress of children and influence reading programme design	

3. Oral language activities	a. Child's interaction, involvement and response to teaching	b. Teacher's interaction with child	c. Teacher transmitting information	d. Questions	e. Strategies	f. Resources	g. Emphasis	h. Non-teaching	i. Other	j. Timing and sequence
1.Vocabulary development, *for example, building a speaking vocabulary*										
2.Receptive language, *for example, building an understanding of spoken language*										
3. Expressive language, *for example, developing the ability to formulate more complex sentences, learning linguistic patterns*										
4. Listening skills, *for example, developing listening comprehension skills*										

4.Pre-reading skills	a. Child's interaction, involvement and response to teaching	b. Teacher's interaction with child	c. Teacher transmitting information	d. Questions	e. Strategies	f. Resources	g. Emphasis	h. Non-teaching	i. Other	j. Timing and sequence
1. Visual perception, *for example, developing visual discrimination and visual memory skills*										
2. Auditory perception, *for example, developing auditory memory and auditory discrimination skills*										
3. Motor co-ordination, *for example, developing fine motor skills*										
4. Familiarity with books, *for example, directionality with print*										
5. Knowledge of alphabet, *for example, ability to recognise and name letters of the alphabet*										

5. Phonological Awareness (developing the ability to recognise that the words we hear are composed of individual sounds within words)	a. Child's interaction, involvement and response to teaching	b. Teacher's interaction with child	c. Teacher transmitting information	d. Questions	e. Strategies	f. Resources	g. Emphasis	h. Non-teaching	i. Other	j. Timing and sequence
1. Syllabic awareness, *for example, clapping games, teaching nursery rhymes*										
2. Onset and rime, *for example, rhyming words, same or different games*										

6. Phonemic awareness (games or activities that focus on words and their phonemic elements, oral segmenting and blending activities, oral syllabication and rhyming activities)	a. Child's interaction, involvement and response to teaching	b. Teacher's interaction with child	c. Teacher transmitting information	d. Questions	e. Strategies	f. Resources	g. Emphasis	h. Non-teaching	i. Other	j. Timing and sequence
1. Phonemic awareness in isolation										
2. Phonemic awareness in context										
3. Phoneme segmentation, *for example, segmenting long words into syllables*										
4. Phoneme blending, *for example, blending sounds into words*										
5. Phoneme deletion, *for example, finding new word games*										

358

7. Alphabetic principle	a. Child's interaction, involvement and response to teaching	b. Teacher's interaction with child	c. Teacher transmitting information	d. Questions	e. Strategies	f. Resources	g. Emphasis	h. Non-teaching	i. Other	j. Timing and sequence
1.Letter names										
2.Letter sounds										

Session ended with teacher recapping on all the words with the children.

Patrick preoccupied with £1.00 he has to spend.

8. Phonics (the relationship between printed letters and sounds in language)	a. Child's interaction, involvement and response to teaching	b. Teacher's interaction with child	c. Teacher transmitting information	d. Questions	e. Strategies	f. Resources	g. Emphasis	h. Non-teaching	i. Other	j. Timing and sequence
1. Teaching initial letter sounds										
2. Teaching final letter sounds										
3. Teaching long and short vowel sounds										
4. Following a systematic phonic programme	E(A) P R	O Repeating Words	P →D F sounds		M	Ma	U A			③ 9.50
5. Phonics in isolation										
6. Phonics in context										

Ann comfortable with initial + final consonant. Difficult m – p did not get o c. Teacher encourage her to look at it and sound again.

Flashcards – pictures & 3 letters words. Chn well able – Patrick – cat bus especd Ann Mop zip

Scaffolded dots – blue consonants red vowels.

Clsm letter blocks – coloured red/blue

When so zip she waited for teacher's attention

360

9. Word attack skills (strategies which help children decode unknown words)	a. Child's interaction, involvement and response to teaching	b. Teacher's interaction with child	c. Teacher transmitting information	d. Questions	e. Strategies	f. Resources	g. Emphasis	h. Non-teaching	i. Other	j. Timing and sequence
1. Use of picture cues										
2. Use of contextual cues (*context cues help children recognise a word through the meaning or context of a sentence/ paragraph in which the word appears*)										
3. Use of structural analysis (*structural analysis refers to the recognition of words through the analysis of meaningful word units such as root words and syllables*)										

helping chn remember words — away-words that rhyme with away done yesterday
day, may, pay

10. Sight Vocabulary (words that are recognised instantly, without hesitation)	a. Child's interaction, involvement and response to teaching	b. Teacher's interaction with child	c. Teacher transmitting information	d. Questions	e. Strategies	f. Resources	g. Emphasis	h. Non-teaching	i. Other	j. Timing and sequence
1. Common sight words Dolch list words.	E→Ⓟ →Ⓐ	P BⒸ R words.	P E	What does word begin with	Et Ma M——→ teacher modelled sounds / helped chn get words					① 9-33.
2. Personal dictionary of important words/ personal vocabulary lists			putting words in sentence rhyming words.							
3. Word families										
4. Concept driven vocabulary instruction										
5. Vocabulary from text										

by my dwe Ⓟ ple Ⓐ

Ⓐ are - said' or 'self corrected.
all
away—
came—

Ⓟ
at ✓
after ✓
away ✓

given tiup 362

11. Combining word-recognition cues (encouraging children to use all of the word-recognition cues)	a. Child's interaction, involvement and response to teaching	b. Teacher's interaction with child	c. Teacher transmitting information	d. Questions	e. Strategies	f. Resources	g. Emphasis	h. Non-teaching	i. Other	j. Timing and sequence
1. Combining word-recognition cues										

12. Reading Fluency	a. Child's interaction, involvement and response to teaching	b. Teacher's interaction with child	c. Teacher transmitting information	d. Questions	e. Strategies	f. Resources	g. Emphasis	h. Non-teaching	i. Other	j. Timing and sequence
1. Reading fluency with comprehension										
2. Provision of opportunity to read independently										
3. Repeated reading										
4. Re-reading										
5. Guided oral reading										
6. Paired reading										

13. Reading comprehension	a. Child's interaction, involvement and response to teaching	b. Teacher's interaction with child	c. Teacher transmitting information	d. Questions	e. Strategies	f. Resources	g. Emphasis	h. Non-teaching	i. Other	j. Timing and sequence
1. Vocabulary development										
2. Developing thinking processes, *for example, encouraging children to think about what might happen next in the story*										
3. Developing conceptual knowledge, *for example, building children' knowledge of the concepts underlying the words they are reading*										
4. Comprehension monitoring, *for example, encouraging children to be aware of their understanding of what they are reading*										
5. Use of graphics/ semantic organisers, *for example, teaching children to draw pictures of the stories they are reading*										
6. Question answering										
7. Question generation, *for example, encouraging children to ask themselves questions about the material they are reading*										

364

	a. Child's interaction, involvement and response to teaching	b. Teacher's interaction with child	c. Teacher transmitting information	d. Questions	e. Strategies	f. Resources	g. Emphasis	h. Non-teaching	i. Other	j. Timing and sequence
8. Story structure, *for example, teaching children to recognise the beginning, middle and end of the story*										
9. Summarisation, *for example, modelling to children how to integrate ideas and generalise from text information*										
10. Literal comprehension, *for example, asking factual questions about stories*										
11. Interpretation, *for example, encouraging children to think about why things happen in a story*										
12. Critical comprehension, *for example, asking children to make judgements on the actions of characters in a story*										
13. Inferential comprehension, *for example, encouraging children to draw insights about material they are reading*										

with money left over from crayons. Teacher explained
for second time that shop shut. He wanted to know
how he bought something earlier - shop open earlier.

Chn able to read sentences on sheet
My house has a black door - Ann
Do not run away from me - Patrick.

Good relationship: Chn volunteer info
eg Ann was at R's house
yesterday.
2nd time group have done a
cloze type exercise

Chn commented that
they were faster at
exercise and
Teacher responded
that they knew
what they were
doing.

* Ann + Patrick + R better than D
who appears to have more difficulty
Teacher supplied words when necessary
- time given to decode - chn
encouraged to use decoding
skills.

366

2- Chn read sentences and filled in words in turn.
C + Patrick wrote in wrong place.

14. Reading/ Writing connection	a. Child's interaction, involvement and response to teaching	b. Teacher's interaction with child	c. Teacher transmitting information	d. Questions	e. Strategies	f. Resources	g. Emphasis	h. Non-teaching	i. Other	j. Timing and sequence
1. Constructed spelling as approximation										
2. Spelling as a window into phonic knowledge										
3. Response to texts in child's own words	using finger to follow other chn reading		Teacher repeats sentence + demonstrates sounding in when letter sounds of target words then directs chn to fill in sentences							
4. Completion of teacher-made/ commercial worksheets/ workbooks	E (Anu) Patrick	P O R	P D	C	Et M	W	Crn U*			② 9.40
5. Reading and writing integrated (text as source for child wring opportunities)	E	O	Et P				Cr			④ 9.58 -10.00
6. Letter formation			Teacher steps in when she sees difficulty for example writing c backwards.							

Cloze type exercise.

Based on sight vocabulary covered yesterday

P1. blue big but came brown

P2. be by away cat black

Patrick 7 Ans very neat writer
letter formation 367 excellent

Appendix 9: Interview Schedules for (i) Learning

Support /Resource Teachers, (ii) Class Teachers, (iii) Principals,

(iv) Parents/Guardians and (v) Home-School-Community Liaison Teacher

(i) *Semi-Structured Interview Schedule with Learning Support/Resource Teacher*

The following interview guide will be used to conduct a semi-structured interview with the teacher. The interview is scheduled for approximately 35-40 minutes.

Introduction

The teacher is thanked in advance for giving her time for the interview. The researcher invites and answers any questions about the purpose and focus of the research.

Teacher Identity

Can you tell me about your teaching career to date with specific reference to the teaching of reading?

- Length of teaching career

- Pupils and classes taught

- Professional development with specific reference to reading

- Perception of your role as a teacher of reading

- Perception of role of the class teacher with regard to reading

Reading Process

What is your understanding of the process of teaching reading?

- Purpose of teaching reading

- Approaches, methods and strategies used to teach reading

- Resources employed

- Emphasis on independent reading

Organisation of Support for Children who Struggle with Reading

How are children who struggle with reading supported in this school?

- Macro level:

    Role of the Department of Education and Science

- Micro level:

    School policy and planning

    Organisation of learning support

Planning for the Teaching of Reading

Give an account of how you go about planning your reading lessons.

- Needs of children

- Collaboration with class teachers

- Involvement of parents/guardians

- Collaboration with other relevant professionals

Assessment

What role does assessment play in teaching reading to children who struggle to learn to read?

- Formal assessment

- Diagnostic assessment

- Informal assessment

- Use of on-going assessment

Perception of Role

What do you perceive your role in the teaching of reading to be?

What do you perceive the role of the class teacher in the teaching of reading to be?

Role of Parents/Guardians

How do you involve parents/guardians in supporting their children to learn to read?

Transfer of Learning

How do you encourage children to utilise their developing reading skills beyond the

learning support class?

- Connection between children's experience of the teaching of reading in

  learning support and in mainstream class

Reading Interventions

Give an account of any reading interventions/initiatives currently running in the

school.

Issues

Are there any other issues regarding the teaching of reading to children who struggle

to learn to read in first class that you wish to highlight as a learning support/resource

teacher?

The following interview guide will be used to conduct a semi-structure interview with the teacher. The interview is scheduled for approximately 35-40 minutes.

Introduction

The teacher is thanked in advance for giving her time for the interview. The researcher invites and answers any questions about the purpose and focus of the research.

Teacher Identity

Can you tell me about your teaching career to date with specific reference to the teaching of reading?

- Length of teaching career

- Pupils and classes taught

- Professional development with specific reference to reading

- Perception of your role with reference to teaching reading

- Perception of role of learning support/resource teacher with regard to reading

Reading Process

What is your understanding of the process of teaching reading?

- Purpose of teaching reading

- Approaches, methods and strategies used to teach reading

- Organisation of reading class

- Resources employed

- Emphasis on independent reading

Organisation of Support for Children who Struggle with Reading

How are children who struggle with reading supported in this school?

- Macro level:

  Role of the Department of Education and Science

- Micro level:

  School policy and planning

  Organisation of learning support

Planning for the Teaching of Reading

Give an account of how you plan your reading lessons.

- Needs of children

- Collaboration with learning support/resource teachers

- Involvement of parents/guardians

- Collaboration with other relevant professionals

Assessment

What role does assessment play in teaching reading to children who struggle to learn to read?

- Formal assessment

- Informal assessment

- Use of on-going assessment

Perception of Roles

What do you perceive your role in the teaching of reading to be?

What do you perceive the role of the learning support/resource teacher in the teaching of reading to be?

Role of Parents/Guardians

How do you involve parents/guardians in supporting their children to learn to read?

Transfer of Learning

How do you encourage children to utilise their developing reading skills beyond the mainstream classroom?

- Connection between children's experience of the teaching of reading in learning support and in mainstream class

Reading Interventions

Give as account of any reading interventions/initiatives currently running in the school.

Issues

Are there any other issues regarding the teaching of reading to children who struggle to learn to read in first class that you wish to highlight as a mainstream class teacher?

The following interview guide will be used to conduct a semi-structured interview with the Principal. The interview is scheduled for approximately 35-40 minutes.

Introduction

The Principal is thanked in advance for giving his/her time for the interview. The researcher invites and answers any questions about the purpose and focus of the research.

Principal Identity

Can you tell me about your career in schools to date with specific reference to the teaching of reading?

- Length of teaching career

- Pupils and classes taught

- Professional development with specific reference to reading

- Perception of your role as Principal with specific reference to the teaching of reading to children who struggle to learn to read in your school

Reading Process

What is your understanding of the process of teaching reading?

- Purpose of teaching reading

- Approaches, methods and strategies that you recommend for the teaching of reading

- Reading resources employed in your school

Organisation of Support for Children who Struggle with Reading

How are children who struggle with reading supported in this school and how does the organisation of the school facilitate these children to learn to read?

- Macro level:

    Role of the Department of Education and Science

- Micro level:

    School policy and planning

    Organisation of learning support

    Resourcing with regard to support children to learn to read

Planning for the Teaching of Reading

Give an account of how reading lessons are planned in the school.

- Needs of children

- Collaboration with teachers

- Involvement of parents/guardians

- Collaboration with other relevant professionals

- Time-tabling

Assessment

What role does assessment play in teaching reading to children who struggle to learn to read?

- Formal assessment

- Diagnostic assessment

- Informal assessment

- Use of on-going assessment

Perception of Roles

What do you perceive your role regarding the teaching of reading to be?

What do you perceive the role of the class teacher in the teaching of reading to be?

What do you perceive the role of the learning support/resource teacher regarding the teaching of reading to be?

Role of Parents/Guardians

In your opinion, what role should parents/guardians play in supporting their children in learning to read?

How does the school encourage parents/guardians to support their children to learn to read?

Transfer of Learning

How are children encouraged to utilise their developing reading skills across the school?

- Connection between children's experience of the teaching of reading in learning support and in mainstream class

Reading Interventions

Give an account of any reading interventions/initiatives currently running in the school.

Issues

Are there any other issues regarding the teaching of reading to children who struggle to learn to read in first class that you wish to highlight as Principal?

(iv) *Semi-Structured Interview Schedule with Parent/Guardian*

The following interview guide will be used to conduct a semi-structured interview with the parent/guardian. The interview is scheduled for approximately 25-30 minutes.

Introduction

The parent/guardian is thanked in advance for giving his/her time for the interview. The researcher invites and answers any questions about the purpose and focus of the research.

Reading Process

What is your understanding of your role in helping your child to learn to read?

Collaboration with the School

Give an account of your involvement with the teachers and the school regarding your child's reading.

- Role of assessment in teaching reading

- Planning of reading programmes

- Implementation of reading programmes

The Teaching of Reading

How does the school support your child as (s)he learns to read?

How do you support your child as (s)he learns to read?

Issues

Are there any other issues regarding the teaching of reading to your child that you wish to highlight as a parent/guardian?

(v) Semi-Structured Interview Schedule with Home-School-Community Liaison

Teacher (HSCL)

The following interview guide will be used to conduct a semi-structured interview with the HSCL. The interview is scheduled for approximately 35-40 minutes.

Introduction

The HSCL is thanked in advance for giving his/her time for the interview. The researcher invites and answers any questions about the purpose and focus of the research.

HSCL Identity

Can you tell me about your career in schools to date with specific reference to the teaching of reading?

Role of HSCL

Can you tell me about your role as HSCL with reference to supporting children who struggle to learn to read in first class?

Role of Parents/Guardians

In your opinion, what role should parents/guardians play in supporting their children in learning to read?

How does the school encourage parents/guardians to support their children to learn to read?

Reading Interventions

Give an account of any reading interventions/initiatives currently running in the school.

Issues

Are there any other issues regarding the teaching of reading to children who struggle to learn to read in first class that you wish to highlight as HSCL?

Appendix 10: (i) Children's Interview Schedule and (ii) Interview Transcripts in Respect of Children: (a) Mary (Scoil Rois) and (b) John and Emma (Scoil Naoise)

(i) *Interview Schedule*

Introduction

The following interview guide will be used to conduct a group interview with two children in first class. The interview will be scheduled for approximately 25-35 minutes.

The following activities introduce the group interview:

1.   Introductory/settling activity

Look through a book which is pitched at the appropriate level for the children in the group as a basis for giving them a brief account of the research, which is about learning what they think about reading and how they feel about it.

2. *Reminder of confidentiality of the children's contributions in the interview*

3. *Children's questions or queries*

The children are thanked in advance for giving of their time for the interview. The researcher invites and answers any questions about the research that the children may ask.

Children's Attitude toward Reading

Tell me what you think of reading?

• Do you like to read?

• Do you think it is important to read?

- How can reading help you?

Children's Experience with Reading in School

I want you to think about how you learn to read in school, and then tell me what you like most about learning to read in school and what you do not like about learning to read.

- How do you learn to read in school?

- What books do you like?

- What activities help you to learn to read?

- What do you like most about learning to read in school?

- What do you not like about learning to read in school?

Children's Awareness of Learning to Read

- What do you do when you cannot read a word?

- Who helps you to learn to read?

Children's Experiences with Reading at Home

- Do you read with Mammy or Daddy at home?

- What books do you read at home?

- When do you read at home?

(a) *Mary's Transcript (Scoil Rois)*

Child's Attitude Towards Reading

Tell me what you think of reading?

- Do you like to read?

M: Yes.

- Do you think it is important to read?

M: Yes, because then you know how to spell things and you know the words.

- How can reading help you?

M: Because if I read a book, then I will be able to read other things when I grow up.

Child's Experiences with Reading in School

I want you to think about how you learn to read in school, and then tell me what you like most about learning to read in school and what you do not like about learning to read.

- What books do you like?

M: The Broken Sleigh.

- What activities help you to learn to read? —What kinds of activities (things) does teacher do?

M: She *(Ms. Sullivan)* just like does reading, she does no activities to help you read.

- What do you not like about learning to read in school?

M: Because there is some hard words and then your Mum or Dad have to tell you them.

Child's Own Awareness of Learning to Read

- What do you do when you cannot read a word?

- What do you do to learn to read hard words?

M: I say half of the words and then I say the other part of the word and then I put it all together.

- Who helps you to learn to read?

M: My Mum and Dad if I am stuck on a word, they help me and Ms. Sullivan reads the part first and we have to take turns reading, and Ms Rooney does it different because we just have to read each line.

Child's Experiences with Reading at Home

- Do you read with Mammy or Daddy at home?

M: Yes.

- What books do you read at home?

M: *Put Me In The Zoo* and *Pixie The Fairy*. I have some reading books at home. You see I have paired reading books at home, they are not belonging to teacher and I read some of them and some different books.

- When do you read at home?

M: I read after my homework or else if my mum and dad have gone out, I bring reading books down to my Nans and then I could read them.

- Do you ever go to the library with Mum and Dad?

M: Yes.

(b) *John's and Emma's Transcript (Scoil Naoise)*

Children's Attitude Toward Reading

* Tell me what you think of reading?

J: It is very good fun.

E: It's good because it is good to learn.

* Do you like to read?

J: Yes.

E: I do.

* Do you think it is important to read?

J: Yes.

E: Yes.

* How can reading help you?

J: For if you remember in your head you will know all of the letters: you know all the letters off, if you keep reading you will know all the letters.

E: You can remember it in your brain and then do everything and then say it out again.

Children's Experiences with Reading in School

I want you to think about how you learn to read in school, and then tell me what you like most about learning to read in school and what you do not like about learning to read.

* What do you like most?

J: My one is to read and learn and listen and listen and learn and very good people who want to ask me and to know all the letters of the alphabet.

E: Well, like, it's very good because everyone helps us to learn to read and our teacher helps us to read and then teacher reads it first and then we read it out ourselves and then I read it out at home as well.

- What do you not like?

J: Well, I don't like to read when letters are bad because that's why sometimes you need to look at them because sometimes you don't hear them in your head.

E: Well, it's like disgusting things in our books, we don't like them and we don't like reading them sometimes.

- What books do you like?

E: I like *Horrid Henry* and I don't know what else.

J: My one is I like *Sonic X* books and I love the alphabet book.

- What activities help you learn to read?

J: In your brain so you can know all the letters of the alphabet.

E: I always like every book but not hard ones because my brother reads them out, and I have loads of books at home and I read them out every day.

Children's Own Awareness of Learning to Read

- How are you learning to read?

J: We learn and learn and we have to do, we have to learn our letters.

E: Like what John said, learning our letters.

- What do you do when you cannot read a word?

J: You just have to think of it in your head, so if you know it you can tell people how you know it.

E: And you go back on it if you know it, you go back and you say it and you do the letters of the words.

- Who helps you to learn to read?

J: Teachers and people and your mum and dad and whoever is at home, they can learn about the alphabet

E: Your teachers, mum, brother and sisters.

Children's Experiences with Reading at Home

- Do you read with Mammy or Daddy at home?

E: Yes. I read it out to my mum and everyone else and my brothers and sisters.

J: Yes. I read sometimes at home on my own, I read sometimes with my mum and dad and sometimes I don't want to read them.

- What books do you read at home?

E: I read *Horrid Henry, Bratz*, and the alphabet.

J: My one is I like *Sonic X* books and I love the alphabet book and the *Strike of the Matrix*.

- When do you read at home?

J: I read at school and at home. I read every day when my brother is watching TV. I keep reading my books and learning.

E: When I go to bed I get a book from my room and I read it; when my brother comes in and asks, I say I am reading a book.

Appendix 11: Audit Trail of (i) Observation Visits Specified for Class and Learning Support/Resource Teachers, (ii) Interviews with Teachers, Principals, Parents/Guardians and Children, and (iii) Document Analysis

(i) *School Visits*

Date	School	Class Teacher Observation	Learning Support/Resource Teacher Observation
10/09/07 - 15/09/07	Introductory visits to schools		
18/09/07	Scoil Rois	10.30 -11.00	11.20 – 12.00
24/09/07	Scoil Eoin		9.30 – 10.00
24/09/07	Scoil Naoise		11.15 – 11.45
25/09/07	Scoil Rois	10.30-11.00	11.20 – 12.00
25/09/07	Scoil Naoise	1.15-1.45	2.05 – 2.45
26/09/07	Scoil Eoin	10.00-10.30	9.30-10.00
1/10/07	Scoil Eoin	10.00 – 10.30	9.30- 10.00
2/10/07	Scoil Chiarain		9.10-9.50
2/10/07	Scoil Rois	10.30-11.00	11.20-12.00
2/10/07	Scoil Naoise	2.10-3.00	1.15-1.45
3/10/07	Scoil Eoin	10.00 – 10.30	9.30- 10.00
3/10/07	Scoil Naoise	11.15-11.55	12.00- 12.30
8/10/07	Scoil Eoin	10.00 – 10.30	9.30-10.00
9/10/07	Scoil Chiarain		9.10-9.50
9/10/07	Scoil Rois	10.30- 11.00	11.20-12.00
9/10/07	Scoil Naoise		1.15 – 1.50
10/10/07	Scoil Eoin	10.00 – 10.30	9.30 – 10.00
10/10/07	Scoil Naoise	12.00-12.30	11.15-11.45
11/10/07	Scoil Chiarain	11.25-12.00	
12/10/07	Scoil Chiarain	9.00 – 9.30	9.50-10.30
12/10/07	Scoil Naoise	11.15 -12.00	
15/10/07	Scoil Eoin	10.00-10.30	9.30-10.00
16/10/07	Scoil Chiarain		9.10-9.50
16/10/07	Scoil Rois	10.30-11.00	11.20-12.00
16/10/07	Scoil Naoise		1.15-1.45
17/10/07	Scoil Eoin	10.00-10.30	9.30-10.00
17/10/07	Scoil Naoise	11.50-12.30	11.15-11.45
19/10/07	Scoil Chiarain	9.50-10.30	9.10-9.50
19/10/07	Scoil Naoise	11.15-12.00	
22/10/07	Scoil Eoin	10.00-10.30	9.30-10.00
23/10/07	Scoil Chiarain		9.10-9.50
23/10/07	Scoil Rois	10.30-11.00	11.20-12.00
23/10/07	Scoil Naoise		1.15-1.45
24/10/07	Scoil Eoin	10.00-10.30	9.30-10.00
24/10/07	Scoil Naoise	11.50-12.30	11.15-11.45

25/10/07	Scoil Chiarain	11.25-12.00	
26/10/07	Scoil Chiarain	9.50-10.30	9.10-9.50
26/10/07	Scoil Naoise	11.15- 12.00	
06/1107	Scoil Chiarain		9.10-9.50
06/1107	Scoil Rois	10.30 –11.00	11.20-12.00
06/1107	Scoil Naoise		1.15- 1.45
07/11/07	Scoil Eoin	10.00-10.30	9.30-10.00
07/11/07	Scoil Naoise	11.50 –12.30	11.15-11.45
08/11/07	Scoil Chiarain	11.25-12.10	
09/11/07	Scoil Chiarain	9.00-9.50	9.50-10.30
09/11/07	Scoil Naoise	11.15-12.00	
12/11/07	Scoil Eoin	10.00-10.30	9.30-10.00
13/11/07	Scoil Chiarain		9.10-9.50
13/11/07	Scoil Naoise		1.15-1.45
14/11/07	Scoil Eoin	10.00-10.30	9.30-10.00
14/11/07	Scoil Naoise	11.50-12.30	11.15-11.45
15/11/07	Scoil Rois	9.30-10.15	10.15-11.00
15/11/07	Scoil Chiarain	11.25-12.10	
16/11/07	Scoil Naoise	11.15-12.00	
19/11/07	Scoil Eoin	10.00-10.30	9.30-10.00
19/11/07	Scoil Naoise	11.15-12.00	
20/11/07	Scoil Chiarain		9.10-9.50
20/11/07	Scoil Rois	10.30 –11.00	11.20-11.50
20/11/07	Scoil Naoise		1.15- 1.45
21/11/07	Scoil Eoin	10.00-10.30	9.30-10.00
21/1107	Scoil Naoise		11.15-11.45
22/11/07	Scoil Chiarain	11.25-12.10	
23/11/07	Scoil Chiarain	9.00-9.50	9.50-10.30
23/11/07	Scoil Naoise	11.15-12.00	
26/11/07	Scoil Eoin	10.00-10.30	9.30-10.00
27/11/07	Scoil Chiarain		9.10-9.50
27/11/07	Scoil Naoise		1.15-1.45
28/11/07	Scoil Eoin	10.00-10.30	9.30-10.00
28/11/07	Scoil Naoise	11.50-12.30	11.15-11.45
29/11/08	Scoil Rois	9.30-10.15	10.15-11.00
29/11/07	Scoil Chiarain	11.25-12.10	
30/11/07	Scoil Chiarain	9.00-9.50	9.50-10.30
30/11/07	Scoil Naoise	11.15-12.00	
3/12/07	Scoil Eoin	10.00-10.30	9.30-10.00
4/12/07	Scoil Chiarain		9.10-9.50
4/12/07	Scoil Rois	10.30 –11.00	11.20-12.00
4/12/07	Scoil Naoise		1.15- 1.45
5/12/07	Scoil Eoin	10.00-10.30	9.30-10.00
5/12/07	Scoil Naoise	11.50-12.30	11.15-11.45
6/12/07	Scoil Chiarain	11.25-12.10	
7/12/07	Scoil Chiarain	9.00-9.50	9.50-10.30
7/12/07	Scoil Naoise	11.15-12.00	
10/12/07	Scoil Eoin	10.00-10.30	9.30-10.00

11/12/07	Scoil Chiarain		9.10-10.03
11/12/07	Scoil Naoise		1.15- 1.45
12/11/07	Scoil Eoin	10.00-10.30	9.30-10.00
12/12/07	Scoil Naoise	11.50-12.30	11.15-11.45
13/11/07	Scoil Rois	9.30-10.15	10.15-11.00
13/12/07	Scoil Chiarain	11.25-12.10	
14/12/07	Scoil Chiarain	9.00-9.50	9.50-10.30
14/12/07	Scoil Naoise	11.15-12.00	

(ii) *Interviews*

Date	School	Interviewee
16/1107	Scoil Rois	Principal
22/11/07	Scoil Rois	Ms. Sullivan (LSRT)
22/11/07	Scoil Rois	Mary (Child)
24/11/07	Scoil Naoise	Ms. Joyce (LSRT)
26/11/07	Scoil Naoise	John and Emma (Children)
26/11/07	Scoil Naoise	Ms. Adams (CT)
27/11/07	Scoil Rois	Ms. Rooney (CT)
28/11/07	Scoil Eoin	Patrick and Ann (Children)
28/11/07	Scoil Eoin	Ms. White (LSRT)
28/11/07	Scoil Eoin	Principal
28/11/07	Scoil Eoin	Ms. Boylan (CT)
30/11/07	Scoil Chiarain	Ms. Whelan (CT)
5/12/07	Scoil Rois	Mary's Mum
5/12/07	Scoil Eoin	Patrick's Mum
6/12/07	Scoil Eoin	Ann's Mum
7/12/07	Scoil Naoise	Principal
7/12/07	Scoil Naoise	John's Mum
7/12/07	Scoil Naoise	Emma's Mum
13/12/07	Scoil Chiarain	HSCL teacher
17/12/07	Scoil Chiarain	Ms. Murphy (LSRT)
17/12/07	Scoil Chiarain	Principal
17/12/07	Scoil Chiarain	Kate and Ben (Children)
18/12/07	Scoil Chiarain	Ben's Mum
15/1/08	Scoil Chiarain	Kate's Mum

(iii) *Document Analysis*

Scoil Rois	Special Needs & Learning Support Policy
Scoil Rois	English Policy
Scoil Eoin	Policy on Learning Support
Scoil Naoise	Whole School Policy for Learning Support (Draft)
Scoil Chiarain	Special Educational Needs Policy
Scoil Chiarain	DEIS Whole School Review of Targets -

	November 2007
Scoil Chiarain	English Policy

Appendix 12: Conducting Interviews

The researcher addressed the interpersonal, interactional, communicative and emotive aspects of the interview in the manner in which she staged the interview. This encompassed how the interviewee was greeted and how the chairs were arranged, and the way she communicated verbally and non-verbally. The researcher gave due consideration to the dynamics of the interview, for example, "how to keep the conversation going, how to motivate participants to discuss their thoughts, feelings and experiences, and how to overcome the problems of the likely asymmetries of power in the interview (where the interviewer typically defines the situation, the topic, the conduct, the introduction, the course of the interview and the closing of the interview)" (Kvale, 1996, p.126). As the interview is a social, interpersonal encounter, where the researcher may or may not have had a history involving a professional relationship with an interviewee, it was important to establish an appropriate atmosphere where the individual felt secure to talk freely.

Several problems in the actual conduct of the interview were anticipated. It became apparent during piloting, when an interruption occurred, that the researcher needed to ensure that interruptions and distractions were minimised. She did this by organising the interviews well in advance at times when the interviewees felt they would not be disturbed. By giving the interview schedule to the interviewees in advance, the flow from one topic to another was smoother because the interviewees had had a chance to think about the issues being discussed. The researcher refrained from giving opinions. Rather, she listened actively to those of the interviewees.

Appendix 13: Sample Transcripts of Interviews in Respect of (i) Learning

Support/Resource Teachers, (ii) Class Teachers, (iii) Principals, (iv)

Parents/Guardians and (v) Home-School-Community Liaison Teacher

(i) *Learning Support/Resource Teacher: Ms. Murphy (Scoil Chiarain)*

Teacher Identity

Can you tell me about your teaching career to date with specific reference to the teaching of reading?

- Length of teaching career

- Pupils and classes taught

I have been teaching for about eleven years. My experience includes some younger classes and then senior classes. I moved into the area of special needs about four years ago, first of all in the capacity of a resource teacher working with children who have special needs and then as a learning support teacher.

- Professional development with specific reference to reading

I completed the Post-Graduate Diploma in Special Educational Needs two years ago and I am currently doing my Masters in Special Educational Needs. I am also training as a RR Teacher and it is specifically related to reading and uncovering gaps in children's reading – children in first class and senior infants; it is very much based on a language experience approach to reading.

- Perception of your role as a teacher of reading

My perception of my role as teacher of reading - I think I would have been quite skeptical prior to starting the training in RR because I was a teacher of senior classes and children come into to you with an expected level and there won't be many children who cannot read and most of my experience was in middle and senior classes, so I was quite apprehensive about moving down to this area, but on the advice of others, whom I know have trained in RR, I was told it was going to be very prescriptive course in terms of strategies you would have to use, which it is, but I would have learnt hugely from it and I have still lots to learn.

- Perception of the role of the class teacher with regard to reading

My perception of the class teacher, well I suppose in an ideal world we should be working in collaboration around reading, sometimes that is quite difficult though. I think a class teacher would be working around a more skilled-based approach, where they are teaching a skill and really that is probably the most feasible approach in the classroom situation, but I think there might be lots of lost opportunities in that approach also because here you have children who are presenting with gaps and often their needs can't be met. The class teacher has absolutely and entirely the responsibility for getting these children to read; I am only there in a support capacity and to try and maybe offer whatever expertise I have.

Reading Process

What is your understanding of the process of teaching reading?

- Purpose of teaching reading

Well the purpose, if we are teaching reading effectively to children, we are opening up the entire curriculum. If they are failing in reading, it is closing gaps and making barriers to the curriculum; the classic example is Math, you often see children who have the computational skills but it is the language that is the problem, and when they come up the school it is the problem solving that is the problem – the language and the reading – so reading is huge. This is a disadvantaged school, so often and in my experience of working with children in the top primary, to bring them to a functional level of literacy that they can operate in society, things like social sight vocabulary and all that, which is where you are at with children in the top classes in this calibre of a school – but to me that is success if you can bring them to that level. I remember being told that if you can get a child to a reading age of eight, they can function at a literate level in society, so there is the focus.

- Approaches, methods and strategies used to teach reading

In my RR we would use a language experience approach and it is sort of based on error analysis, whereby the mistakes the children make are analyzed and that informs your teaching, for example, you have the meaning cues, the syntax cues and the visual cues and wherever the child is falling down it is up to you, in a post-analysis of the lesson, to try and decipher what is the problem: Is the child not looking at the word? Is she not looking at the visual detail? Is she not looking for meaning cues? Is there a syntax problem? and then whatever is coming up in that analysis, that is something you must build into the next day's lesson and that is how it works. Again, the fact it is

a one-to-one programme, it is a privilege for both the child and the teacher to be in that situation. And because of that privilege, it is so individualised.

- Resources employed

We would have a scheme, the *Magic Emerald Scheme* running throughout the school. There is an additional mini-library in every class that teachers can dip in and out of. The infants would use *Storyworlds* and the big books associated with that - that is their main scheme, but there would also be a selection of other schemes. We also have a resident writer who comes in every week, and he does creative writing with the entire school. He is absolutely brilliant and the children love him. It is like a different medium. He does different types of poetry and different genres of writing and it works really, really well. We also use ICT.

- Emphasis on independent reading

The goal of any teacher is to bring a child to independence and it is very much a part of the RR – the first ten minutes is the familiar reading, the whole idea of that is to build up their confidence and increase their independence. We are trying to do that as an entire school as well using sustained silent reading. We are trying to organise sustained silent reading. We are trying to organise a ten minute slot in the day where the teacher would read as well, modeling for the children who are reading, trying to emphasise the importance of reading.

Organisation of Support for Children who Struggle with Reading

How are children who struggle with reading supported in this school?

- Macro level:

  Role of the Department of Education and Science

Well, they are identified firstly using the screening tests, in senior infants the MIST, and from first class upwards the Drumcondras – that is stage one. The class teacher would try to put some kind of a programme in place and if that is failing the link teacher is taken in. Then the learning support teacher comes on board and the emphasis has been on withdrawal up to now, but we are trying to change that as part of our DEIS plan - the children are taken in a learning support capacity for a temporary period and the type of programme would depend on the age and year group of the children – I know with first class the emphasis would be on sight vocabulary and letters and then the children would be assessed again after a twelve week period. If the children have not progressed, they would continue to remain in the learning support room and further diagnostic tests would be administered to see if there was a question of assessment. I suppose we do find that there are a lot of children who come into the learning support group in first and second class and unfortunately remain in it – they are not candidates to be assessed, they are often the children and the support is not there at home – you are kind of banging your heads here as best you can with them using the strategies you have but they don't move beyond the learning support room, so that is what we are trying to change with the new DEIS plan, rather than withdrawing them, because I am sure that is messing with their self-esteem, that we would go into the class and support them there.

- Micro level:

School policy and planning

Organisation of learning support

The emphasis of support is changing as a result of trying to meet the DEIS standard of reducing the number of children in the zero to twentieth percentile by ten percent. Children in the eleven to twentieth percentile will now be targeted by the link teachers; these are learning support/resource teachers linked to every year group. Children under the tenth percentile will remain in class and in-class support will be devised for these children by the class teacher and learning support teacher. Three children for the eleven to twentieth percentiles will be targeted in every class; these children will be supported through withdrawal or in-class support depending on the needs of the child. The models that will be used will be First Steps, especially writing as in-service has been provided in this area; RR will continue in first class but children in the eleven to twentieth percentile will be targeted. Learning support teachers will set up programmes and go into classes.

The percentage of the school's population who are reading below the tenth percentile has risen rather than falling throughout the school over the last two tears despite the resources available from DEIS. However, this can be attributed to the influx of non-national children for whom English is a second language and who are trying to learn to read in their second language.

We get DEIS funding and we also have the school completion project and we also get funding from that, and that allows for breakfast clubs and that type of thing.

Planning for the Teaching of Reading

Give an account of how you go about planning your reading lessons.

• Needs of children

My programme is quite specific and different to the others (LS/RTs) but how I would work with the RR is that I have my list of children at the beginning of the year and these were children who presented on the MIST and who went through the *Forward Together Programme* in Senior infants and still came out below the cut-off point – they are the children who were on my list and also those from teacher observations at the beginning of first class. What I do then is I administer a series of tests. There are seven of them I think, and they included Letter Identification, British Abilities Scale Word Test, Writing and Vocabulary Word Test, Hearing and Recording Sound and Word Test and then three running records to establish the instructional level of reading the child is at. From there, I would go *Roaming in the Known*, where you are working on what the child knows and you are trying to build on this but you are not teaching in this two week period, you are just building on what the child knows from the information from the tests you have administered. From there you start structured teaching which should be week three of the programme, the first week of formal instruction and that is where you have the familiar reading, that is, the books that are at their level. Then you do the running record which is an assessment, it is the only part of the lesson that is assessment, where you don't talk where you are assessing the book that you have taught and hopefully taught hard the day before and that is establishing where the child is at. Then comes the writing; the target is seventy-five common sight words by the end of the twenty week intervention. Then comes the reading, the teaching of the reading of the new book, that is where you would adopt the classic strategies, I suppose, of RR, that is, again based on the error analysis I

talked about earlier. You are working on the cues, if a child can't attack a word, "*Where are you stuck?*" and one important strategy of it is chunking – you chunk a word, you are going from the *Roaming in the Known*, that I talked about a minute ago, you would chunk a particular word that you know they know because you have recorded all the words that they know and you build on that and you get them to chunk the word. Expression and fluency are a given in every RR lesson, speech marks, expression marks, bold print, all that kind of stuff

- Collaboration with class teachers

Collaboration with class teachers – in my opinion, it is not the ideal here. They are involved, we had a meeting say around the RR, we had a meeting initially and I broke it down as best I could. I told everyone I am training myself, so as much as I knew I told them. There has not been any formal collaboration around the RR apart from the odd informal 'she is doing really well', 'she is here, she is there', whatever – but what I am hoping and I know is part of the training programme of RR is the dissemination where I have to demonstrate a lesson to all of the teachers of first class, and hopefully the infant teachers as well, just to give them as idea of where it is at. I am hoping as well when this DEIS stuff starts happening in January, in first class, that I will be able to bring the assessment tools that I am using in RR and I am hoping to collaborate with them (*teachers of first class*) around this - I would say that they probably don't realise that their interpretation of the average child is now different to my interpretation, so I am hoping there will be more collaboration after Christmas. There has not been, I am not aware of what is going on in the classroom and they are not aware of what is going on here really. That is why I think after Christmas, when this

DEIS action plan kicks in, that I am hoping to get in there with each first class, get into each class for an hour in the day; again that is all about negotiation.

- Involvement of parents/guardians

I would be encouraging involvement of parents and guardians around the RR, but it is very hard to get some of them on board. In fact, two of the parents having signed the forms and being informed about what an expensive and privileged programme it was during a one-to-one meeting – but the folder was lost and the homework was not being done, so we took the SNAs on board to try and work that, but, then, I have two parents who are rowing a 100% with me and you can see the benefits. I took the parents in at the beginning and explained explicitly what I wanted them to do – it is very consistent because it is a cut up story and just to show them how to do it and how to read it and what not. I also showed them how to find appropriate cues for their children when they were stuck on a word.

There is a lot of illiteracy within the community of parents here and that is a difficulty and I am not sure if that was the issue with the two parents who have not co-operated, but I did get the HSCL on to the case as well but it did not work and the child was not moving and we just had to come up with a different solution. But it is working fifty percent, I have to say.

- Collaboration with other relevant professionals

I collaborated with the HSCL as I have mentioned and I contacted the homework club, because one child was attending the homework club. It is a DEIS funded club and I thought sure that is what it is there for, so I contacted one of the workers down there and I went down with the folder and I told the lady what I wanted her to do and that is working ok. This child is not one of the children you are observing.

The Principal is supporting and leading and aware. My own tutors and colleagues in Monaghan on the training programme also advise me even though they are not working with the children themselves – we discuss and compare children with each other.

Assessment

What role does assessment play in teaching reading to children who struggle to learn to read?

- Formal assessment

- Diagnostic assessment

- Informal assessment

- Use of on-going assessment

I am talking specifically about RR. Initially, in all the tests I spoke previously about you are assessing for learning really; those tests are yielding information that is making you aware of where the child is at. Then we go from there and we do our teaching strategies over the twenty week period intervention, etc., and then we do our assessment of learning at the end of the programme. So obviously, the two of them are vital, one is informing you where the child is at and therefore where you need to go, the other is informing you whether or not the programme has worked. Obviously,

there would be continuous on-going assessment throughout. It is very much a reflective sort of approach – RR is language based – you have to reflect on the lesson every day, that is, part and parcel of it, because that informs your next day's teaching. So there is assessment every single day and I think that is the beauty of the programme and I think that is what makes it so effective.

The role of the parents and their involvement have contributed to the significant improvement shown by both Ben and Kate and I think both parents and assessment /reflection play a part – one would not happen without the other. You are giving the skills and the parents are helping the child use them and both are validating the child's progress.

Role of Parents/Guardians

How do you involve parents/guardians in supporting their children to learn to read?

As I mentioned, it is one of the stipulations of RR that first of all you would have the signature – we would invite the parents in one by one for an interview and explain about the programme, why the child was selected in the first place, which would have been based on the MIST, and then that it is a twenty week intervention. We emphasise to the parents at that point that the programme will not work unless they are exposed to books at home. There would be on-going but informal contact with the parents; I would often grab them outside school if I needed anything, or, for example, I was not going to be there for a few days because we had different training going on, so I just explained that to the parents and asked them to please keep it going so that the children would not fall back and as I have said, two of them did, so I am having a fifty

percent success rate. The parent teacher meetings fell into place mid intervention and I found that very, very helpful, particularly with Kate's mother because I just explained to her and showed her exactly the books and the strategies I would use and at that point I was concerned about Kate's intonation and her monotone and all that, and all of a sudden about a week later she just flew. We just I suppose met up and discussed where she was at at that point and because the mum is so much on board, it just made a huge, huge difference. So parents play a huge role. Unfortunately, we are a disadvantaged school and parents not getting involved is part and parcel of disadvantage and a lot of it is the parents' feelings of inadequacy within themselves and low levels of literacy within themselves and you just simply have to take that into account. There is an issue that needs to be addressed; the Department has decided to role out RR into DEIS schools but a very important and critical part of it is parental involvement and that very point is often missing in disadvantaged schools. You just have to get around it using the SNAs and the homework club. I would definitely and undoubtedly say that the children who are not getting the support at home are not performing as effectively on the programme. But maybe and I am hoping that eventually they will get there, but it just might take that little bit longer. However, I am not sure whether I can hold them for longer than the twenty weeks. There is a waiting list of children and you would like to give them all the opportunity but at the same time it would be an awful shame to bring a particular child nearly there and not the whole way for the sake of a few more weeks, and I hope that we could work that someway.

Transfer of Learning

How do you encourage children to utilise their developing reading skills beyond the learning support class?

- Connection between children's experience of the teaching of reading in learning support and in mainstream class

Again, this is something, like collaboration, that we in this school need to work on. It is very difficult to establish the connection when you are not in the class; all you can do is try to talk to the teacher and discuss where he/she is at. But in very many ways, when my RR children leave this room that is it - I have no further dealings with them the way the structure is and the system is at the moment; this is really not the best system in terms of their learning. I would be connecting with parents and that. I mean it is informal with the teachers and I would be telling them where the children are at, levels wise and all that, but we have not actually sat down and thrashed it out. The teachers have no sense of the cues the children are using or the strategies I am teaching so that they could back them up – that is crucial I suppose really. And as well as that then, because the teacher is using a different approach in the class, if she was aware of what I have been kind of encouraging and instructing the children to do, she could back that up. I mean what's to say that the children are not getting confused.

Reading Interventions

Give an account of any reading interventions/initiatives currently running in the school.

The Super Reader initiative focusing on first class, run by the HSCL, was trying to get the parents on board. We had a meeting to just try and emphasise to parents the importance of reading and the importance of trying to instil a love of books into the children because this is where it is at. Now again I am not sure how successful that was or was not – I did not have a lot to do with it apart from offering my bit about RR

to the parents at the meetings but I do know that even the turn out at the meetings was quite poor, and, again, the parents you were dying to get at and who really needed it were the parents who did not turn up. There was a library visit last week and a book week is organised later on in the second term where a visiting library comes and you try and encourage the children to buy a book.

Issues

Are there any other issues regarding the teaching of reading to children who struggle to learn to read in first class that you wish to highlight?

I suppose that it has come up already in that I am working probably from a different approach than the class teachers are and I am just not sure – that every child has different needs and every child learns in a different way and I would just think that the approach is very stiff, stilted and prescriptive, and I know that I am coming from a different angle here, when you have twenty children in class you have to pitch it at some level, but I think that this is why children are falling through the gap, they are not able to, their needs are not being addressed by the approach that is being used. This is why I think it just has to be the way forward that we as learning support teachers go into the class and try and support these children, through a different medium, if they are not getting what the teacher is saying, which a lot of them won't, and you could kind of row in, having done their profile – the children that are presenting with some level of needs that the learning support teacher would have done a profile on them and done some level of testing and that the class teacher could sort of row in – that if you were in the classroom and could see where the child was, you could sort of row in there, rather than this withdrawal where everything is segregated and nobody knows what is going on in all these rooms –that would be my

main concern around reading. And again the whole emphasis on it at home but what can you do? – You cannot change the world.

Teacher Identity

Can you tell me about your teaching career to date with specific reference to the teaching of reading?

- Length of teaching career

I have been teaching for twelve years and I have been in Scoil Eoin for nine of those years.

- Pupils and classes taught

I have taught a varied amount of classes. When I was in Dublin, I taught in an inner city area and then I came here which was a big change really in terms of the facilities and the different types of backgrounds that the children would come from. Teaching of reading – well, I taught infant classes for the first few years after training, I learned a lot from colleagues. I would say that I learned how to teach reading from colleagues, rather than, yea we were shown how to teach reading in College but I don't think I ever went back and looked at the notes or anything like that to be honest. You pick up different things from colleagues and then you form your own opinions and depending then on your class group, you adapt them to suit. You become creative as well over the years; what will work one year may work for one class but not another and you look for new things then, and if something works it is great.

- Professional development with specific reference to reading

I have not had any apart from the English in-service with the revised curriculum and that has been fabulous and the Cuiditheoirs coming around – when I had the infant classes, she came around and told me how to use the big book and all those things that you take on board yourself, yea it has been fabulous.

- Perception of your role with reference to teaching reading

My role is vital, especially with the lower classes. It is crucial that the teacher is there at the centre of what is happening and she is the one who is going to spot the children who are having difficulties, I mean the parent at home won't be seeing the child in relation to the other children in the group, they will just see their child and they may not know that the child is experiencing difficulties unless they are very bad, so yea it is crucial.

- Perception of the role of the learning support teacher

Vital as well, because those children who have been observed, may be even from the infant stage children who are struggling maybe from when they are starting to do their initial sounds, that they would be observed and then through the MIST test in SI, the ones that are observed usually show up and then the learning support teacher will take them on board. It is of great benefit to the class teacher because they are just going to be lost in a big class. We still have big classes here and without Ms. White's help, we could not give them the time that Ms. White gives them, I mean they get a half an hour every day and Ms. White is fabulous.

Reading Process

What is your understanding of the process of teaching reading?

- Purpose of teaching reading

The purpose for teaching reading, well it is a tool that they are going to need for life, in every walk of life; it is a survival tool, they are going to need it.

- Approaches, methods and strategies used to teach reading

- Organisation of reading class

With regard to first class, I do individual reading still, but at the start of the year we start kind of on a level. I would have been speaking to the class teacher for the year beforehand and I would be aware of the children going to learning support, but I still start them off on the same level, I give them out a word-sheet at the start of the year and we start with that. I do the flashcards and we make sentences with those and they don't see any of the reader at all at the start of the year. We make sentences and we do a lot of *Language Experience Approach* (LEA) approach, making stories, and they bring all of that home and all the sheets and that is their reading homework for the first term nearly and they are still learning new words as they are going along. And the gap, then you can see the gap then in terms of what they are able to cope with, so I individualise them then. You know, some child might only be able for two new words a night, the good children are getting seven/eight new words a night – a lot of the children might even know a lot of the words on the sheet.

Then when they get their new reader, I do the same; I put a sheet on the front page of the reader and I give them, depending on the their ability, the amount of pages per night and every week we do a class reading lesson, so we can all join in and have a discussion about the story, we can all talk about the same story, there is no disparity there then, they are all on the same level in that way and the children don't realise that they are different then.

And, then of course, with that you need a phonic programme to back that up and we have a structured one with the school plan that we all follow. And of course the children are immersed in a world of language and books and they get supplementary readers that they bring home with them and all the time you are trying to encourage them to read.

- Resources employed

Buster and the supplementary readers, the *Oxford Reading Tree* readers, and we have our library in our class that we dip into every now and again, and the children are allowed to dip into and we do story-time and it is something a bit different from their reader.

- Emphasis on independent reading

That is a vital thing, especially when the children are in first class. They are beginning to make that step from being totally dependent on Mammy or Daddy or the teacher to want to pick up a book themselves and that is what you are trying to encourage but

not to dampen in any way the child – you are trying to build up their self-confidence in doing that, without them actually knowing it, so that they will naturally go for a book. It can be a very difficult, I don't know, with some children, you don't want to frustrate them, so the right level of book is important. They won't read ever if they are frustrated.

Organisation of Support for Children who Struggle with Reading

How are children who struggle with reading supported in this school?

- Macro level:

  Role of the Department of Education and Science

- Micro level:

  School policy and planning

  Organisation of learning support

Well, we have Ms. White, the learning support teacher, and we have resource teachers then that deal with the children who have big, big problems: we have the teacher for the travellers and a new language teacher. With regard to going to Ms. White and all that, it is done on the standardised tests, the Drumcondras, and we send children under the twelfth percentile and then if there are any other children bordering on that, maybe thirteenth/fourteenth/fifteenth percentile, you know, chatting with Ms. White and observation, they may also go; it depends from year to year, the numbers, that would be the school policy thing. The Department, I think that they recommend under the tenth percentile to go to learning support, I am not sure about that.

Timetabling, well, hmm, well I mean it is a joke, trying to organise it at the start of the year, and then I would - there is no formal meeting, I should say that I would have, there is no formal time set aside when we would meet about the children. It happens incidentally, I would meet Ms. White in the corridor and we would have a chat about so and so, in the staffroom and all that, but she is following a phonic programme suitable for the children who are going up to her and I suppose I am doing the class one back in the classroom. And then she sends home other books with the children as well but I suppose we don't really meet formally.

Planning for the Teaching of Reading

Give an account of how you plan your reading lessons?

- Needs of children

- Collaboration with learning support/resource teachers

Well, the needs of the children obviously, but when you are in a class set up and you are doing a reading lesson with the class, you have to take into account the language of the children as well, to phrase a thing differently so you are keeping all the children with you; sometimes it can be difficult.

- Involvement of parents/guardians

Involvement of parents, well I have a sheet at the start of their reader which the parents must sign when they hear the reading, at least then I know that they hopefully have sat down with child and read with their child. Last week we had our parent teacher meetings, we talked about reading that way or if you had a specific problem

that you would bring them in, maybe some of the children who are going to learning support, just to show them what to do with their child if you thought that things were not progressing the way you wanted it.

- Collaboration with other relevant professionals

Other professionals, that would be a speech therapist in regard to one child in my class, we would have gotten a speech therapy report there last week, that is vital. In my experience from dealing with children down through the years, there is not enough collaboration with these professionals. It is vital that the teacher in school knows exactly what is being done by the speech therapist for the child, they need to know what is going on so that they too can help the child in the same way. The same if a child was going to an occupational therapist, these reports. There nearly should be a meeting with all these professionals if a child is attending them. A report is ok but you take more from a face to face meeting. I know with the learning support/resource teachers it is coming in, I know that this year they had their big meetings with all these professionals, which is great and much more beneficial to the child. So at the moment we get a report and sometimes only if you request it.

Assessment

What role does assessment play in teaching reading to children who struggle to learn to read?

- Formal assessment

- Diagnostic assessment

- Informal assessment

- Use of on-going assessment

Well, it is definitely going to separate and pick out the children that need the help even though usually you can hand pick them. Often you can have some surprises when you have a child that you thought might have being doing ok, might have struggled, but then again you have to look at other factors as well, but it does definitely show up that these children need help and it is something you can bring to the parents as well, that this is how they are getting on. And we are doing the Drumcondras at the end of this year but that MIST test is excellent. I found it excellent with the infants; it definitely separates the children who need it and the children who don't.

Informal assessment, that is the teacher, isn't it, and yes the first form of assessment that any child gets is the teacher and it is vital.

On-going assessment is important too, especially for the child who is doing better now, even more important than first finding out because usually the teacher spots the children who need to go to learning support, but the on-going assessment shows the child that is really beginning to cope now and then they can be dropped from the learning support caseload and it is a huge boost to a child to know that they are improving.

Role of Parents/Guardians

How do you involve parents/guardians in supporting their children to learn to read?

That is huge and that even goes back to before the child comes to school. The first book a child sees should not be their JI book. There should be books around them from when they are very small, being read to, nursery rhymes; talking to all these sorts of things is so important that the child is nearly learning by example. They know a book, they know how to pick up a book, that is the parent's role.

Transfer of Learning

How do you encourage children to utilise their developing reading skills beyond the mainstream classroom?

- Connection between children's experience of the teaching of reading in learning support and in mainstream class

Well, the thing with reading is what they are learning with Ms. White and what they are learning with me, that the child who is having difficulty still needs to be swamped with books all the time, I think, and it is only by doing that, that these kind of problems will click and there won't be that sort of problems anymore, and what they are learning here with Ms. White with regard to phonics you are hoping that they are bringing it with them; they must be because you see the children that come on every year and how they really progress coming from Ms. White.

Using them in the classroom, if they come across a word in the classroom, what I always say to children is there are words and you will be able to use your phonics and sound out but there are loads of other words that they are not going to be able to sound out, but these words are words that we are going to have to learn as our sight vocabulary and the only way that they will learn them is by seeing them so many

different times, by reading all the time or being read to or being aware of words. I can only do so much in school, that is why parents are so vitally important for those sort of things.

Reading Interventions

Give as account of any reading interventions/initiatives currently running in the school.

I am going to do Buddy reading with the sixth class and my class after Christmas. It generally is a great success, it gives the weaker children in the older classes a boost and the good as well as the weaker children in my class a boost too. The good children can show off.

Issues

Are there any other issues regarding the teaching of reading to children who struggle to learn to read in first class that you wish to highlight as a mainstream class teacher?

No, none that I can think of.

Principal Identity

Can you tell me about your career in schools to date with specific reference to the teaching of reading?

- Length of teaching career

- Pupils and classes taught

- Professional development with specific reference to reading

- Perception of your role as Principal with specific reference to the teaching of reading to children who struggle to learn to read in your school

Well, I have been teaching in Scoil Naoise my entire teaching career and most of the time I would have been dealing with children from JI to third class – that is were I would have spent most of my years teaching, so I would have had experience teaching reading, pre-reading right up along the line, often taking children after school to help them with reading as well and doing paired reading and shared reading with them. I would be very interested particularly in phonics and long before I was aware of any scheme being available in Ireland. I had worked out my own little phonic method and spent quite a lot of time and I do believe that the earlier you start phonics with children the better, and I even found that having started it in JI that I had a child, who was probably exceptional, who at the end of JI, was reading quite fluently. But I do find that the phonics work, there may be a few children whom oral language and visual is the way and some children find phonics difficult, whether it is tone-deafness or what, they just find it that bit more difficult.

I did Montessori training as well as Carysfort training and I found that very good and very helpful, so I really took on to the sandpaper letters in a big way and found that was very beneficial for weak children, tracing the letters in as many ways as possible, in the air, on the table, with the sandpaper letters and shaping letters. Also, I think developing correct formation of letters is very, very important and I would be very much in favour of joined writing because they get the whole flow of the word.

As Principal, I would be definitely encouraging all the phonics methods that are. I know *Letterland* was used for a number of years – never ever got into *Letterland* having had my own one – it worked to a certain extent. Now, we have changed over to *Jolly Phonics* but we are still a little bit iffy about those. The Learning Support teachers are using the *Ann Newell* scheme and one of them has come up with a scheme she found in another school, which is English, but it runs right through every class from JI to sixth and there is quite a lot of work to be done in each classroom, so I think that it might be a good idea to look at that and we might go that road next. It is a bit soon to judge how the *Jolly Phonics* are doing as this is only our second year using it, we need to give it more time and see how it develops. But certainly I would be for – I think children have to practise reading when they are young and that is the bottom line and they would certainly need a lot of support from home as well as school, and the shared reading and probably the paired reading are very beneficial.

Reading Process

What is your understanding of the process of teaching reading?

- Purpose of teaching reading

- Approaches, methods and strategies that you recommend for the teaching of reading

- Reading resources employed in your school

Probably, a lot of pre-reading activities as well as all I have mentioned before. When I taught JI, I did a lot of pre-reading activities. We had a little black jotter and crayons, it was pre-reading and pre-writing and we did all sorts of patterns in different colours for each line and we filled copybooks with it. I did find it very beneficial. I also had a little thing where I had matchsticks, different shapes where they had to follow the shape and direction of the matchsticks, repeating the patterns. That is invaluable to children in my mind, jigsaws, all the pre-reading skills. I would encourage that.

Organisation of Support for Children who Struggle with Reading

How are children who struggle with reading supported in this school?

How does the organisation of the school facilitate these children to learn to read?

- Macro level:

  Role of the Department of Education and Science

- Micro level:

  School policy and planning

  Organisation of learning support

Our learning support teachers are working really hard with them, to take them out on a regular basis, not as often as we would like; we would love to have much more learning support help for them. They really veer in on their letters and the sounds of the letters and word building and try to get them off the ground with the reading.

Again, teachers would – classes are so large that they have not time to give them the individual attention that they would like to give them, but I think that it is very important that they are caught early and that intervention is put in as soon as possible. And, maybe, even as soon as the end of JI when we see what is happening and where the children are going. Again, I think a print rich environment is very important and that their attention is drawn to it because very often children will walk around blindly and not see what is there, it has to be pointed out to them. Again, if they are out with their parents they should really be looking at signs and we would encourage parents, when we meet them before the children come into school, to make them aware of what is in their environment and to talk to them about their environment and to point out things, reading signs, etc.

We are developing our policy at the moment in terms of learning support. The learning support teachers are working on it and they will take it to a staff meeting, and we will all have an input into it and work on it and develop it and there will be on-going development on the policy – it won't be static.

Planning for the Teaching of Reading

Give an account of how reading lessons are planned in the school?

- Needs of children

- Collaboration with teachers

- Involvement of parents/guardians

- Collaboration with other relevant professionals

- Time-tabling

Well, we would try and put in as much pre-reading resources into the infants' rooms as we could, and Mrs X would work on the children beginning with their letters and the sounds of them and following the *Jolly Phonics* programme at the moment. She would be very observant of where the children are and trying to make sure that they have a certain amount of letters covered through the *Jolly Phonics* and that they would really know them very well. That would continue on into the SI class where they would have the rest of the letters and the sounds worked out, and the learning support teachers test the children towards the end of senior infants on the MIST test. We withdraw them out then in first class and try and bring them up to standard. Now, of course, school attendance will have an impact on children's reading and we find that the children who are poor school attenders are the children who struggle with reading. That is a big issue in the school with one or two children in particular.

We encourage the parents to engage with the children in shared reading even in the JI rooms; it may be only a picture book but chatting about the picture and getting the children talking about the picture is very, very important, and I think reading stories to children and making them fond of books and seeing that their parents enjoy books is a very important factor in encouraging reading. We have shared reading books in every classroom from JI to sixth class, and we run slots of six weeks with the children taking the books home and read with their parents. The older children will read the book and chat to their parents about it, and write up a little commentary about it.

Again we link in with the teachers' centre and the Cuiditheoirs for help with the teaching of reading, and any resources and backup that they can give us is very, very welcome.

Reading is timetabled in each classroom, a certain period for reading. Of course reading overlaps into all other subjects, so they are constantly reading right through the other subjects as well. But a specific time is laid out for class reading and the development of language and increasing their vocabulary, and hopefully this will have an impact on their writing as well.

Assessment

What role does assessment play in teaching reading to children who struggle to learn to read?

- Formal assessment

- Diagnostic assessment

- Informal assessment

- Use of on-going assessment

Well, as I said, the MIST is run in SI in the second term so that any child who is having difficulties may be picked up and given that little bit of extra support before the end of SI. From first class through to sixth class we were running the Drumcondra test for a while in reading and then we changed over to the MICRA-T tests and we run that test each year in the month of May, and the results are then taken by the learning support teachers and they assess what level the children are at and where they need to be picked up. Sometimes we find children who can read quite well but their comprehension can be quite weak, and it is important that they can comprehend what they are reading because that will cross over into other subjects, particularly into maths problems, so it is very important that comprehension is not forgotten about. Also when the learning support teachers take the children out in September who are

under the tenth percentile, they will run further assessments on the children and try and make a diagnosis as to where their difficulties are, what area they are, and then they will draw up a little plan and work on that and try and bring the children up to the standard that is acceptable for their age.

On-going assessment – well the teachers will be assessing each week, each month, how the children are progressing and they work in tandem with the learning support teachers and they meet every few weeks, probably once a month, to plan how they will work together.

Role of Parents/Guardians

In your opinion, what role should parents/guardians play in supporting their children to learn to read?

How does the school encourage parents/guardians to support their children to learn to read?

The role of the parents is very important in terms of the paired reading and the shared reading, and, when the parents are coming in first, we meet with them and encourage them to make their environment print rich and book rich and I will encourage presents for children to be books, for example, Christmas – there is a rich variety of books out there now that there is no excuse. You do need the commitment from the parents and the support from the parents, it is vital.

Transfer of Learning

How are children encouraged to utilise their developing reading skills across the school?

- Connection between children's experience of the teaching of reading in learning support and in mainstream class

You need to make the connection and it is important that the children can see that it is not just a school activity; it is a whole key to life–learning. No matter what skills they take up in the future, be it academic or manual, reading is important and also that it can be a good leisure past time, but for any activity it is vitally important.

It is taken right across the curricular activities, a print rich environment, to make them conscious of it, and if we take them out on tours or outings, that we ourselves get them to read signs, read instructions, read the *instructions* step-by-step, understand what is expected of them through these instructions, and again through I suppose their own little essay writing, letter writing and drawing up menus and whatever they are doing with the different activities, that they are connecting this with the wider life, that it is a life skill – they are not just using it for today, that it is going to take them into old age.

Reading Interventions

Give an account of any reading interventions/initiatives currently running in the school.

We have shared reading initiatives with the parents.

Issues

Are there any other issues regarding the teaching of reading to children who struggle to learn to read in first class that you wish to highlight as Principal?

None that I have not mentioned before.

Reading Process

What is your understanding of your role in helping your child to learn to read?

We have a huge role, from day one when we realised that Mary was having difficulty we realised that we had a huge role; we reinforce work covered, complete worksheets, we read all the time and go over the phonic sounds. Now you can go over board and do too much, and it is important to stop when the child has had enough. We read books every night, I integrate reading skills and make it fun, we talk about the pictures not only about words.

We watch the level of the work that Mary is doing, for example, some of the work was too advanced for Mary and was frustrating her, so I contacted the teacher and she pulled back on the work and now Mary is still progressing but much happier. We do a lot of cutting out and pasting exercises at home.

We do a lot of reading at home. Mary is beginning to bring her reading skills into the outside world; she now asks what is written in posters, in the supermarket, and she is very aware of words in the world around her – and making good progress in this area.

We have joined the library and we used to go there every Saturday morning but Mary and her brother wanted to do other things on a Saturday morning, so we are giving it a break and we will go again in the new year.

We have great resources here at home, lots of books and puzzles and anything that will help Mary. Mary's brother helps her, I often hear him telling her to break up the word when they are reading at bedtime, saying that the word is not hard, it is just longer.

Collaboration with the School

Give an account of your involvement with the teachers and with the school regarding your child's reading?

- Role of assessment in teaching reading

- Planning of reading programmes

- Implementation of reading programmes

We have got a lot of help from when Mary was in playschool to now. She is socially very confident and has a lot of friends in school which I think is very important. That is my wish that we all promote and instill confidence in Mary regarding her reading and her speech. Reading is placed in a prominent place in our home, even if I am tired I still make the effort to do the reading with Mary.

The Teaching of Reading

How does the school support your child as (s)he learns to read?

How do you support your child as (s)he learns to read?

Mary is getting support from her class teachers and Ms. Sullivan and she is doing well. We support Mary by reading with her and helping her with her homework.

Issues

Are there any other issues regarding the teaching of reading to your child that you wish to highlight as a parent/guardian?

I cannot think of any, only that it is important that the homework that the teacher sets is not too hard for Mary.

HSCL Identity

Can you tell me about your career in schools to date with specific reference to the teaching of reading?

Role of HSCL

Can you tell me about your role as HSCL with reference to supporting children who struggle to learn to read in first class?

My role is to support parents around reading, literacy and numeracy are part of my agenda.

Role of Parents/Guardians

In your opinion, what role should parents/guardians play in supporting their children in learning to read?

How does the school encourage parents/guardians to support their children to learn to read?

The aim is to help parents to support their children with their homework. I set out to build their relationship with the school. I want to get them involved in the school and in helping their children. They have a very important role. I use my room as a centre that parents can drop in and spend time. Sometimes, we just have a cup of tea and a chat; other times, I organise activities - we are icing Christmas cakes at the moment.

Reading Interventions

Give an account of any reading interventions/initiatives currently running in the school.

This term, I organised a literacy initiative - *Super Readers* - for first class for eight weeks. I had three meetings with the parents and I showed them the video *The Road to Reading* (Mary Immaculate College) to show them good practice when reading with their children. Kate's mum was there, she is very involved with the school. Ben's mum was contacted but she did not attend. The library gave the school storybooks to help us and three books a week were sent home with the children. The parents were asked to read the books with the children. I was trying to make the parents realise the importance of their role. Next term it is going to be a maths initiative, *Maths For Fun*. I will encourage parents to play mathematical games with the children in the classroom and at home. I also hope to run classes for parents around upskilling them, focusing on their own literacy and ICT skills. I arranged for a story teller to come to the town library to tell a story for the children. I wanted to show the children the town library but the day was very wet, so the storyteller had to come to the school hall instead.

Issues

Are there any other issues regarding the teaching of reading to children who struggle to learn to read in first class that you wish to highlight as HSCL?

Just the difficulty in getting parents to attend meetings and get involved with the school.

Appendix 14: Thematic Analysis Conducted on Research Data

Braun and Clarke (2006) outline six phases of thematic analysis which the researcher found very helpful as she analysed her data. This analysis was a recursive process, where she constantly moved back and forth through the phases as necessary. In the first phase, she *familiarised herself with the data.* During the observation period of the research, she wrote up each observation schedule in order to transform the data into manageable word documents. The researcher transcribed the interviews as soon as it was possible after they had occurred, and she wrote initial notes on the documents that she examined. During transcription of interviews, she ensured to the best of her ability that a verbatim account of the interview was developed. All of this contributed to her knowledge of her data, she immersed herself in the data, reading and re-reading it, noting initial issues, ideas and comments in the margin of the documents as she read them.

The second phase involved *generating initial codes,* where the researcher developed initial codes from the data. Codes are defined as "the most basic segment, or element, of the raw data or information that can be assessed in a meaningful way regarding the phenomenon" (Boyatzis, 1998, p. 63). The use of codes enabled the researcher to organise her data into meaningful groups. This coding was done manually; the researcher used highlighters to indicate potential themes, she wrote notes on the margins of the text and she developed a key to highlight emerging patterns, for example, the use of withdrawal as the typical organisation of the observed support, the use of over-learning as a teaching method, an emphasis on skills instruction in the learning support setting. All the data extracts for the observation schedules, the interviews and the notes from the schools' policies and from teacher

planning documents were coded and collated together under the different codes to produce manageable material.

The next phase of analysis was what Braun and Clarke (2006) describe as *searching for themes*. This phase, which "re-focused the analysis at the broader level of themes rather than codes, involved sorting the codes into potential themes, and collating all the relevant coded extracts within the identified themes" (p. 89). For example, at one stage, the researcher considered three levels of themes as shown in Table A.14.1.

Table A.14.1: Proposed Themes, 31 October 2007.

Themes		
School level	**Class level (Mainstream and Learning Support)**	**Child level**
Planning	Planning	Engagement
Organisation of support	Use of assessment	Level of support received
Collaboration	Strategies/approaches used to teach reading	Risk taking
Connection	Areas/skills of reading focused on	Fear of failure
Level of support children receive	Types of learning (auditory/visual/kinaesthetic)	
	Classroom management/effective teaching	
	'Learning up' in multi-class setting	

The three levels proved problematic in that they resulted in repetition of data. The researcher continued to work with the codes, for example, the following codes were eventually collated under the theme, *child's engagement/disengagement with reading*: engagement with support; disengagement with support; risk taking; fear of failure; response to reading support; attitude to reading; things children don't like about

433

reading, and things children like about reading. Codes such as level-of-support and development-of-dependency-culture were merged.

Phase 4 of analysis, *reviewing themes*, involved the refinement of the themes that were developed to date. The researcher's aim during this phase was to ensure that data within themes cohered meaningfully, and that there were clear and identifiable distinctions between themes. She reviewed and refined the extracted coded data to ensure that it formed a coherent pattern. She also considered the validity of the individual themes in relation to the data set and whether the thematic map reflected the meanings that were representative for the data as a whole. When she was satisfied with the thematic map, she moved into phase 5, *defining and naming themes*. The aim of this phase was to identify and solidify the themes of the study by ensuring she captured the 'essence' of what the theme was about. Phase 6, *producing the report*, involved writing the dissertation so as to provide "a concise, coherent, logical, non-repetitive and interesting account of the story of the data" (Braun and Clarke, 2006, p.93).

Appendix 15: Tables of Timed Skills/Methods of Teaching Reading, Differentiated

for Each Child (School) and Type of Teacher

Table A.15.1 details the use of oral language activities for the children

(schools) and the types of teacher.

Table A.15.1: Observed Oral Language Teaching Activities by (i) Child (School) and (ii) Class Versus Learning Support/Resource Teacher,

Reported in Minutes (Total Time = 238 Minutes).

Oral Language Activities	Mary (Rois) CT	Mary (Rois) LS/RT	Ann (Eoin) CT	Ann (Eoin) LS/RT	Patrick (Eoin) CT	Patrick (Eoin) LS/RT	John (Naoise) CT	John (Naoise) LS/RT	Emma (Naoise) CT	Emma (Naoise) LS/RT	Kate (Ciarain) CT	Kate (Ciarain) LS/RT	Ben (Ciarain) CT	Ben (Ciarain) LS/RT	Total Time Minutes
Vocabulary Development		65 (27.3%)													65 (27.3%)
Receptive language		35 (14.7%)													35 (14.7%)
Expressive language		47 (19.7%)													47 (19.8%)
Listening skills	30 (12.6%)	50 (21.1%)		11 (4.6%)		11 (4.6%)									91 (38.2%)
Total time/minutes	30 (12.6%)	197 82.8%)		11 (4.6%)		11 (4.6%)									238 (100%)

Note 1: Ann and Patrick were observed receiving the same reading intervention in the mainstream classroom. They were also observed receiving the same reading intervention in the learning support setting.
Note 2: John and Emma should have received the same reading intervention in the mainstream classroom, except that Emma was absent for many of the sessions. They should also have received the same reading intervention in the learning support setting, but again Emma was absent for many of the sessions.
Note 3: Kate's and Ben's reading intervention differed for the learning support setting. However, they were observed receiving the same intervention in the mainstream classroom.
Note 4: Computation formula is (CT+LS/RT) for Mary + (CT+LS/RT) for either Ann or Patrick + (CT+LS/RT) for John + CT for either Kate or Ben + LS/RT for Kate + LS/RT for Ben.

The hierarchy of oral language teaching activities was *listening skills* (38.2%), *vocabulary development* (27.3%), *expressive language* (19.8%) and *receptive language* (14.7%). The learning support/resource teacher in Scoil Rois accounted for 82.8% of the total time spent in oral language teaching in the research schools, which was spread evenly over the four component teaching activities. Overall, oral language activities accounted for 4.7% of the total observational research time of 5118 minutes and they were observed in only two schools, Scoil Rois (95.4% of the total time of 238 minutes) and Scoil Eoin (4.6%).

Table A.15.2 details the observed pre-reading skills for the children (schools) and the types of teacher.

Table A.15.2: Observed Pre-Reading Skills by (i) Child (School) and (ii) Class Versus Learning Support/Resource Teacher, Reported in Minutes

(Total Time = 90 minutes).

Pre-Reading Skills	Mary (Rois) Teacher CT	Mary (Rois) LS/RT	Ann (Eoin) CT	Ann (Eoin) LS/RT	Patrick (Eoin) CT	Patrick (Eoin) LS/RT	John (Naoise) CT	John (Naoise) LS/RT	Emma (Naoise) CT	Emma (Naoise) LS/RT	Kate (Ciarain) CT	Kate (Ciarain) LS/RT	Ben (Ciarain) CT	Ben (Ciarain) LS/RT	Total Time Minutes
Visual perception		12 (13.3%)													12 (13.3%)
Auditory perception															
Motor co-ordination															
Familiarity with books	13 (14.4%)		5 (5.6%)		5 (5.6%)										18 (20.0%)
Knowledge of the alphabet		4 (4.6%)		10 (11.0)%		10 (11.0%)		31 (34.4%)		18 (20.0%)		9 (10.0%)		6 (6.7%)	60 (66.7%)
Total time/minutes	13 (14.4%)	16 (17.9%)	5 (5.6%)	10 (11.0%)	5 (5.6%)	10 (11.0%)		31 (34.4%)		18 (20.0%)		9 (10.0%)		6 (6.7%)	90 (100%)

Note 1: Ann and Patrick were observed receiving the same reading intervention in the mainstream classroom. They were also observed receiving the same reading intervention in the learning support setting.

Note 2: John and Emma should have received the same reading intervention in the mainstream classroom, except that Emma was absent for many of the sessions. They should also have received the same reading intervention in the learning support setting, but again Emma was absent for many of the sessions.

Note 3: Kate's and Ben's reading intervention differed for the learning support setting. However, they were observed receiving the same intervention in the mainstream classroom.

Note 4: Computation formula is (CT+LS/RT) for Mary + (CT+LS/RT) for either Ann or Patrick + (CT+LS/RT) for John + CT for either Kate or Ben + LS/RT for Kate + LS/RT for Ben.

Knowledge of alphabet was the preferred pre-reading skill of the learning support/resource teachers in three of the four schools at 66.7% of the total time of 90 minutes devoted to pre-reading skills. The preference for *familiarity with books* was 20.0% while *visual perception* accounted for 13.3%. The pre-reading skills involving *auditory perception* and *motor co-ordination* were not observed. While *familiarity with books* is favoured by the class teachers in two schools, the learning support/resource teachers in all four schools placed an emphasis on *knowledge of alphabet* in their teaching. The overall usage of pre-reading skills of 90 minutes, represents only 1.8% of the total observation research time of 5118 minutes.

Table A.15.3 details the phonological awareness skills that were observed for the children (schools) and types of teacher.

Table A.15.3: Observed Phonological Awareness Skills by (i) Child (School) and (ii) Class Versus Learning Support/Resource Teacher, Reported in Minutes (Total Time = 146 Minutes).

Phonological Awareness Skills	Mary (Rois) CT	Mary (Rois) LS/RT	Ann (Eoin) CT	Ann (Eoin) LS/RT	Patrick (Eoin) CT	Patrick (Eoin) LS/RT	John (Naoise) CT	John (Naoise) LS/RT	Emma (Naoise) CT	Emma (Naoise) LS/RT	Kate (Ciarain) CT	Kate (Ciarain) LS/RT	Ben (Ciarain) CT	Ben (Ciarain) LS/RT	Total Time Minutes
Syllabic awareness		21 (14.4%)													21 (14.4%)
Onset and rime			120 (82.2%)		120 (82.2%)		5 (3.4%)								125 (85.6%)
Total time/minutes		21 (14.4%)	120 (82.2%)		120 (82.2%)		5 (3.4%)								146 (100%)

Note 1: Ann and Patrick were observed receiving the same reading intervention in the mainstream classroom. They were also observed receiving the same reading intervention in the learning support setting.

Note 2: John and Emma should have received the same reading intervention in the mainstream classroom, except that Emma was absent for many of the sessions. They should also have received the same reading intervention in the learning support setting, but again Emma was absent for many of the sessions.

Note 3: Kate's and Ben's reading intervention differed for the learning support setting. However, they were observed receiving the same intervention in the mainstream classroom.

Note 4: Computation formula is (CT+LS/RT) for Mary + (CT+LS/RT) for either Ann or Patrick + (CT+LS/RT) for John + CT for either Kate or Ben + LS/RT for Kate + LS/RT for Ben.

Though *onset and rime* accounted for 85.6% of the total observed time in respect of phonological awareness, it was predominantly used by the class teacher in Scoil Eoin (82.2%). *Syllabic awareness* accounted for 14.4% of total time. The phonological awareness skills were observed for 146 minutes in three schools and they accounted for 2.9% of the overall research observation time of 5118 minutes.

The section on phonemic awareness in the OS was not used during observation. Likewise, the use of the alphabetic principle was not observed on its own in the schools and has been included in Table A.15.2, which deals with pre-reading skills.

Table A.15.4 details the use of phonics for the children (schools) and the types of teacher.

Table 15.4: Observed Use of Phonics by (i) Child (School) and (ii) Class Versus Learning Support/ Resource Teacher, Reported in Minutes (Total Time = 821 Minutes).

Phonic Skills	Mary (Rois) CT	Mary (Rois) LS/RT	Ann (Eoin) CT	Ann (Eoin) LS/RT	Patrick (Eoin) CT	Patrick (Eoin) LS/RT	John (Naoise) CT	John (Naoise) LS/RT	Emma (Naoise) CT	Emma (Naoise) LS/RT	Kate (Ciarain) CT	Kate (Ciarain) LS/RT	Ben (Ciarain) CT	Ben (Ciarain) LS/RT	Total Time Minutes
Teaching initial letter sounds															
Teaching final letter sounds															
Teaching long and short vowel sounds											140 (17.1%)		140 (17.1%)		140 (17.1%)
*Following a systematic phonic programme			210 (25.6%)	183 (22.2%)	210 (25.6%)	183 (22.2%)		184 (22.4%)		89 (10.8%)					577 (70.3%)
Phonics in isolation	35 (4.3%)						35 (4.3%)		35 (4.3%)						70 (8.5%)
Phonics in context												16 (1.9%)		18 (2.2%)	34 (4.1%)
Total time/minutes	35 (4.3%)		210 (25.6%)	183 (22.2%)	210 (25.6%)	183 (22.2%)	35 (4.3%)	184 (22.4%)	35 (4.3%)	89 (10.8%)	140 (17.1%)	16 (1.9%)	140 (17.1%)	18 (2.2%)	821 (100%)

Note 1: Ann and Patrick were observed receiving the same reading intervention in the mainstream classroom. They were also observed receiving the same reading intervention in the learning support setting.

Note 2: John and Emma should have received the same reading intervention in the mainstream classroom, except that Emma was absent for many of the sessions. They should also have received the same reading intervention in the learning support setting, but again Emma was absent for many of the sessions.

Note 3: Kate's and Ben's reading intervention differed for the learning support setting. However, they were observed receiving the same intervention in the mainstream classroom.

Note 4: Computation formula is (CT+LS/RT) for Mary + (CT+LS/RT) for either Ann or Patrick + (CT+LS/RT) for John + CT for either Kate or Ben + LS/RT for Kate + LS/RT for Ben.

*The systematic phonic programme being followed in Scoil Eoin was laid out in the school plan and focused on long and short vowel sounds. It used different commercial resources and materials selected by the teachers in the school. The systematic phonic programme being followed in Scoil Naoise was the Newell Literacy Programme.

Following a systematic phonic programme was the dominant method at 70.3% of the total time of 821 minutes devoted to teaching phonics, followed by *teaching long and short vowels* (17.1%), *phonics in isolation* (8.5%) and *phonics in context* (4.1%). Phonics was taught in all schools and the usage in Scoil Eoin reached 47.8% of the total time for teaching phonics. The class and learning support teachers in Scoil Eoin and the learning support teacher in Scoil Naoise followed a *systematic programme* in teaching phonic skills. The class teacher in Scoil Chiarain favoured the teaching of *long and short vowel sounds*. A lesser degree of emphasis was given to *phonics in isolation* (class teachers in Scoil Rois and Scoil Naoise) and to *phonics in context* (learning support teacher in Scoil Chiarain). The reported use of 821 minutes devoted to teaching phonics amounted to 16% of the total observation research time of 5118minutes.

Table A.15.5 details the use of word attack skills other than phonics in teaching reading for the children (schools) and types of teacher.

Table A.15.5: Observed Use of Word Attack Skills Other than Phonics by (i) Child (School) and (ii) Class Versus Learning Support/ Resource

Teacher, Reported in Minutes (Total Time = 18 Minutes).

Word Attack Skills Other than Phonics	Mary (Rois) CT	Mary (Rois) LS/RT	Ann (Eoin) CT	Ann (Eoin) LS/RT	Patrick (Eoin) CT	Patrick (Eoin) LS/RT	John (Naoise) CT	John (Naoise) LS/RT	Emma (Naoise) CT	Emma (Naoise) LS/RT	Kate (Ciarain) CT	Kate (Ciarain) LS/RT	Ben (Ciarain) CT	Ben (Ciarain) LS/RT	Total Time Minutes
Use of picture cues															
Use of contextual cues															
Use of structural analysis							8 (44.4%)							10 (55.6%)	18 (100%)
Total time/minutes							8 (44.4%)							10 (55.6%)	18 (100%)

Note 1: Ann and Patrick were observed receiving the same reading intervention in the mainstream classroom. They were also observed receiving the same reading intervention in the learning support setting.

Note 2: John and Emma should have received the same reading intervention in the mainstream classroom, except that Emma was absent for many of the sessions. They should also have received the same reading intervention in the learning support setting, but again Emma was absent for many of the sessions.

Note 3: Kate's and Ben's reading intervention differed for the learning support setting. However, they were observed receiving the same intervention in the mainstream classroom.

Note 4: Computation formula is (CT+LS/RT) for Mary + (CT+LS/RT) for either Ann or Patrick + (CT+LS/RT) for John + CT for either Kate or Ben + LS/RT for Kate + LS/RT for Ben.

The total time observed for word attack skills other than phonics could not be considered significant at 18 minutes: it amounted to 0.3% of the total research observation time of 5118 minutes and was only observed in two of the research schools.

Table A.15.6 details how sight vocabulary was used for the children (schools) by types of teacher.

Table A.15.6: Observed Emphasis on Sight Vocabulary by (i) Child (School) and (ii) Class Versus Learning Support/ Resource Teacher,

Reported in Minutes (Total Time = 563 Minutes).

Sight Vocabulary	Mary (Rois) CT	Mary (Rois) LS/RT	Ann (Eoin) CT	Ann (Eoin) LS/RT	Patrick (Eoin) CT	Patrick (Eoin) LS/RT	John (Naoise) CT	John (Naoise) LS/RT	Emma (Naoise) CT	Emma (Naoise) LS/RT	Kate (Ciarain) CT	Kate (Ciarain) LS/RT	Ben (Ciarain) CT	Ben (Ciarain) LS/RT	Total Time Minutes
Common sight words				54 (9.6%)		54 (9.6%)		3 (0.5%)			35 (6.2%)	28 (4.9%)	35 (6.2%)	31 (5.5%)	151 (26.8%)
Personal dictionary of important words/personal vocabulary lists															
Word families															
Concept driven vocabulary instruction															
Vocabulary from text							139 (24.7%)	217 (38.5%)	93 (16.5%)	101 (17.9%)	56 (9.9%)		56 (9.9%)		412 (73.2%)
Total time / minutes				54 (9.6%)		54 (9.6%)	139 (24.7%)	220 (39.1%)	93 (16.5%)	101 (17.9%)	91 (16.2%)	28 (4.9%)	91 (16.2%)	31 (5.5%)	563 (100%)

Note 1: Ann and Patrick were observed receiving the same reading intervention in the mainstream classroom. They were also observed receiving the same reading intervention in the learning support setting.

Note 2: John and Emma should have received the same reading intervention in the mainstream classroom, except that Emma was absent for many of the sessions. They should also have received the same reading intervention in the learning support setting, but again Emma was absent for many of the sessions.

Note 3: Kate's and Ben's reading intervention differed for the learning support setting. However, they were observed receiving the same intervention in the mainstream classroom.

Note 4: Computation formula is (CT+LS/RT) for Mary + (CT+LS/RT) for either Ann or Patrick + (CT+LS/RT) for John + CT for either Kate or Ben + LS/RT for Kate + LS/RT for Ben.

Vocabulary from text was used by teachers 73.2% of the total time of 563 minutes devoted to sight vocabulary, compared with 26.8% for use of *common sight words*. Three other methods for teaching sight vocabulary were not observed in reading instruction: *personal dictionary/vocabulary lists, word families* and *concept driven instruction*. The class and learning support/resource teachers in Scoil Naoise taught *vocabulary from text* up to 63.2% of the total time given to the method. There was an emphasis on *common sight words* by the learning support/resource teachers in Scoil Eoin and by the class and the learning support/resource teachers in Scoil Chiarain. The observed 563 minutes for sight vocabulary usage in three schools was 11% of the total research observation time of 5118 minutes.

Table A.15.7 details the use of practice in oral reading for the children (schools) by the types of teacher.

Table A.15.7: Observed Use of Practice in Oral Reading* by (i) Child (School) and (ii) Class Versus Learning Support/Resource Teacher, Reported in Minutes (Total Time = 1613 Minutes).

Practice in Oral Reading	Mary (Rois) CT	Mary (Rois) LS/RT	Ann (Eoin) CT	Ann (Eoin) LS/RT	Patrick (Eoin) CT	Patrick (Eoin) LS/RT	John (Naoise) CT	John (Naoise) LS/RT	Emma (Naoise) CT	Emma (Naoise) LS/RT	Kate (Ciarain) CT	Kate (Ciarain) LS/RT	Ben (Ciarain) CT	Ben (Ciarain) LS/RT	Total Time Minutes
Reading fluency with comprehension															
Provision of opportunity to read independently		242 (15.0%)		12 (0.7%)		12 (0.7%)		15 (0.9%)		15 (0.9%)	17 (1.1%)	25 (1.5%)	17 (1.1%)	13 (0.8%)	324 (20.1%)
Repeated reading															
Re-reading				17 (1.1%)		17 (1.1%)	5 (0.3%)		5 (0.3%)		38 (2.4%)	78 (4.8%)	38 (2.4%)	84 (5.2%)	222 (13.8%)
**Oral reading guided by the teacher	224 (13.9%)		197 (12.3%)	10 (0.6%)	197 (12.3%)	10 (0.6%)	226 (14.0%)	55 (3.4%)	116 (7.2%)	15 (0.9%)	126 (7.8%)	116 (7.2%)	126 (7.8%)	113 (7.0%)	1067 (66.1%)
Paired reading															
Total time/minutes	224 (13.9%)	242 (15.0%)	197 (12.3%)	39 (2.4%)	197 (12.3%)	39 (2.4%)	231 (14.3%)	70 (4.3%)	121 (7.5%)	30 (1.9%)	181 (11.2%)	219 (13.6%)	181 (11.2%)	210 (13.0%)	1613 (100%)

Note 1: Ann and Patrick were observed receiving the same reading intervention in the mainstream classroom. They were also observed receiving the same reading intervention in the learning support setting.

Note 2: John and Emma should have received the same reading intervention in the mainstream classroom, except that Emma was absent for many of the sessions. They should also have received the same reading intervention in the learning support setting, but again Emma was absent for many of the sessions.

Note 3: Kate's and Ben's reading intervention differed for the learning support setting. However, they were observed receiving the same intervention in the mainstream classroom

Note 4: Computation formula is (CT+LS/RT) for Mary + (CT+LS/RT) for either Ann or Patrick + (CT+LS/RT) for John + CT for either Kate or Ben + LS/RT for Kate + LS/RT for Ben.

* Practice in oral reading has replaced the OS term reading fluency, and **oral reading guided by the teacher has replaced the term guided oral reading.

There was a strong emphasis on promoting practice in oral reading across all the schools by the class and learning support/resource teachers. The dominant means for promoting practice in oral reading were *oral reading guided by the teacher* at 66.1% of the total time of 1613 minutes given to practice in oral reading, followed by *provision of opportunity to read independently* (20.1%) and *re-reading* (13.8%). Neither *reading fluency with comprehension, repeated reading* nor *paired reading* were observed in the schools. Mary's reading (Scoil Rois) was evenly balanced between *independent reading* (13.9%) in learning support and *oral reading guided by the teacher* (15%) in class. Anne and Patrick (Scoil Eoin) received *oral reading guided by the teacher* (12.3%) in class and *provision of opportunity to read independently, re-reading* and *oral reading guided by the teacher* (2.4%) in learning support. John (Scoil Naoise) received *oral reading guided by the teacher* from the class teacher (14%) and from the learning support teacher (3.4%). Emma was present for 7.2% and 0.9%, respectively, of this activity. *Oral reading guided by the teacher* teaching was more evenly balanced between the types of teachers in Scoil Chiarain: class (7.8%) and learning support (7.2%). Kate and Ben (Scoil Chiarain) were respectively afforded *re-reading* at 4.8% and 5.2% in learning support. The observed time for *practice in oral reading* of 1613 minutes amounted to 31.5% of the total research observation time of 5118 minutes.

Table A.15.8 details reading comprehension which was observed for the children (schools) according to the types of teacher.

Table A.15.8: Observed Reading Comprehension by (i) Child (School) and (ii) Class Versus Learning Support/Resource Teacher, Reported in Minutes (Total Time = 23 Minutes).

Reading Comprehension	Mary (Rois) CT	Mary (Rois) LS/RT	Ann (Eoin) CT	Ann (Eoin) LS/RT	Patrick (Eoin) CT	Patrick (Eoin) LS/RT	John (Naoise) CT	John (Naoise) LS/RT	Emma (Naoise) CT	Emma (Naoise) LS/RT	Kate (Ciarain) CT	Kate (Ciarain) LS/RT	Ben (Ciarain) CT	Ben (Ciarain) LS/RT	Total Time Minutes
Vocabulary development															
Developing thinking processes		11 (47.8%)													11 (47.8%)
Developing conceptual knowledge															
Comprehension monitoring			7 (30.4%)		7 (30.4%)										7 (30.4%)
Use of graphics/semantic organisers															
Question answering	5 (21.8%)														5 (21.8%)
Question generation															
Story structure															
Summarisation															
Literal comprehension															
Interpretation															
Critical comprehension															

Inferential comprehension																
Total time/minutes	5 (21.8%)	11 (47.8%)	7 (30.4%)		7 (30.4%)											23 (100%)

Note 1: Ann and Patrick were observed receiving the same reading intervention in the mainstream classroom. They were also observed receiving the same reading intervention in the learning support setting.

Note 2: John and Emma should have received the same reading intervention in the mainstream classroom, except that Emma was absent for many of the sessions. They should also have received the same reading intervention in the learning support setting, but again Emma was absent for many of the sessions.

Note 3: Kate's and Ben's reading intervention differed for the learning support setting. However, they were observed receiving the same intervention in the mainstream classroom.

Note 4: Computation formula is (CT+LS/RT) for Mary + (CT+LS/RT) for either Ann or Patrick + (CT+LS/RT) for John + CT for either Kate or Ben + LS/RT for Kate + LS/RT for Ben.

Only three reading comprehension component skills of a total of thirteen were observed in the schools: *developing thinking processes* (47.8% of the total time of 23 minutes), *comprehension monitoring* (30.4%) and *question answering* (21.8%). Reading comprehension was not observed for practical purposes in the research sessions. It accounted for 0.4% of the total research observation time of 5118 minutes and was observed in only two schools.

Table A.15.9 details the use of practice in writing in the observed sessions for the children (schools) by the types of teacher.

Table A.15.9: Observed Use of Practice in Writing* by (i) Child (School) and (ii) Class Versus Learning Support/Resource Teacher, Reported in Minutes (Total Time = 1606 Minutes).

Practice in writing	Mary (Rois) CT	Mary (Rois) LS/RT	Ann (Eoin) CT	Ann (Eoin) LS/RT	Patrick (Eoin) CT	Patrick (Eoin) LS/RT	John (Naoise) CT	John (Naoise) LS/RT	Emma (Naoise) CT	Emma (Naoise) LS/RT	Kate (Ciarain) CT	Kate (Ciarain) LS/RT	Ben (Ciarain) CT	Ben (Ciarain) LS/RT	Total Time Minutes
Constructed spelling as approximation															
Spelling as a window into phonic knowledge	8 (0.5%)										173 (10.8%)		173 (10.8%)		181 (11.3%)
Response to text in child's own words			6 (0.4%)		6 (0.4%)										6 (0.4%)
Completion of teacher-made /commercial worksheets/ workbooks	40 (2.5%)	5 (0.3%)	35 (2.2%)	300 (18.7%)	35 (2.2%)	300 (18.7%)	257 (16.0%)	125 (7.8%)	202 (12.6%)	80 (5.0%)					762 (47.4%)
Reading and writing integrated	50 (3.1%)	3 (0.2%)	20 (1.2%)	33 (2.1%)	20 (1.2%)	33 (2.1%)	205 (12.8%)	30 (1.9%)	99 (6.2%)	10 (0.6%)	115 (7.2%)	88 (5.5%)	115 (7.2%)	98 (6.1%)	642 (40.0%)
Letter formation							15 (0.9%)		7 (0.4%)						15 (0.9%)
Total time/minutes	98 (6.1%)	8 (0.5%)	61 (3.8%)	333 (20.7%)	61 (3.8%)	333 (20.7%)	462 (28.8%)	170 (10.6%)	301 (18.7%)	97 (6.0%)	288 (17.9%)	88 (5.5%)	288 (17.9%)	98 (6.1%)	1606 (100%)

Note 1: Ann and Patrick were observed receiving the same reading intervention in the mainstream classroom. They were also observed receiving the same reading intervention in the learning support setting.

Note 2: John and Emma should have received the same reading intervention in the mainstream classroom, except that Emma was absent for many of the sessions. They should also have received the same reading intervention in the learning support setting, but again Emma was absent for many of the sessions.

Note 3: Kate's and Ben's reading intervention differed for the learning support setting. However, they were observed receiving the same intervention in the mainstream classroom.

Note 4: Computation formula is (CT+LS/RT) for Mary + (CT+LS/RT) for either Ann or Patrick + (CT+LS/RT) for John + CT for either Kate or Ben + LS/RT for Kate + LS/RT for Ben.

* Practice in writing has replaced the OS term reading/writing connection

Practice in writing was dominated by *completion of teacher-made/commercial worksheets/workbooks* at 47.4% of the total time of 1606 minutes, *reading and writing integrated* (40.0%) and *spelling as a window into phonic knowledge* (11.3%). Mary (Scoil Rois) received instruction in *completion of teacher-made/commercial worksheets/workbooks* (2.5%) and *reading/writing integrated* (3.1%) in class. Ann and Patrick (Scoil Eoin) received instruction in *completion of teacher-made/commercial worksheets/workbooks* (18.7%) and in *reading/writing integrated* (2.1%) in learning support, compared to 2.2% and 1.2% for the respective methods in the classroom. John (Scoil Naoise) received instruction in *completion of teacher-made/commercial worksheets/workbooks* (16.0%) and *reading/writing integrated* (12.8%) in class, compared to 7.8% and 1.9% for the components in learning support. Emma was present for 12.6% and 6.2% of these activities, respectively, in class and for 5.0% and 0.6%, respectively, in learning support. Kate and Ben (Scoil Chiarain) received instruction in *spelling as a window into phonic knowledge* (10.8%) and in *reading/writing integrated* (7.2%) in class. They received 5.5% and 6.1%, respectively, for *reading/writing integrated* in learning support. The observed time for the use of *practice in writing* of 1606 minutes amounted to 31.4% of the total research observation time of 5118 minutes.

Appendix 16: Reading Profiles of (i) Mary (Scoil Rois), (ii) Ann (Scoil Eoin), (iii) John (Scoil Naoise), (iv) Emma (Scoil Naoise), (v) Kate (Scoil Chiarain) and (vi) Ben (Scoil Chiarain)

(i)*Profile of Mary's Reading Support/Intervention*

Introduction to Mary

Mary (Scoil Rois) was a friendly, smiling, pleasant child who appeared older than her age of seven. She had attended learning support for the past year, having been identified in senior infants as struggling with reading. The following assessment information was available on Mary's reading.

Table A.16.1: Mary's Assessment Profile (September, 2007)

Test	Result	Date of Testing
Schonell Reading Test (Newton & Thompson, 1982) (a reading test consisting of reading words in isolation)	Reading Age: 7y 3m Chronological Age (CA): 7y 0m	4/9/07
Dolch List (Dolch, 1948) (common sight words, for example, the, an...)	81/100 sight words known	4/9/07
Quest (Robertson et al., 1991) (a diagnostic reading kit)	Auditory Sequential memory test: 0/4 correct	4/9/07

Mary's reading on the Schonell Reading Test, where she was asked to read words in isolation, was found to be above her chronological age. She also knew eighty-one out of first one hundred common sight words on the Dolch List. The test results indicated that Mary's strength was in the area of sight vocabulary. However,

they did not indicate her reading comprehension levels. Mary did not perform well on the auditory memory subset of the Quest diagnostic kit, scoring zero out of four.

Mary's language was causing concern to both Ms. Sullivan (LS/RT) and Ms. Rooney (CT). As a result, she was referred for assessment by a speech and language therapist during the course of the observation period. The resultant report commented that her expressive and receptive language skills were depressed for her age level. The researcher also observed this.

> Picture sequence cards were used where Mary had to sequence the story and describe what she sees in the three pictures. Mary needs a lot of support in this activity. Her language is limited in that she has a restricted vocabulary and did not use any descriptive language at all. Teacher provided structure and running commentary/ narrative during this activity. In fact, teacher over supplied language and Mary sat back. (LS observation, SR, 25/09/07)

Mary was very positive in her class setting and interacted naturally with her peers in first class and the other classes in the room. Overtly, she did not appear to have any problems either with reading or language and she engaged with the curriculum alongside her peers. However, she had coping strategies that masked her reading and language difficulties. For example, she did not volunteer information unless directly asked. Nonetheless, she put her hand up to read aloud during class and to answer closed questions about passages she had read. She also engaged in a mothering and helper role in the classroom, helping the younger children whenever possible in an effort to distract attention from herself. This impacted on her engagement in some of the reading lessons. The researcher observed that

> Mary was engaged for some of the lesson; towards the end of the session she was distracted by the senior infants who were engaged in drawing, and while she continued working in the group she did not

interact or engage in the discussion occurring around her. (Class observation, SR, 16/10/07)

At the beginning of the observation period, the researcher judged Mary to be at Ehri's (1998) *full alphabetic phase* and that she was moving towards *consolidated alphabetic phase* by the end of observation period. Mary was observed to be well able to read the class reader, *Ginger Giraffe Moves House* (Folens, 2000). She tended to listen rather than participate or volunteer information during class discussions and in the learning support setting, she tended to sit back and to let the learning support/resource teacher do the majority of the talking.

Each child reads a sentence. Mary reading with class and is well able for reader. Comprehension questions ensued– *"What can we say about Ginger?"* (inferential question), and building on E's answer, Ms. Rooney asks, *"What is E talking about?"* Ms. Rooney encouraged children to use the picture to help answer the questions. There was a very rich detailed discussion about the story to date. Mary listened but did not participate in the discussion. (Class observation, SR, 9/10/07)

In fact, Mary tried to avoid discussions in the one-to-one withdrawal, for example, on a number of occasions she asked Ms. Sullivan whether she could read the supplementary reader straight away rather than discussing the story through the pictures first. It was observed that

Ms. Sullivan talks for most of session. Ms. Sullivan tends to ask questions or make statements and then answers them herself. Mary seems aware of this and knows she can just say *yes* or *no.* (LS observation, SR, 2/10/07)

Mary benefited from learning in a multi-class setting. It was evident in the multi-class setting that the children in the different classes in the classroom learned from the material being covered in the room with specific classes, that is, they

'learned up'. For example, the older children revised all the initial letter sounds and names when the class teacher was introducing them to the younger children and the younger children were exposed to material that was being taught to the older children. This was particularly evident during a session where the class teacher used a big book with the children in first class during a reading lesson and the younger children followed it with interest as they completed their own tasks. Veenman (1995) suggests that the multi-class teaching setting provides teachers with an opportunity to use teaching approaches and grouping strategies, including across-grade teaching, cross-grade tutoring and peer tutoring, that are associated with enhanced pupil achievement (Slavin, 1987; Gutiérrez & Slavin, 1992). For example, Mary was observed listening in while Ms. Rooney taught other classes.

> Later, the first class group went back to writing their news in their copies. Ms. Rooney introduced the letter *r* to the Junior Infants. Mary tuned in as the teacher modelled the sound r makes and the correct way to form the letter (learning up). (Class observation, SR, 9/10/07)

While her performance on the Schonell Reading Test indicated that sight vocabulary was a strength, Mary's sight words were observed to cause her difficulty at times, especially when words were visually similar.

> Mary substitutes common sight words when reading –these words are visually similar– *what* for *that*, *went* for *want*, *come* for *came*. I noticed this again in LS observation. (Class observation, SR, 16/10/07)

Mary's Classroom Support

The class teacher was observed supporting Mary in the area of oral language activities, in particular, listening skills. The use of circle time was employed where all four classes participated and completed games and activities such as *Simon says* and

saying rhymes and poems in unison. Practice in oral reading was focused on oral reading guided by the teacher where the class reader was emphasised. During the guided reading sessions, the teacher led the first class children as they read *Ginger Giraffe Moves House* She modelled reading, provided cues and words where necessary, and gave all the children, including Mary, an opportunity to read aloud individually.

> Each child in first class gets a chance to read and answer questions on what is read. Mary read her page very fluently. Ms. Rooney praised her and asked her to tell what happened on the page. Mary responded: *"When she went into fix it, she should have put it up and she didn't, the car-sun roof."* Ms. Rooney recapped on what Mary said and asked her what happened next, supplying the word *sunroof.* Mary replied: *"Car got all wet."* Ms. Rooney then praised Mary's reading and asked her if that had ever happened to her Mum's car. Mary said, *"No".* (Class observation, SR, 16/10/07)

Practice in writing was also focused on, that was reading/writing integrated, which included Mary writing the news after a class lesson where the children discussed what they would write and they provided sentences for Ms. Rooney. She then wrote them on the board, the children in first class read them in unison and individually and then they wrote the news in their copies. Completion of commercial workbooks was also observed. This included completing pages from *Treasury, Core Skills in English, Workbook A* (Folens, 2004), for example, phonic activities. Mary was required to fill in the initial letter blends, for example, *tr, dr* of words and spelling them as a window into phonic knowledge. Therefore, some emphasis was placed on phonics; this was on phonics in isolation based on workbook activity.

> The first class open their *Treasury, Core Skills in English, Workbook A* workbooks on page thirty. This page is about initial letter blends and the children have to ring the correct initial blend of the object pictured from a choice of two possible blends. Ms. Rooney asks the class what the word initial means and one child gives the initials of his name. Ms.

> Rooney asks the children what is the first object. She models the *tr* and *dr* sounds and the first class say the correct sound together – *tr tractor*. Each child gets a chance to complete a question orally and then the class all fill in the answer at the same time. Mary initially says *drum* for *trumpet* but she self-corrects. Ms Rooney models *tr* for *trumpet*, all the children say *trtrtrumpet*. Ms. Rooney gets the children to put the other (wrong) sound in front of the word to hear the nonsense word and says, *"Did anyone hear of a dridge, no it's a silly word"*. (Class observation, SR, 29/11/07)

There was a limited focus on reading comprehension, in this case question answering.

The researcher observed the following strategies being used to support Mary in the classroom. Ms. Rooney tended to state the purpose of the activity at the outset and she used modelling strategies when teaching. She used encouragement and corrective feedback to motivate Mary and she supported risk taking by encouraging Mary to decode words and to attempt to answer questions. Mary was given the opportunity to practise her reading skills during the reading lessons; she was asked to read passages from the class reader in front of her peers. Ms. Rooney used explicit teaching strategies involving clear explanations, for example, when she spoke about the class reader, she moved from the front to the back cover, pointing out the title of the book and the publisher (Class observation, SR, 18/09/07). The researcher observed mainly closed questions being asked, for example, recalling information. Some open questions were asked, where Mary was asked to give an opinion on events that occurred in the reader.

Generally, Mary was engaged and involved in her class reading lessons. She listened and attended the majority of the time. However, at times, she focused on events happening in other classes in the room. Ms Rooney's interactions with Mary during the reading lessons were positive. She accepted and built on Mary's ideas,

praised and encouraged her learning, and observed Mary as she read. Ms. Rooney helped Mary to generalise her learning. She provided factual information, she summarised main points and was inclusive in that the amount of questions that Mary was asked was on parity with her classmates. Observation by the teacher was the only assessment strategy that the researcher observed. Resources included the Magic Emerald reading series, *Up, Up And Away, Ginger Giraffe Moves House* and *The Broken Sleigh* (Folens), as well as use of workbooks, for example, *Treasury, Core Skills in English, Workbook A* (Folens), and classroom resources such as blackboard and copies.

Mary's Learning Support

Mary's observed learning support programme concentrated mainly on practice in oral reading where the focus was on giving Mary the opportunity to read independently, using stage five of *The Magic Key* series from the *Oxford Reading Tree* (ORT). Ms. Sullivan encouraged Mary to look through the pages of the story first and discuss what she thought might happen in the story. Mary did not enjoy this activity; she tried to avoid it and tended to let Ms. Sullivan do most of the talking. When Mary was reading aloud, Ms. Sullivan provided factual information for her regarding the story she was reading. In some sessions, Ms. Sullivan was observed supplying the unknown words for Mary with Mary making very little effort to decode, and in other sessions Mary read by herself.

> Mary read the story *Castle Adventure* for Ms. Sullivan who provided factual information for Mary during the discussion on the story. The emphasis was on Mary using the decoding skills she possesses and comprehending the story. She appeared to have no difficulty with this.

She was observed sounding out initial letter sounds to help her decode and focusing on the picture for ideas. However, she only reads the book in the session with the teacher and does not bring it home or share it with the class teacher. When Mary read by herself, she read quite fluently with some slight hesitations, which affected the smoothness of her reading. It was obvious she was decoding words internally. At times, Mary read alone and at other times Ms. Sullivan read with her. The teacher supplied any words that Mary could not read as they read together. The teacher used statements rather than questions during this session. (LS observation, SR, 25/09/07)

Mary and Ms. Sullivan talk about the story by looking at all the pictures. There is good use of pictures to get Mary to develop language and to infer about story observed. Ms. Sullivan relates the story to Mary's life as her bedroom has also being painted. A discussion about snooker occurred as a result of the snooker table in the story: Mary describes snooker saying, *"He hitted a red one and them two are playing and he has to hit one of them and he will get another shot"*. Mary and Ms. Sullivan read the story together and Ms. Sullivan supplies any words that Mary hesitates on. Mary does not use decoding skills as teacher supplies words straight away, not letting the flow of the reading to be interrupted, for example, *painted, ceiling, trap, spooky, dark, cellar*. Ms. Sullivan interjected commentary as Mary read. (LS observation, SR 9/10/07)

Oral language activities were also concentrated on with time spent on developing vocabulary, receptive language, expressive language and listening skills. This was done through the use of games, for example, describing pictures where Ms. Sullivan had to guess what the picture was about, listing objects: *In my gorgeous expensive handbag, I put in my lipstick (Ms. Sullivan), mobile phone (Mary), mascara (Ms. Sullivan), a drink (Mary), keys (Ms. Sullivan), a purse (Mary), tissues (Ms. Sullivan) and glasses (Mary)* and also *Chinese Whispers*. Ms. Sullivan tended to supply ideas of what Mary could add to the list.

Some focus was observed on phonological awareness, in particular, syllabic awareness, where Mary was asked to clap the syllables she heard in multisyllabic words, for example, *banana*. Pre-reading skills, that is, development of visual

perception and knowledge of the alphabet, were also focused on briefly. During some sessions, Mary focused on worksheets containing pictures which were not logical and had to tell Ms. Sullivan what was wrong. At other times, she had to state whether a list of facts which Ms. Sullivan read to her were true or false, for example, the sun is wet, the ice cream is hot.

Ms. Sullivan focused on developing thinking processes with reference to reading comprehension, for example, during the reading of *The Whatsit* (Hunt & Brychta, 2008)), Ms, Sullivan asked, *"Why is she saying stop to them? I think she realises what a whatsit is"*. There was a limited focus on practice in writing, in particular, the completion of commercial worksheets and reading and writing integrated, in the learning support sessions. They were based on the ORT and were each emphasised only once during the course of the observation period.

Ms. Sullivan used modelling strategies when teaching as well as encouragement and corrective feedback to motivate Mary. She praised Mary, for example, *good reading, well done*. Mary was provided with opportunity to practise reading skills. Questioning observed during the observation period in the learning support setting included open questions, for example, Mary was asked to explain something or to activate prior knowledge, as well as closed questions looking for recall of information.

Generally, Mary was very engaged during learning support sessions. However, at times, she indicated that she was frustrated, for example, she frequently asked Ms. Sullivan whether they could read book directly rather than looking through the pages

and discussing it first. Ms. Sullivan encouraged, praised and ensured that Mary experienced success. She repeated information and helped Mary to generalise her learning. She observed Mary at work. She provided factual information, explicitly stating the purpose of the activity/task. However, teacher talk was observed to dominate discussion during the sessions.

The organisation of the learning support was one-to-one withdrawal and the emphasis was on Mary using her developing reading skills, though Ms. Sullivan tended to supply words if Mary was unable to read them. Observation by the teacher was the only assessment strategy that the researcher observed. However, diagnostic assessment influenced the programme, for example, the emphasis that was observed on language and memory activities. Resources that were employed included the use of appropriate reading material, that is, high interest/low level narrative texts from the ORT and the use of some worksheets.

Summary of Mary's Reading Support/Intervention

The support which Mary received in the mainstream classroom and in the learning support setting is detailed in Table A.16.2. It is to be noted that the percentages are based on the overall observed time across learning support and mainstream classes.

Table A.16.2: Mary's Support: 24 Observations Amounting to 900 Minutes.

Mary's support	CT 12 sessions	LS/RT 12 sessions
Oral Language Activities	**30 mins (3.3%)***	**197 mins (21.9%)**
• Vocabulary		65 mins (7.2%)

development		
• Receptive language		35 mins (3.9%)
• Expressive language		47 mins (5.2%)
• Listening skills	30 mins (3.3%)	50 mins (5.6%)
Pre-Reading Skills	**13 mins (1.4%)**	**16 mins (1.8%)**
• Visual perception		12 mins (1.4%)
• Familiarity with books	13 mins (1.4%)	
• Knowledge of the alphabet		4 mins (0.4%)
Phonological Awareness		**21 mins (2.3%)**
• Syllabic awareness		21 mins (2.3%)
Phonics	**35 mins (3.9%)**	
• Phonics in isolation based on workbook activity	35 mins (3.9%)	
Practice in Oral Reading	**224 mins (24.9%)**	**242 mins (26.9%)**
• Provision of opportunity to read independently		242 mins (26.9%)
• Oral reading guided by the teacher	224 mins (24.9%)	
Reading Comprehension	**5 mins (0.6%)**	**11 mins (1.2%)**
• Developing thinking processes		11 mins (1.2%)
• Question answering	5 mins (0.6%)	
Practice in Writing	**98 mins (10.9%)**	**8 mins (0.9%)**
• Spelling as a window into phonic knowledge	8 mins (0.9%)	
• Completion of teacher-made/commercial worksheets/workbook	40 mins (4.4%)	5 mins (0.6%)
• Reading and writing integrated	50 mins (5.6%)	3 mins (0.3%)

*Numbers highlighted in bold indicate total time observed for the particular area

No connection between class teaching and learning support/resource teaching was observed other than informal conversations at break time when teachers discussed concerns relating to Mary's language.

The lack of emphasis on decoding skills that was observed during Mary's support was reflected in her comment relating to practice in oral reading.

> She (Ms. Sullivan) just does reading; she does no activities to help you read. (Mary, SR, 22/11/07)

When questioned further on how she decoded unknown words, Mary responded by saying:

> I say half of the word and then I say the other part of the word and then I put it all together. (Mary, SR, 22/11/07)

Mary's case exemplified the influence of strong home support on her reading. Her parent's interest and involvement in her reading underpinned her ability to cope successfully in the classroom. This was verified by the interview with Mary's Mum.

> We do a lot of reading at home. Mary is beginning to bring her reading skills into the outside world; she now asks what is written in posters, in the supermarket and she is very aware of words in the world around her – and making good progress in this area. We have joined the library and we used to go there every Saturday morning but Mary and her brother wanted to do other things on a Saturday morning, so we are giving it a break and we will go again in the new year. We have great resources here at home, lots of books and puzzles and anything that will help Mary. Mary's brother helps her, I often hear him telling her to break up the word when they are reading at bedtime, saying that the word is not hard, it is just longer. (Mary's Mum, 05/12/07)

In summary, Mary was observed receiving appropriate support when her assessment results and the teachers' expressed concern regarding her language were considered. However, her underlying skills base in the area of reading was not being developed and areas were identified where she needed support, for example, Mary's tendency to substitute similar sight words as well as her difficulty in the area of

language, which could impair her comprehension of text. It was difficult to quantify Mary's progress in reading during the reading observation period. Mary was able to read with her peers and participate in class lessons. The main emphasis of Mary's support that was observed was a concentration on language activities and practice in oral reading. The use of modelling strategies by both the class teacher and the learning support/resource teacher was observed as was the use of encouragement and corrective feedback. Mary was given plenty of opportunity to practise her reading skills. Mary tended to be attentive and engaged for most of the observed sessions.

(ii) *Profile of Ann's Reading Support/Intervention*

Introduction to Ann

Ann (Scoil Eoin) was a pleasant, petite child who was extremely responsive to both Ms. Boylan (CT) and Ms. White (LS/RT). She was particularly conscientious about her schoolwork and was observed to be engaged and attentive for the majority of the observation sessions. She was never observed being reprimanded by either of the teachers. Ann took learning to read very seriously and completed all tasks asked of her dutifully. She only put her hand up to answer questions when she was sure she knew the answer; otherwise, she focused on the teacher or the child who was answering the question asked.

> Ann engaged, she has her hand up all the time. (Class observation, SE, 22/10/07)

> Ann very engaged and attentive and following other children as they read… Ann encouraged to check over her work. (LS observation, SE, 14/11/07)

Table A.16.3 details the assessment information which was available for Ann.

Table A.16.3: Ann's Assessment Profile (October, 2007)

Test	Result	Date of Testing:
Middle Infants Screening Test (Hannavy, 1993a): *(Listening Skills: Cut off point: 10* *Letter Sounds: Cut off point: 20* *Written Vocabulary: Cut off*	• Listening Skills: 12 • Letter Sounds: 22 • Written Vocabulary: 6* (* teacher	4/3/07

point: At least six words required *Three Phoneme Words: Cut off point: 15* *Cut off point indicates that a child scoring below these scores needs extra support.*	indicated that it was possible that Ann wrote words from posters on classroom wall for this section of the test) • Three Phoneme Words: 24	
The Infant Reading Test (Educational Evaluation Enterprises, 1989): *(Scale 1-7: 1,2 – probable weakness; 3,4 - possible weakness, and 5,6,7 - mastery)*	• Reading Test 1 (Word Recognition): 5 • Reading Test 2 (Sentence Completion): 4 • Reading Test 3 (Reading Comprehension): 4	24/4/07
Non Reading Intelligence Test (NRIT) (Young, 1989)	Result: 101 *(This is in the average range)*	9/10/07

Ann's assessment results indicated that she was coping with reading in senior infants but her class teacher thought she would benefit from receiving further support in reading in order to cope with the increased demands that were made of readers in first class.

Ann's Classroom Support

The support Ann received in the mainstream class consisted of an emphasis on phonological awareness, in particular, onset and rime, concentrating on word families, for example, the *at* family. Ms. Boylan worked with the class in general and went through the alphabet to see if they could find words, and paid particular attention to vowels. Ann supplied *bat* (Class observation, SE, 10/10/07). Ms. Boylan favoured whole class teaching and prepared the class for the worksheet (*Look, Listen and Learn* workbook, Fallons, 2008) that was to follow. This worksheet was often completed in the afternoon. There was also an emphasis on phonics where a structured phonic

programme was followed, focusing on long and short vowels. This programme was laid out in the school policy on English.

Practice in oral reading, in particular, oral reading guided by the teacher in a whole class teaching setting, where all the children were on the same page of the class reader, was the preferred method.

Ms. Boylan introduces the story which is titled *The Snowman*. She asks which children have read it already and Ann puts her hand up and keeps it up to answer questions on the story. Ann answers question, *Why did Buster run away from Emma's dad?* A discussion ensues about making snowmen. Ms. Boylan draws a snowman from a child's description. Ann is captivated. Ms. Boylan asks the class to find the page that the story is on using the contents page, and to open book and put finger on first word, ready to read or listen and follow reading, saying, *"I am going to ask different children to read"*. Ann has her hand up to be asked to read. Ann is on task, using her finger to follow reading. They read the whole story which consists of seven pages. Ms. Boylan is very good at accepting and building on children's ideas. She encourages them to look at pictures in story and makes a link with geography lesson and art lesson from last week, talking about materials and the clothes in picture that children are wearing. There is a discussion around clothes you wear in cold weather. (Class observation, SE, 12/11/07)

Practice in writing was also focused on. Ann was observed responding to a text in her own words, completing workbooks/worksheets and integrating reading and writing.

Completion of a teacher-made worksheet based on the class reader, where the class had to answer questions on the story they had just read (*My friend Emma*). Ms. Boylan gives out worksheet. Ms. Boylan directs the children to look at question one. The children read the question in unison. Ms. Boylan tells the children to look at the big lines, saying, *"I have left a full line, so I want a full sentence for the answer."* One child is asked to give a full sentence and the class repeat this in unison. Ms. Boylan then repeats the sentence and directs the

children to look in their reader for spelling. Ms. Boylan goes through each question in turn with class, she reads the question with the class. One child is asked to give the answer. The class say the answer in unison. Ms. Boylan also provides the answer and repeats – at times she repeats it four times. When all the questions are prepared, Ms. Boylan revises them with class to make sure that they can read the questions and answer them. The children begin working and teacher monitors them. (Class observation, SE, 15/10/07)

A limited time was spent on pre-reading skills, that is, familiarity with books, and reading comprehension where the focus was on comprehension monitoring. They were built into the reading lessons.

The strategies that Ms. Boylan was observed using included stating the purpose of the activity at the outset and using modelling and scaffolding strategies when teaching. Encouragement and corrective feedback were used to motivate Ann who was supported in risk taking. Ann was provided with some opportunity to practise her reading skills. Ms. Boylan used explicit teaching strategies involving clear explanations; she revised, revisited and recapped on work that was covered previously.

Ms. Boylan asked mainly closed questions, recalling information. Some open questions were asked, where Ann was asked to give an opinion. Ms. Boylan's interaction with Ann during the observed lessons was positive and encouraging. She accepted, used and built on the Ann's ideas. Ms. Boylan repeated information and encouraged strategy use, for example, prompting Ann to sound out words. Observation by the teacher was the only assessment strategy that the researcher observed. Resources included the use of teacher-made worksheets and the reading programme, *Starways* (Fallons).

The support Ann received in the learning support setting was comprised of a strong emphasis on phonics with the emphasis placed on short vowel sounds. Ann was withdrawn for learning support in a small group of four and Ms. White developed a group programme designed according to the needs of the four children in the group. The four children were identified as having similar needs. The emphasis of this programme was on developing phonic skills. The phonic blending programme was used and supported by worksheets from *Alpha to Omega* programme (Hornsby & Pool, 1980), *Easy Learn* and *Prim Ed* books.

> Ms. White is following a systematic phonic programme. The children have three lines of letters written in their copies, for example,
>
> | | | | |
> |---|---|---|---|
> | *d* | *d* | *d* | *d* |
> | *e* | *i* | *o* | *a* |
> | *n t* | *g* | *p.* | |
>
> Ms. White said a sound from the top line, the children marked off the letter using a colour pencil. She then said a sound from the middle line, again the children marked it off; she then said a sound from the bottom line and again the children marked off the letter. They then wrote the word but did not say it aloud. Finally, one of the children was asked to say the word and had to put it in a sentence. The children wrote out six words using this method. Ms. White asked each child to say the words in turn; she also asked them to say words that rhymed with words, for example, *dip.*

An emphasis on spelling was observed at the end of the lesson when the children had to make the words using magnetic letters and the magnetic board. The teacher said a word from the list that the children had just written and they had to select the letters that made the word and form it on the magnetic board. Ann was asked to produce *doll*: while she produced the right word, she looked for reassurance as she placed the second *l* on the board. When producing *dig,* she hesitated on the *i*. The end of the activity was formulating a sentence that included one of the words.

Ann suggested *My mum has a dress*. This was the sentence that all the children wrote (LS observation, SE, 24.09.07).

The phonic instruction that Ann received was supported by reading/writing integration, with an emphasis on the completion of teacher-made/commercial worksheets/copywork and reading and writing integrated. There was also a focus on sight vocabulary observed in the teaching of common sight words.

> The children are progressing through the Dolch List, Wordlist Three, with ten words in each list. Ms. White praises Ann as she reads the words and builds on her knowledge: *"At, if it was cat what would I need?"; "As, if it had a h what would it be?"; "By/my, if that was a b, it would be by"*, and *"Tell me a word that rhymes with me – be, see."* Ms. White repeated word for Ann encouraging over learning and demonstrated breaking up words for her – *af ter*. Ms White supported Ann to take risks: Ann tries the word *down*, she is unsure and says *do*. Ms. White said, *"Yes, but look again."* Ann said *always* for *away*, Ms. White said, *"Well done, we know that word but look again"* and Ann said *away*. (LS observation, SE, 15/10/07)

Practice in oral reading was supported: Ann was provided the opportunity to read independently, to re-read and to participate in oral reading guided by the teacher. This reading was mainly of passages from worksheets, for example, *Madcap Lot* from *Alpha to Omega*. A limited amount of time was spent on oral language activities, that is, listening skills, and on pre-reading skills where knowledge of the alphabet was taught. The magnetic board was used to develop knowledge of the alphabet.

Ms. White used the following strategies when supporting Ann during the observed sessions. She stated the purpose of the activity at the outset and used modelling and scaffolding strategies when teaching. She used encouragement and

corrective feedback to motivate Ann and provided her the opportunity to practise reading skills, mainly in worksheets. Ms. White used explicit teaching strategies involving clear explanations and supported Ann in taking risks. She revised, revisited and recapped work that was covered in the lessons.

Ms. White asked mainly closed questions where Ann was asked to recall information or to decode words. Ms. White noted the children's difficulties as she observed them during sessions, but observation by the teacher was the only assessment strategy that the researcher observed. Resources included the use of *Phonic Blending* series and a supplementary reading programme, *Snap Dragon* (ORT), as well as the use of worksheets from *Easy Learn* and *Alpha to Omega*.

Summary of Ann's Reading Support/Intervention

The support which Ann received in the mainstream classroom and in the learning support setting is detailed in Table A.16.4. It is to be noted that the percentages are based on the overall observed time across learning support and mainstream classes.

Table A.16.4: Ann's Support: 41 Observations Amounting to 1,230 Minutes.

Ann's support	CT 20 sessions	LS/RT 21 sessions
Oral Language Activities • Listening skills		**11 mins (0.9%)*** 11 mins (0.9%)
Pre-Reading Skills • Familiarity with books • Knowledge of the alphabet	**5 mins (0.4%)** 5 mins (0.4%)	**10 mins (0.8%)** 10 mins (0.8%)

Phonological Awareness	120 mins (9.8%)	
• Onset and rime	120 mins (9.8%)	
Phonics	**210 mins (17.1%)**	**183 mins (14.9%)**
• Following a structured phonic programme, emphasis on long and short vowel sounds	210 mins (17.1%)	
• Following a structured phonic programme, emphasis on short vowel sounds		183 mins (14.9%)
Sight Vocabulary		**54 mins (4.4%)**
• Common sight words		54 mins (4.4%)
Practice in Oral Reading	**197 mins (16.0%)**	**39 mins (3.1%)**
• Oral reading guided by the teacher	197 mins (16.0%)	10 mins (0.7%)
• Provision of opportunity to read independently		12 mins (1.0%)
• Re-reading		17 mins (1.4%)
Reading Comprehension	**7 mins (0.6%)**	
• Comprehension monitoring	7 mins (0.6%)	
Practice in Writing	**61 mins (5.0%)**	**333 mins (27.0%)**
• Response to text in child's own words	6 mins (0.5%)	
• Completion of teacher-made/commercial worksheets/workbooks	35 mins (2.8%)	300 mins (24.3%)
• Reading and writing integrated	20 mins (1.7%)	33 mins (2.7%)

*Numbers highlighted in bold indicate total time observed for the particular area

The support that Ann received enabled her to build on the word decoding skills that she acquired from tuition in phonological awareness, phonics, sight vocabulary and practice in oral reading. Practice in oral reading was supported by an emphasis on developing the connection between reading and writing. Ann was observed to gain confidence steadily, especially with regard to decoding consonant-vowel-consonant (cvc) words. At the beginning of the observation period, the

researcher judged Ann to be at the *partial alphabetic phase* (Ehri, 1998) and that she

was moving towards the *full alphabetic phase* by the end of observation period.

While both Ms. White and Ms. Boylan emphasised short vowel sounds, they

used different approaches to teach them. There was no formal connection between the

work of the learning support teacher and the class teacher. However, Ms. Boylan was

kept informed by Ms. White of Ann's progress, usually during break times. Neither

teacher was fully aware what the other teacher was covering during a particular week,

and, therefore, they were not able to support each other's work in a more effective

way.

Introduction to John

John was a friendly boy whose immaturity had affected his progress in learning to read. Both his infant teachers found that he was very babyish in their classes and that this hindered his progress (Ms. Joyce, 24/11/07). John thrived on praise and experiencing success, but failure set him back and he stopped concentrating and listening when this occurred. During observation, it was noted that John was determined to complete the workbook activities that his classmates were doing in the mainstream class, even though he could not read the words on the page. John used strategies such as copying from his neighbour and asking the teacher what went in a particular space as a means of ensuring that his page of the workbook was filled in, even if it was done incorrectly. John flourished in the small group environment of the learning support room, but seemed to struggle in the mainstream classroom.

Table A.16.5 details the assessment information which was available for John.

Table A.16.5: John's Assessment Profile (October, 2007)

Test	Result	Date of Testing:
Schonell Reading Test (Newton & Thompson, 1982)	Reading age: 6.00 C.A.: 6.7	5/9/07
Schonell Spelling Test (Newton & Thompson, 1982)	John did not score	5/9/07

Aston Index (Newton & Thompson, 1982)	• Test 8 (Visual Discrimination): 2/10 • Test 5 (Grapheme/Phoneme Correspondence): John did not know the letter sounds *i e g n q r v u y x w*. John did not know the lower case letter names *f i q j u* or the upper case letter names *F G Q U*	5/9/07
Dolch List (Dolch, 1948) **(First 12 words)**	4/12 (John knew *a and he I*)	9/10/07

The researcher observed that John had difficulty segmenting and pronouncing words, for example, *cinema*. His knowledge of the alphabet was assessed as poor according to the Aston Index and he equated reading with knowing the letters of the alphabet. The following statement, though incoherent, expresses this.

> For if you remember in your head you will know all of the letters: you know all the letters off; if you keep reading you will know all the letters. (John, SN, 26/11/07)

John's assessment results would indicate that his range of sight vocabulary was poor. However, he was beginning to talk himself through activities and he was well able to ensure that he could hear and see what was going on.

> John began the session fully engaged. He told the teacher that he could not see the whiteboard, the teacher moved him so that he could see it. (Class observation, SN, 2/10/07)

John made considerable progress during the observation period. Though this was not reflected in the informal assessment that was administered by his learning support teacher, using a sight vocabulary checklist, it was acknowledged by the class and learning support/resource teachers and by his mother.

And they do, you can see now from September to now how they have blossomed. I can notice it in the classroom. (Ms. Adams, CT, SN, 26/11/07)

Progress was observed in terms of higher confidence, increase in interest and ability to remain on task as well as a marked improvement in knowledge of the alphabet and ability to decode cvc words.

Each child took a turn and sounded out the nonsense words, for example, *mit, jap, fam*. John was very good at this and is well able to sound. When John finished work before others, he sat reading his work in the copy. I am observing a different child from the child I observed in early October; he is blossoming in the small group situation. (LS observation, SN, 7/11/07)

John's Classroom Support

The support John received in the mainstream class consisted of an emphasis on practice in oral reading, in particular, oral reading with guidance from the teacher where all the children were on the same page of the class reader.

Ms. Adams reads the page first with the class following words with their fingers – Emma follows with finger but John does not. Ms. Adams then asks the children to find today's word in the book which is *very*. John has his hand up that he has found it but the researcher observed that when Ms. Adams moves around the class she has to help him find it. Emma had found word by herself. Both children are distracted at this point in the lesson. Ms. Adams shows her awareness of the needs of John and Emma in this reading session. She walks around the class and stops and helps the two children at least three times during session. When I asked her about this at the end of the session, during informal discussion, she revealed that the class was probably too hard for John and Emma. (Class observation, SN, 17/10/07)

Sight vocabulary was also developed, especially vocabulary from the class reader.

> Ms. Adams revises vocabulary from the class reader: *hairy, green, big, loud, Aargh,* saying that *"these can be used to describe Spooky Monster"*. The words are shown to class using flashcards and individual children tell Ms. Adams the word, who then repeats the word before moving on to the next word. Neither John nor Emma put up their hands except for the word *big* which they know from their phonic work in learning support. However, both are paying attention. (Class observation, SN, 17/10/07)

Practice in writing was also focused on. John was observed completing workbooks/worksheets and integrating reading and writing.

> *The red squirrel has soft fur. It is light brown. His tail is as long as his body. It keeps him warm and helps him jump from tree to tree...The squirrel sleeps for most of the winter. Sometimes, he wakes up to eat.* (Treasury: Core Skills in English, Folens, 2004) Ms. Adams tells class what they are going to do during lesson. The class discuss title of story and one child is asked to read the first line of text. The class then read the first line in unison; Emma reads but John does not. Ms. Adams then reads each line and the class read each line in unison after her. The passage is far too difficult for either John or Emma. Both switched off and disengaged during lesson. The children then answer yes/no questions based on passage. Ms. Adams asks different children to read the statements, she repeats them and the children fill in the correct answer. Each statement is done one by one. The teacher goes over the statements with John as the class fill in the answer. John determined to complete the page with the other children. (Class observation, SN, 3/10/07)

A limited amount of time was spent on phonological awareness, that is, onset and rime:

> Ms. Adams tells the class they are going to look at the *all* family, saying, *"Can anyone think of a word that rhymes with ball?"* and she models the word *ball.* Ms. Adams observed and generalised on learning and repeated information. She encouraged thinking through the use of open questions, *"Can anyone think of a word that rhymes with — ?"* The class developed a list of words: *ball call fall tall wall*

mall which Ms. Adams wrote on the whiteboard. The word *mall* was explained by one of the class. John did not say anything during this activity. (Class observation, 3/10/07)

Some attention was given to word attack skills other than phonics, that is, use of structural analysis.

Ms. Adams provided an example of adding '*ing*' to words and asked the children to suggest some. The class compiled a list which the teacher wrote on the whiteboard.

Ring   ringing
Call   calling
Fall   falling
Talk   talking
Walk   walking

John tuned in for the words *fall falling* and then tuned out again, playing with pencil. Ms. Adams asked John what the word *walk* was – he was unable to answer; after a brief pause, she moved on to another child. John was concerned about something in his schoolbag under the table which turned out to be a conker. Ms. Adams told him not to worry about his schoolbag and to concentrate. John tuned in for a minute and then tuned out again. He began to play with the pencil and showed his copy to his neighbour. He got plenty of non-teaching attention from teacher. (Class observation, SN, 25/09/07)

A lot of the written activities assigned during the observed sessions were too difficult for John's level of reading and he used strategies, for example, copying from his neighbour, to complete them.

The strategies that Ms. Adams was observed using included stating the purpose of the activity at the outset and using modelling and scaffolding strategies when teaching. Corrective feedback was used to motivate John. Ms Adams revised, revisited and recapped on work that was covered previously. John's engagement and involvement were haphazard. He did not remain on task for any length of time and he only focused when his interest was caught or he was sure he knew the answer.

Though Ms. Adams was aware of his tendency to loose concentration, she did not succeed in engaging him for many of the observed lessons.

Ms. Adams asked mainly closed questions, recalling information. She was observed praising John and she repeated information and demonstrated strategies. Towards the end of the observation period, Ms. Adams was observed providing John with a high level of support in the form of differentiated worksheets and a greater level of support than that provided for the majority of the class. Unfortunately, this resulted in him becoming over dependent on her and he did not attempt activities unless she was at hand to direct him.

An emphasis on developing reading skills was observed in the mainstream classroom. Observation by the teacher was the only assessment strategy that the researcher observed. Resources included the use of *Sunny Street Friends* reader and commercial workbooks, *Treasury, Core Skills in English, Workbook A* (Folens), and teacher-made worksheets. Classroom resources included the whiteboard and teacher-made resources. Commercial flashcards of sight vocabulary from *Sunny Street Friends* were also used.

John's Learning Support

The help John received in the learning support setting was comprised of a strong emphasis on phonics, with the emphasis placed on initial letter names and sounds and on short vowel sounds. Ms. Joyce followed the Newell Literacy

Programme (Newell, 2004) which is a structured step-by-step approach to developing children's knowledge of the sounds and letters of the alphabet.

> The skills taught were letter names and letter sounds, including initial letter sounds and short vowel sounds. The phonic skills were taught in isolation. Ms. Joyce began by stating the purpose of the activity, which was to learn new sounds. She then introduced new letter sounds, one after another, *j k*. She showed the children the letter on a flashcard and modelled the name and the sound, *j says 'ju' as in jam*. The children repeated the sentence and they discussed the word *jam*. John worked in the group and was engaged; this continued for the rest of the lesson. The teacher then sounded the letter and the children took turns finding the letter she had sounded out. The children then had to find words using the flashcards, for example, the word *at*. John was well able for this task. Ms. Joyce's interaction was positive; she praised and encouraged him throughout the lesson. (LS observation, SN, 25/09/07)

The development of a sight vocabulary was also focused on, in particular vocabulary from the *Fuzzbuzz* programme (Harris, 1984) and from the class reader.

> Ms. Joyce introduced the new words *an, stop,* using flashcards. The children moved back to centre table. This movement appears to keep John on track; he needs to be active and the changing of position gave him a release. When teaching new words the teacher introduces the word, she puts the word in a sentence and makes a story about it. As she says the word, she emphasises the initial sound. She also makes associations that may help the children remember the word, "*Stop says the policeman.*" Ms. Joyce then revised the sight vocabulary from *Fuzzbuzz* learned to date, again using flashcards. The children then individually went through the words with Ms. Joyce. John did not listen while the other two children in the group said the words. (LS observation, SN, 2/10/07)

The reading programme was supported by an emphasis on the completion of teacher-made and commercial worksheets/copywork, again based on the *Fuzzbuzz* programme.

When John finished saying the vocabulary for Ms. Joyce, she gave him a worksheet to complete. The worksheet was quite easy, based on *Fuzzbuzz* vocabulary which John had just read. John needed Ms. Joyce's support to fill in the worksheet. Ms. Joyce went through the instructions on the worksheet with the children individually. John had to be encouraged to concentrate. Ms. Joyce observed while he filled in the worksheet and stepped in where necessary, generalising information. She had very high expectations and she would not accept work that she felt was not up to the right standard. She rubbed out incorrect work and got John to do it again. The children do not have to self-correct because she steps in. Ms. Joyce noticed that John's letter formation was wrong, he is starting his letters in the wrong place. She modelled the correct way to form *o* and *p* and she encouraged John to write them correctly. John needed constant monitoring or he switched off. (LS observation, SN, 3/10/07)

A small amount of time was spent on letter formation.

Letter formation concentrated on *b k l*. Ms. Joyce had observed the children in the group making them incorrectly when the class was last observed by the researcher. Ms. Joyce is very organised, the children's copies are ready and ruled appropriately with letters written in. Ms. Joyce showed the children how to make the letter, when it was necessary saying the rhyme associated with the letter as they worked, for example, *"making letter b starting at the top line, make the first line down and then go up a little and make a small belly."* Corrective feedback was also observed: *"I am not very happy, you did not start at the line as I said"* ... Later on: *"Well done John, so much better than the last one I saw."* (LS observation, SN, 9/10/07)

Practice in oral reading was also supported; John was provided the opportunity to participate in oral reading guided by the teacher and to read independently. Ms Joyce asked him to read pages from the first book in the *Fuzzbuzz* series, *The Black Box* (Harris, 1978), when he knew all the vocabulary.

John is asked to read the whole of the first *Fuzzbuzz* book, *The Black Box*. He read somewhat fluently but he got stuck on *black, stop, goes* and *crack*. Ms. Joyce encouraged him to make the sound to match the letter. Ms. Joyce checked the *Fuzzbuzz* words using the flashcards and John could recognise words on the flashcards that he could not read in the text. (LS observation, SN, 20/11/07)

Some time was spent on pre-reading skills, where knowledge of the alphabet was taught using flashcards and the Newell Literacy Programme.

Ms. Joyce used the following strategies when supporting John during the observed sessions. She stated the purpose of the activity at the outset and used modelling and scaffolding strategies when teaching. She used encouragement and corrective feedback to motivate, and provided the opportunity for John to practise reading skills, mainly in worksheets. She praised John regularly for work successfully completed, saying, *"You are a star;" "Well done;" "That was magic."* John responded to this praise by greater engagement with the activity.

Ms. Joyce used explicit teaching strategies involving clear explanations and supported John in taking risks. She revised, revisited and recapped on work that was covered in the lessons. She used games to reinforce learning, for example, *I spy*. Ms. Joyce generalised vocabulary for John by using words in different contexts, for example, she repeated sounds and words, made associations between words and stories/actions and demonstrated sentences using the words. She emphasised over-learning.

Ms. Joyce asked mainly closed questions where John was asked to identify letters or words or to decode words. Ms. Joyce ensured that John was engaged and attentive and that he remained on task during lessons. She ensured that he experienced success and this helped to improve and maintain John's concentration. She regularly changed activity to keep John motivated and provided him with a high level of

support. While the main emphasis was on developing phonic decoding skills, both auditory and visual learning modes were used.

Ms. Joyce developed a group programme according to the needs of the children in the group, which were assessed to be similar. Formal and informal assessment influenced the development of the group programme. Ms. Joyce noted the children's difficulties as she observed them during sessions and she recorded their progress in her weekly notes. The notes then informed her planning of the next week's work. Ms. Joyce recognised that John was making greater progress than the other two children in the group and she indicated that she would reorganise the group after Christmas.

> Ms. Joyce assessed John on the sight words from his class reader on the 12/11/07 and he scored 20/30 words. Ms. Joyce said, in discussion, that she will reorganise her groups after Christmas and place John in a group where work progresses faster. (LS observation, SN, 14/11/07)

Resources included the use of a systematic phonic programme, the *Newell Literacy Programme* (Newell, 2004*)*, as well as the reading programme, *Fuzzbuzz, Level 1, The Black Box*. They were supported by commercial workbooks and flashcards of sight vocabulary from *Fuzzbuzz* programme, and classroom resources, for example, whiteboard.

Some connection was observed between John's learning support and his classroom support. Ms. Joyce provided homework based on her learning support programme for use in the classroom and at home. She also prepared the vocabulary from the class reader with the group when she realised how much they were

struggling with this reader in the classroom. At the beginning of the observation period, the researcher judged John to be at the *pre-alphabetic phase* (Ehri, 1998) and that he was moving to *partial alphabetic phase* towards the end of observation. John's support in terms of developing knowledge of the alphabet, sight vocabulary and phonic decoding skills helped the development of his reading skills. However, the researcher believes he would have benefited from further input in terms of phonological awareness.

Summary of John's Support

The support which John received in the mainstream classroom and in the learning support setting is detailed in Table A.16.6. It is to be noted that the percentages are based on the overall observed time across learning support and mainstream classes.

Table A.16.6: John's Support: 43 Observations Amounting to 1,555 Minutes.

John's support	CT 21 sessions	LS/RT 22 sessions
Pre-Reading Skills • Knowledge of the alphabet		**31 mins (2.0%)*** 31 mins (2.0%)
Phonological Awareness • Onset and rime	**5 mins (0.3%)** 5 mins (0.3%)	
Phonics • Phonics in isolation based on a workbook activity on digraphs • Following a structured phonic programme, The Newell Literacy Programme, teaching initial names and sounds, short vowel	**35 mins (2.3%)** 35 mins (2.3%)	**184 mins (11.9%)** 184 mins (11.9%)

sounds and cvc words		
Word Attack Skills Other than Phonics • Use of structural analysis	**8 mins (0.5%)** 8 mins (0.5%)	
Sight Vocabulary • Vocabulary from text • Common sight words	**139 mins (8.9%)** 139 mins (8.9%)	**220 mins (14.1%)** 217 mins (14.0%) 3 mins (0.1%)
Practice in Oral Reading • Oral reading guided by the teacher • Provision of opportunity to read independently • Re-reading	**231 mins (14.9%)** 226 mins (14.6%) 5 mins (0.3%)	**70 mins (4.5%)** 55 mins (3.5%) 15 mins (1.0%)
Practice in Writing • Completion of teacher-made/commercial worksheets/workbooks • Reading and writing integrated • Letter formation	**462 mins (29.7%)** 257 mins (16.5%) 205 mins (13.2%)	**170 mins (10.9%)** 125 mins (8.0%) 30 mins (1.9%) 15 mins (1.0%)

*Numbers highlighted in bold indicate total time observed for the particular area

John, however, was supported in differing ways in the classroom and in the learning support setting and there was insufficient connection between them. Ms. Joyce concentrated on building up his phonic knowledge by using a structured scheme. John progressed slowly through this scheme in the learning support setting where over-learning, revising and recapping were very evident. The pace was much quicker in the classroom and the level of material more advanced. In fact, many of the observed lessons were too difficult for John. However, as the observation period progressed, Ms. Adams was observed differentiating the workbook activities and she developed simpler exercises for the children who attended learning support. She also began to move the children to one central table where she was able to concentrate on

them while the other children in the class worked independently. This enabled John

cope to a greater degree with the material being taught in the classroom.

Introduction to Emma

Emma was a pleasant, bubbly, smiley girl whose difficulties regarding reading were attributed partly to her chronic absenteeism from school (Ms Joyce, SN, 24/11/07). She missed fifty school days in senior infants and had missed twenty-five days of school in first class by the time the observation ended on 14 December, 2007. The principal of the school commented on the issue of absenteeism, referring specifically to Emma.

> Now, of course, school attendance will have an impact on children's reading and we find that the children who are poor school attenders are the children who struggle with reading. That is a big issue in the school with one or two children in particular. (P, SN, 7/12/07)

Table A.16.7 details the assessment information which was available for Emma.

Table A.16.7: Emma's Assessment Profile (October, 2007)

Test	Result	Date of Testing:
Schonell Reading Test (Newton & Thompson, 1982)	Reading age: 6.00 (No words known) C.A.: 6.11	5/9/07
Schonell Spelling Test (Newton & Thompson, 1982)	Spelling Age – None available (Emma could not spell any words; however, she did get the initial letter sounds correct)	5/9/07
Aston Index (Newton & Thompson, 1982)	• Test 8 (Visual Discrimination): 6/10 • Test 5 (Grapheme/Phoneme Correspondence): Emma did not know the letter sounds *g u y w*. Emma did not know the lower case letter names *c d i b e h o q j u*	5/9/07

	z or the upper case letter names C ZSFTGQUHJ	
Dolch List (Dolch, 1948) **(First 12 words)**	5/12 (Emma knew *a and he 1 in*)	9/10/07

Emma's assessment results indicated that her pre-reading baseline was poor, for example, her sight vocabulary would appear to be limited. However, she performed well on the Visual Discrimination test of the Aston Index and her results on Test Five indicated that her knowledge of the letter sounds was better than her knowledge of the letter names.

When Emma was at school, she participated in class activities and she thrived in the small group situation in the learning support room. As Emma is a very articulate child, the gaps in her knowledge were not obvious at first glance, but over the observation period they became very apparent. For example, she did not know all the letter names of the alphabet and her lack of sight vocabulary hindered her attempts to read class and learning support texts. Emma tended to try to avoid attention in the mainstream classroom, especially when the level of work was beyond her. She was very skilful at not drawing attention to herself and could sit unnoticed for a considerable length of time doing nothing.

Emma blends in and quietly tunes in and out of the lesson, unnoticed by teacher. However, discussion with teacher showed that the teacher is aware of this. (Class observation, SN, 10/10/07)

It is to be noted that Emma received the same support as John in the mainstream classroom and similarly in the learning support setting. Emma was expected to fit into the reading programme whether she had been absent or not for a few days. Ms. Joyce concentrated on developing Emma's (and John's) baseline

reading skills and only introduced text when the children had mastered the sight vocabulary. On the other hand, Ms. Adams was concerned with completing the first class curriculum and worked through the class reader. This reader was too difficult for Emma. In the latter part of the observation period, Ms. Adams differentiated the worksheets/workbook activities for the children in the class who were attending learning support. However, her main concern continued to be completing the class reader with the majority of the class.

Emma's Classroom Support

The support Emma received in the mainstream class consisted of an emphasis on practice in oral reading, in particular, oral reading guided by the teacher, where all the children were on the same page of the class reader. Sight vocabulary, especially vocabulary from the class reader, was also developed.

> Ms. Adams set the scene after getting children's attention. She uses questions to do this, these questions were closed, literal questions of recall: *What has happened, Who was going... Did they do anything while....* Some language development was observed, *"Can anyone give me another word for yummy?"* One child said *"scrumptious"* which Ms. Adams praised saying, *"That is a good word."* Ms. Adams revised sight vocabulary from class reader using flashcards. Firstly she revised vocabulary covered previously and then focused on today's word – *they.* The children put their hands up to say the word and were asked to put word *they* into sentences. Ms. Adams modelled making sentences as well as supplying words; she prompted the children where it was necessary, for example, *I am late I must _____ (hurry).* The children then revised the pages of the reader that were covered in the previous lesson by reading pages individually out loud for the class. Emma is not asked to read. Ms. Adams introduced the new pages of the reader and the children read these in unison out loud. Ms. Adams questioned the class, testing literal comprehension of reading. (Class observation, SN, 12/10/07)

Practice in writing was also focused on. Emma was observed completing workbooks/worksheets and integrating reading and writing. Similar to John, a lot of the written activities being completed during the observed sessions were too difficult for Emma's level of reading. However, her strategy was to sit and wait quietly until the teacher was correcting the activity on the whiteboard and she then completed the workbook activity.

> The class had to make a birthday card for Sam, a character in the class reader. This activity was based on a page of the *Sunny Street* workbook that accompanied the class reader. It began with a discussion around birthday cards. Open questions were observed. Emma was eager to contribute and had her hand up. She persisted in keeping her hand up even though she was not asked to contribute by Ms. Adams. Ms. Adams told class that they are going to make cards for Sam and she asked them what they might write on the card. She wrote the children's ideas on the whiteboard. The whiteboard became very cluttered as the sentences from the earlier part of the lesson are still written up. Emma has difficulty negotiating the information on the whiteboard. Emma does not complete the task. (Class observation, SN, 2/10/07)

Ms. Adams employed the strategy of stating the purpose of the activity at the outset and she used modelling strategies when teaching. Encouragement and corrective feedback were used to motivate Emma. Ms Adams revised, revisited and recapped on work that was covered previously. Emma appeared to be attentive for many of the lessons, though she sat quietly doing nothing for some of them.

Ms. Adams asked mainly closed questions, recalling information. Ms. Adams accepted and used Emma's ideas on the occasions that she contributed to the class discussion. Ms. Adams provided factual information. Towards the end of the observation period, Ms. Adams was providing Emma with a high level of support, which was a greater level than that provided for the majority of the class.

Unfortunately, this resulted in Emma becoming over dependent on Ms. Adam's help and she sat and waited for her to come and to help her in the different activities.

An emphasis on developing reading skills was observed in the mainstream classroom. Observation by the teacher was the only assessment strategy that the researcher observed. Resources included the use of reading programme, Sunny Street, *Sunny Street Friends* reader (Dowling, Herron & Kelly, 2000a) and flashcards of sight words, as well as commercial workbooks, *Treasury, Core Skills in English, Workbook A* (Folens, 2004). Classroom resources included the whiteboard and teacher-made resources.

Emma's Learning Support

The support Emma received in the learning support setting was comprised of a strong focus on phonics, with the emphasis placed on initial letter names and sounds and on short vowel sounds.

> Ms. Joyce showed the letters *a m h t I id k b* to the group and laid the flashcards out on the table for the children. The children said the name of each letter and its sound in unison, for example, *k says k as in kite.* Ms. Joyce asked the children to find words, for example, "*Kit, Emma, find me kit*". Emma selects the letters correctly and Ms. Joyce asked her to get her magic pointer (finger) and to sound each letter and to put the letter sounds together to get the word. Teacher modelled the word, emphasising the sound that Emma pointed to. Emma was also asked to find *fit*. She picked *f*, Ms. Joyce told her it was a good start and encouraged her to select middle and end sound. Ms. Joyce prompted her by associating the story with the word, "*I bought a pair of shoes and they did not fit.*" (LS observation, SN, 9/10/07)

The development of a sight vocabulary was also focused on, in particular, vocabulary from the *Fuzzbuzz* programme (Harris, 1984) and the class reader.

> Ms. Joyce began the activity by stating what they were going to do and she encouraged strategy use, for example, making association, that is, stories about the words and sounding out the letters, saying, *"Watch the letters, they talk to you"*. She also associated actions with words. Questions were generally closed, *"Can you read the word for me?"* The *Fuzzbuzz* vocabulary taught included *goes, egg, the, this, stop, and, jumps, draw, up, box, black, colour, under, buzz, is, write* and *crack*. The three children in the group said the words in unison and they were encouraged to tell a story or to make actions associated with the word, for example, *"Emma, put the ball under the table."* Ms. Joyce revised the words that caused difficulty for the children, *crack, egg, the, I* and *goes*. Emma was asked to put these words into a story and to make a sentence using the flashcards, and she read the sentence/story, *the egg goes crack*. Ms. Joyce then played a game, *I spy with my little eye a word that begins with...*for example, she sounded out the letter *e*. Emma supplied egg. Ms. Joyce took away a word and the children had to identify which word was removed. (Class observation, SN, 09/10/07)

The development of sight vocabulary was supported by practice in writing with an emphasis on the completion of teacher-made commercial worksheets/copy work, based on the *Fuzzbuzz* programme.

> Ms. Joyce explained what children had to do to complete the worksheet and encouraged strategy use, for example, *"When you are stuck on a word, do the sounds."* She gave the children a photocopy of a page from the *Fuzzbuzz* workbook based on the two new words they had just covered, *he* and *down*. Ms. Joyce explicitly explained what the children had to do. The children worked away and Ms. Joyce praised Emma's writing, saying, *"Look at those lovely tall letters sitting on the line."* (LS observation, SN, 21/11/07)

A small amount of time was spent on letter formation.

> Ms. Joyce showed how to form letters *t* and *f*. The children used copies where the teacher had prepared the pages for them. She encouraged

children and they knew that she expected good work from them. She stated what the children had to do and she provided strategy instruction as well as demonstrating the letters, for example, saying, *"Don't forget Mr f's dicky bow"*. While children completed the page of work in their copies, the teacher began to hear the children individually read the phonic worksheet. (LS observation, SN, 10/10/07)

Practice in oral reading was also supported: Emma was provided the opportunity to participate in oral reading guided by the teacher and to read independently.

> While the other two boys worked away on the worksheet, Ms. Joyce asked Emma to read the entire first book from the *Fuzzbuzz* scheme, *The Black Box*. Emma needed a lot of prompts from Ms. Joyce to read correctly but Ms. Joyce praised her for her efforts. Emma stuck on the word *this*, the teacher noted the word that Emma was stuck on. Emma's reading is very laboured; the level of difficulty of the class reader is far greater and this begs the question of how is she managing the class reader. Ms. Joyce uses corrective feedback to prompt Emma, *"No, don't tell me a fairy story, you are only guessing; do the sounds."* (LS observation, SN, 21/11/07)

Ms. Joyce used the following strategies when supporting Emma during the observed sessions. She stated the purpose of the activity at the outset and she used modelling and scaffolding strategies when teaching. She used encouragement and corrective feedback to motivate Emma and she provided the opportunity for her to practise her developing reading skills, usually in worksheets. Ms. Joyce used explicit teaching strategies that involved clear explanations and she supported Emma in taking risks. She revised, revisited and recapped on work that was covered in the lessons. Ms. Joyce generalised vocabulary for Emma by using words in different contexts and she emphasised over-learning. Emma was withdrawn with John in a group of three and Ms. Joyce developed a group programme to meet the needs of the children in the group, which were assessed to be similar.

Ms. Joyce asked mainly closed questions where Emma was asked to identify letters or words or to decode words. Ms. Joyce ensured that Emma was engaged and attentive and that she remained on task during lessons. She ensured that Emma experienced success.

Ms. Joyce noted Emma's difficulties as she observed them during sessions and she recorded her progress in her weekly notes. The notes then informed her planning of the next week's work. Formal assessment also influenced the development of the group programme. Resources included the use of a systematic phonic programme, the *Newell Literacy Programme* (Newell, 2004), as well as the use of the reading programme, *Fuzzbuzz*, Level 1, *The Black Box* (Harris, 1978). They were supported by the use of commercial workbooks and flashcards from *Fuzzbuzz* programme, and by classroom resources, for example, a whiteboard.

Summary of Emma's Support

The support which Emma received in the mainstream classroom and in the learning support setting is detailed in TableA.16.8. It is to be noted that the percentages are based on the overall observed time across learning support and mainstream classes.

Table A.16.8: Emma's Support: 24 Observations Amounting to 885 Minutes.

Emma's support	CT 13 sessions	LS/RT 11 sessions
Pre-Reading Skills • Knowledge of the alphabet		**18 mins (2.0%)*** 18 mins (2.0%)
Phonics • Phonics in isolation based on a workbook activity on digraphs • Following a structured phonic programme, The Newell Literacy Programme, teaching initial names and sounds, short vowel sounds and cvc words	**35 mins (4.0%)** 35 mins (4.0%)	**89 mins (10.1%)** 89 mins (10.1%)
Sight Vocabulary • Vocabulary from text	**93 mins (10.5%)** 93 mins (10.5%)	**101 mins (11.3%)** 101 mins (11.3%)
Practice in Oral Reading • Oral reading guided by the teacher • Provision of opportunity to read independently • Re-reading	**121 mins (13.7%)** 116 mins (13.1%) 5 mins (0.6%)	**30 mins (3.4%)** 15 mins (1.7%) 15 mins (1.7%)
Practice in Writing • Completion of teacher-made/commercial worksheets/workbooks • Reading and writing integrated • Letter formation	**301 mins (34.0%)** 202 mins (22.8%) 99 mins (11.2%)	**97 mins (11.0%)** 80 mins (9.1%) 10 mins (1.1%) 7 mins (0.8%)

*Numbers highlighted in bold indicate total time observed for the particular area

It is difficult to comment on Emma's progress as she was absent for a large number of the observations, eight of the twenty-one class observations and eleven of the twenty-two learning support observations.

Emma finds it difficult to sound out the individual letter sounds and combine them to make a cvc word. She needed a lot of support from

the teacher. The teacher bends down to Emma's level and models sounding the words, facing her directly. (LS observation, SN, 7/11/07)

Emma assessed at end of this session and scored 17/21 words on a checklist of the vocabulary from her class reader. They are the words from the last story that the class has finished and moved on from. Emma needs a lot of help from teacher to read the list; she does not know many of the words as automatic sight words and she needs to sound them out, or to be prompted by teacher reminding her of action/story /association. (LS observation, SN, 14/11/07)

At the beginning of the observation period, the researcher judged Emma to be at the *pre-alphabetic phase* (Ehri, 1998), and that she was moving towards *partial alphabetic phase* by the end of observation period.

Introduction to Kate

Kate was a pleasant, reserved, slightly serious child who participated fully at all times in both mainstream and RR lessons. The RR intervention was fully supported by her parents who completed the homework with her every night. Kate was quite independent. She never needed to be reminded that it was time to go to RR; rather, she would slip out of the class quietly with her folder and go to Ms. Murphy's room. During mainstream classroom observations, it was noted that Kate did not like to be distracted by the children beside her when she was listening to her teacher; she would tell them crossly to be quiet.

Kate's assessment results prior to the RR intervention are detailed in Table A.16.9.

Table A.16.9: Kate's Assessment Profile (October, 2007).

Test	Result	Date of Testing
Concepts About Print (Clay 2002)	Test score 16/24 Stanine group 5	12/09/07
Letter Identification Test (Clay 2002)	46/54 letters known. Confusions include *Y/U, w/y.* Unknown letters include *W, Q*	12/09/07
Duncan Word Identification Test (Clay 2002)	11/23 words known. Stanine group 4	12/09/07
British Abilities Scale Word Reading Test (Nfer Nelson, 1996)	Ability score 53 Word reading age 5:4 C.A: 6.0	12/09/07
Writing Vocabulary Observation Test (Clay, 2002)	Test score 14 Stanine group 4	12/09/07
Hearing and Recording Sounds in Words (Dictation task) (Clay 2002)	Test score 30 Stanine group 6	12/09/07

Kate was reading level three *PM* books at the beginning of the observation and had reached level fourteen by the end. She was expected to reach level twenty *PM* books by the end of week twenty of the RR intervention in January, 2008. At the beginning of the observation period, the researcher judged Kate to be at the *pre-alphabetic phase* (Ehri, 1998) and that she was moving towards the *full alphabetic phase* by the end of the observation period.

Kate's Classroom Support

The support Kate received in the mainstream classroom consisted of an emphasis on phonics where long and short vowels sounds were taught. The teacher taught them explicitly by using the whiteboard and by getting the children to find examples of the words that contained the particular vowel sound in their class reader. Sight vocabulary was developed, in particular, common sight words, and also the vocabulary from the class reader.

> Ms. Whelan revised the vocabulary from the class reader taught to date, using flashcards. She set up activity, ensuring that all the children including Kate were listening attentively before she began. She observed children as they went through words and she praised them for their efforts. Ms. Whelan and the children said the words from the flashcards displayed in room. Ms. Whelan introduced the new words, *friends, whole, dinosaur* and *matter*. She referred to *friends* as it was in the *Ginger Giraffe* story. Ms. Whelan explicitly taught the words, explaining what the words meant and getting the children to put words in a sentence. Kate put up her hand often but was not asked a word. (Class observation, SC, 22/11/07)

Practice in oral reading was focused on with the main emphasis placed on oral reading guided by the teacher, but some time was spent on re-reading and providing Kate with the opportunity to read independently.

Ms. Whelan set the scene of the page that the class were going to read. She asked questions about the picture on the page that the children had read for homework and she gave the children time to answer. Kate had her hand up for every question. Ms. Whelan told the children to get their *magnetic finger, which sticks to page, ready,* and she directed them to drag their finger, following the child who was reading. One child read a line at a time and Ms. Whelan thanked the child for reading and praised them. Kate followed the other children as they read and was well able to pick up directly where other child finished. Kate read fluently, *"There was water on it."* Ms. Whelan had to prompt her with the initial sound of *w* to decode *water.* The new pages introduced were pages fourteen and fifteen. The children read in unison with teacher, who demonstrated and modelled reading for them. Kate read clearly with class. Then, the children read the sentences on their own. The children were picked randomly. Kate was asked to read, *her umbrella went inside out.* The teacher supplied the word *her.* Kate played with her earring after she was asked to read. (Class observation, SC, 11/10/07)

Practice in writing was also emphasised.

The children choose a sentence from the page that they have just read to write in their copies and to draw a picture of it when finished. If they were finished this, they were told they could pick another sentence. The class choose the sentence together. Ms. Whelan explained the activity again when copies were distributed. She went around the class and helped individual children, spending time with Kate. Ms. Whelan praised Kate's pictures and she provided stickers for good work which Kate earned. (Class observation, SC, 8/11/07)

Particular reference was placed on developing spelling as a window into phonic knowledge and encouraging Kate to respond to text in her own words.

The children have completed a spelling worksheet for homework. They learn four cvc words a night starting Monday and they practise each word three times on a worksheet at home, for example,

    Not   _____   _____   _____
    Got   _____   _____   _____ ...

This week, the words on Monday all ended with *ot,* on Tuesday with *og,* Wednesday with *op* and on Thursday, the words ended with *ob* and *od.*

Ms. Whelan set up the spelling test. Firstly, she revised how the children learn their spellings by explaining the strategy: *"We read the word, we look at the word, then we cover the word and we write the word and then, finally, we check the word. We sound out the word if we are not sure"*. She used encouragement and corrective feedback, she demonstrated strategy by covering words as individual children spelt them and she modelled sounding out the words. Resources included a flipchart.

Ms. Whelan goes over spelling as practice for the test. Kate has her hand up and she is asked to spell *not*. She said the word, looked at it, then Ms. Whelan covered the word and Kate spelt it and then checked to see if she is right. She got it right and she was delighted; she beamed at others in her group. Ms. Whelan revised all the spellings from the week, and recapped on the spelling strategy by regularly sounding out, looking, saying, covering, spelling and checking. The class went through sixteen words and Kate remained intent on lesson.

Ms. Whelan gave out spelling copies. Kate got her copy ready. The teacher dictated sentences and reminded the children how they do their spelling test. Ms. Whelan said the sentences on her own and the children listened, then the children and the teacher said the sentence together. Finally, the children began to write the sentence and the teacher repeated the sentence three times slowly.

The first sentence was *The dog is in the fog.* Kate was fine until she reached the word *in*, she asked another child at the table how to spell it and the other child showed her his copy. Kate then kept going; she sounded *fog* out to herself. The children were given plenty of time to write the sentence. The next sentence was *It is not hot.* Kate listened, said the sentence with the teacher and began to write. She sounded out *it* and *is* and got stuck on *not*. Ms. Whelan said the word for her, modelling the sounds for her and emphasising them. Kate is one of the first to close her copy to signal that she is finished. (Class observation, SC, 9/11/07)

The strategies used by Ms. Whelan included stating the purpose of the activity at the outset, the use of modelling and scaffolding strategies when teaching and using encouragement and corrective feedback to motivate Kate. Ms. Whelan supported Kate in risk taking and she provided her with the opportunity to practise her reading skills. Explicit teaching strategies that involved clear explanations were used in the course of her teaching. Ms. Whelan revised, revisited and recapped on the work that she covered in previous classes and in the lesson.

Kate was asked mostly closed questions, recalling information. However, some open questions were asked, where Kate was asked to give an opinion. Kate was attentive and engaged the majority of the time. Ms. Whelan was encouraging, praising and she ensured that Kate experienced success. She accepted, used and built on Kate's ideas. She helped Kate to generalise her learning and she repeated information where it was necessary. Ms. Whelan encouraged Kate to use the strategies that she had been taught, for example, to summarise main points. The teacher demonstrated strategies and she provided factual information and strategy instruction. Kate was observed used the chunking strategy taught in the RR intervention when reading in the mainstream classroom.

Observation by the teacher was the only assessment strategy that the researcher observed. Resources that were used in supporting Kate included the use of a reading programme, the Magic Emerald reading series, *Ginger Giraffe Moves House* and *The Broken Sleigh* (Folens, 2000), and the use of worksheets that were developed by teacher. Classroom resources included the blackboard, copies and commercial flashcards.

Kate's Learning Support

The support Kate received in the one-to-one RR intervention programme included an emphasis on developing practice in oral reading, with attention paid to oral reading guided by the teacher, re-reading and providing Kate with the opportunity to read independently.

Ms. Murphy praised Kate as she read the three readers that she had for homework. The teacher stated to Kate that the reason for reading the books was to see how well she read. Strategies that were used by Ms. Murphy included giving time for Kate to decode unknown words before supplying the word, providing opportunity for Kate to practise her reading skills and using assessment to monitor the reading, that is, the use of a running record. New books were then introduced. Ms. Murphy demonstrated reading to Kate by reading the first line of the first new book. All the other pages in the book followed the same sentence format, so Kate was able to read them. The teacher supplied words where it was necessary and she read the story to Kate. Ms. Murphy and Kate prepared three small readers for Kate to read with her parents at home that evening. (LS observation, SC, 2/10/07)

Other reading skills were focused on within the context of the texts that Kate was reading, for example, knowledge of the alphabet, phonics and sight vocabulary. The connection between reading and writing was also established with Kate writing a story/sentence during every session, and revising and sequencing them at home with her mother.

Ms. Murphy asked Kate to read the story she had read with her mum last evening, which was *One of my teeth fell out.* Ms. Murphy then asked Kate to think up of ideas for a new story and prompted her to build on yesterday's story. The teacher gave Kate a new copy for the class and told her that she was going to write today and not to worry about mistakes because the teacher had magic sticking plasters for them, which were labels to cover the mistakes.

Kate's story was *One night I was sleeping in my bed and I woke up and I got ten euro.* Kate wrote *One not I was,* Ms. Murphy said *"Very good try, what does its sound say? Not, yes, that sounds like night; don't worry we will use magic plasters and I will help you write night."* Ms. Murphy demonstrated writing the words that Kate could not sound out or spell, for example, *one,* on the practice sheet. They wrote the word *was* by Ms. Murphy sounding out *w,* Kate wrote *w,* Ms. Murphy sounded out *a,* Kate wrote *a* and completed the word. Kate then wrote *was* on the practice page and then transferred it into her copy. For *sleeping,* Kate wrote *sleping.* Ms. Murphy emphasised *long ee* sound for Kate, saying, *"What will we add to this?"* Kate supplied second *e.* Ms. Murphy directed Kate to look at end of word, saying, *"Yes that sounds like ing".* Ms. Murphy emphasised the *ing* and Kate wrote it. For *bed,* Kate sounded out the word and said after she had

written the word bed, that *"it looks like a bed"*. As time was running out, Ms. Murphy suggested that they finish writing there and Kate said that they needed to put in a full stop. (LS observation, SC, 9/10/07)

Ms. Murphy used modelling and scaffolding strategies when teaching. She used encouragement and corrective feedback to motivate Kate as well as explicit teaching strategies that involved clear explanations. Kate was supported to take risks during the sessions. An element of revising, revisiting and recapping on skills that were previously taught was intrinsic to the sessions. Ms. Murphy was observed developing individual programmes that were designed according to the Kate's needs, based on the RR approach.

The researcher observed very little questioning. The observed questions consisted of questions such as *What did you think of the book?* or *Did you like it?* Kate was attentive and engaged the majority of the time. Kate sometimes became very tired by the end of the RR session.

Ms. Murphy's interaction with Kate was encouraging and praising, she accepted and built on Kate's ideas. Information was repeated where it was necessary and Kate was supported in generalising her learning. Ms. Murphy demonstrated and encouraged use of strategy as well as providing factual information and strategy instruction.

A strong emphasis on the use of assessment to influence teaching and learning was observed as part of the support that Kate received in the RR intervention. Ms. Murphy observed, watched and listened to Kate reading. She completed running

records of Kate's reading and conducted miscue analysis. They informed the next day's RR lesson.

Resources used to support Kate during this intervention included the use of appropriate reading material: high interest/low level narrative texts. The *PM* Scheme was used with Kate during observed sessions. Classroom resources were also used, for example, whiteboard, magnetic letters, sand tray and blackboard. The resources assisted Kate to learn in a multi-sensory manner, for example, by tracing words in the sand.

Summary of Kate's Reading Support/Intervention

The support which Kate received in the mainstream classroom and the learning support setting is detailed in Table A.16.10. It is to be noted that the percentages are based on the overall observed time across learning support and mainstream classes.

Table A.16.10: Kate's Support: 25 Observations Amounting to 1060 Minutes.

Kate's support	CT 16 sessions	LS/RT 9 sessions
Pre-Reading Skills • Knowledge of the alphabet		**9 mins (0.8%)*** 9 mins (0.8%)
Phonics • Phonics in isolation, teaching long and short vowel sounds • Phonics in context, based on text Kate was reading	**140 mins (13.2%)** 140 mins (13.2%)	**16 mins (1.5%)** 16 mins (1.5%)

Sight Vocabulary	**91 mins (8.6%)**	**28 mins (2.6%)**
• Vocabulary from text	56 mins (5.3%)	
• Common sight words	35 mins (3.3%)	28 mins (2.6%)
Practice in Oral Reading	**181 mins (17.1%)**	**219 mins (20.7%)**
• Oral reading guided by the teacher	126 mins (11.9%)	116 mins (10.9%)
• Provision of opportunity to read independently	17 mins (1.6%)	25 mins (2.4%)
• Re-reading	38 mins (3.6%)	78 mins (7.4%)
Practice in Writing	**288 mins (27.2%)**	**88 mins (8.3%)**
• Spelling as a window into phonic knowledge	173 mins (16.4%)	
• Reading and writing integrated	115 mins (10.8%)	88 mins (8.3%)

*Numbers highlighted in bold indicate total time observed for the particular area

Some connection was observed between the support that Kate received in the mainstream classroom and in the learning support setting. Ms. Murphy informed Ms. Whelan about the comments that she would be making to parents during the parent /teacher meeting and she kept her informed about the reading level that the child was at. Phonics, developing sight vocabulary, practice in oral reading and the connection between reading and writing were emphasised in the support that Kate received in both the learning support and mainstream classroom settings. The importance of assessment and the importance of incorporating the assessment knowledge into planning the child's programme were observed in the RR programme in the learning support setting.

Introduction to Ben

Ben was a friendly, open child who engaged with his teachers. Ben's mum supported the RR programme and read with him in the evening as requested by Ms. Murphy. Ben listened well in class and participated in the different lessons. However, it was observed that Ben was not a risk taker and seemed to have a fear of failure; he never put his hand up in class or attempted tasks unless he was certain that he knew the answer and then this confidence was apparent in his expression.

> Ben looking around – he has finished sentence and now he is encouraged to draw a giraffe by his teacher. However, he does not attempt to start the picture. The researcher observes as he discusses the picture with neighbour and talks about hiccups. Finally, she realised what he was doing; he had negotiated with his neighbour to draw the giraffe for him and was waiting for him to finish his own picture. Ironically, the teacher was observed praising Ben for this picture three times. Ben never said that he did not draw it and the teacher did not hear the other child claiming it. This is the second time that Ben's reliance on this particular child has been observed. (Class observation, SC, 11/10/07)

> Ben did not attempt to write sentences even though the flipchart was in front of him; he just sat there until his teacher came (after a good few minutes) and the teacher wrote the sentences for him to copy. He will not attempt anything that he is not sure he can do. (Class observation, SC, 12/10/11)

He did not like writing and often failed to finish writing exercises in class because he would spend minutes erasing and rewriting the same word until, finally, he asked one of his friends or the teacher how to spell the word. He appeared to prefer to write nothing unless he was certain it was correct.

I see the top of the shop – Ben listens as teacher dictates sentence, he then says sentence with the teacher and begins to write the dictation: he sounds out *see*, gets stuck on *shop*, teacher says the word *shop*, modelling the sounds for him and emphasising them. Ben needs a certain level of support to succeed and the teacher provides him with it; she bends down to his level when helping him. (Class observation, SC, 9/11/07)

Ben's assessment results prior to the RR intervention were as follows:

Table A.16.11: Ben's Assessment Profile (September, 2007).

Test	Result	Date of Testing
Concepts About Print (Clay, 2002)	Test score 8/24 Stanine group 3	13/09/07
Letter Identification Test (Clay, 2002)	48/54 letters known. Confusions include *J/L*, *j/I*, *q/p*. Unknown letters include *Q*, *g*	13/09/07
Duncan Word Identification Test (Clay, 2002)	11/23 words known. Stanine group 4	13/09/07
British Abilities Scale Word Reading Test (Nfer Nelson, 1996)	Ability score 7	13/09/07
Writing Vocabulary Observation Test (Clay, 2002)	Test score 9 Stanine group 4	13/09/07
Hearing and Recording Sounds in Words (Dictation Task) (Clay, 2002)	Test score 32 Stanine group 6	13/09/07

Ben was reading level three *PM* books at the beginning of the observation and had reached level ten by the end. He was expected to reach level twenty *PM* books by the end of week twenty of RR in January, 2008. At the beginning of the observation period, the researcher judged Ben to be at the *pre-alphabetic phase* (Ehri, 1998) and that he was moving towards the *partial alphabetic phase* by the end of the observation period.

Ben received the same support as Kate in the mainstream classroom. This consisted of an emphasis on phonics where long and short vowels sounds were taught. Sight vocabulary was developed, in particular, common sight words, and also the vocabulary from the class reader.

> Ms. Whelan explained to the children what they were going to do and called on Ben to attend. *"Everyone has a book and a magnetic finger, we have to wait for Ben."* She waits for all to be ready. Ms. Whelan used strategies including explicit teaching, for example, *grass grows on ground, 'g' makes a 'g' sound at the beginning of a word,* and she revised vocabulary already learned. The class and the teacher read words together in unison from the flashcards displayed in the classroom. Ms. Murphy asked individual children to say words. Ben said *stuck* without hesitation. New words were then introduced. The children looked at the flashcards and Ms. Whelan discussed the words, *"Little, it is the opposite of big."* She told the children to look at the word, and asked the children to say it together. Then, they made sentences with the word in them. Ben had his hand up for most of the lesson. Ben's sentence was *"I found a little stone."* The next new word was *think.* Ms. Whelan told the children to look at first two letters in word, "What sound do they make?" She supplies the *th* sound. Ben attentive. The class were asked to make sentences with the word *think.* Ms. Whelan spends time teaching vocabulary from the class reader, ensuring the children understand it. Ben engaged and listening to other children's sentences. Ben did not participate much in these sentences but remained attentive. (Class observation, SC, 9/11/07)

Practice in oral reading was focused on with the main emphasis placed on oral reading guided by the teacher, but some time spent on re-reading and providing Ben with the opportunity to read independently.

> Ms. Whelan set the session up, got the children to put their finger on the page and follow the words as they are read. She demonstrated reading by reading the new page with the children. Each child read a sentence in turn from pages they have already read to date. Ben was well able for his sentence, *Can you help, please?* and Ms. Whelan

praised him. The new page was page seven. The class read as a group with the teacher leading. Then the children read individually. Ben read again and is told *excellent*. A discussion of picture on the page leads to a discussion about animals you find in Dublin zoo, which is what Ms. Whelan planned. Ben was engaged and listened to other children. He put up his hand to talk about an animal in the zoo and told the class he liked the lion. (Class observation, SC, 8/11/07)

Practice in writing was also emphasised, with particular reference placed on developing spelling as a window into phonic knowledge, and encouraging Ben to respond to text in his own words.

A written activity based on the class reader and the ensuing discussion was then observed. The children looked at vocabulary on flashcards and had to think of a sentence. Ben had his hand up and Ms. Whelan said, *"Good, I like the way you are thinking."* One child gave the sentence *I saw a little monkey* and Ms. Whelan got individual children to spell the words in the sentence for her as she wrote them on the board. Ben has his hand up and is asked to spell *monkey*. He does this with the aid of flashcard on the board. Ms. Whelan wrote three sentences on board. During this activity, she sounded out words for the children and encouraged risk taking in spelling, for example, the word *went*. Ben no longer had his hand up but he was watching and listening. The teacher encouraged the children to listen to each other. The children had to write the sentences in their copy, copying them from board. Ben started, then he stopped, rubbed out the work he had done, played with his rubber and pencil, watched the others in his group, started again, rubbed out again. Ms. Whelan asked, *"Ben, are you writing?"* Ben says *yes* and begins to work again. In ten minutes he wrote a total of two words, *the elephant,* because he kept rubbing out his work. (Class observation, SC, 8/11/07)

The strategies which Ms. Whelan used included stating the purpose of the activity at the outset, the use of modelling and scaffolding strategies when teaching and using encouragement and corrective feedback to motivate Ben. Ms. Whelan supported Ben in risk taking; this was not something that Ben liked to do. She provided him with the opportunity to practise his reading skills. Explicit teaching strategies involving clear explanations were used. In the course of her teaching, Ms.

Whelan revised, revisited and recapped on work she had covered in previous classes and in the lesson. Observation by the teacher was the only assessment strategy that the researcher observed.

Resources used in supporting Ben included a reading programme, the Magic Emerald series, *Ginger Giraffe Moves House* and *The Broken Sleigh* (Folens, 2000), and worksheets developed by the teacher. Classroom resources included the blackboard, flip chart, copies and commercial flashcards.

Ben's Learning Support

Ben received individualised support in the one-to-one RR intervention programme. This included an emphasis on developing practice in oral reading, with attention paid to oral reading guided by the teacher, re-reading and providing Ben with the opportunity to read independently.

> Ms. Murphy observed Ben reading during this part of the session. Questions observed were closed, for example, *"What is that word?"* Ms. Murphy modelled reading and used explicit teaching strategies, *"What sound does that word start with?"* She sounded out words, for example, *brother*. Ms. Murphy supplied word if Ben could not decode them. She used encouragement and corrective feedback and revised books already read by Ben. The books included predictable, repetitive texts, which included sentences such as *baby monkey is up the tree, baby monkey is safe in the tree.* (LS observation, SC, 12/10/07)

> Ms. Murphy introduced the new book called *A Home For Teddy*. Ben was engaged and attentive and she built on his suggestions regarding the story. The questions observed were mainly closed – *"What kind of a house is it?"* The teacher used on-going assessment as Ben read, she provided him with the opportunity to practise his reading and provided prompts/ scaffolds as he read, supplying words where necessary. This book was a level five, an appropriate narrative text with repetitive

language. Ms. Murphy and Ben discussed the pictures, but Ms. Murphy did most of the talking. Ben began to read and said *here* instead of *he,* and Ms. Murphy supplied *he went.* Ben read, *'Can I come in? I am looking for a house'* and Ms. Murphy supplied *home,* giving a strategy for recognising the word – *ome* then add *h* and you get *home.* Ben had difficulty with the word *this,* he read *is,* the teacher brought him up to the board and did a mini lesson on *this.* Ben pushed the magnetic letters together and said the word, tracing a line under it; he then traced the word in sand, wrote it on a magic slate and on a chalkboard. Ben had the two chunks of the word and now needed to put it together.

Ben used the picture cue and remembered what the teacher said during the discussion on the story to decode words, for example, *rabbit.* Ms. Murphy modelled reading the last few pages for Ben. (LS observation, SC, 21/11/07)

Other reading skills were focused on within the context of the texts that Ben was reading, for example, knowledge of the alphabet, phonics, sight vocabulary and word attack skills other than phonics.

Revision of the word *asleep* which Ben came across in his book. When Ben was presented with the word in isolation, which he had just read in a book, he said it was too hard. Ms. Murphy told him that he knows the word and modelled sounding it for him and he decoded it – *eep sleep asleep.* Teacher praised Ben's efforts and repeated words and sounds for him. She demonstrated sounding out the word. She was observed using explicit teaching and modelling decoding for Ben. Resources included magnetic letters and the whiteboard. (LS observation, SC, 9/11/07)

The connection between reading and writing was also established with Ben writing a story/sentence during every session, and revising, sequencing and reading this at home with his mother.

Ms. Murphy and Ben read through the stories already written, *My tooth fell out and I am going to Smyths.* Ms. Murphy prompted Ben to compose sentences through the use of questions, *"When are you going to Smyths?"* Ben said sentence/story, *"My Granda is bringing me to Smyths."* Ben wrote story, he was well able to write *my.* He had

difficulty with *Granda* – Ms. Murphy said, *"Granda is a long word, I will help you, Does Granda start with a large G or a small g?"* Ben decided large G and wrote *G* on the practice page with the teacher's help. *" What is the next letter? A, no r, sounds like r – yes, good work – you are much better than you think."* Ben wrote *Grada* and Ms. Murphy modelled the word emphasising the *n* sound. Ben offered that the letter *n* needed to go into the word and the teacher praised him; Ben delighted and wrote the word in his copy. Ms. Murphy encouraged Ben to put spaces between words and got him to reread the written sentence. A mini lesson then occurred developing word attack skills other than phonics though the use of structural analysis: the word *bringing* – Ben and Ms. Murphy moved to magnetic board and the teacher placed the word *bring* on the board and the ending *ing*. She told Ben to look at *bring* first and then separately at *ing;* Ben then pushed the word together and said the word, placing his finger under the word as he said it. Ms. Murphy praised him saying, *"That's a very big word for a small boy to know."* She placed *look   ing*   on   the board. *"Do you think you could push word over and make another big word?"* .Ben did and was well able to say *looking.* Ben then traced the word *looking* in the sand tray. He constantly referred to board to make sure he was tracing word correctly. Ben went back to writing his story. Ben finished writing the sentence. I observed that he had very poor letter formation, he could spell *me to,* and the teacher supplied the word *Smyths.* Ben read sentence three times. (LS observation, SC, 12/10/07)

Ms. Murphy used modelling and scaffolding strategies when teaching. She used encouragement and corrective feedback to motivate Ben as well as explicit teaching strategies that involved clear explanations. Ben was encouraged and supported in taking risks during the sessions. An element of revising, revisiting and recapping on skills previously taught was intrinsic to the sessions. Ms. Murphy was observed developing individual programmes designed according to the Ben's needs, based on the RR approach.

Ben was attentive and engaged the majority of the time but he became very tired by the end of the RR session. Ms. Murphy's interaction with Ben was encouraging and praising; she accepted and built on Ben's ideas. Information was repeated where necessary and Ben was supported in generalising his learning. Ms.

Murphy demonstrated and encouraged strategy use as well as providing factual information and strategy instruction.

A strong emphasis on the use of assessment to influence teaching and learning was observed as part of the support Ben received in the learning support/RR intervention. Ms. Murphy observed, watched and listened to Ben reading. She completed running records of Ben's reading and conducted miscue analysis. They informed the next day's RR lesson.

Resources used to support Ben during this intervention included appropriate reading material: high interest/low level narrative texts. The *PM* Scheme was used with Ben during observed sessions. Classroom resources were also used, for example, whiteboard, magnetic letters, sand tray and blackboard.

Summary of Ben's Reading Support/Intervention

The support which Ben received in the mainstream classroom and in the learning support setting is detailed in Table A.16.12. It is to be noted that the percentages are based on the overall observed time across learning support and mainstream classes.

Table A.16.12: Ben's Support: 25 Observations Amounting to 1073 Minutes.

Ben's support	CT 16 sessions	LS/RT 9 sessions
Pre-Reading Skills • Knowledge of the alphabet		**6 mins (0.6%)*** 6 mins (0.6%)
Phonics • Phonics in isolation, teaching long and short vowel sounds • Phonics in context, based on text Ben was reading	**140 mins (13.0%)** 140 mins (13.0%)	**18 mins (1.7%)** 18 mins (1.7%)
Word Attack Skills Other than Phonics • Use of structural analysis		**10 mins (0.9%)** 10 mins (0.9%)
Sight Vocabulary • Vocabulary from text • Common sight words	**91 mins (8.5%)** 56 mins (5.2%) 35 mins (3.3%)	**31 mins (2.9%)** 31 mins (2.9%)
Practice in Oral Reading • Oral reading guided by the teacher • Provision of opportunity to read independently • Re-reading	**181 mins (16.9%)** 126 mins (11.8%) 17 mins (1.6%) 38 mins (3.5%)	**210 mins (19.6%)** 113 mins (10.6%) 13 mins (1.2%) 84 mins (7.8%)
Practice in Writing • Spelling as a window into phonic knowledge • Reading and writing integrated	**288 mins (26.8%)** 173 mins (16.1%) 115 mins (10.7%)	**98 mins (9.1%)** 98 mins (9.1%)

*Numbers highlighted in bold indicate total time observed for the particular area

The reading intervention that Ben received was appropriate to his needs. He needed to build up his sight vocabulary and overcome his fear of writing. While a structured phonic programme was not part of the support that Ben received in learning

517

support, the class teacher focused on building up his phonic decoding knowledge. The support provided by the class teacher dovetailed well with the RR intervention in that she built up Ben's spelling base, which helped in the writing he was engaged in in the learning support setting.

Recommendation One: The DES needs to update its policies to provide schools, learning support/resource teachers and class teachers with further guidelines and guidance to enable them to successfully support children who struggle to learn to read. Professional development and a range of practical examples need to be provided with reference to implementing the guidelines at class level. Areas to be addressed should emphasise the connected nature of reading support, alternative classroom teaching arrangements to support struggling readers, for example, flexible co-operative grouping and team teaching models, and also teaching methodologies such as differentiation.

Recommendation Two: The connection between learning support and mainstream class settings in supporting children as they learn to read needs to be clarified and strengthened. To this end, school practice at classroom level needs to reflect the collaborative practices between the learning support/resource teachers and class teachers that are recommended in the LSG, and guidance needs to be provided for learning support/resource and class teachers to enable them to develop and to sustain collaborative practices. These practices need to be incorporated into the updating of policy documents. Collaborative planning (and, sometimes, teaching) should focus on the specific areas of reading to be targeted and the teaching methods to be employed by the learning support/resource and class teachers. This planning should aim to ensure that reading strategies and skills transfer effectively between instructional settings, specifying opportunities and contexts in which children are expected to demonstrate the transfer of their reading strategies and skills.

Recommendation Three: Assessment as a teaching strategy should be used in reading instruction with reference to the importance of individualising the support that children receive to meet their unique needs. Furthermore, formal and informal assessment should be systematically incorporated and documented in the teaching/learning reading process by the learning support/resource and class teachers, thus providing more effective support for the children who struggle to learn to read. The teachers should avail of professional development in the formal and informal assessment of children's reading needs.

Recommendation Four: The learning support/resource and class teachers should employ a balanced approach in the teaching of reading to children of all abilities. Furthermore, the approach that is used to support children in first class should reflect the children's individual reading needs and should incorporate the acquisition of word attack skills, phonological awareness, phonics, sight vocabulary along with the development of reading fluency, the integration of reading/writing, comprehension and metacognition.

Recommendation Five: Schools need to develop school/parent/guardian partnership to expand support for the school reading programmes to the children's homes. Such partnership should operate under whole-school policies and involve upskilling the parents/guardians to complement school reading instruction at home.