INITIAL TEACHER TRAINING FOR THE TEACHING OF READING

An exploratory study with final-year primary B Ed students

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by

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ABSTRACT

INITIAL TEACHER TRAINING FOR THE TEACHING OF READING:

AN EXPLORATORY STUDY WITH FINAL YEAR PRIMARY B.ED. STUDENTS

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The field of study was the preparation of primary B.Ed. students for the teaching of reading. It was carried out at a time of public debate about the quality of education and particularly in the preparation of teachers for reading. Review of relevant research revealed a paucity of information in this area.

The aim of the study was to explore students' knowledge, skills and beliefs in the teaching of reading, identifying areas of discrepancy between intended and actual performance and to use the acquired information to explore ways of improving existing procedures for the preparation of teachers in reading. Over five years the study involved four teacher training institutions and a sample of 835 students, 680 teachers and 151 college supervisors.

The study, focusing on the final block school experience of students, consisted of two phases.
Phase I adopted survey methods employing purpose designed questionnaires and interviews to gather information on students' performance in the teaching of reading as perceived by themselves, their classteachers and supervisors. This provided a baseline and focus for further study.
Phase II was carried out in one institution. It adopted an action research approach and explored the potential and limitations of a specially designed programme to heighten students' 'reading metaknowledge'.

A Follow–up Study probed the performance of recently qualified teachers in this area.

The outcomes of the study were:

1. Findings demonstrating possible ways of improving students' perceived performance and feeling of competence in teaching reading by raising their awareness of knowledge they held
2. Development of a model for learning to teach reading, identifying the role of metacognition in linking theoretical knowledge with teaching activities
3. Development of research instruments for exploring beliefs and perceived performance in the teaching of reading.

The study has implications for theorists and practitioners in the field.

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1 The training of teachers and the teaching of reading

1.1 Introduction

Societies in developed and developing countries place considerable value on literacy. The ability to read and write is regarded as an essential and basic skill for their members.

In England and Wales, the learning and teaching of literacy has a well-established and central place in the school curriculum. This is reflected in a great number of official documents throughout the history of education in these countries, most recently in the 1988 Education Act which firmly placed literacy at the core of the curriculum.

The recognised need for a population to be literate has, over the past century, resulted in the recurring concern over standards, as expressed in the recent Report on Primary Education –

> It is clear that to function effectively in the 21st century, our children will need higher standards of literacy and numeracy than ever before. (DES, 1992, III – 24)

Within the area of literacy, the teaching and learning of reading in the primary school has received repeated and critical attention since the start of compulsory education. Directly related to the question of standards in reading is the role played by teachers and their training. A concern about reading standards leads logically to a consideration of the quality of reading instruction, and hence to the appropriateness of the teacher.

It was thus surprising that by the 1980s little attention had been given to the study of teacher education and the teaching of reading. Whilst reports of several systematic studies existed concerning the quality of reading instruction in primary schools, a review of the literature showed the apparent absence over the previous decade of systematic and long-term investigations into the preparation of primary teachers for the teaching of reading during their pre-service education. As discussed in the literature review of section 1.5, the few available studies in this area are small-scale surveys and reports indicating a general lack of attention given to the teaching of reading in teacher

training courses. The seed of encouragement sown by the Bullock Committee (DES 1975) for long-needed investigations in this field within training institutions has not come to fruition.

In view of this apparent absence of systematic and longer-term investigations the current study therefore set out to seek information in this vital field, in particular in relation to future primary teachers' school-based preparation for this area. No previous study was known which collected data and reported on the performance in the teaching of reading during classroom practice of teacher trainees. What was considered to be of most value was a study of this aspect of teacher preparation based on the performance of teacher trainees in the final year of their course.

The motivation for the present study arose from the writer's involvement in teacher education, both at the in-service and the pre-service stages. Over a period of five years it had been observed that teachers enrolled for in-service 'English in the Primary School' courses and students following courses in 'Teaching Children with Learning Difficulties' had registered concern about their own initial preparation for the teaching of reading. When subsequently the writer found herself engaged in the planning and implementation of courses on the teaching of reading for teacher trainees, the need for this research was identified and the project initiated.

The field of interest is the area in which the writer is professionally engaged. It was chosen because of her experience and interest in promoting consistently high quality teacher training and education. The study has involved self-reporting via questionnaires by the participants and is therefore reliant upon informed subjectivity. It also involved close monitoring of the developing views of a sample of participants through guided interviews and, following the main survey, assessing the influence of a series of activities upon student performance, applying an action research approach.

The study systematically repeated surveys in the writer's college over a period of five years, using the entire fourth-year student population on each occasion. In addition, surveys of the relevant final year student population of three further institutions for a single year were carried out as part of the main investigation. Between 1988 and 1993, the study dealt with 614 questionnaires from students, 271 from teachers and 74 from

college tutors. Furthermore information from 86 newly qualified teachers, who were past students of the writer's college and had participated in the research whilst at college, was collected by postal questionnaires, processed and analysed.

The design of the study is described and discussed in detail in sections 2.2 and 3.2, dealing with the Pilot, Main and Follow-up Studies.

The research was designed to address the following questions –

1 How do teacher trainees perceive their competence and performance in the teaching of reading during the final year of their course?

2 How is the students' performance concerning the teaching of reading perceived by their class teachers and college supervisors?

3 How do teachers and supervisors perceive their own interaction with the students and how is this interaction perceived by the students?

4 How can the students' performance and feeling of confidence be enhanced?

The aim of the study was to explore the activities of student teachers concerning the teaching of reading during their final Block School Experience (BSE), as perceived by themselves, their class teachers and the college tutors, so as to provide information concerning their perception of the adequacy and appropriateness of their training in this field.

The study was well underway when a renewed national interest in the teaching of reading and teacher preparation developed. In 1989 the National Foundation For Educational Research (NFER) carried out an investigation into 'What teachers in training read about reading' (Gorman, 1989) and in the preparation of its report, consulted the writer and made acknowledged use of part of the data collected and analysed in the pilot component of the present study.

In 1990, one of a group of educational psychologists claimed to have evidence of declining standards of reading in schools, and that this related to particular teaching methods of reading. These claims led to a public debate and official inquiry on the training of primary teachers for the teaching of reading. Subsequently, several official

reports were produced, including those from NFER (Brooks et al., 1992) and Her Majesty's Inspectorate (OFSTED, 1993), both of which investigated how well teacher trainees were prepared for the teaching of reading. Whilst these surveys address the same area of teacher training, the present study, by that time in its final stage, was characteristically different in that the focus was not on 'What teachers in training are taught about reading', but on the teacher trainees' perceptions and aspects of the teaching of reading during their final BSE.

Sections 1.2 to 1.4 provide an overview of the wider context in which the present study was carried out, the concepts and issues involved, and the nature and aims of the research. The study sets out to explore issues related to the nature and quality of education regarding teacher training and the teaching of reading.

The literature review in section 1.5 discusses relevant published research in the areas of teacher preparation, and thus attempts to provide an understanding of the context in which the study took place.

1.2 The quality of education

Traditionally, the work of teachers has been closely linked to the cultural ideals and political / economic interests of their appropriate societies. Not only have teachers been expected to pass on recognised contemporary values and skills, but they have also been required to assist new generations of pupils develop neoteric skills and knowledge to prepare for the new challenges of the future. The teacher is recognised as the primary ingredient of a country's education and learning system, and so attention tends to concentrate upon teachers.

> Within Britain itself the teaching force represents a massive educational investment, and is therefore certain to attract continuing and often unfriendly public attention.
>
> (Benton, 1990, p.3)

In the many reform movements observed throughout the history of compulsory education, external agencies have always held strong vested interests in the quality of

teaching. During the past decade, greater state intervention and control has been noticeable, frequently creating tension between the economic / political motives of the authorities and the educators' own professional aspirations. The need for flexibility in teaching content and approaches has led to a dynamic model of the teacher, characterised by responsiveness to changes sought by external influences and those which derive from reflection on educational practice from within the profession. The teacher as reflective practitioner is increasingly regarded as central to this model and is essential for the teacher's ability to respond to new challenges and demands.

Since the quality of schooling is dependent on the quality of teaching, and hence teacher development, the suitability of professional preparation, particularly at the pre-service stage, merits particular attention. Several recent official reports have expressed concern regarding the effectiveness of teaching, leading to a consensus, reflected in a variety of policy statements, that the quality of educational provision can be most effectively enhanced through appropriate improvement in teacher education. Educationalists have expressed concern over the simplistic interpretations sometimes given to 'effectiveness' of education and 'appropriateness' of teacher development. It is not at all clear whether effectiveness should be related primarily to ensuring value for money in educational provision and hence making a contribution towards increasing prosperity, or whether it should be concerned with the quality of learning. Similar uncertainty exists in arriving at a judgement on appropriate teacher preparation.

> What kind of teachers and teaching do we want? ... Competent technicians grounded in a narrow range of knowledge or educated professionals capable of generating and accommodating new knowledge with the capability of long-term professional self development. (Tickle, 1987, p.28)

Whilst recognising that this statement represents a somewhat extreme attempt at a polarisation of aims, nevertheless the latter alternative would appear to possess more educational merit and to agree with the dynamic model of the teacher as reflective practitioner.

There is, however, considerable common ground between the two caricatures presented in the above quotation, and both the quality of competence and the capacity for

development should be the goals for teacher preparation. The general meaning applied to the term quality, embracing such concepts as 'degree of excellence' or 'fitness for purpose', requires an interpretation when applied to teacher or student performance, which takes account of attitude, competence and professional skills.

HMI (DES 1985), in an attempt to 'identify some characteristics of good performance by teachers in primary and secondary schools' lists characteristics of successful teaching. The report suggests that teachers should have the personal qualities of reliability, punctuality and co-operation, be academically and professionally well qualified, be able to stimulate the development of language in the classroom, to organise and manage pupils' learning, to assess pupils' work and to make relationships outside the classroom. Similar criteria were used in a report by HMI (1988) of a survey which aimed to assess how well newly trained teachers in England and Wales were 'equipped for the work they are assigned in their first post'. Mastery of the subject and practical teaching skills were the two main areas for investigation. These are two of the areas in which pre-service teacher preparation courses have experienced changes to achieve improvement in quality since the late 1970s. The introduction of the four-year B Ed degree course with emphasis on subject study to a greater depth led to student time-tables occupying the equivalent of two years of an undergraduate course on this aspect. More recently, emphasis has switched to a demand for greater mastery of the practical skills of teaching and has produced suggestions that an increase in school-based training with an emphasis on competence in particular skills would provide a general improvement in the teaching ability of newly qualified teachers.

Consideration of this proposed change in teacher education requires an examination of the concepts of teacher training and teacher education. Although these terms are often used interchangeably the distinction between them needs to be recognised. The inherent difference in meaning is perhaps most clearly expressed by Tickle (1987) with his suggestion that 'Pre-service classroom experience has, however, largely remained at the conceptual and practical level of *training* in general technical competences' (p.2), whilst teacher *education* incorporates 'improved classroom practice which is based on understanding' (p.4). Tickle, as well as Nias et al. (1988), questions the value of the

'apprenticeship' or 'technician' model as being appropriate for the consideration of initial preparation for teachers.

Pearson (1989), in a discussion about the quality of teacher education, provides a useful explanation of teaching quality by suggesting that –

> The challenge in teacher education is to enable prospective teachers to take what they have learned about teaching and to use it on their own in the teaching situation in which they find themselves or, to put this in the terms of this work, to engage in practical reasoning as teachers. Teachers must form intentions based on their beliefs, as well they must change their beliefs and intentions in the light of experience. To enable teachers to make these changes reasonably is a central concern of teacher education. (Pearson, 1989, p.154)

Pearson (op. cit.) thus widens the discussion from the quality of the teacher to the quality of teacher education. He arrives at these conclusions from a discussion which considers the need to improve the preparation of teachers to 'solve the problems to be found in our schools' (p.131).

1.3 The teaching of reading

Problems regarding pupils' educational achievements have been identified in official reports over the past twenty years. One area which has provoked repeated comment and criticism is that of reading standards and quality of the teaching of reading in primary schools.

Historically, reading is one of the key areas in the primary curriculum. Achieving literacy has always been regarded as the main requirement for any system of education, recognising its additional importance in providing access to other areas of learning. By the nature of the task, the ability to read also enjoys prestige as an important skill within society. It has an established place within all education systems and over the past fifty years has received continuous attention from educationalists and researchers. The study and growing understanding of the reading process has been paralleled by an expanding interest in the teaching within this field, and a great number of publications

have examined and influenced the quality of practice in primary schools. Outstanding among critical and influential investigations of classroom practice in the teaching of reading are the work by Morris (1959), Lunzer and Gardner (1979) and Southgate et al. (1981). Findings of these studies not surprisingly emphasise the importance of good teaching for successful pupil learning and draw attention to the need for competent teachers.

Within the initial training of primary teachers, the teaching of reading is part of the English course which has, following the recommendations of the Bullock Report (DES, 1975), been allocated only one hundred taught hours plus private study or practice for the study of all aspects of language.

Recent reports and the resulting publicity have generated criticism on reading standards of primary pupils, and this has created confusion and concern amongst both teachers and parents. The controversy over reading, arising from Martin Turner's claim in 1990 that certain teaching methods were responsible for a decline in reading standards, has naturally caused bewilderment and uncertainty among student teachers approaching the teaching of reading for the first time. Following this report, the appropriateness of initial teacher preparation for the teaching of reading has been the subject of critical discussion within the profession and also by education authorities and the wider public.

It is surprising to find, however, that little defence has been offered against this criticism by the teaching profession (Lambley, 1992). On the contrary there is evidence that, long before the Turner debate began, it was apparent that students of education as well as newly qualified and experienced teachers were expressing concern over the effectiveness of their attempts to teach reading. The majority of primary teachers in Bassey's (1981) research regarded their initial training for the teaching of reading as inappropriate.

1.4 The nature, scope and aims of the study

The incentive for this research arose from personal discussion with teachers and B Ed primary students on the topic. The concern expressed by teachers over the adequacy of

their initial professional preparation for the teaching of reading and the apparent difficulties experienced by students during their teaching practices, together with the recurring theme in the national debate on lack of quality in this curriculum area in primary schools, indicated the need for an investigation into the degree of professional knowledge and skills which the students develop towards the end of their initial teacher training course.

In this context, Robinson's (1993) definition of the problematic nature of educational practices is helpful. She defines educational practice as 'action informed by beliefs about how to achieve educationally important purposes' (p.5), and an educational problem as 'a gap between an existing and a desired state of affairs, because this is what is meant when we identify educational practices and their consequences as problematic' (p.25).

The purpose of the research was therefore to examine whether and if so in what way the B Ed course actually develops what it is intended to develop in this area, and to establish whether a problematic practice exists, and how this can be improved.

The research project consisted of two separate but interrelated phases, a survey and a course of action research. The survey involved investigations in four Colleges of Higher Education, identified as Colleges A, B, C and D, offering courses for the preparation of primary teachers. Two of these colleges were CNAA- and the other two university-controlled. The focus of the investigation was the performance in the teaching of reading of B Ed primary students during their final BSE. The level of the students' professional knowledge and practical skills which developed during their course in the teaching of reading should become evident during their work in schools towards the end of their college course. Investigations carried out during their final BSE should indicate what knowledge, ideas, beliefs and repertoire of skills the students had acquired in the teaching of reading, and how able they were in transferring these to practical situations.

Data were collected using questionnaires and interviews, and to obtain a more holistic picture, triangular techniques were used in the Main Study involving the students, the class teachers and the college supervisors. The students' performance, as indicated by the variables in the triangulation, provided an indication of the quality and effectiveness of their college course in reading.

A Pilot Study involving a survey in one of the two CNAA-controlled institutions preceded the Main Study. In this study, student and teacher questionnaires were used as the sole instruments for data acquisition.

The main survey, which comprised Phase One of the Main Study, was intended to provide evidence of the current situation in the four institutions, and the findings from the survey should provide a basis for discussion, reflection and review, and hence inform practice.

Certain findings of the survey were used to form a baseline for a course of action research in Phase Two of the Main Study. This part of the project, carried out in one of the CNAA-controlled colleges, involved limited modification to existing courses and observation of the effect upon the performance of students in the teaching of reading during their final BSE. Cycles of planned action, their implementation, evaluation and reflection were aimed at improved student learning.

A Follow-up Study with a sample of students assessed the long-term effect of measures introduced during Phase Two.

Thus the overall theme of the research project was to assess the effectiveness of student learning in enabling the student to develop knowledge and skills in the teaching of reading.

The three major aims were –

- to gather information on student knowledge, skills and beliefs in the teaching of reading,
- to identify areas of discrepancy between the intended provision of student knowledge and skills in the teaching of reading and the actual performance of the courses,
- to make use of the acquired information for the purpose of improving existing procedures for the preparation of teachers for the teaching of reading.

Further sub-aims relating to the main aims are identified in section 2.3.

It is recognised that a study such as this has a limited claim to the generalisation of fundamental and objective knowledge. Findings must be treated as illuminative rather than generalisable and should be valued in their contribution to the identification of problems, the generation of issues and some guidance towards potential solutions.

1.5 A review of published research on the preparation of primary teachers to teach reading

This section presents a review of published research in the field of initial teacher training for the teaching of reading over the three decades up to the time when the present study began. Further reference to literature and more recently published research is made throughout the study in discussion of findings (see sections 4.1.3, 5.7, 6.3 and section 7), to qualify arguments (e.g. section 5.1) and to support the methodology used (section 3). This integrated approach has been chosen in preference to a comprehensive review of the literature in this section, since reference through the study is more effective in terms of comparison and relevance.

This review of the literature is structured as dealing with the following questions –

- Is teacher preparation in reading observed to be appropriate?
- How well prepared in teaching reading do students / teachers consider themselves?
- How well prepared in teaching reading are students / teachers considered by others?
- What is the nature of student performance in teaching reading?

1.5.1 Is teacher preparation in reading observed to be appropriate?

Throughout the literature on the acquisition of reading, writers have stressed that the 'classroom teacher is the key to successful reading on the part of all school children' (Robinson, 1970, p.483). Only a small minority of writers who emphasise the importance of the book rather than the teacher in the process of learning to read question 'the assumption that better courses of training would automatically improve

literacy levels' (Wilcox, 1984, p.41). The recognition by most that differences among teachers are more important than among methods and materials in influencing children's reading achievement has led to the demand for better trained teachers of reading (Harris, 1969, pp.532 and 541). This movement supports the view that –

> The pre-service programme must be the first, very powerful, step in a never-ending continuum ... for teachers throughout their total teaching careers.
>
> (Robinson, 1978, p.392)

Robinson (op. cit., p.387) refers to a questionnaire survey carried out in 1969 during which information on pre-service teacher training on the teaching of reading was collected from various countries. Although the response rate (30%) was low, it was found that the teaching of reading was generally not allocated a separate course within institutions, but was integrated either in courses teaching language or general teaching methods. It was concluded that students only received limited information on the teaching of reading and that pre-service education in the teaching of reading was 'in the greatest need of development' (Robinson, op. cit., p.398).

Three research projects carried out in Britain between 1959 and 1971 also pointed to the shortage of reading courses and the inadequacy of professional training in reading at that time. Morris (1959) found that 'three-quarters of first year junior teachers in Kent in 1953 had no training in infant methods and nearly one in five had no knowledge of teaching the beginning of reading' (Start and Wells, 1972, p.334). College courses had not made these students aware of their possible role as teachers of reading, and they began their careers as junior teachers not expecting to deal with pupils who could not read (Latham, 1968, p.404).

Goodacre (1969) gathered information from 232 teachers' on their recollections of training for the teaching of reading. 10% of teachers recalled not having received any training in teaching reading, whilst only 33% of teachers believed their course had provided them with information on a variety of approaches to reading. Goodacre (op. cit., p.390) concludes that 'even though the training course has been lengthened, this had not ensured that more time has been devoted to the preparation for teaching a basic subject such as reading'.

Similarly Southgate (1971) reported a small proportion of primary teachers having received training in the teaching of reading during their college course, the time allocation for junior teachers only being between one and six hours (Start and Wells, 1972, p.335) over a three-year course of training. One of the recommendations made to the Committee of Enquiry into Teacher Education by Southgate in 1970 was that 'all student teachers should be expected to undertake a broadly based introductory course concerned with reading' (Southgate, 1972, p.116).

The Government Report 'A Language for Life' (DES, 1975) emphasised that in the acquisition of literacy 'the most important single factor is the teacher, and therefore, by extension, his initial and continuing professional education' (p.336). Findings of a survey on teachers' initial training in the same report point to the lack of attention paid to reading in Teacher Training Institutions, the uncertain relationship between theory and practice, the lack of opportunity for students to teach reading during BSE and the variance in support received by students from teachers and supervisors (op. cit., chapter 23).

The need was recognised for relevant training procedures and 'more adequate programs for teacher training ... for improvement in pre- and in-service programs', since research had shown 'that most of the people who teach children to read have little or no training in how to perform this task' (Calfree, 1978, p.431). In considering the evidence from inquiries at that time Calfree (op. cit.) saw the aim of future research as to supply 'data on the relative efficiency of various means of delivering such programs' (p.431). Similar requests for inquiry into these various aspects of teacher preparation in reading to be 'carried out regularly by training institutions, or on a national basis' were made by Bassey (1981, p.227). Whilst such studies appear in American literature, few studies in Britain have attempted this kind of research. Subsequent studies focused more on the adequacy of teacher preparation and the competence teachers felt they had gained in teaching reading through their training, rather than investigating the aims, content and delivery of courses and students' actual performance in teaching reading.

1.5.2 How well prepared in teaching reading do students / teachers consider themselves?

Whilst studies on teacher preparation for the teaching of reading consulted the recipients of such courses, most data collected were obtained from experienced teachers' recollections of their initial preparation.

Goodacre (1969) deduced from teachers' descriptions of their training course in reading that 'twice as many teachers were dissatisfied as satisfied with the training they had received' (p.389).

In Maxwell's study (1977) on pupils' reading progress, a sample of primary teachers who were trained in Scotland between 1930 and 1974 were asked to judge the usefulness of their initial preparation. It is reported that 'their attitudes to preparation they received were roughly four unfavourable to one favourable' (p.71).

Bassey (1981) carried out a survey with 131 primary teachers from Nottinghamshire, who had qualified between 1942 and 1978, on their perceived preparation for the teaching of reading. 50% of respondents felt inadequately prepared with 29% considering themselves well prepared.

HMI survey (DES, 1988) found that a quarter of probationary teachers in primary schools considered themselves to be inadequately prepared for teaching reading (p.33). Generally these teachers felt better prepared for teaching mathematics than teaching reading.

Wendelin and Murphy (1986) in a study with 125 elementary education students at Nebraska University asked respondents whether they felt prepared for teaching reading. About 80% of participants stated that they felt prepared. However, in this study students were asked 'Do you feel your course prepared you?', whereas participants in Bassey's study responded to the question 'How effective was your course?'.

1.5.3 How well prepared in teaching reading are students / teachers considered by others?

The literature on teaching reading contains frequent reference to the inadequacy of teacher preparation in the teaching of reading. Most comments are either general, such as 'the training for the teaching of reading is very patchy indeed' (Willey and Maddison, 1971, p.34), or they derive from the author's subjective opinion. Morris's (1959) study for example states that 'in her view only one in three students following infant courses had satisfactory training in the teaching of reading' (Start and Wells, 1972, p.334).

HMI report (1987) on the initial training of teachers conveys a different message concerning reading by stating that 'in college courses the teaching of reading received particularly close attention' (p.66). An example is also presented to demonstrate the way students were encouraged 'to relate course work to their school experience' (p.70).

Inconsistency in opinion on the adequacy of preparation from those who have received the training as well as those who judge the preparation as observers is apparent. A more objective picture of the adequacy of students' preparation for teaching reading would be gained by investigating the nature of student performance in teaching reading as shown during their teaching practice. Research on teaching practice has only recently attracted attention (Stones, 1984, chapters 1 and 2), and no investigations regarding the nature of students' performance in teaching reading have been identified in the British literature.

1.5.4 What is the nature of student performance in teaching reading?

Few studies in Britain have explored this aspect of teacher preparation. Wray (1988) examined the impact of psycholinguistic theories presented during the course by surveying students' views of the teaching of reading both at the beginning and at the end of the course. Results demonstrated that theories presented on the course had no impact on students' views on the practice of teaching reading, but that instead a traditional view to teaching reading predominated. It is speculated that the apparent ease of traditional methods and the influence of the teacher during teaching practice might have led to a view on teaching reading not presented during the college course.

Whilst Wray solely explored the students' intentions for teaching reading, some American studies have investigated the influences upon students during their teaching practice. Hodges (1983) was concerned about the limited impact of college courses on students' instructional practices in reading and the considerable influence of teachers. In her study she observed two groups of five students, one group working in the traditional way with the teacher present and the other group teaching without co-operating teachers. All students' expressed views on teaching reading before the teaching practice were consonant with those expressed by their course. However, students in both groups changed their ways of teaching reading during the practice to be dissonant with their view expressed before the practice. It was observed that, while co-operating teachers had an influence, other factors such as school pressure, limited time and lack of confidence effected the same change

Gray (1982) came to similar conclusions when analysing student's view of reading. She found that there was a lack of influence of knowledge gained during the college course and that students' view of reading was predominantly gained from their work with children and the particular tasks these children required.

Although the above studies were carried out with small samples, they nevertheless questioned the influence and effectiveness of the college course. National surveys in the USA (Morrison and Austin, 1976) in 1961 and 1974 attempted to establish how colleges prepared prospective teachers for the teaching of reading and, following this, made recommendations for improving their preparation. Several researchers in the USA (Collins-Cheek, 1983; Cheek, 1982) subsequently investigated students' opinion of their courses in teaching reading to determine the perceived quality of courses from the students' perspectives. These studies were all short-term investigative surveys of student opinion.

1.5.5 Summary and conclusions

Overall, the literature has revealed an increasing interest by educationalists in the preparation of teachers for the teaching of reading in order to raise the quality of teaching in this area. The majority of studies in Britain in this field have focused on the outcome of training by assessing the adequacy of courses as perceived by teachers. Most

of these studies were surveys and provided findings of a quantitative nature. Recently there has been a move towards qualitative inquiries with more attention been paid to the impact of courses upon students' views of teaching reading.

In America there has been a much longer-standing tradition of research into teachers' preparation for teaching reading. However, despite the plethora of published research in this area the review revealed an emphasis upon student opinion of their preparation and a lack of attention to student practices. Where student practice was concerned only very small-scale and short-term investigations were involved.

A review of the literature on research in Britain revealed a scarcity of investigations into perceived student practice. Information on the performance of those who have experienced preparation for teaching reading would provide an indication of the effectiveness of their courses. There is a perceived need for investigations into the questions –

- What is the nature of students' performance in the teaching of reading at the final stage of their training?
- Are there ways of improving this performance?

This study aims to address these questions and to reduce the paucity of information from research in this field.

2 The Pilot Study

2.1 Purpose and dimensions

The Pilot Study was carried out to test the suitability of the questionnaires as tools for data collection and to develop them into a form suitable for the Main Study. In addition to checking the reliability of the questionnaires, the validity of the response method and the procedures used in processing and analysing the collected data were examined.

Observed weaknesses were used to indicate appropriate modifications to the study before the start of the main investigation. Piloting the questionnaires as the main tool for data collection was particularly important to obtain information on the clarity of instructions, necessary completion time, methods of recording and analysing responses and the suitability of the information collected. The Pilot Study also indicated results to be expected from the Main Study.

The Pilot Study was carried out in College B. Student teachers in this institution followed a four-year Honours degree course within the Faculty of Education. They had a choice of emphasis in training for either age-range 4 to 8 years (early years) or 7 to 11 years (later years). In addition to professional teacher training, they studied one main subject conjunctively in one of the other faculties in the college. The teaching of reading was an integral part of the English core course, which was spread over years one, two and three and was a compulsory part of the teacher training course. Early years students followed a different English course to later years students.

2.2 Design of the survey and strategies for data collection

The study was structured as survey research and used self-completion questionnaires as the method of inquiry. In view of the restraints resulting from single-handed research this approach was considered an acceptable substitute for direct observation of the students which might provide more reliable data (see section 3.2.3.2). Collecting data by questionnaire, although making them prone to subjectivity, allows wider sampling of the population involved than would otherwise be possible. The data provided information on the preparation of primary B Ed students for the teaching of reading, and the additional involvement of their class teachers, attempted to give greater objectivity by examining the same issue from two angles.

The investigation involved year-four B Ed students and the area for inquiry was their six-week final Block School Experience (BSE) during the Autumn Term 1987. Student and teacher questionnaires were the sole method of inquiry. The entire year-four B Ed primary student population (97) and the teachers of the classes where these students had spent the teaching practice were involved in the investigation.

The survey was implemented immediately following the conclusion of the BSE. Student questionnaires were distributed and returned through the institution's internal mail system within the week 8th to 15th December 1987. Because of teachers' involvement in Christmas activities, the postal questionnaires for teachers were deferred until the Spring Term 1988. They were returned within a period of three weeks (27th February to 18th March 1988) in pre-paid and addressed envelopes. Letters accompanying the questionnaires explained the purpose of the investigation and assured respondents of confidentiality and anonymity. A return rate of 69% for the students and 76% for the teachers was achieved, thus producing a representative sample for each group.

2.3 Hypothesis and objectives

The main hypothesis from which the study developed stated that –

> *By investigating the views of B Ed students and their class teachers it is possible to arrive at an understanding of the students' classroom performance in the teaching of reading during teaching practice.*

Objectives or sub-aims in the form of questions were formulated to investigate areas relevant to the main hypothesis. These sub-aims were structured in four sections (A, B, C and D) as follows –

A The students

- How does the teaching of reading rate in the students' written preparations and evaluations?
- How competent do students regard themselves to be in the teaching of reading?
- What do the students consider their own needs to be?
- Is there an observable difference in responses for early and later years students?

B The students' teaching experience

- What exerts the greatest influence upon the students' approach to the teaching of reading during BSE?
- How much consultation / interaction over the teaching of reading occurs between
  a) the teacher and the student?
  b) the college supervisor and the student?
- Are students given full responsibility for the teaching of reading during BSE?
- Do students develop new skills in the teaching of reading during BSE
  a) in their own opinion?
  b) in their teacher's opinion?

C The college course related to the teaching of reading

- How frequently do students consult information from the college course during their BSE?
- Are students able to make the transition from theory to practice successfully?
- What aspects of the course do students find most helpful?
- Is there a perceived difference in the approach to the teaching of reading between the college course and schools?

D The class teachers

- How experienced are the teachers?
- How do they feel about their own training?
- How much in-service training related to the teaching of reading
  a) have teachers experienced?
  b) would teachers welcome?
- What is the teachers' opinion about current initial training with respect to the teaching of reading?

2.4 Questionnaire construction

The purpose, aim and design of the study required the questionnaires as the main tool for the investigation to be of the appropriate form to collect the sought information. A review of other investigations concerning the preparation of teachers for the teaching of reading (DES, 1975; Bassey, 1981) revealed that the research instruments used in those surveys were unsuitable for the purpose of this study, since they differed in their aims, rationale and focus. Student and teacher questionnaires were therefore required to be specially devised for this survey. The main purpose of the Pilot Study was to test and refine these questionnaires to make them suitable for use in the main survey.
The first two major aims of the study, as presented in section 1.4, provided the basis

upon which the questionnaires were built. The identification of these major aims and the final BSE as the chosen setting for the investigation made it possible to derive further sub-aims for the research. These sub-aims, presented in the form of questions (see section 2.3) were used for the development of the structure of the questionnaires as well as for the construction of the individual questions. The steps involved in the process of developing the questionnaires were –

1 Identifying the area for inquiry.

2 Stating the main aims for the study.

3 Choosing the setting.

4 Deriving sub-aims (questions).

5 Designing the structure of the questionnaires.

6 Framing the questionnaire questions.

7 Piloting the questionnaire.

8 Analysis of Pilot Study.

9 Making modifications.

10 Final design of the questionnaire for use in the Main Study.

The student questionnaire (see stage 5 above) was structured in three sections – section A for factual background information, section B for specific information on experience related to BSE and section C for opinion on the college reading course and BSE. These three sections appear similarly in the teacher's questionnaire, which has an additional section D relating to teachers' professional experience, in-service and pre-service training. Both questionnaires (see Appendix 1) contained both open and closed questions, in which respondents were required to list items, categorise, rank and also use nominal and ordinal scales. Section C was entirely presented as ordinal scale questions and used the Likert response categories.

The questions which appeared on the questionnaires were derived from an examination of the sub-aim questions given in section 2.3 (A, B, C, D). These sub-aim questions were not in a suitable form for inclusion in the questionnaires, being in a general style which would not be conducive to straightforward treatment by the respondents.

Regarding the Main Study, the construction of final questionnaires is discussed in detail in section 3.2.3.

2.5 Processing and analysis of data

Data were converted into numerical codes; e.g. for nominal scale questions 'yes' and 'no' answers were recorded as '1' and '2' respectively. Likert response categories were recorded on a 1 to 5 scale.

In order to ease the collation and quantitative analysis of responses, collected data were processed with the use of the *dBase II* program.

Since one of the objectives of the study was to gain an insight into the difference between early and later years students (see objective A, section 2.3), the collected data were recorded in a way to allow sub-group comparison. Three files were created for the student questionnaire and two files for the teacher questionnaire. Each file contained a record on early years and later years students / teachers in the form of a raw-data matrix. From this it was possible to summarise information on single variables and also on mixtures of variables.

For the Pilot Study, the method of descriptive statistics was used. Analysis concerning significance of data was carried out within the main investigation involving the four institutions.

2.6. Presentation and discussion of the main findings

Results from the Pilot Study indicated certain trends which are worthy of further discussion. They also demonstrated some shortcomings in the research instruments which are discussed and have been remedied for the main survey.

Not all results are presented or discussed in detail, but those responses which are representative in relation to the hypothesis and derived objectives are presented.

Discussion of findings is not carried out strictly in the sequence of points in section 2.3. Some of the issues overlap and rigid adherence to the sequence would result in unnecessary repetition in different sections. In some areas it has proved interesting to focus on the difference in response between early and later years students.

2.6.1. The students

2.6.1.1. Distribution of age range

Whilst both early and later years students participated in a whole primary age range professional education course, separate courses in curriculum core areas were offered within the specific age routes. Thus students of the two age-range routes would have followed different courses in English. During BSE student placements were chosen according to appropriate age-range specialism. The number and age-range specialism of the student participants and their class teachers are given in Table 1.

Table 1: Age-range distribution in the Pilot Study

	Early Years		Later Years	
	No	%	No	%
Students	39	58.2	28	41.8
Teachers	39	52.7	35	47.3

2.6.1.2 Written preparations and evaluations of teaching reading

Students were required to prepare written teaching plans in the form of schemes of work for each curriculum area before the start of the practice. In addition, written daily teaching plans had to be prepared, and one aspect of the teaching experience chosen for the daily written evaluation.

Students' indication of how much the teaching of reading featured in their written schemes of work are shown in Table 2.

Table 2: Amount teaching of reading featured in students' schemes of work

	Not at all		A little		A lot	
	No	%	No	%	No	%
Early years (39)	6	15.4	26	66.6	7	18
Later years (28)	10	35.7	14	50	4	14.3
Total (67)	16	23.9	40	59.7	11	16.4

The extent of consideration of the teaching of reading in the daily preparations is presented in Table 3.

Table 3: Consideration of teaching of reading in daily preparations

	Not at all		Once a week		2/3 times a wk		Every day	
	No	%	No	%	No	%	No	%
Early years	7	18	8	20.5	14	35.9	10	25.6
Later years	8	28.6	7	25	8	28.6	5	17.9
Total	15	22.4	15	22.4	22	32.8	15	22.4

The frequency of written evaluations on the teaching of reading by individual students is given in Table 4.

Table 4: Frequency of written evaluations

	Not at all		Once a week		2/3 times a wk		Every day	
	No	%	No	%	No	%	No	%
Early years	17	43.6	16	41	6	15.4	0	0
Later years	16	57.1	11	39.3	1	3.6	0	0
Total	33	49.3	27	40.3	7	10.4	0	0

It appears that early years students spent more time on the written preparation for the teaching of reading than their later years colleagues. The evaluation table shows that almost half of the students did not evaluate their teaching of reading at all. Considering that reading is a basic skill for learning this is surprising and this aspect is explored further within the main survey.

2.6.1.3 Feeling of competence

Responses to the statement 'during Block School Experience, I did not feel sufficiently competent to teach reading effectively' are given in Table 5.

Table 5: Agreement with statement of feeling of insufficient competence to teach

Strongly agree		Agree		Uncertain		Disagree		Strongly disagree		No response	
No	%	No	%	No	%	No	%	No	%	No	%
11	16.4	21	31.3	7	10.4	19	28.3	8	11.9	1	1.5

Response to this question was made unnecessarily difficult by the lack of conceptual clarity in the use of the term 'competent'. The measurement of competence, as Burke (1990, p.183) suggests, 'is graduated rather than binary in character'. Since no criteria were supplied for the gradient of competence the responses were of general rather than detailed value.

The phrasing of this statement is also likely to cause confusion. Converse and Presser (1988, p.13) draw attention to the 'needless confusion' caused by double negatives, and the tendency of negatively phrased 'agree / disagree' items to lack clarity. It was therefore necessary to adopt a different procedure for the investigation of student competence. The Likert scale should only be used when connected to positive statements and this was taken into account during the modification of the questionnaire for the Main Study.

2.6.2 The students' teaching experience

2.6.2.1 Influences upon student approach to the teaching of reading

The nomination by the students of the most significant influence on their approach to teaching reading is shown in Table 6.

It is noted that whilst class teachers tended to have a strong influence, college supervisors were not felt to have much impact at the time of this practice. 56% of early years students and 32% of later years students ranked college supervisors in fifth place; 31% of early years students and 35% of later years students did not mention supervisors at all. At the time of this survey, college tutors were expected to take a leading role in the supervision of students during their practice in school.

It is thus surprising that this requirement was not reflected in the students' perception as having a strong influence. This area therefore required further investigation, which led to the inclusion of the supervisors' own views in the Main Study.

Table 6: First-ranked influences upon student approach to teaching reading

	Early years		Later years	
Influence	No	%	No	%
College course	11	28.2	1	3.6
Information from class teacher	16	41	8	28.6
Observation of class teacher	3	7.7	8	28.6
Previous BSE	9	23.1	9	32
Guidance from supervisor	0	0	1	3.6
Others	0	0	1	3.6
Total	39	100	28	100

Elsewhere in the questionnaire 28% of students strongly agreed and 58% agreed that they mainly followed their class teacher's approach in the teaching of reading. Of the class teachers, 12% strongly agreed and 61% agreed that 'students do not rely upon the knowledge from their college course during the teaching practice. They mainly follow the class teacher's approach.'

The above results must be judged in the light of the difficulty which students experienced during BSE in the implementation of their own approach, particularly in the teaching of reading, when taking over a class for a short six-week period. Whilst the above comments suggest teacher influence on the approach to reading, elsewhere in the questionnaire teachers and students tended to agree that the college course approach to reading was not dissimilar to that used by teachers in school. It would therefore be useful to examine in further detail students' and teachers' classroom practices. Questions used in the main survey were therefore made more elaborate and specific.

In this context, a further exploration of student beliefs and attitudes would be illuminative about their needs. The inclusion of open questions in the questionnaire

might provide some revelation, but face-to-face interviews appear to be a more promising resource towards this aim and the introduction of interviews as an additional tool of inquiry was therefore planned for the Main Study.

2.6.2.2 Areas of teacher influence upon students' approaches in reading

Teacher influence on student approach seems to exist in three areas.

The approach to reading

Listening to individual children read appeared in first place for 52% of the students and 80% of teachers.

Methods of recording children's progress in reading

In recording pupils' progress, 42% of the students placed 'recording books and pages the child had read' in first place. The majority of teachers listed 'recording pages / books the child has read' as their main method of record-keeping, confirming the informal observation that this was a favoured approach of record-keeping by most teachers. It could be argued therefore, that this question should have been abandoned in future. However, it was considered interesting to establish if there were similar findings in the larger sample involving the appropriate population from four colleges and also if there were significant differences between the colleges.

Organisation of reading in the classroom

Students and teachers identified the most frequently used method for the organisation of reading within the classroom according to the information shown in Table 7.

These results show a similarity between the methods used by teachers and by students. Whilst the strong correlation is noted, a statement of causality is hypothetical since other variables might be involved. Although elsewhere in the questionnaire 93% of teachers believed that students followed their example in organisation of reading in the classroom, the restriction of taking over a class for a relatively short time must come into play here. Open questions in the questionnaire and comments during interviews provided information in this area.

Table 7: Organisation of reading in the classroom

Respondents		Individuals		Groups		Whole class	
		No	%	No	%	No	%
Students	Early yrs	31	79.5	4	10.3	4	10.3
	Later yrs	9	32.1	0	0	19	67.9
	Total	40	59.7	4	6	23	34.3
Teachers	Early yrs	33	84.6	6	15.4	0	0
	Later yrs	20	57.1	2	5.7	13	37.2
	Total	53	71.6	8	10.8	13	17.6

2.6.2.3 Responsibility for the teaching of reading in the classroom

The degree of responsibility afforded to the students for the teaching of reading in the classroom as perceived by the students and teachers is shown in Table 8.

There seemed to be agreement between students and teachers in the perceived responsibility for the teaching of reading in their class. Most students shared this responsibility with the class teacher.

On being questioned about the ability of students to accept full responsibility for the teaching of reading, students generally felt incapable whereas the teachers were equally divided on this question.

College guidelines for the final BSE state as one of the aims, 'to give students responsibility for teaching across the whole curriculum and with the whole class, in conditions approaching those of a first teaching post'. In view of the individual differences in pupils' reading development and the short-term involvement of the students, it is questionable if this is a realistic aim.

Table 8: Degree of responsibility given to students, as perceived by students and teachers

		Full resp.		Shared resp.		No resp.	
Respondents		No	%	No	%	No	%
	Early yrs	5	12.8	34	84.2	0	0
Students	Later yrs	9	32.1	16	57.2	3	10.7
	Total	14	20.9	50	74.7	3	4.5
	Early yrs	2	5.1	37	94.9	0	0
Teachers	Later yrs	12	34.3	21	30	2	5.7
	Total	14	19	58	78.4	2	2.7

Connected to the question of responsibility for the teaching of reading, which is worthy of further exploration, is that of student ability, expressed in their competence and confidence. The pilot questionnaires approached this issue in a somewhat simplistic manner, and further consideration is required.

2.6.2.4 Use of resources by students

The questionnaire required the students to state their perceived knowledge on the use of reading schemes in their teaching before and after the teaching practice. The response showed that most students (81%) used reading schemes with their pupils, which also correlated with the response of teachers (88%) who adopted the same scheme-based approach. As Table 9 shows, the use of schemes during BSE enhanced the students' feeling of competence. However, their feeling of incompetence (54%) before the teaching practice does not correlate well with the teachers' opinion which judged 59% of students as being adequately prepared for using reading schemes.

Table 9: Students' perceived knowledge of reading schemes before and after BSE

	Yes		No		No response	
	No	%	No	%	No	%
Knowledge before BSE	23	34.2	36	53.7	8	11.9
Knowledge after BSE	45	67.2	12	17.9	10	14.9

2.6.2.5 Explanation of school policy to students by teachers

In response to a question on the degree of explanation of school policy on reading given to students, the results are shown in Table 10.

Table 10: Degree of explanation of school policy on reading

Respondents	Category	No	%
Students	Not at all	13	19.4
	Vaguely	42	62.7
	In detail	12	17.9
Teachers	Yes	66	89.2
	No	8	10.8

The data are difficult to compare, since the question was phrased differently for students and teachers. This was changed for the Main Study. However, there seems to be a discrepancy in teachers' belief of having explained the school policy and students not perceiving this to have happened.

2.6.3 The college course

The student and teacher questionnaires offered a range of open and closed questions for comments related to the college course on reading.

Students listed as helpful aspects of the college course –

- lectures on encouragement of reading,
- knowledge of the reading process,
- examination of various reading schemes,
- written assignments during years two and three of the course.

However, 76% of students considered that there were aspects of teaching reading for which the college course should have prepared them better. They specified their needs as –

- how to plan and organise reading,
- a greater knowledge of what to expect in schools,
- how to organise the whole class,
- linking reading to other curriculum areas.

In particular the majority of later years students requested more information on the early stages of reading development.

Regarding the consultation with different sources on the teaching of reading, notes from the college course received a low rating, with class teachers being the overwhelming first point for consultation.

Again, regarding the use of reading schemes and kits, 72% of students sought the teacher's explanation, whereas only 8% mentioned information received during the college course. 54% stated that they used schemes according to their own common sense. There seemed to be an identified need to investigate further how students rate various aspects of the college course, and to consider this in the Main Study.

2.6.4 The class teachers

The response from the teachers added a dimension to the inquiry. The majority of teachers (57%) involved in the Pilot Study had previously experienced fourth-year students on teaching practice in their classrooms. All were experienced teachers with 58% having had between eleven and twenty years, and a further 28% more than twenty years teaching experience. Many teachers indicated their positive attitude towards an inquiry of this kind, either by informal comments or in accompanying letters when returning their questionnaires.

When asked about the quality of student preparation, 71% of teachers felt that students were well or adequately prepared by the college in their knowledge of methods and approaches. 44% of teachers believed that their approach to the teaching of reading did not differ from that presented in the college, and only 13% agreed with the statement that the 'college course presents the students with unnecessary theory on the teaching of reading which they do not need in the real world of the classroom'. The students' knowledge of reference reading was frequently mentioned as a positive aspect of the college course. Teacher opinion was equally divided regarding students' ability to accept full responsibility for the teaching of reading.

In identifying areas of inadequate preparation, teachers cited organising listening to children read, understanding the mechanics of reading, developing reading for learning, teaching phonics, organising progression in reading and maintaining children's interest in reading.

Among suggestions for future development were –

- more contact with college supervisors – 47% of teachers stated that supervisors had never discussed the teaching of reading in relation to the student's performance with them,
- more acquaintance with the college course and the specific expectations by the college in this area,
- reading to be made a priority area during the final BSE,

- more practical experience for students outside their BSE.

Regarding their own professional development, only 36% of teachers felt that their initial training had prepared them adequately for the teaching of reading. 51% of teachers had participated in in-service training for reading over the past six years and 85% would welcome more opportunities for in-service training in this field. The variety and scale of issues brought out by teacher comments is of value, but was not considered suitable at this stage for further enquiry within the scope of this study. Nevertheless, there were a number of findings which instigated modifications to the main survey.

2.7. Validity and reliability of the questionnaires

Assessment of the technical adequacy of the questionnaires as the main research instruments, their design and their method of implementation were essential considerations which had to be addressed. These features formed part of the *validity* and *reliability* of the questionnaires, and it is these aspects which required attention .

2.7.1. Questionnaire validity

The validity of a questionnaire is a measure of whether it provides the information which the research requires and for which claims are made. Sapsford and Evans (1987, p.260) distinguish between two types of validity 'Internal validity refers to the appropriateness of the measuring instruments; external validity is to do with the generalisability of the results.' Thus piloting the questionnaires was only concerned with *internal validity* and was required to establish that the research instrument truly measured what was intended to be measured. Judged against the ' simple definition that "validity is the extent to which an indicator is a measure of what the researcher wishes to measure",' (Sapsford & Evans, 1987, p.259) the results of this survey, in providing the required information, confirm the *face validity* (the property of measuring what it is intended to measure) of the questionnaires. There is a variety of methods which can be used to assess validity, some of which have been applied in this study.

Writers such as Sapsford and Evans (1987, p.263) warn of problems with research design, which are particularly inherent in surveys, such as this study. Within a particular field of interest the researcher may, by selecting particular areas for investigation and designing specific instruments for exploration, exclude, either by accident or design, many aspects that could be considered worthy of examination.

In order to ensure *content validity*, which is an amplification of *face validity* and relates to the extent to which the whole area under investigation is covered, the researcher engaged four independent experts in the field of teaching reading and teacher preparation. They were actioned to deliver an opinion as to whether the questionnaires covered the field under investigation appropriately, addressed the area comprehensively and in a balanced way, not unreasonably excluding certain items in favour of others. Whilst this was of course a matter of individual judgement, the selection of assessors from four different institutions for this purpose was intended to provide greater objectivity. The need for more detailed information in response to some questions was identified as a result of this process and led to modifications to questionnaire sections such as those on methods of assessing children's reading, and students' opinion on various aspects of the college course on teaching reading.

The survey instruments were required to be valid in achieving the purpose of exploring the field chosen for investigation. As far as possible they were expected to accurately describe how students operated and felt about the teaching of reading during the final stage of their training. The possibility of bias was acknowledged, which might distort any results based upon information which 'involves an interaction between researcher, research circumstances and research subject' (Sapsford and Evans, 1987, p.261). The researcher's own known interest in the area of teacher preparation and the teaching of reading might be considered to have influenced the responses of subjects, in particular with students in the researcher's own institution. It could be postulated that they might have given the responses they believed the researcher might expect or would be pleased to hear. This degree of familiarity with the researcher's professional interests only related to the home college and would not have pertained in the Main Study with students from other institutions, which comprised the majority of surveyed individuals. Thus predisposition, if exhibited by respondents from the researcher's own college,

should have been detected and filtered out in an examination of the results. Regarding the Pilot Study carried out in the researcher's own institution, biased results of this type were possible. Instead of seeking information on what students actually did during their teaching practice, the questionnaire might have been directed towards what students thought they ought to do in the classroom.

With this approach however, the questionnaire would not have provided accurate information as a measure of students' classroom practice. Direct observation and interview might have produced more objective and therefore possibly more valid data, but the integration into a single study of the views and interpretations of different observers by this method of data gathering, although appearing to be more valid, would 'suffer the criticism of being less reliable and more subjective' (Coolican, 1991, p.39). Coolican, in comparing modes of questioning, underlines an assurance that the 'privacy of the postal method is likely to produce more honest answers' than face-to-face interviews (p.92). To increase the likelihood of accurate information being obtained, a number of other procedures were applied to guard against bias.

The possibility mentioned earlier of respondents' predisposition to the researcher's own interests was minimised by adopting the procedure of anonymous questionnaires, and thus respondents did not expect to obtain any credit or deficit from the provision of particular replies.

In using self-reporting instruments such as questionnaires, which by definition are intended to provide subjective information, the possibility of eliciting biased information existed. This effect was mitigated by adopting the procedure whereby exploration of the same situation, concept or activity from the perspectives of two different groups of respondents was applied, and this was considered to provide a further step towards enhancing the validity of data. The Pilot Study made use of this approach by frequent examination of the same items in the teachers' as well as the students' questionnaire. However, the data collected in the Pilot Study identified the requirement that the main investigation should be tailored to provide information which could be used to further 'cross-check on validity by means of triangulation' (Sapsford and Evans, 1987, p.261). The main survey was therefore widened to provide

perceptions and viewpoints on the same area of investigation not only from the perspectives of the two groups – students and their class teachers – involved in the Pilot Study, but also from an additional group, the college supervisors. These three groups were all involved in the same contexts and areas of content during the final BSE.

The aspect of wording is an important consideration in the assessment of a questionnaire's validity. Moser and Kalton (1971, p.323) express their scepticism of the value of the leading question, 'which, by its content, structure or wording, leads the respondent in the direction of a certain answer'. In this regard, certain questions in both the student and teacher questionnaires might be considered to exhibit this characteristic. In particular the negative wording used in items 33, 35 and 37 of the student questionnaire and items 28 and 29 in the teacher questionnaire might have had a 'leading influence' on respondents, although subjects were invited to agree or disagree. Whilst the questions in these sections proved to be extremely reliable, some doubt might be felt concerning their validity. It was therefore decided that these sections should be deleted and replaced by questions providing nominal or ordinal data in the questionnaires for the Main Study.

2.7.2 Questionnaire reliability

Another important factor that needed to be addressed was the *reliability* of the research tool, which again must be assessed concerning both internal and external aspects.

The *internal reliability* of questionnaires, which refers to its internal consistency, was examined by using separate questions to elicit the same information from respondents when approached in different ways. For example, questions 8 and 29 in the teacher questionnaire both attempted to investigate the influence of the class teacher upon student performance as perceived by the teachers. The purpose of internal consistency checks of this kind is to give the researcher 'greater confidence in his data, but otherwise they will at least warn him of the presence of response errors' (Moser and Kalton, 1971, p.407). Reasons for inconsistency in responses can then be investigated. For the above questions, 16% of the teachers provided inconsistent replies. Closer examination showed that this 'apparent inconsistency *may* be genuine' (op. cit., p.412),

and that it was in fact caused by the complex structure of item 29, which referred to the college course as well as the class teacher.

Regarding the whole study, it was also necessary to establish whether the questionnaires could be relied upon to produce consistent results when re-administered in similar situations and under similar conditions. To assess how well this requirement was met the method of replication was used to provide a check on the *external reliability* of the questionnaires, to meet the definition which requires the questionnaires 'to produce the same scores from the same people at different times' (Coolican, 1991, p.34).

When the questionnaires were first implemented for the Pilot Study in December 1987 and February 1988, a group of 15 students and ten teachers respectively agreed to participate in further activities related to the study. Each of these subjects was allocated a number from 1 to 15, which was noted at the top of their questionnaire during its completion for the Pilot Study. The questionnaires were re-administered to these subjects as described below with their questionnaire being marked with the appropriate number. It was noted and observed that procedures for the implementation and re-implementation of questionnaires were standardised as far as possible and that the same conditions for their completion and the same introductory statements were employed.

2.7.2.1 The assessment of reliability of the student questionnaire

Piloting of the student questionnaire took place with the total year-four B Ed population at the end of the Autumn Term between 5th and 15th December 1987 following the completion of a six-week spell of teaching practice. After their Christmas break and during the week of 11th January 1988, the previously identified 15 students were asked to complete another copy of the questionnaire relating to the same period of teaching practice, noting the number allocated to them earlier on the front sheet. The data obtained from this exercise in replication, when compared with the initial questionnaire completion, provided the necessary information for an assessment of the reliability of the instrument used in eliciting these responses. A four-week interval between the test and re-test situation is generally regarded as acceptable for the checking of reliability. In ideal circumstances, participants involved in such a

replication activity would not have been subject to any influences which could result in a change of their knowledge, skills, beliefs or attitudes from the first administration of the questionnaire. The use of the Christmas vacations for an interval between these two activities seemed to be the most appropriate arrangement to meet this requirement. Students did not receive further course input or gain additional teaching experience during this time, which could have caused a deviation from previous responses; they had not been given any assignments in the teaching of reading over this period, which might have resulted in the acquisition of new information from reference reading.

Despite the measures taken to control those variables which could affect the reliability of the questionnaire, it cannot be assumed that comparison of sets of responses obtained from administering and re-administering the questionnaire provides an exact test of reliability. Events beyond control could effect changes which might result in the measured correlation between the two sets being 'an inflated or deflated estimate' of the questionnaire's reliability (Moser and Kalton, 1971, p.354). Sources of error affecting reliability are suggested by Moser and Kalton –

> At the re-test, respondents may remember their first answers ... which would make the test appear more reliable than is truly the case. Alternatively ... they may make less effort the second time to give accurate answers, or events occurring between the two tests may cause them to change their views on the subject. In any of these circumstances, the test and re-test scores are not exactly comparable. (Moser and Kalton, 1971, p.353)

It is pointed out that a longer time-lapse between questionnaire administrations reduces the likelihood of 'memory effect', but increases the possibility of 'intervening events'. For the purpose of this study it is considered that use of a four-week long vacation for the intervening period represented the most appropriate means of balancing the above mentioned risks without being able to assume their total elimination.

In order to assess the reliability of the questionnaire, results of the first administration had to be compared with responses from the second administration to provide a measure of correlation. The resulting correlation coefficient which was derived, expressed the

strength of the relationship between the two administrations of the same questionnaire and could thus be regarded as an indication for its reliability.

Reliability analysis of the student questionnaire

In the study, responses to the questions in both the student and the teacher questionnaire were not expressed in exact numerical terms, such as would be the case with the allocation of quotients to subjects in intelligence tests or points achieved for correct answers within experimental designs using parametric tests. Here the data were expressed either at the nominal level, by allocating subjects to categories, or in an ordinal scale 'when it is only capable of being ranked in order of magnitude' (Greene and D'Oliveira, 1993, p.41). The statistical tests for assessment of reliability appropriate to this investigation had therefore to be of the non-parametric kind. Reliability of the questionnaire has been examined by the calculation of a measure of correlation between the two administrations of the questionnaire using two appropriate non-parametric statistical tests –

1 Spearman's coefficient of rank correlation, rho (ρ), was used for measuring the degree of correlation between the sets of responses from the first and second questionnaire administration regarding those items expressed at the ordinal level.

2 The phi coefficient (ϕ) was used to measure the correlation between the two questionnaire administrations when responses to questions fell into two distinct categories only (nominal level), such as 'yes' / 'no' answers.

Spearman's coefficient of rank correlation (ρ)

This is a non-parametric test involving ranking that is used when the data are measured on an ordinal scale and provides a measure of the amount and significance of any correlation between two sets of responses to a particular set of questions. The coefficient so derived lies between +1, when paired ranks on two sets of variables are in exactly the same order, and –1, when the ranks are in exact inverse order. Coefficients of around zero indicate random rank arrangements with respect to the two sets and signify little correlation. Thus the derived correlation coefficient indicates the strength and direction of the relationship between the two sets of data.

Subject responses are ranked in order for both questionnaire administrations, and the greater the similarity between ranking in the two sets of responses the higher the correlation coefficient. The overall measure of mismatch between the ranking in the two observations is calculated using the formula –

$$\rho = 1 - \frac{6 \sum d^2}{n (n^2 - 1)}$$

where d is the numerical ranking difference for each of the n observations, and the difference between 1 and the coefficient ρ represents a measure of the lack of correlation. Thus the above formula allows the degree of correlation to be calculated between responses obtained from students to the same set of questions on two different occasions, where the responses are obtained and treated in a ranking method.

Some caution needs to be expressed when calculations are based upon data containing multiple tied ranks. Siegel (1956, p.210) points out that 'the effect of ties is to inflate the value of r [ρ]'. In the case of few tied rankings it can be shown that the correction that needs to be applied to the original formula is negligible. However, in cases where a large proportion of ties in the two variables exists, a correction factor to the value of ρ needs to be calculated. This correction factor to the correlation coefficient is computed following the analysis (Siegel, 1956, p.207), where the correction factor T for each group of tied observations is given by –

$$T = \frac{t^3 - t}{12}$$

with t being the number of observations tied at a given rank.

When the proportion of ties is large Siegel suggests the use of the formula –

$$\rho = \frac{\sum x^2 + \sum y^2 - \sum d^2}{2 \sqrt{\sum x^2 \ \sum y^2}}$$

where $\sum x^2 = \frac{n^3 - n}{12} - \sum Tx$ and $\sum y^2 = \frac{n^3 - n}{12} - \sum Ty$.

Relating the calculated value of correlation coefficient to the table of significance levels indicates the probability that this correlation has occurred by chance, and whether the

particular question under consideration shows results at an acceptable consistency level between the two administrations.

The phi coefficient (ϕ)

Some questionnaire items generate responses that fall into one of two possible categories such as 'yes' and 'no'. The two categories are said to be *discrete* or *dichotomous*. The appropriate test for this situation is the phi correlation, since 'developed from r [ρ] it allows bivariate samples to be correlated' (Crocker, 1981, p.152). For calculating the phi coefficient the following formula is used –

$$\phi = \frac{BC - AD}{\sqrt{(A + B)(C + D)(A + C)(B + D)}}$$

where A, B, C and D are the values of frequency contained in the four cells of the following table –

		1st Test	
		no	yes
2nd Test	yes	A	B
	no	C	D

The calculated value of correlation coefficient is related to the table of significance levels to establish whether an acceptable level of reliability has been achieved.

2.7.2.2 Conclusions on the reliability of the student questionnaire

The method of replication was used to assess the reliability of the pilot questionnaire. For this, the correlation between responses of the same subjects from the administration and re-administration of the questionnaire was calculated using either Spearman's or the phi coefficient method, depending on the kind of data to be analysed. In using Spearman's rank order correlation formula, consideration was given to the large

proportion of tied ranks. In these cases the correction suggested in Siegel (1959) was applied to the original formula.

Overall, the statistical analysis suggested acceptable reliability for the majority of questionnaire items in the student questionnaire. For most questions a correlation coefficient of 0.7 and above was achieved, with a significance level beyond 0.01.

Five questions did not reach the above level of reliability. Questions 25 and 27 showed less reliability with correlation coefficients of only 0.51 and 0.53 respectively and a significance level of 0.05. The ranks offered to subjects did not provide sufficiently accurate description and clear distinction, the difficulty in response being caused by the two categories 'some' and 'very little'. It was felt that the presentation of these questions on a ranking basis provided little valuable extra information and that they should therefore be replaced by open questions in the questionnaire for the Main Study.

Questions 9, 15 and 23 also showed lower reliability than the majority of questions in the pilot questionnaire with correlation coefficients between 0.44 and 0.46 and thus barely reaching the significance level of 0.05. In all three questions ranking the replies proved to be somewhat unreliable, because students seemed to have difficulties in listing their responses in consistent order of priority. Additionally question 9 seemed to suffer from a lack of specificity that also caused it to be less reliable. For these three questions the following modifications from the questionnaire of the Pilot Study (PQ) were made for the Main Study (MQ) –

PQ 9: Question deleted. Topics to be treated under more specific aspects in MQ 10, 11, 16, 27.

PQ 15: Ranking deleted. Topic extended and treated under separate aspects in MQ 17.

PQ 23: Ranking deleted. Topics combined with those of PQ 24 into MQ 23.

2.7.2.3 The assessment of the reliability of the teacher questionnaire

Statistical analysis of the teacher questionnaire did not identify any significant lack of reliability as had been shown by the student questionnaire. This difference in the

reliability of the two questionnaires is due to the avoidance of requirements to rate characteristics in the order of perceived priority in the teacher questionnaire. For the teacher questionnaire correlation coefficients between the first and second administrations lay between 0.81 and 0.92, indicating significance levels of below 0.01.

2.7.2.4 Limitations of reliability analysis

It should be noted that despite the above reliability analysis it is not possible to arrive at mathematically exact measures of reliability for the questionnaires. A number of questions require responses based on subjective opinions. Crocker (1981, p.37) explains that 'it is quite possible over a short period of time to get considerable changes in the responses', when attitudes are being studied. Whilst this can affect the measure of reliability as well as the lack of consistency within the questionnaire, it has to be remembered that these factors cannot be separated, but that 'reliability is only concerned with the inconsistencies that are the result of lack of perfection within the test' (op. cit., p.37).

2.8 Summary and conclusions

The purpose of the Pilot Study was to establish that the use of the specifically constructed questionnaires was a feasible means of gaining the desired information, to investigate various aspects of questionnaire design and distribution, to produce the information in the most useful and relevant form, and to explain ways of evaluating, analysing and recording the resulting information.

Piloting the questionnaires involved a sample of 97 final-year B Ed students in one college and their class teachers, of whom 69% of the students and 76% of the teachers returned their completed questionnaires.

The Pilot Study was designed to provide descriptive data from students and their class teachers on the important aspects of student performance in the teaching of reading during classroom practice. It was considered an essential precursor to the Main Study to tighten the formulation of the research instrument, devise the most effective form of its

application, confirm its validity and reliability and examine the feasibility of applying meaningful analysis to the information provided and presentation of results.

The use of the computer program *dBase II* provided for ease of analysis in the Pilot Study. A more comprehensive tool for analysis was however required for surveying the substantially larger population in the Main Study. Therefore alternative data processing software was sought and employed for analysing the data collected by use of the questionnaires in the Main Study.

The questionnaires set out to explore (see section 2.3 for details) –

- the students' view on their performance in the teaching of reading during their final BSE,
- the class teachers' view on the students' performance in the teaching of reading,
- the influence of the college course upon the students' performance in the teaching of reading.

Findings from the Pilot Study suggested that the desired information from the main investigation could reasonably be expected by use of the questionnaires. Results from piloting the questionnaires indicated certain trends, such as the strong influence of the class teacher and the comparative lack of influence of the college course upon students' perceived performance. These trends were identified as being worthy of further study, and this provided the basis for expanding some areas of the questionnaires and extending the investigation to a third participant group in the Main Study. Thus the Pilot Study not only generated the information sought, but additionally revealed trends and suggested modifications to the research design and the tool employed in the acquisition of data.

The information resulting from piloting the questionnaire was –

- descriptive, and
- indicative of trends which required to be further explored in more extensive study of a larger sample and over a longer period.

Piloting the questionnaires was also illuminating for suggesting additional methods and areas for investigation which would likely be of assistance in the Main Study, such as follow-up interviews, a more detailed exploration of student opinion on aspects of the college course in the teaching of reading, and an extension of the population sample to include the college supervisors.

Thus the execution of the Pilot Study was of value in assisting the design of the Main Study.

3 Planning the Main Study

3.1 Restatement of rationale and aims

3.1.1 Aims and extent of the study

The overall theme of the study was to explore the performance in the teaching of reading of primary teacher trainees during their final Block School Experience (BSE), and thus to arrive at an impression of their skills and an understanding of their attitudes and beliefs at this stage of their professional preparation. A statement of the major aims is presented in section 1.4, and of the objectives required to meet these aims in section 2.3. A further discussion is given in section 3.2.3 of the objectives in the form of fundamental questions which were the basis for the questionnaire design.

The Pilot Study, although suggesting supplementary forms of data collection, demonstrated that the questionnaires were a suitable tool for generating the desired information and had determined their reliability. Thus piloting the questionnaires had determined their validity and reliability.

Whilst important questions and issues emerged from the Pilot Study, it had to be recognised that they had only been drawn from a single institution and evaluated by descriptive statistics. To employ a wider, more eclectic approach, the Main Study in its first phase therefore extended the investigation to include the year-four B Ed student population of three other institutions in addition to the one already involved in the Pilot Study and analysed the collected data using appropriate methods from inferential statistics. Bearing in mind the limitations in available human and material resources for the research, this represented a workable and adequate scale in achieving the objectives set for the study.

Findings from the extended survey then provided the basis for an in-depth study with students from one institution, investigating if and how much student behaviour and beliefs concerning the teaching of reading could be influenced.

Subsequently a smaller survey followed newly qualified teachers who had participated in the previous investigations at the college into their own classrooms, examining if any of their activities and beliefs regarding the teaching of reading differed from those expressed earlier by the relevant student population.

3.1.2 Rationale for the focus of the study

Consideration about the quality of education had given rise to the rationale for this inquiry. The question of teacher effectiveness in the teaching of reading had led to the investigation of teacher preparation in this area, as indicated by the performance of B Ed students during their final BSE. McNeil and Popham (1973) point out that teacher effectiveness is shown in the teaching process and pupil outcomes. They define a teacher as 'a person engaged in interactive behaviour with one or more students for the purpose of effecting a change in those students' (p.219).

The present study did not investigate students' effectiveness and competence in the teaching of reading directly by examining the *outcome* of their teaching, but instead chose to explore the *process* of their teaching. A school experience of six weeks is too short to register any measurable change in pupil achievement in reading that could reasonably be expected to have been caused by the teacher trainee. Instead of applying McNeil and Popham's model of teacher effectiveness to the classroom situation with the student in the teacher role and pupil performance as the outcome of the trainee's teaching, for the purpose of this research the model was applied to the training institution with the college course in the role of the teacher effecting a change in students' behaviour.

The performance of teacher trainees during their final BSE could be regarded as the outcome of their preparation during the college course and consequently provided the focus for this study. The system selected to gather data for analysis of students' performance concerning the teaching of reading had been designed to provide as complex and holistic a set of information as possible. Observation as the only informant on students' teaching behaviour, as for instance available from the students' class teachers, was therefore supplemented by students' own perceptions of their teaching as

well as those of their college supervisors. Thus by using different, though subjective, sources of information agreement as well as conflict between expectations, observations and belief systems valued by different groups would become apparent. This represented the core aspect of the study in a direct sense, but was also seen as a possible contribution to the process of reflection and appraisal by students and teachers as well as by institutions when reviewing and planning the professional preparation of future teachers for the teaching of reading. Tisher and Wideen (1990), in discussing the relationship in education between research and practice, express the view that research is able to inform practice. Whilst these authors emphasise that the value of educational research lies not in proposing solutions but in identifying problems, they draw attention to the importance of reflection as a guide to future action.

> Research can serve to help us examine our assumptions and motives, sensitize us to the existence of variables and phenomena that might otherwise have gone unnoticed, and provide a forum of people who will debate and share ideas and problems so that reform is more likely to be stimulated and guided by conscious critical analysis rather than blind faith. (Tisher and Wideen, 1990, p.9)

3.1.3 The value of the study for educational practice

For five years before starting this study, the writer had been involved in the initial preparation of primary teachers which included participation in the planning and delivery of courses in Teaching English in the Primary School. One aspect of this work dealt with the teaching of reading. Thus an important object of the research was to inquire into the writer's own professional practice, to question assumptions and beliefs which were underpinning that practice, and to develop this practice to achieve greater effectiveness. The involvement of students in an assessment of their own teaching performance in the teaching of reading encouraged reflection upon their own learning. At the same time this involved an evaluation by students of their preparation for the teaching of reading provided by the college course.

Piloting the questionnaire showed that a high proportion of students, in assessing their own ability in teaching reading, observed a discrepancy between what they thought

they should be able to achieve and what they felt they were achieving. Nearly half of the students had either agreed or strongly agreed with the statement that they did not feel competent to teach reading. This observation of students' dissatisfaction with their own performance encouraged a further and more detailed investigation with the wider involvement of students together with the participation of class teachers and college supervisors. The extension of the study to include three additional institutions of teacher preparation gave more statistical validity to the results, and the involvement of three groups of respondents also provided enhanced confidence through cross-reference in the validity of data. Judgements made as a result of the study were inevitably based upon respondents' subjective criteria, and differing views concerning the expectations of student behaviour in the teaching of reading, which were more likely to appear with the three groups of respondents involved, led to increased objectivity of observations through the process of data collection from three different sources on the same aspect. This also indicated the particular practices and beliefs which were valued by the three groups of respondents.

3.1.4 Rationale for the research design and procedures

The Main Study consisted of two phases, a survey and a resulting course of action research. Phase One of the study aimed to establish a baseline by identifying students' teaching behaviour in reading, their perceived knowledge and competence in the field. Evidence gathered was both qualitative and quantitative and took the form of information provided by students, teachers and supervisors. Survey methods employed were those of self-completion questionnaires, followed by individual sample interviews. This part of the study was intended to be descriptive and analytical rather than prescriptive. It not only provided information from students, teachers and college tutors about what they valued in the teaching of reading, but also, by an analysis of levels of correlation, investigated associations and relationships between aspects under examination. Analysis of the acquired data was intended to establish possible overall trends and permit comparison between the responses from each of the four institutions to identify any significant differences between them.

Thus Phase One of the study provided information and increased understanding on the implications of student learning experiences upon their performance in the teaching of reading. Reflection by the students on their perceived learning in this field established questions and hypotheses for the purpose of the study. This in turn resulted in the explorations of approaches designed to improve students' performance in the teaching of reading with the year-four B Ed population in one of the institutions during Phase Two of the investigation, carried out in a cycle of action research approaches.

Whilst the purpose and reason for the inquiry remained unaltered, the data collected during the piloting of the questionnaires made it necessary to reconsider the approach taken for the Main Study. The hypothesis for the Pilot Study presented in section 2.3 attempted to test that –

> *By investigating the views of B Ed students and their class teachers it is possible to arrive at an understanding of the students' classroom performance in the teaching of reading during teaching practice.*

The breadth of information obtained through piloting the questionnaires indicated that the above hypothesis was too narrow to be applied to the Main Survey in Phase One. It was therefore decided to abandon the hypothesis before proceeding to the Main Study. An alternative model was adopted (see Figure 1) which made use of the entirety of the collected data from the three participant groups and allowed the survey in Phase One to be solely exploratory. Analysing the evidence gathered during Phase One led to a deeper understanding of the processes involved in student performance in the teaching of reading in order to arrive at a theory concerning the relationship between these processes. A hypothesis based on the emergent theory was tested during Phase Two of the study. This involved a course of action research with controlled modifications to the existing college course on the teaching of reading and an evaluation of the effect upon the perceived performance in the teaching of reading of students in the writer's college during their final BSE.

Figure 1: Model of the Main Study

Phase One – Exploratory investigation involving four colleges

Gather data by questionnaires and interviews

|

Analyse data — *Identify processes and connections between them*

|

Emergence of a theory — *Explain connections between processes*

|

Formulate a hypothesis based on emergent theory — *Predict outcome when processes are influenced*

Phase Two – Action research in one college

Test the hypothesis and modify the theory

Hypothesis 1
|
Cycle 1
|
Evaluation ⟶ Hypothesis 2
|
Cycle 2
|
Evaluation ⟶ Hypothesis 3
|
Cycle 3
|
Evaluation ⟶ **Modified theory**

Each action cycle was evaluated by repeating the survey implemented within Phase One of the research, using the same investigative approach, but with modified questionnaires, to the student population for each successive year, spanning a period of three years in total. These modified questionnaires investigated the same areas of interest as those addressed in Phase One, but in addition, being intimately connected with the action research of Phase Two, sought supplementary information related to the cycles of this action research.

The aim of Phase One of the study was thus to investigate the educational practice in the teaching of reading of teacher trainees during their final BSE. The analysis of findings then gave direction to further research during Phase Two.

3.2 Design of the Main and Follow-up Studies

3.2.1 Introduction

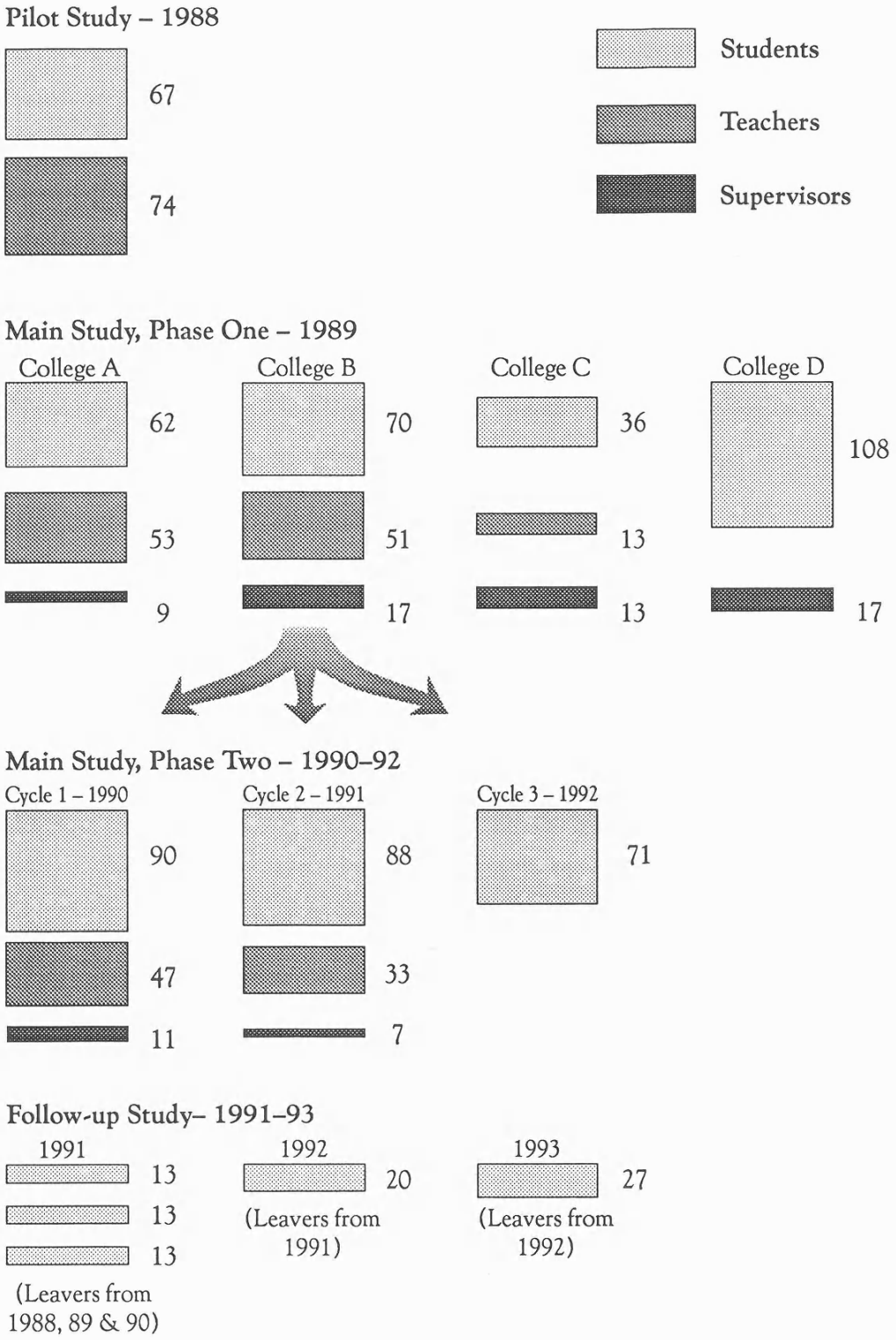
An important principle of research planning requires the establishment of an effective mutual relationship between the main areas involved in the organisation of the research work. Writers on educational research emphasise that the planning and design of a research project are not only influenced by the aims of the investigation which determine the chosen methods of inquiry, but are also dependent upon the resources available.

> Research design has to take account of the aims of the study, the resources available and the general feasibility of the study area. (Bell et al., 1987, p.20)

Therefore the research design and the proposed programme of data analysis are interdependent, since the design of the project influences the statistical methods which are appropriate in the resulting data analysis.

An overview of the study design is given in Figure 2, which shows the chronology and details of the responding participants of each of the stages.

Figure 2: Chronology of the studies with respondent participant details



students' final teaching practice, were selected for investigation. Question 10 referred to information received by teachers on the students' previous training in the teaching of reading, whilst question 27 explored the efforts made by the supervisor in discussing the student's performance in the teaching of reading with the teacher.

4 How much responsibility did teachers feel they had given to students for the teaching of reading during the practice?

The question of responsibility for the teaching of reading was also included in the student's questionnaire. Question 11 sought information on the teachers' perception on this aspect.

The investigation of this area should also make possible a comparison of the students' assumed responsibility for the whole class as compared with that for the teaching of reading.

5 How much influence do teachers feel they exert upon students in the teaching of reading?

The Pilot Study demonstrated a strong influence of the class teacher during the teaching practice, and indicated a possible long-term effect upon the students' approach to the teaching of reading. Assessing the influence of teachers upon students as perceived by teachers concerning the organisation of reading (question 12 and 13) should reveal if a common trend exists. Question 18, seen in relation to the responses to question 5, indirectly investigated teacher influence upon approaches to reading. Student performance independent of teacher influence and support was the field of interest in questions 17 and 19. The content of these latter questions was related to the quality of student preparation.

6 How well did teachers feel the students were prepared for the teaching of reading by the college course?

This addressed the core question of the teacher pre-service education debate for the teaching of reading and attempted to measure the quality of the college preparation for the teaching of reading on the students' classroom performance in this area. It was the field of interest represented in all three questionnaires and thus attempted to compile a

picture from the perception of the three participant groups. Teachers' responses (question 15, 16, 23, 24, 25, 26, 29, 34) should reveal what aspects and characteristics of the students' performance in the eyes of classroom practitioners counted as competence in the teaching of reading.

7 What is the class teachers' model of the teaching of reading?

Judgement of student performance in the teaching of reading was dependent on the respondents' own view of this process. Insight is sought into teachers' views on the teaching of reading (question 30) and their opinion on teacher training in this field (question 34).

8 How do teachers feel about their own training in the teaching of reading?

Work of other researchers, such as Bassey (1981), has already demonstrated that a high proportion of primary teachers consider their initial training in this area to be inadequate. The present study planned to add further information by exploring the teachers' views on their initial preparation for the teaching of reading (question 31) and establishing if they felt their needs had been met through in-service training (questions 32 and 33). It was considered relevant to encourage teachers to generate propositions concerning the design of future college courses in the teaching of reading (question 34).

9 Was the age range of the class matched to the students' age-specific training?

Age range of the class (question 2) would categorise teachers into early and later years practitioners, which would be of interest when investigating the responses from the teachers in these two categories. Responses to question 3 would permit an assessment of the match between students' age-specific training and class age-range allocation.

10 When had the teacher been involved with the supervision of students on final teaching practice?

Responses to question 8 would indicate the period of involvement with students of this study, whilst question 1 sought to establish if respondents had been involved in piloting the questionnaire which could have affected responses to the main questionnaire.

3.2.3.7 Supervisor questionnaire

1 What is the supervisors' subject specialism and recent teaching experience in the primary classroom, and how well informed are they about the English-language course the students have been following?

Whilst a partnership between college tutors and classroom teachers is considered desirable for students' professional development during their teaching practice, certain research evidence suggests the contribution of college tutors to be of less value than that of teachers. Tickle (1987, p.34) refers to Yates' report of a national survey of teaching practice supervision in England and Wales in which he concludes that 'there is evidence to suggest that the contribution of school-based personnel in the supervision process was of greater value than that of college-based personnel'. It is necessary to establish characteristics of the supervisors' professional background which were prerequisites for an ability to give support in the teaching of reading during classroom practice. Relevant information was the supervisors' main teaching commitment in college (question 1), their age specialism (question 2), their recent full-time primary teaching experience (question 3), and their knowledge of that part of the course which related to reading (question 6).

2 How much advice / support on the teaching of reading did supervisors feel they had given to students before and during the teaching practice?

This was also considered in the student questionnaire, and investigation from the two angles should indicate whether intended actions by the instigators were perceived as actions by the receivers. Questions 11, 15, 16, 17 and 18 attempted to specify the support and advice provided as perceived by the supervisors.

3 How much attention did supervisors request their students to give to the teaching of reading in their written preparations and evaluations?

The students' written preparations and evaluations were presented in a file and assessed in a formative and summative manner as part of their professional performance. It was the supervisors' responsibility to ensure that all areas of the curriculum were covered in the teaching file. The exploration aimed to establish whether supervisors requested

students to refer to the teaching of reading in their schemes of work before the practice (question 8), in their daily preparations during the practice (question 10) and in their written evaluations (questions 13 and 24).

4 Did supervisors believe that they made an effort to instigate communication with class teachers and students over the teaching of reading?

This question explored the contribution of the supervisors in focusing on the students' development in the teaching of reading. The areas regarded as important for supervisors' instigation were the discussion of the school's policy on the teaching of reading (question 7), the discussion of reading before the practice (question 9), the observation of the student whilst teaching reading during one of the school visits (question 14), the discussion of the student's performance in the teaching of reading with the class teacher (question 21) and the possible consultation of other tutors in college (questions 19 and 20).

5 Did supervisors perceive a difference in the approach to the teaching of reading between the college course and schools?

Supervisors would have needed to be informed about the college's approach and to have sought information on the school's approach in order to note a difference (question 22). Nevertheless, the question was not only of interest in relation to supervisors, but also in disclosing any observed differences between college and school approaches.

6 How competent and confident were the students in the teaching of reading ?

The supervisors were a party in the triangulation set-up giving their perception of student competence in the teaching of reading. Apart from the general question about student confidence and competence (question 25), specific inquiries were made about the student's knowledge of children's literature (question 12), aspects of their teaching of reading in which they performed well (question 26) or were having most difficulties (question 27). In monitoring students' development, supervisors would have observed if and how students gained in the teaching of reading (question 23) during their final teaching practice.

7 What is the supervisors' model of the teaching of reading?

This was an area for exploration with all three target groups. It was believed that respondents' own models of teaching reading should have been directing their behaviours and observations. It seemed likely that the frequency and kind of supervisors' communication with students and teachers, regarding the teaching of reading, would have been dependent upon their own beliefs and knowledge in this curriculum area. Supervisors' views on the most important aims in the teaching of reading to primary age children (question 28) and their thoughts on future initial training of primary teachers in this area (question 29) were therefore the focus for investigation.

8 How extensive was the supervisors' workload?

Question 4 was intended to confirm that the supervision time referred to in the questionnaire was that of this study. Question 5 established the number of students supervised by individual college tutors. This information could be of value in relation to other factors. Higher student numbers could imply increased supervision experience in the field, but they could also be responsible for less communication over literacy issues because of the increased demand on tutor time.

3.2.3.8 Considerations for questionnaire construction

It was anticipated that by using the above questions as a basis for data collection and analysis, additional issues would become apparent, and information could be interpreted in a wider sense, beyond the framework set by the questions. Thus the preceding questions pursued in the individual questionnaires were also expected to be a source of information concerning the following aspects of the college course relevant to the teaching of reading –

- How strong was the influence of the college course upon students' practice compared with other forces that come to bear?
- Were students able to make use during this final teaching practice of the knowledge and skills in the teaching of reading previously acquired during the college course?

- Was there a need to organise student learning and experiences regarding the teaching of reading in a way that was educationally more effective?

All three questionnaires were designed for self-completion, some of the students' and supervisors', and all the teachers' being implemented as a postal survey. To achieve a high response rate it was considered important that instructions and wording should be clear and unambiguous to participants. Cohen and Manion (1984) emphasise the importance of questionnaire appearance with well-spaced questions as one of the necessary features for inviting participation and ensuring responses. Piloting the questionnaire provided substantial reassurance concerning the clarity of the language used, so as to ensure that questions were understood by respondents. Piloting had also determined that the questionnaires only asked for information which was relevant to the study, meaningful to respondents and reasonably expected to be within their experience and knowledge. The layout of the questionnaire was arranged so that the questions could easily be completed. After a brief introduction to the study, instructions on the required form of response were printed in bold type. Questionnaire items were numbered and required a tick for the appropriate category option in the box provided for closed questions. Appropriate space was provided for participants to respond to open questions.

Questionnaires for all participants were structured in three sections –

A General information on participants.

B Experiences related to the final BSE.

C Participants views on the teaching of reading.

Whilst Converse and Presser (1988, p.41) point out that 'there are almost no experimentally based general rules to order questions', they nevertheless recommend asking the general questions before the specific. Other authors advise placing the simple questions at the beginning, the more difficult and demanding in the middle and the ones of high interest last 'in order to encourage the respondents to return the completed schedule' (Cohen and Manion, 1984, p.86). This seemed sufficient justification and reassurance for the arrangement of the above sections for which this order would apply.

Within each section, questions were arranged in logical progression in that subsequent questions were related to or, by chronological order, derived from previous questions. Considerations additional to that of placement had also to be taken. Several researchers warn of the over-use of open and too generally phrased questions, some to the point of advising the researcher to 'avoid open-ended questions in self-completion questionnaires' (Cohen and Manion, 1984, p.84), since, unlike an interview, there is no way of probing for the meaning of a particular response in that situation. Converse and Presser (1988, p.33), whilst admitting that the open question has its place, prefer the closed form for offering greater specificity in the responses. The latter believe that in offering checklists or categories as part of closed questions these not only 'communicate the same frame of reference to all respondents' (p.31), but this approach through its 'specificity aids respondent recall' (p.32). Since specificity of answers was vital for easy comparability of responses, the majority of questions in the three questionnaires were of the closed type.

The response technique for answering closed questions throughout the questionnaire was to place ticks in boxes. These questions were specific and required a structured response. The form of response was either in pre-set categories, in a multiple choice of categories or in selecting items from a checklist provided. As far as possible, the response systems for questions were kept stable to avoid unnecessary confusion by varying response modes. Answer categories such as not at all / in general terms / in detail; frequently / occasionally / never; yes / no remained in this same format within the same questionnaire and between questionnaires.

The purpose of these specific questions and categorised responses was to allow quantification of data and hence to make responses between respondents more easily comparable. This would have been more difficult with more generally phrased questions, which by design are open to wider interpretation and therefore would lead to greater variations in response.

However, a few open-ended questions were planned into the questionnaires to discover the participant's own and uninfluenced view. These questions were intended to explore a particular area, aspect, behaviour or opinion. Open questions are believed to be more

appropriate 'when not enough is known to write appropriate response categories' (Converse and Presser, 1988, p.34). Open questions were frequently used as probes to follow closed questions. Converse and Presser (1988, p.44) recommend this method firstly 'to identify respondents whose understanding of the question was imperfect' and secondly 'as a qualitative aid to interpretation'.

Open questions complemented and extended the fixed responses to selected closed questions. The supervisor questionnaire, for example, posed item 15 as a closed question – 'Did you refer to the teaching of reading in your written comments to the student?' For the response three categories were available – frequently, occasionally, never. This was followed by item 16 as an open question – 'In which aspect of the teaching of reading did you express most interest in your discussions and comments?' Information, given as a response to the open question, whilst more revealing and interesting, was nevertheless more demanding for the respondent, since there were no pre-set categories. It also rendered the analysis of those data obtained from open-ended questions more complex, and this is considered in greater detail in section 3.2.4.3.

The content and design of each of the three sections of the questionnaire require additional explanation.

Section A was solely a 'tuning-in' exercise, collecting factual information and compared with other sections, was less demanding for respondents. Responses were intended to provide information on participants' professional background, including for example the teaching experience of teachers and the date of the last BSE for the students and supervisors. Teachers were also asked in this section to give information on the kind of approaches they used for promoting and monitoring reading in their classrooms.

In the design of Section B, which was the most extensive and considered to be the most important, it was essential to maintain participants' interest in completing the questionnaire. Questions followed the natural time sequence of 'before', 'during' and 'after' the teaching practice to stimulate and ease recall. Factual questions alternated with questions asking for opinions on a particular issue. The latter were believed to 'relieve boredom and frustration as well as providing valuable information in the process' (Cohen and Manion, 1984, p.85). Closed questions predominated, however,

throughout Sections A and B. Triangulation strategies were used frequently on issues regarded as complex to reveal different attitudes and experiences through focusing on the same aspect from two or three different angles. One such aspect was the consideration of the teaching of reading by all three agencies before the teaching practice, and this was explored by the question – 'Did you discuss the teaching of reading prior to the school practice?'

Open questions of the widest kind appeared in Section C of all three questionnaires. This section explored participants' views on the teaching of reading and gave them an opportunity to express their opinion concerning teacher preparation in this field. The piloted questionnaires had asked for 'comments which might be useful in determining essential features of a college course in this area' (teacher questionnaire) and also had attempted to investigate what the students considered their 'own needs to be with respect to the teaching of reading'. Students and teachers had the opportunity in the piloted questionnaire to agree or disagree with general statements on the teaching of reading and training, but no reference to specific components and aspects of the course had been made. Whilst agreement / disagreement with statements, for reasons discussed in the Pilot Study, had been deleted, the investigation with reference to course components was considered to be particularly appropriate for inquiry from students who had reached the final stage of their training. For this reason it was located in Section C of the student questionnaire and followed by an invitation to contribute further comments. The question seeking information on the students' own perceived needs at this stage of their training was retained.

Behaviour and opinions are thought to depend on beliefs and convictions. The questionnaires were compiled so as to investigate behaviour first, and in the final section challenge participants to air their views on professional preparation for the teaching of reading as well as to present their model for 'the most important aims in the teaching of reading to primary age children'. Responses obtained through these open questions would be expected to reveal if similar or differing models of reading were held by the three participating groups, if differences existed between institutions, and if models did not correlate with educational practices in the teaching of reading. An identification of the latter would suggest a gap between existing beliefs and educational

practice, thus give a possible indication of respondents' needs to achieve the desired practice indicated by their beliefs.

Exploration of subjects' models of the teaching of reading in the primary school was located in the final section of the questionnaire since it was likely that answers to questions would be influenced by the content of previous questions. This question posed at the beginning of the questionnaire would not only have been more demanding for respondents than the provision of factual information, but might also have influenced subsequent reporting of perceived behaviour. It could of course be argued, that by placing this question at the end of the questionnaire the participants had an opportunity to tailor the content of their replies according to the behaviour reported in the earlier sections of the questionnaire. The sequence of procedure chosen for the construction of the questionnaires in this study, whereby respondents were required to report on their behaviour before presenting their views on the teaching of reading, was felt to be more realistic, since it was likely that individuals' models of reading would not have been the sole influence on their behaviour. Where discrepancies between beliefs and practice existed, it would be more likely for these to become apparent with the questions so arranged.

In designing the questionnaires, the writer was strongly guided by the aims of the study, which were rooted in personal beliefs and observations. The choice of items presented for discussion in the questionnaires derived largely from the writer's specific interests in the topic under investigation. The final item in all three questionnaires therefore invited participants to make free comments. This was intended as a strategy to present respondents with an opportunity to express their views on any topics which might have been ignored in the rest of the questionnaire and to permit additional comments on items already covered in the earlier more tightly structured part of the questionnaire.

3.2.3.9 Designing the interview schedules

Interviews were chosen as an additional research tool for data gathering and were designed as a follow-up to complement the questionnaire survey. This supplementary method was intended to explore further some of the data obtained by questionnaires.

Interviews were carried out with a small representative sample of the target populations in the four institutions using 'structured but open-ended' interviews (Coolican, 1991, p.81). This involved using an interview schedule consisting of a set of questions which was suitable for gathering the desired information from the sample of participants. As in the case of the questionnaires an existing interview schedule for satisfactory implementation in this study could not be located, and therefore an instrument for interviews in this study had to be specifically designed.

For this purpose a set of pre-determined questions in a fixed order was developed. Coolican (op. cit., p.82) points out that in this type of interview responses are not limited by fixed answers, but have the advantage over 'informal but guided' interviews (p.81), which have no pre-set questions, in ensuring that no topics are omitted. They also make responses more easily comparable.

Interview schedules were designed for samples of all three participant groups (see Appendix 2), who had previously been involved in the completion of the appropriate questionnaire. Although the particular field of inquiry was still maintained as being 'aspects of fourth year students' perceived performance in the teaching of reading', the focus was not solely on the final teaching practice and the gathering of factual information, but on the exploration of other relevant and related factors. It was the aim of the interviews to examine further with individual participants some topics of the questionnaires. Interviews were therefore designed to make more use of open questions than the questionnaires had done. The interviews provided opportunity for more detailed and specific exploration of participants' beliefs, attitudes and experiences by probing for further meaning in given responses. Since open questions make a high demand on respondents' concentration, commitment and emotions, they were interspersed with some closed questions. The design for task variety is generally regarded as an important technique to keep respondents' active attention (Converse and Presser, 1988, p.64). Thus interviews were designed with interviewees' continuous high engagement in mind. So as to maintain the subject's interest and attention it was also considered important that interview time should not exceed 50 minutes, as recommended by authorities in this field.

It was necessary to assess the suitability of the newly developed instruments for the Main Study. Initial interviews had been designed and piloted with three students, teachers and supervisors in the writer's own college at the end of the Spring Term 1989 in preparation for interviews to be conducted during the Summer Term 1989 in all institutions. It was subsequently decided that the number of items in the interview schedules should be reduced to aim at an interview duration of 30 to 40 minutes. This was on account of the limited resources being available, which dictated that all interviewing be carried out by the writer as the sole interviewer. Time limitations dictated that all interviews in distant colleges had to be completed during a single day visit. Although a small number of participants were involved in piloting the schedules, validity and reliability assessments were made. The instruments were seen to be valid since they supplied the information they were intended to provide. Reliability, assessed by the test-retest method, was high, although the low numbers involved prevented firm conclusions being drawn. Further work in refinement involving piloting of the interview schedule with larger numbers of subjects, using frequent retesting and statistical assessment would have been necessary to guarantee a completely appropriate instrument. However, in view of the complementary use of the interviews to the survey by questionnaire, the piloting undertaken was regarded as sufficient for this study.

Piloting the interview was also important for possible modifications of questions. Observations had to be made on respondents' understanding and interpretation of posed questions. In addition piloting provided the necessary training for the interviewer to gain familiarity with the interview questions, experience in recording and coding responses and sharpening sensitivity to respondents' reactions. Developing these skills led to increased confidence and improved performance in the interviewing process.

Converse and Presser (1988, p.75) remind researchers that a set of ordered questions prepared as a basis for interviews 'is not writ in stone. It is *merely* a design, a plan for action and interaction'. This approach would be worthy of consideration if diversion from the interview schedule were to present an opportunity to obtain particularly rich data on an interviewee's opinion or experience. Thus at times the interviews might take on the characteristics of the semi-structured method, where 'each person questioned will be asked the same question, but further questions are tailored to the nature of

initial replies' (Coolican, 1991, p.82). Whilst the sequence of questions would have remained, the informality of this approach would have been shown in the possibility of modified question wording or asking additional questions as used in a more conversational style. The writer was aware, however, of the potential problems this technique presented in reducing the comparability of data and the replication of the study, but thought its use to be justified as a specific and additional research tool applied in conjunction with the formal questionnaire method with the aim of gaining rich information in a more relaxed situation. For this study it was considered important for the comparability of responses to maintain the wording and order of questions constant for all participants. However, where a promise of worthwhile supplementary information was indicated the interviewees were encouraged to present this in divergent discussions.

The schedule of questions prepared for the structured interviews consisted of some 'fixed alternative items' (Cohen and Manion, 1984, p.246), such as 'Did you complete the questionnaire?', and open-ended items, such as 'How do you feel about having been involved in this research?'. Questions were grouped around five key areas and issues in appropriate sections –

1 General information

2 Teaching reading

3 The college course and the teaching of reading

4. The final teaching practice

5 Involvement in this research project

The teachers' and supervisors' interview schedules presented the five key areas in the sequence listed above. However, the student interview schedule, although covering the same five areas, varied the order. This was because the Pilot Study had shown that students were most interested in the teaching of reading, and this was discussed with them first during the interview.

The supervisor schedule contained an additional section for language tutors.

3.2.3.10 Student interviews

1 What was the students' concept of reading and their philosophy for teaching it to primary-age children?

The questionnaire attempted to establish what students regarded as the main aims in the teaching of reading. The initial question of the interview related directly to the core theme of the research by seeking the underlying basis for aims in teaching reading. The students' classroom approach in this area, their opinion of the college course, their behaviour during the teaching practice and their interest and participation in this study would all be controlled and strongly directed by their own concept of reading. Students' familiarity with the requirements of the National Curriculum for English (question 34) should have been influential to teaching.

2 To what extent did students register a personal interest in reading and its teaching?

The importance of personal interest and motivation in relation to successful teaching and learning is well-acknowledged, and has been extensively researched (Raaheim et al., 1991, pp.13 and 132). Students' own enjoyment of reading (question 35), their membership or intended future membership of a professional organisation concerned with reading (questions 32 and 33) and interest in children's books (question 36) were indicators of personal interest in reading and its teaching.

3 How did students feel about the research topic and their involvement in this study?

This was closely related to the previous question. After confirming the respondent's earlier involvement in the survey (question 2), the interview sought to establish how students valued the topic for investigation (questions 37 and 38) and their participation in the study (questions 3 and 4). Reflecting upon the possible influence of this involvement upon their own thinking (question 39) and being invited to predict the findings (question 40) of the investigation provided an opportunity to gather participants' free comments on the topic. In this connection it was interesting to determine whether students had already an established interest in research in reading (questions 5 and 6).

4 Did the items mentioned in the questionnaire sufficiently raise the students' interest?

The purpose of the interviews was to expand on the content of the questionnaire. Students were therefore invited to make additional comments (questions 7 and 9) to issues raised in the questionnaire and to indicate which questions were of most interest. It was likely that the questionnaire was restricted in choice of items for investigation and that it ignored areas of particular interest and concern to the students. Question 9 attempted to remedy this.

5 What did the students regard as the strongest influence in their professional development with respect to the teaching of reading?

Question 10 investigated this area in relation to the understanding of the reading process and the development of teaching skills in this curriculum area. Whilst information on the same topic was sought in other sections of the interview and the questionnaire (questionnaire questions 10, 24, 25, 31, 33 and 34), question 10 was planned as an expansion and double-check on the responses. It was placed in the section about the questionnaire for this reason, where it provided a natural progression from the other questions.

6 What was the students' opinion on the content and conduct of the college course with respect to the teaching of reading?

Several questions in the student questionnaire had referred to the college course concerned with the teaching of reading (question 15, 23 and 37). This section of the interview schedule was designed to further illuminate the subject matter. The heart of the question was the search for student opinion concerning the most useful (questions 11 and 16), the least useful (questions 12 and 17) and omitted (question 13) aspect of the course on reading. Students had already been asked in the questionnaire (question 37) to categorise course activities regarding their usefulness. The interview dealt with the same theme in a less structured manner, encouraging open comments on aspects chosen by respondents (question 15) and thus was designed to provide richer data than the questionnaire. The information as to whether students used notes from the college course on reading during their work in the classroom and their justification

of this (question 26) would indicate the students' opinion on the practical use of the course content as well as their ability to apply knowledge gained during their training. Question 18, dealing with the usefulness of textbooks and journals was added to the interview schedule at a later stage and had arisen from the responses to the questionnaire.

7 How did students feel about their experience in the teaching of reading during the final teaching practice?

This section of the interview schedule re-visited some of the questions already posed in the questionnaire with the hope that students would offer further comments. Questions were phrased in an open format to encourage richness and variety of response. Did the teaching of reading make a memorable impression upon students (question 31)? Did students feel that thorough preparation for the teaching of reading was necessary (questions 27, 28 and 30)? What level of importance did students allocate to reading in comparison with other areas of the curriculum (question 29)? In asking for information on students' perceived competence and confidence in the teaching of reading (questions 19, 20, 21 and 22) and for the specification of the support students had received (question 25) or would have welcomed (question 24) during the most recent teaching practice, it would be possible to identify those aspects of the training which were successful as well as the ones requiring attention. Piloting the questionnaire had indicated the strong influence of the class teacher upon the students' approach to the teaching of reading. Thus the response to the hypothetical question of which approach students would use in returning to their class without the class teacher (question 23) would disclose their own favoured method of teaching reading.

3.2.3.11 Teacher interviews

1 What was the teachers' concept of reading and their favoured approach in its teaching to primary-age children?

Whilst the section on reading revisited some of the items of the questionnaire (questions 6 and 7), it was expected that during the interview responses would be more detailed, possibly offering justification for preferences. Question 8 on familiarity with

the National Curriculum was seeking teachers' opinions on this matter. Teachers' awareness of possible influences upon their approach to the teaching of reading (questions 9 and 10) and their interest in professional development in this field (questions 11 and 12) was also investigated.

2 Did the teachers register a specific interest in reading and its teaching?

The aim was to establish whether teachers held personal and professional interests other than that regarded as essential for the teaching of reading in their primary classes. Thus, belonging to a professional organisation concerned with reading (question 4) or specialising in the teaching of reading (question 5) would indicate additional interest in the field, which in turn might have affected interaction with students.

3 Did the items in the questionnaire sufficiently raise the teachers' interest?

After establishing that teachers had completed the questionnaire before the interview (question 1), information was sought on those areas of the survey which teachers regarded as particularly important (question 2). Further comments to those items were invited, as well as encouraging respondents to discuss those areas of interest and concern which had possibly been ignored in the questionnaire (question 3).

4 What was the teachers' opinion about the study and the participants?

It was clear from comments made by students involved in the Pilot Study that the questionnaire had had an influence upon their own thinking in certain areas. Comments such as 'the questionnaire made me think more about what I had been doing / not doing in teaching children to read,' and 'it made me want to find out more about teaching reading' were frequently expressed by these students. It was therefore of interest to learn whether involvement in the research had also had an effect upon teachers' thinking (question 30). Closely related to this was the question of whether teachers valued the involvement of the other two participant groups (question 28), or whether they regarded themselves as the main suppliers of information in this field. As with all other participant groups, teachers were given an opportunity to predict the

findings of the study (question 29) allowing subsequent comparison of the opinions on the topic between the groups.

5 What was the teachers' opinion of the experience of having students teach reading in their class during their final school practice?

In specifying their expectations of the students (question 13), teachers would be able to identify positive (question 20) and negative (question 21) aspects of student performance. If they had observed the student regularly (question 19), they should have observed any difference to their own method of teaching (question 14) and the student's attitude in this area (question 15). The knowledge of (question 16) and participation in planning and reflection (question 17) of the student's work in reading would naturally have led to the realisation of the student's professional development (question 22) and the possible benefit for the pupils (question 23). Information obtained in response to these questions would indicate the teacher's active interest in the student's behaviour concerning the teaching of reading. In addition, question 18 would reveal how the involvement of the college supervisors in this part of the student's performance was perceived by teachers.

6 What was the teachers' attitude towards the college course with respect to the teaching of reading?

If teachers were to be regarded as partners in the professional development of students, it was important to establish whether and by what means they had gained information about the students' preparation for the teaching of reading by the college (question 24). To arrive at a clear picture of their role in this process they also required information on the expected student performance during the practice (question 25) and the college's attitude towards the teaching of reading (question 26). Question 27 offered respondents an opportunity to express their views and suggest modifications for the current preparation of primary teachers in this field.

3.2.3.12 Supervisor interviews

1 What was the supervisors' knowledge of and attitude towards the teaching of reading?

If college tutors were to be effective in supporting and assessing students' classroom activities in this field, it was necessary to identify their own concept of the teaching of reading (question 7), their knowledge of developments in this area (questions 10 and 11), their view of reading in the National Curriculum and their cognisance of the college course in reading (question 8).

2 Did supervisors hold a particular interest in the teaching of reading?

It was expected that supervisors recognised the important role of reading across the primary curriculum and therefore would refer to it in whatever area of the curriculum they specialised (question 6). Realising the core role of reading for children's learning might have led to a particular interest (question 4) and specialisation (question 5) in this field.

3 Did the items in the questionnaire sufficiently raise the supervisors' interest?

This part of the interview not only established that respondents had completed the main questionnaire (question 1), but also registered and investigated their particular interest in any of the items which were then offered for responses (question 2). In addition, the interview provided opportunity for supplementary comments in a non-structured manner to questions posed previously and the opportunity to consider issues for discussion which were of importance to supervisors, but which had been ignored in the main questionnaire (question 3).

4 How did the supervisors feel about the study and its participants?

Since the topic of the investigation is the preparation of future primary teachers for the teaching of reading, it could easily have been assumed that college tutors shared an interest in the study, which should have supported reflection upon and appraisal of their professional work with students in this field. Question 29 therefore examined whether supervisors were prepared to make the connection between this study and their practice.

This part of the interview also investigated if and how college tutors accepted and valued the involvement of students and teachers in this project (question 27). Question 28 was intended to indicate the college tutors' willingness and ability for appraisal by giving them the opportunity to predict the outcome of the study.

5 What expectations and experiences of the students' performance in the teaching of reading during the final teaching practice did the supervisors hold?

General information on the number of students supervised (question 12) and the frequency of visits per student (question 13) was indicative of the time available for supervision by college tutors. Supervisors' expectations of student activities in the teaching of reading (questions 14 and 15) would have been decisive in the assessment of student performance in this area (questions 19 and 20). It was also essential to establish the breadth and depth of interaction concerning the teaching of reading that had been initiated by the supervisors with the other two agents, the students (questions 16 and 18) and the class teachers (questions 17 and 21), during the teaching experience.

6 What was the supervisors' knowledge and opinion of the college course with respect to the teaching of reading?

It was expected that supervisors as college representatives would be familiar with the preparation given to students during their course. This assumption had been made in the design of the main questionnaire, which did not investigate in detail supervisors' familiarity with course details, but instead concentrated on the perception of performance and interactions during the students' final practice. Only two items in the main questionnaire considered the supervisors' knowledge of the college course on language (question 6) and their need for advice from other colleagues (questions 19 and 20). The interview therefore provided an opportunity to gain an impression, by way of a small sample, of supervisors' familiarity with (questions 22, 23 and 24) and opinion of (questions 25 and 26) students' preparation for the teaching of reading.

7 What detailed information on the preparation of students for the teaching of reading was available from those supervisors who were also language tutors?

Courses concerned with the teaching of English were designed according to the criteria set by CATE, and basic information on courses in individual colleges had been supplied by all four institutions. This provided fundamental information for the study. The presence of English-language tutors as supervisors and their planned representation in the interview sample made it possible to gather some supplementary data on the implementation of courses within the four colleges. Facilities such as a language resources room (question 30) would provide the opportunity for students to inspect useful resources such as reading materials. Although this was a closed question, it was intended to stimulate further comments. Information on materials on the teaching of reading supplied to students (question 31), the distribution lists for reference reading (question 33) and the timing of the course (question 32) would disclose possible differences in emphasis between institutions. Gorman's (1989) study had already analysed 'What teachers in training read about reading', and tutors' statements and possible justification for their choice of reference readers could provide some enlightenment for this research. Reference to the reading of journal articles (question 34) and the teaching of reading as a possible topic for an assignment would additionally inform on course policies and practices.

3.2.3.13 Considerations for interview implementation

Time and resources limitations prevented the use of video or audio recording with the associated transcription and analysis of responses, although this should have led to greater reliability and objectivity. Taking hand-written notes during a face-to-face interview might have adversely affected some interviewees, and caused the interviewer to omit the recording of some important detail. It is, nevertheless, a technique accepted by authorities in the field, such as Bell et al. (1987, p.191), who assert that 'it is not essential to transcribe interviews, and many interviewers rely on hand-written notes assembled during the interview'.

The implementation of the whole interview programme by a single interviewer avoided problems arising from differing interviewer approaches and recordings. It also gave the

writer in the role of interviewer valuable field experience. The use of the same interview schedule by the same interviewer cannot, however, guarantee the elimination of interpersonal bias attached to the presentation of some questions. It is difficult for the interviewer who has a personal involvement in the study to be totally impartial during face-to-face communication. Bell et al. (1987, p.187) suggest that 'even a watertight schedule cannot totally excise the kind of bias inherent in tone of voice, gesture and facial expression'. The aspect of research participants' familiarity with the researcher's interest was already considered regarding questionnaire responses in deciding that assurances of anonymity and confidentiality should minimise its effect. Anonymity, however, was not possible in face-to-face interviews with the researcher. In dealing with students and tutors in the home college the knowledge of the researcher and her interests has therefore to be recognised as a possible influence upon respondents in their replies.

3.2.4 Methods of data analysis

3.2.4.1 Development of an analysis proposal

The main function of the study was to seek answers to the research questions. Robson (1993) explains that this requirement influences the kind of analysis needed in that 'to come up with trustworthy answers, the analysis has to treat the evidence fairly and without bias' (p.372). This was the primary influence in the selection of methods adopted in the analysis of data.

The study employed survey methods as the principal procedures for gathering information. The purpose of the Pilot Study was to establish whether the proposed research methods were appropriate in eliciting the sought information. For this reason, the results from piloting the questionnaires were merely summarised, using descriptive statistics, whereas the data obtained from both the Main and Follow-up Studies required in addition the use of inferential statistics to evaluate their significance.

The aim of Phase One was to gather data concerning students' behaviour and beliefs regarding the teaching of reading during their final teaching practice, as perceived by

the students, their class teachers and college supervisors. It was intended to describe and explore observed behaviour, and to facilitate a series of statistical analyses aimed at identifying any significant relationships existing between variables. Emphasis was placed upon qualitative perspectives in the documentation of participants' practices, perspectives and beliefs. Hegarty (1985) points out that this perspective characterises the work of the qualitative researcher –

> A key consideration is that human action and behaviour can be understood only in terms of how the participants perceive and understand significant events. (p.111)

Analysis in qualitative research therefore differs in its function from that having an experimental design in that –

> The cardinal principle of qualitative analysis is that causal relationships and theoretical statements be clearly emergent from and grounded in the phenomena studied. The theory emerges from the data; it is not imposed on the data. (Coolican, 1991, p.236)

Thus data were mainly qualitative, deriving from described experiences and observations. However, the survey procedure was designed to produce information in a categorised form so that the essentially qualitative data were amenable to appropriate quantitative methods of analysis.

Phase Two consisted of a series of action research programmes. It investigated the existence of a cause / effect relationship between the programmes implemented during the cycles of the action research and the succeeding observed student behaviour concerning the final BSE. The research question was whether the programmed input to the students, the independent variable, caused changes in the succeeding student behaviour and beliefs, the dependent variable. Evidence of this dependency was sought by survey methods applied at the end of the final teaching practice which followed the implementation of the programme in a particular cycle. Analysis was required to establish whether statistically significant differences in students' perceived behaviour were experienced, and to investigate whether identified differences might be due to chance or to other variables outside the framework of the research.

By design, the study was of a qualitative nature displaying some features of ethnography. It made use of planning aspects commonly employed by ethnographic researchers, who 'do not start with a specific hypotheses', but 'are likely to start with a broad theoretical framework' (Borg and Gall, 1983, p.493), continuing through the accumulation and analysis of data to the generation of a hypothesis 'that can then be tested using further observation or other methods such as correlational or experimental research' (op. cit., p.493). However, in respect of research methods used for gathering the information, the study did not employ the major ethnographic research techniques of continuous and detailed participant observation in the setting under investigation, but instead implemented survey methods for the collection of data in the area specified for inquiry. Survey methods adopted in this study provided both quantitative and qualitative data.

Borg and Gall (1983, p.492) point out that educational researchers have been criticised for deviation in the use of ethnographic techniques from those originally administered by anthropologists, and this study may be seen to belong to that category. Other writers however recognise that 'qualitative research methods are exceedingly diverse' (Hegarty, 1985, p.111) and that 'qualitative research may involve some quantification of data' (Corrie and Zaklukiewicz, 1985, p.125). The latter authors, in comparing quantitative and qualitative research methods, suggest that the two techniques can be complementary and they therefore advocate greater use of qualitative approaches in combination with quantitative procedures (op. cit., p.124).

Whilst the nature of this study was concerned with the production of qualitative findings, it made use of both quantitative and qualitative analytical techniques. It was realised that deficiencies which might apply to the one approach could in many instances be offset by advantageous use of the other method, and the rationale for the use of qualitative techniques lay in mitigating the limitations of quantitative procedures.

The survey carried out during Phase One, the evaluation of action research cycles in Phase Two and the surveys of the Follow-up Study employed questionnaires which contained both closed, highly structured questions as well as unstructured questions with a high degree of open-endedness. In addition, the survey in Phase One used semi-

structured interviews which again employed mainly open-ended questions. Those closed questions which were posed requested respondents to select their answer from two or more qualitative categories set by the researcher. Frequencies of response in the appropriate categories were quantifiable and suitable for analysis by quantitative methods appropriate to this style of inquiry. Analysing these data produced informative, if somewhat limited, statistical information concerning the three participant groups' activities, beliefs and understandings. A shortcoming of this approach lay in the selection of categories, which, being specified by the researcher, were imposed upon respondents and may have inhibited their freedom of response.

Alternative qualitative procedures which were adopted avoided responses in pre-set categories and instead sought to derive categories from the participants' broad and descriptive information, which could in part be used as a basis for quantitative analysis. Question 36 in the student questionnaire is an example of such an open-ended question. Students were asked what they considered their needs to be regarding the teaching of reading at this stage of their training. Students responded freely and individually in describing their needs by selecting possible issues themselves. Hammersley (1985, p.153) appropriately defines the aim of such procedures as 'to "get inside" the way each group of people sees the world' by trying to see situations from the participating subjects' points of view, whilst Coolican (1991, p.233) justifies the use of qualitative data as being able to 'illuminate and give context to otherwise neutral and uninspiring statistics'.

This study sought to document respondents' free and independent perceptions on students' activities in the teaching of reading and their opinions on this topic by using open questions in the questionnaires and interviews. The *triangulation process*, that is the involvement of multiple-participant groups, therefore facilitated the investigation of differing perspectives of the students' practices in the teaching of reading. Whilst it was recognised that the collection of data from these disparate sources could create 'mismatches' of reports provided by the various groups, it was felt to be an attractive feature of the adoption of triangulation in the gathering of data, since it was likely to provide greater objectivity and deeper understanding of the topic under consideration. Hammersley (1985, p.158) sees the value of 'mismatches' in 'showing how the world

looks from a different point of view' and regards them as an opportunity 'to get the facts behind official accounts'. The establishment of common as well as conflicting views was considered to be of value to the investigation.

Considering the gathering of quantitative as well as qualitative data in this study, the analysis proposal was established as follows –

> *The collected* quantitative *data of the study were analysed by the use of descriptive statistics followed by inferential statistics which applied chi-square tests as a non-parametric technique in order to establish the statistical significance of derived relationships between variables and to explore the possible significant differences between selected variables.*
>
> Qualitative *data were analysed by the use of content analysis in generating concepts and categories from the acquired data.*

The purpose of the analysis was to make use of the acquired data to provide answers to the questions regarding the teaching of reading and student performance during the final teaching practice. The summary and analysis of data identified similarities and differences in perceptions between the participant groups, exploring relationships between certain variables and highlighting trends in behaviour and beliefs. Thus, following study of the presence and nature of qualitative aspects of the area under investigation, quantitative and qualitative methods of analysis were applied. Analytical processes employed were aimed at a progression from the early exploratory stage of Phase One, characterised by a comparatively high degree of openness and generality, to Phase Two which was marked by 'a considerable degree of specific "closed" focusing' in order to gain a deeper understanding, 'to extract meaning and discover relationships' (Hegarty and Evans, 1985, p.130). Thus it was necessary to conduct the analysis of data collected during Phase One of the study before the beginning of Phase Two. In the same way the detailed planning of each cycle of the action research programme in Phase Two was based upon the analysis of findings from the previous cycle.

Analysis of data obtained from the Follow-up Study is discussed in section 6.

3.2.4.2 Quantitative methods of analysis

Selection of techniques for analysis

Responses to the closed questions of the questionnaires were generally sought in the form of two or three mutually-exclusive options offered to participants. These options involved categories. Thus the collected data could be organised to present a set of frequencies attached to each of the options. Results could be expressed as a nominal measurement, being represented numerically as frequencies of the particular category selected by participants. For the purpose of recording of nominal measurement, categories were labelled 1, 2 and 3 as appropriate. The raw data were therefore in a form suitable for quantitative analysis by using descriptive statistics. This would for example express response categories as percentages of the total responding population and would indicate the modal value, being the category with the highest frequency count, of each question in the questionnaire. Appendix 8 presents tables carrying information on the frequency with which a particular category was chosen by respondents in Phase One. These indicate which part of a specified participant group had responded in a particular way to any chosen question. Having explored whether a behaviour or belief existed, this was assessed by using descriptive statistics to indicate the extent to which particular phenomena occurred.

After this initial analysis by descriptive statistics it was necessary to examine what inferences could be made 'to draw implications from the data with regard to a theory, model or body of knowledge' (Goulding, 1987, p.231). The data were analysed further to evaluate their significance regarding relationships existing between the particular variables involved. This required the use of inferential statistics, which provided the opportunity to draw general conclusions from the acquired data. The employment of inferential statistical methods during Phase One enabled conclusions to be drawn on parameters concerning the area under investigation and thus provided information required to generate the hypothesis to be tested with similar statistical methods during Phase Two.

Suitable statistical procedures were selected from non-parametric tests, these being tests appropriate for use when scores being analysed are not 'derived from a measure that has

equal intervals' (Borg and Gall, 1983, p.559). Non-parametric tests relate to the level of measurement and are employed when there are no 'exact numerical differences between scores' and 'only take into account whether certain scores are higher or lower than other scores' (Greene and D'Oliveira, 1993, p.41), as in the case when data are measured at ordinal or nominal level.

The appropriate statistical test for the analysis of nominal data, such as those in this study, where results were presented by allocating participants to two or more categories, was the *chi-square test*. Chi-square is a non-parametric statistical test concerned with frequency analysis of categorical data. The test involves an examination of the observed and expected frequencies of participants occurring in the various categories. Frequencies can be presented in contingency tables, which represent in matrix form the relationships between multiple variables and which provide a suitable display for chi-square evaluations.

Chi-square was used to test the statistical significance of relationships between observed and expected frequencies for each of the cells in the contingency tables constructed from the obtained data. The expected frequencies were the ones predicted by the null hypothesis, which states that there is no relationship between the variables under investigation, and these can be calculated from data displayed in the contingency tables. Chi-square is employed to test the null hypothesis according to which the observed frequencies would be equal to the expected frequencies as derived from the above procedure. When investigating the significance of the deviation of a set of data measured on one variable, the null hypothesis 'predicts no difference across the cells' of the table, since with respect to expected frequencies 'each cell should have the mean of all frequencies per cell' (Coolican, 1991, p.185). The observed frequencies were those collected empirically during the survey. Chi-square measures, by means of ascribing a probability, the significance of the difference between observed and expected frequencies. The greater the difference between the two frequencies, as measured by the chi-square calculation, the greater was the likelihood that the result was significant, since this would correspond to a lower probability that it was due to chance or other unconsidered variables.

For the purposes of investigating the significance of any relationship it is necessary to lay down a critical level of significance which corresponds to a specified probability of the relationship being due to chance. For the purpose of sociological studies such as this the level of probability which is chosen as the criterion for significance is 5% or 0.05, and this value was generally used in the study.

Computed values of chi-square were thus checked for significance, considering the appropriate degree of freedom, against the critical values given in Table D (Greene and D'Oliveira, 1993, p.169).

The chi-square method was considered suitable for analysing the data collected in this study, since Green and D'Oliveira (1993) state that 'the minimum is usually considered to be at least 20 subjects' (p.69). If more than one cell contained calculated expected frequencies of less than 5, such as in some calculations of Phase Two analyses, either the *Yates' Correction Factor* (Coolican, 1991, p.180) or the *Fisher Exact Probability Test* (Siegel, 1956, p.96) were used.

In this study the computation of chi-square was applied for circumstances where two variables with two or more values were tested for association. The computation was planned to be used to determine the possible significant differences between two groups, such as early years and later years students. Chi-square was for instance to be employed to test whether the two student groups differed significantly in their feeling of competence in the teaching of reading, in their behaviour pattern and beliefs regarding the teaching of reading during their final teaching practice. Similar associations of variables were tested in relation to the teachers' and supervisors' frequency data.

The application of the chi-square test where two variables having four values each were assessed for association proved useful when examining whether there existed significant differences among the four colleges in the behaviour and beliefs of the three participant groups regarding the teaching of reading. The four values for each of the variables were the observed frequencies from the four colleges. Setting up the contingency tables also offered the opportunity to inspect which cells contributed most to the total chi-square value, these being the cells most significantly at variance with the null hypothesis.

All available data from Phase One of the Main Study were submitted to systematic and rigorous analysis, noting significant results in the data as well as registering those areas for modification during Phase Two. The data gathered at the end of each action research cycle of Phase Two of the study, which were also at the nominal level, received similar treatment by use of quantitative methods to that already discussed for Phase One. Since part of the questionnaires implemented in the Phase Two surveys addressed the same questions as were used in Phase One, a comparison of the significance findings from Phase One with those from the cycles of Phase Two allowed conclusions to be drawn on the hypothesis, which was formulated at the beginning of Phase Two.

Similar statistical methods were adopted for data analysis in the Follow-up Study.

Data analysis programs

This section discusses the use of computer programs employed in the analysis of data. Statistical analysis of the extensive available data by hand would have been excessively time consuming, and it was therefore necessary to employ appropriate computer programs for this process. Initial frequency counts for all categories were carried out using *Microsoft Excel* spreadsheets in setting up files for each participant group of all surveys. Whilst *dBase II* had been employed for analysis of the Pilot Study, its capacity limitations made it inappropriate for the Main Study. For this analysis *Excel* was adopted, having regard for its capacity, ease of use and the facility for transferring *Excel Sylk* files onto the *Statistical Package for the Social Sciences* (SPSS) for the chi-square calculations.

All questionnaires were numbered as they were returned after completion. The same numbering system was employed in the setting up of *Excel* files, so that at a later stage any checks could be made on data. The student, teacher and supervisor files arranged from Phase One also indicated for each entry the code for the particular college, so that calculations for each college could be carried out. All response options in the questionnaires were coded from 1 to 4, depending on the number of options offered for the particular question. The category code numbers corresponding to these options were then transferred to the appropriate file. For ease of recording some of the subheadings within questions were broken up into sub-questions with their own set of response

options. The completed *Excel* files contained the abbreviation for the particular question as field (column) name and the code number of the option selected by the participant in the column. Thus by selecting column names and using the appropriate *Excel dcount* formula, frequency counts could be carried out, using the database arranged from the responses in the questionnaires.

The main advantage of *Excel* was that files could be transferred and used with other programmes, such as *SPSS* and *Minitab*, which was used for calculations between files from different surveys.

3.2.4.3 Qualitative methods of analysis

This section relates mainly to the analysis of those data gathered from open questions in the questionnaires and the responses received to the same type of questions during the interviews. Some qualitative data also arose from the close and continuous contact with participants during Phase Two. They consisted of incidental comments made by students, teachers and supervisors, relating to the teaching of reading and were recorded as field notes and analysed in the same manner as other qualitative data. Robson (1993), before discussing ways of dealing with qualitative data, defines them as 'words, and other data which come in a non-numerical form' (p.307) and points out, that there 'is no clear and accepted set of conventions for analysis corresponding to those observed with quantitative data' (p.371).

The qualitative data in this study were intended to complement and extend the mainly quantitative data collected during the various surveys. They were intended to offset incidences of relative narrowness which were characteristic of more highly structured quantitative data, generated by using fixed-choice categories defined by the writer, with techniques where 'the participants' own terms and interpretations are the most central data' (Coolican, 1991, p.123). It was therefore intended that the analysis of these qualitative data would add depth, meaning and further clarification to the results of the quantitative assessments of the study, leading to deeper understanding and insight of the area under investigation.

As Jones (1987) explains –

> The analysis of qualitative data is a process of making sense, of finding and making a structure in the data and giving this meaning and significance for ourselves, and for any relevant audiences. (p.263)

The method used in this study towards 'making a structure in the data' was that of generating codes or categories from the data. This process was in contrast to that employed in the collection and analysis of quantitative data, where categories had been offered to participants at the time of response. Various types of qualitative analysis with appropriate terminology attached to them – such as *grounded theory* and *cognitive mapping* (Jones, 1987, p.267), *content analysis, matrices and charts* (Robson, 1993, p.390 and 392) – are discussed in the literature. Many of these approaches overlap in the techniques they employ. There is general agreement, however, that the researcher should attempt to generate categories from respondents' comments and, by sorting and resorting them, aim to ground relevant concepts. The emphasis in analysis of the qualitative data of this study was to arrive, regarding specific issues concerning students' activities in the teaching of reading, at the particular perspective of each participant group. Concepts which crystallised from the analysis of qualitative data of Phase One together with the results of the quantitative data were then used to hypothesise relationships between variables as a basis for the programmes during Phase Two.

The study resorted to the process of *content analysis* as recommended by Robson (op. cit., p.371 and p.274) for dealing with 'open responses in questionnaires', using the *categorisation* of data for analysis as described by Coolican (1991, p.234), whilst being aware that 'the approach to qualitative data and its analysis needs to be rigorous and systematic' (Robson, 1993, p.402). A simple description would classify this process as the dismantling and segmenting of non-numerical data and subsequent re-assembly of them. Throughout this process, the researcher is making inferences from the data, and this permits the introduction of subjectivity and bias. Therefore a well-structured approach is essential. It is also necessary and a well-respected procedure when discussing findings from the qualitative analysis, to return at times to the raw data and 'include verbatim quotations from participants' (Coolican, 1991, p.235). This practice was

adopted here in the review of results from the qualitative data whilst still maintaining the need for a systematic approach. Gilbert (1993), in discussing the analysis of qualitative data, emphasises that –

> Good qualitative analysis is able to document its claim to reflect some of the truth of a phenomenon by reference to systematically gathered data. Poor qualitative analysis is anecdotal, unreflective, descriptive without being focused on a coherent line of inquiry. (p.168)

The raw data were either in the form of written replies made by respondents in the appropriate space on the questionnaires or as notes on the interview schedule taken by the writer during interviews with individual participants. These original responses were then reproduced on the word processor. This had the advantage that multiple copies of the text could be easily provided, when items under analysis fell into more than one category. Reading and re-reading of participants' comments preceded the grouping and sub-grouping of these comments, leading eventually to the generation of common categories. During this process it was essential to consider the information provided in its relevance to the issue discussed and the research question asked. The grouping of items was either carried out through cutting, moving and pasting conceptual units of text on large sheets of paper or by copying, cutting and pasting using the word processor. Robson (1993, p.277) provides useful guidelines for the construction of categories for analysis which were consulted for this study. The exercise of grouping items, although lengthy, enabled the researcher to gain entry into the perspectives of individuals on issues concerning the teaching of reading, and this opened the door to fresh insights. This benefit associated with the more time-consuming method by hand more than offset the practical advantage held by the quicker computer-assisted technique, such as Text Analysis Packages.

The introduction of category names to the generated groupings assisted in the organisation of the qualitative data in a systematic manner. Responses to issues and topics raised could then be presented as a summary sheet containing the various categories and, if appropriate, sub-categories relating to them. The process of categorisation thus assisted in systematically reducing and structuring lengthy data,

originally presented in narrative form, into a format which was more manageable in generating conclusions. Question 34 in the teacher questionnaire, for example, inspired considerable and lengthy comments from teachers, which required categorising in order that conclusions could be drawn.

The process of analysing qualitative data proved to be valuable, since it enabled the writer to enter the belief systems of the participants with an open mind for the discovery of new meaning which went beyond that provided by the closed questions.

Summary of the response analysis in the form of categories made comparable data from each of the participant groups and encouraged 'the drawing of conclusions' (Robson, 1993, p.390). Other evaluation methods adopted in drawing conclusions from the analysis of qualitative data were the search for patterns in actions and beliefs within different participant groups and the measuring of frequencies within categories.

Coolican (1991, p.38), in comparing the relative merits of qualitative and quantitative approaches, points out that qualitative methods, although producing more valid data, are more subjective and therefore less reliable. Other writers draw attention to the possible lack of reliability caused by the subjectivity in interpretation on the part of the researcher during the process of categorisation. Robson (1993, p.276) refers to the possible discrepancy between 'manifest items which are physically present (e.g. a particular word)' and 'latent content' which is the categorisers' inference or interpretation. The present study, apart from making use of triangulation to ensure greater reliability, also used a group of independent analysts to check the reliability of qualitative analysis. For this exercise a group of four librarians from the writer's college was given duplicate copies of twenty typed comments to a particular open question. The group was asked to read the comments, extract and group relevant items and construct categories. The librarians worked in pairs, followed by a group discussion in which the writer participated. At this stage, the writer had already completed her qualitative analysis, and the inference process carried out by the group was intended to uncover any discrepancy in latent content between the writer and the group which could then be discussed. All open questions were given similar treatment by submission of a sample of

respondents' comments to a second reading and analysis by an independent group for double-checking.

3.2.4.4 Taking account of missing data

Missing data can be caused by non-response to individual questions or by the failure of intended participants to complete and return their questionnaires. In this study missing data to individual questions, whilst occurring occasionally, were not a problem, since their number in relation to the total number of responses was too small to have a significant effect upon the results. Non-returns, however, did arise and needed to be considered in more detail.

Hoinville and Jowell (1982) provide a useful definition of non-respondents –

> Selected sample elements that prove to be in the survey population but do not yield any data are non-respondents; they should have yielded data and the fact that they have not done so opens the door to bias. (p.71)

The reason why bias might arise as a result of a significant proportion of non-returns is the possible different characteristics of non-respondents from the other participants. Coolican (1991, p.92) explains that it is common, when using the questionnaire method for the collection of data, that 'the proportion of non-returners is likely to be higher than the number of refusals by other approaches'. He also points out that if the number of subjects who do not return their questionnaires is a large proportion of the participants – in his chosen example the proportion of non-respondents is 60% – then this could create false impressions, when the statistical presentation of results is used to promote generalisations. It was therefore important, when presenting results, to indicate whether they referred to a percentage of the population intended for investigation or to data collected from respondents only. In this study use was made of descriptive statistics generally corresponding to the latter condition.

Researchers (Hoinville and Jowell, 1982, p.71) differentiate between various categories of non-responses, 'refusals and failure to make contact'. In this study it was the participant teachers' group which gave cause for concern. College D had already

rejected participation of their appropriate group of teachers. An attrition of teacher participants was expected in College C, where more than a year had passed since the students' final BSE, and teachers may either have failed to complete the questionnaire due to this long time lapse or had left the school meanwhile. Such a reduced sample size might have caused sampling bias and some weakness in statistical analysis, but there would still have been a sufficiently large sample to avoid statistical difficulties in applying the chi-square tests. If a significant proportion of a sample fail to respond, a recommended procedure is to contact a sample number of the non-respondents and with the same survey methods compare their responses to those of the respondent group for possible bias.

The case of teachers having left the school was unlikely to cause sampling bias, and the difficulty in tracing them due to the anonymity attached to the questionnaire procedure made this impracticable. These subjects having been lost on a random basis regarding the topic under investigation represented a quite different situation from the attrition of subjects during an experimental and longitudinal study. Non-responding teachers due to their change of school were therefore not expected to differ from those who responded. Similarly it is unlikely that those teachers who failed to respond due to the lengthy period of time elapsed between their experience with the student and the time of survey would have possessed any significant difference in characteristics regarding the topic under survey from those who responded.

An attitude relating to the satisfactory use of samples with a possible bias caused by non-respondents is put forward by Borg and Gall (1983). These authors point out that returning a questionnaire is a voluntary activity, and that the volunteer group may differ from the non-volunteer group. They argue, however, that 'the results of studies using volunteer groups can probably be safely applied to other volunteer groups, but not to the population from which the volunteers were drawn' (op. cit., p.205). This condition was met in this study by confining the claims to the findings as being related only to the volunteer respondents of the particular colleges rather than applying them to the whole population of B Ed students. Borg and Gall (1983, p.417) also explain that the rate of response is influenced by the 'salience of the questionnaire content to the respondents', and refer to a study by Heberlein and Baumgartner (1978) which found

that a return rate of 77% can be judged as salient, of 66% as possibly salient and of 42% as non-salient. The degree of salience for this study as indicated by the return rate was examined as part of the analysis of the data.

There is of course no easy, sure and satisfactory way of dealing with missing data, apart from the one given by Borg and Gall (1983, p.393) that 'the best solution obviously is to avoid missing data', which is advice not easy to achieve in practice. Nevertheless efforts were made in the planning and implementation of this study to ensure as high a level of response as possible compatible with other practical limitations. Bias from this source in the interpretation of results was avoided by stating that the presented results were based upon the responding population, not the whole population initially selected for participation.

Finally, it had to be ensured that in the use of computer-assisted calculations, missing data were coded appropriately so as to avoid them being treated as an additional category during significance assessments.

4 Implementing the Main Study – Phase One

4.1 Research procedures

This section presents information on the successive steps taken during the progression of Phase One of the Main Study.

To obtain a general view of the role of Phase One it is necessary to see how this part of the investigation was integrated into the whole of the study. Tables 14a to 14d present information on procedures and participants involved in the whole study in chronological order and are discussed in subsequent sections.

Phase One of the study consisted of a survey carried out in four colleges using self-completion questionnaires and interviews with the three participant groups – students, their class teachers and supervisors of the final Block School Experience (BSE). As described in section 3.2.2, the method of cluster sampling was used, which meant that within each institution a whole-group sampling procedure was adopted, encompassing all members of the three participant groups.

Table 14a: Pilot Study procedures

1988 – Survey by self-completion questionnaires.

	Students			Teachers		
	Sample	Return	%	Sample	Return	%
College B	97	67	69	97	74	76

Table 14b: Main Study Phase One procedures

Questionnaires – Spring 1989

	Students			Teachers			Supervisors		
	Sample	Return	%	Sample	Return	%	Sample	Return	%
College A	98	62	63	98	53	54	20	9	45
College B	88	70	80	88	51	58	20	17	85
College C	48	36	75	48	13	27	27	13	48
College D	160	108	68	—	—	—	50	17	34
Total	394	276	70	234	117	50	117	56	48

Interviews – Summer 1989

	Students			Teachers			Supervisors		
	Invited	Resp.	%	Invited	Resp.	%	Invited	Resp.	%
College A	6	6	100	5	5	100	5	5	100
College B	6	6	100	5	5	100	5	5	100
College C	6	6	100	5	5	100	5	5	100
College D	—	—	—	—	—	—	5	5	100
Total	18	18	100	15	15	100	20	20	100

Table 14c: Main Study Phase Two procedures – action research programme in College B

Pilot, 1989 – Pilot programme and evaluation by questionnaires with 22 students

	Students			Teachers			Supervisors		
	Sample	Return	%	Sample	Return	%	Sample	Return	%
Cycle 1, 1990	105	90	86	104	47	45	20	11	55
Cycle 2, 1991	115	88	77	115	33	29	14	7	50
Cycle 3, 1992	102	71	70	—	—	—	—	—	—
Total	321	249	78	219	80	37	34	18	53

Table 14d: Follow-up Study procedures – past students from College B

Questionnaire – July 1991

	Early years		Later years		Total	
	Sample	Return	Sample	Return	Sample	Return
1988 leavers	10	9	10	4	20	13
1989 leavers	10	7	10	6	20	13
1990 leavers	10	6	10	7	20	13

Questionnaire – September 1992

	Early years		Later years		Total	
	Sample	Return	Sample	Return	Sample	Return
1991 leavers	15	11	15	9	30	20

Questionnaire – November 1993

	Early years		Later years		Total	
	Sample	Return	Sample	Return	Sample	Return
1992 leavers	20	14	20	13	40	27

Total of all leavers – 1991–93

	Early years		Later years		Total	
	Sample	Return	Sample	Return	Sample	Return
All leavers	65	47	65	39	130	86

4.1.1 Contacting the research participants

The Pilot Study was carried out in the writer's home college. Written permission for this and the involvement of college staff and students in Phase One of the Main Study was obtained from the Principal of the college. As discussed in section 3.2.2, a number of additional candidate colleges were selected for involvement in the study. In May 1988, three of these institutions were contacted. The first approach was made on the telephone to the tutors responsible for the B Ed courses in the colleges with the intention of explaining the purpose of the study and exploring the institution's interest in participation. At this first attempt, two colleges expressed an interest in participating in the project, whilst the third had reservations. Another college offering

university-validated B Ed courses was therefore approached in the same manner and agreed to participate. Two CNAA- (College A and B) and two university-controlled (College C and D) institutions had therefore agreed to be involved in the study.

An introductory letter was then sent to the B Ed Leader and the Principal of each of the four institutions outlining the proposed project and requesting official permission to approach fourth-year B Ed students following their final teaching practice, their class teachers and college supervisors regarding their experiences in the teaching of reading during this practice. It was explained that information would be sought by questionnaires from all participants and subsequently by interview with a small representative sample from each group.

Permission was also sought in writing from the relevant Local Education Authorities (LEA) to approach the schools and class teachers where students had been based for their final teaching practice. Altogether, five authorities had to be contacted, since the colleges used schools in more than one LEA for student placements. The responses from Education Officers were generally encouraging, with agreement to the participation of teachers in the study and offers of using the mailing systems for the distribution of teacher questionnaires and any other relevant correspondence to schools (see Appendix 3).

Early in the Autumn Term 1988, contact was renewed with the selected colleges to obtain the relevant background information for the study. This included details of the courses the students followed and the timings of their school experiences. Discussions also began on the organisation of the survey to be carried out regarding the students' final BSE (see Appendix 4). Students in Colleges A and B spent most of the Autumn Term 1988 in schools completing their final BSE, whereas students in Colleges C and D had already experienced this teaching practice one year previously (see section 3.2.2). In agreement with all participating colleges it was decided to implement the questionnaire survey during the week beginning 23rd January 1989.

All participant groups were provided with information on the purpose of the investigation before completing their questionnaires. For students, this information was provided using a brief explanatory document stating the purpose of the study, inviting

students' participation and giving the time, date and place for the administration of the student questionnaire. The document was distributed by B Ed tutors in the four institutions to all year-four B Ed students at the end of a teaching session in college during the first week of the Spring Term 1989.

Supervisors received a similar letter ten days prior to the questionnaire, whilst for teachers an explanatory letter was sent enclosing the postal questionnaires. The letters for the class teachers (see Appendix 5) were sent to head teachers with a covering letter describing the purpose of the investigation with the request to pass the enclosed letter with the questionnaire to the appropriate teacher(s) in the school who had accommodated the named student(s) during the final BSE.

4.1.2 Implementing the questionnaires

4.1.2.1 Students and supervisors

A survey package with the relevant number of student and supervisor questionnaires, as well as appropriate instructions for their administration, was sent to the tutors in charge of the B Ed course in the three external institutions (Colleges A, C and D). Tuesday, 24th January 1989 had been chosen for the implementation of the student questionnaires in all four colleges. Administration of the student questionnaire followed a whole group teaching session and was timed to last for forty minutes. Each tutor was provided with printed information to be read to the students explaining the purpose of the investigation and making clear that participation was voluntary, confidential and anonymous. Questionnaires were then distributed. Students were again addressed briefly in the pre-amble to each questionnaire, explaining the area for investigation, providing assurance of confidentiality and anonymity, expressing appreciation for completing the questionnaire and indicating the response method. At the end of the questionnaire respondents were again thanked for their participation. All student questionnaires were completed at the time of issue, with a request that students work on completion on their own, without contact with others over any issue. Completed questionnaires were collected by the appropriate tutor, placed in an envelope and returned to the tutor in

charge of the B Ed course, who then arranged posting of the package to the writer for analysis.

It was recognised that, although procedures for administering student questionnaires were standardised, some inconsistency in introduction and method of execution of the session in the different institutions could have introduced bias. The presentation at the beginning of the session and the way the total administration was handled may have affected the reception of the research instrument by the students and thus the response rate and quality of the responses. This could only have been avoided by the writer administering the instrument simultaneously in all four colleges, which was impracticable. Whilst total control of bias was impossible, clear standardised instructions for the implementation of the student questionnaire were considered sufficient to ensure consistency and avoid any significant bias. To ensure a standardised procedure being applied in each of the four colleges involved, the student questionnaire session in the writer's home college (College B) was implemented by another tutor without any direct involvement of the writer.

Supervisor questionnaires were distributed through the internal mail system of the institution involved on 24th January 1989 with a request for completion and return to the tutor in charge of each institution by 7th February 1989. All questionnaires were sent in sealed envelopes marked with the name of the recipient. An addressed envelope for the return of the questionnaire was enclosed. A brief pre-amble to each questionnaire, similar to that of the student questionnaire, outlined the area under investigation, ensuring participants of confidentiality and anonymity as well as expressing appreciation for their participation. A further message of thanks for the completion of the questionnaire appeared at the end of the questionnaire.

Reminder letters, which at the same time expressed thanks to those participants who had already returned their completed forms, were distributed on 6th and again on 15th February 1989.

By 24th February 1989 a survey package containing completed student and supervisor questionnaires had been returned to the writer by each of the tutors in charge of the B Ed course at the three external institutions. As shown in Table 14b, the overall

student return rate of 70% compared favourably with the supervisor response of 48%, the latter being depressed by a low return from College D.

4.1.2.2 Teachers

Postal questionnaires to teachers associated with Colleges A, B and C, which had agreed to teacher participation, were mailed during the same week as those for students were administered. Questionnaires for teachers associated with College C were posted directly to the school address, whilst local authorities relevant to Colleges A and B had offered the use of the county mailing service to schools. Although the latter arrangement was convenient, it meant in practice that the distribution date depended on internal administrative arrangements and could not therefore be precisely controlled. In the event, a maximum time difference of three days existed between the arrival of questionnaires in schools.

Each teacher questionnaire was sent in a survey package to the head teacher of the school where students had been placed for this BSE. The package contained a letter to head teachers, explaining the aims of the investigation and at the same time asking them to pass on the enclosed letter(s) to the class teacher(s) who had accommodated students during the particular BSE in their classes. The names of the teachers, where known, or the students concerned were listed in this letter.

The envelope for the teachers contained a covering letter (see Appendix 5), which briefly outlined the study, emphasising the importance of the investigation to the profession and the value of teacher participation. The letter also gave assurance of confidentiality and anonymity and requested completed questionnaires to be returned in enclosed stamped and addressed envelope by Monday, 13th February 1989.

Considerable attention was paid to the quality and presentation of all documentation. Good quality white envelopes were used and special attention had been given to the lay-out of the questionnaires, which were typed by a skilled typist. All letters were typed on official note paper, professionally produced by the Reprographics department in the writer's home college, addressed by hand with the name of the recipient and hand

signed by the writer. The potential positive influence of these measures upon the participants and thus upon the response rate was recognised.

All teacher questionnaires were marked with one of four codes so that they could be assigned to the appropriate college for analysis on return.

Subsequently two further letters were sent to teachers on 10th and 27th February 1989, expressing thanks to those who had already responded and inviting the other teachers to complete and return their questionnaire.

4.1.3 Interview procedures with students and supervisors

Interviews with a small representative sample of the participant groups were planned to follow the questionnaires as an additional data-gathering technique for investigation, as discussed in section 3.2.3.3.

All four colleges had been informed of the intention to conduct interviews when given an outline of the study before they agreed to participate in the project. Immediately following the return of the student and supervisor questionnaires, preparations for the interviews with representatives from each of these groups were put in hand.

At the end of February and beginning of March 1989, letters of thanks for the administration of student / supervisor questionnaires were sent to Colleges A, C and D, with a request for permission and assistance with the early organisation of interviews to follow the questionnaires. All interviews were to be conducted by the writer, and this also presented an opportunity for personal visits to be made to the colleges concerned. Regarding student and supervisor interviews, permission and offers of assistance were received from each of the three institutions. In the writer's college, permission for interviewing had already been granted, with responsibility for their organisation allocated to the writer.

Whilst approval for the interviews had been received from all institutions, College D experienced difficulties with the arrangement of student interviews during the Spring Term 1989. It was therefore decided that interviews in all four institutions and with the appropriate groups of teachers should be held during the Summer Term 1989.

It had been planned that the sample of interviewees should be as representative as possible in respect of any significant sub-groups (see section 3.2.2.1). Where information relevant to this choice was available in the appropriate names lists supplied, these were used by the writer for the composition of interview groups. This applied to student lists from Colleges A and B. The other two colleges offered to compose a representative sample of the student participants according to the criteria provided for them by the writer. The requirement for the supervisor sample was that one of the interviewees should be a language tutor who was involved in the delivery of the course on the teaching of English, including the teaching of reading.

By the end of the Spring Term 1989, dates and times for interviews had been allocated for Colleges A, B and C. A list identifying students and supervisors who had been selected and agreed to participate was to be available by the beginning of the Summer Term, so that individual interviewees could be informed in a preliminary letter by the researcher of the purpose of the interview, its duration and the proposed date, time and venue. At this late stage, College D announced further difficulties over the availability of students for interview, and hence student interviews in this college had to be abandoned. This reduced the total number of students to be interviewed to eighteen, with six from each of the other three institutions.

For Colleges A, B and C, two days were set aside for interviews, for students and tutors respectively, whilst for College D only one day was allocated for a visit to interview supervisors. At the beginning of the Summer Term 1989, preliminary letters were sent to all prospective interviewees (see Appendix 6). The letters were sent in a package to the tutor in charge of the B Ed course, who had agreed to act as the link person between the writer and the college for this whole survey and who distributed the letters to individuals through the college's internal mailing system. Stamped and addressed envelopes were enclosed for participants to accept or refuse attendance at the proposed time and place. All participants contacted in this way agreed with the interview arrangements. Colleges had also arranged for reserve interviewees to be available in case a student or supervisor was unable to attend. Preliminary letters were also sent to reserve interviewees through the colleges internal mail by the link tutor with a request for replies to be returned to him. The link tutor retained a list of these reserve

interviewees and the means by which they could be contacted were their participation required during the interview day.

Interviews in the four institutions were held on the following dates in 1989 –

Table 15: Dates of the college interviews

	Student interviews	Supervisor interviews
College A	Thursday, 4th May	Thursday, 6th July
College B	Thursday, 11th May	Thursday, 22nd June
College C	Thursday, 18th May	Monday, 3rd July
College D	———	Friday, 30th June

All interviews were conducted following the sequence of questions in the purpose-designed interview schedule (see Appendix 2). Approval was sought and granted without exception from all interviewees for notes to be taken by the interviewer during the interview session, and for this purpose, the interview questionnaire forms based on the schedule were used. One such form had been prepared for each interview session, which lasted on average thirty minutes. A twenty-minute break between sessions gave the interviewer sufficient time to record all relevant supplementary observations and comments, which were regarded as important, in greater detail. Time was allowed for the occasional session lasting longer than had been planned.

Proper management of the interview session was essential in encouraging interviewees to provide the required information. A healthy balance was sought between achieving a friendly, relaxed atmosphere, whilst at the same time conducting a factual conversation, progressing through the sequence of set questions at the required speed, without rushing participants and allowing for worthwhile digression from set questions. This was not easy to achieve and required keen judgement by the interviewer combined with tactful guidance of candidates. At the beginning of each interview participants were reminded of the subject of the study and purpose of the interview and were assured of the

complete confidentiality of their comments. Each interview concluded with the candidates being given an opportunity to correct or amplify any earlier comment made during the session. It was noted that most students demonstrated considerable interest in the study, and thirteen of the eighteen students interviewed requested access to the results of the investigation if they were to be published.

Supervisors showed less enthusiasm for the topic, although they were co-operative in supplying the requested information. Several of them who were not involved in the course on teaching English thought themselves unlikely to make contributions of value, since they did not possess a sufficiently detailed knowledge of the students' preparation for the teaching of reading. Those tutors who participated in the course on the teaching of reading were keen to point out positive aspects in this field of teacher preparation in their particular college. Frequently there was a noticeable undercurrent of sensitivity and suspicion at the start of the supervisor interviews, which, however, disappeared once the conversation reached full flow. This was particularly noticeable with College D. It was here, after the completion of their interviews, that two of the supervisors confessed to a changed attitude towards the study. They explained that they had not returned their completed questionnaires in the Spring Term, because they had not approved of the investigation. After meeting the writer they were happy to offer their co-operation and asked if they could help in any other way. A week after these interviews the writer received a letter from one of these tutors with additional information on the topic of the study.

As noted earlier, College D experienced difficulties with full participation in the study, having reservations on teacher participation, inability to arrange student interviews and recording the lowest return rate for supervisor questionnaires. This suggests that a visit by the writer to this college before the start of the investigation to discuss any concerns could have reduced these difficulties.

4.1.4 Interview procedures with teachers

Interviews with teachers made greater demands on time since schools in five different counties were involved. These interviews were therefore scheduled for the first three

weeks in July 1989, when the students in the writer's college had begun their vacation, but all schools involved were still open.

Selection of schools and teachers associated with Colleges A, B and C was based upon factors related to experience in teaching and involvement with pupils of the early (4 to 8 year olds) or later years age group (7 to 11 year olds).

Contact with prospective interviewees was made during May and June 1989 on the telephone. This method of contact was quicker in making arrangements than an exchange of correspondence, since in cases of reluctance or non-availability of potential candidates suitable replacements could be quickly contacted. Telephone arrangements were also welcomed by teachers and schools as being more personal, with the purpose, nature and duration of the interview being explained, and providing an opportunity for any details or queries to be clarified. Attempts to contact twenty teachers were necessary to organise interviews with fifteen candidates. Two teachers were unable to find time for interviews and three had left the school where they had been teaching at the time of the students' practice, either to move to another LEA or to retire from their post. When all participants had been identified and permission for interview granted, the mutually agreed dates and times were confirmed by letter.

Interview dates were spread over twelve days, with a maximum of two sessions being possible in any one day, since times for discussions with primary teachers were confined to after school hours. Of the fifteen teachers interviewed one teacher offered to be met in her home, eight asked to conduct the interview by telephone, whilst the remaining six teachers were visited at their schools. The conduct of telephone interviews as an additional method of data acquisition is discussed below in section 4.1.5.

All teachers interviewed welcomed the opportunity to express their opinion on the topic of teacher preparation and the teaching of reading and treated the discussion with an air of confidence. In contrast to the students and supervisors, the teachers required no reassurance, but they nevertheless had to be guided frequently towards greater objectivity and tended to digress more than the other two interview groups into anecdotal comments.

Teacher interviews were administered in the same fashion as those for students and supervisors, as described in section 4.1.3, using the previously designed interview schedules as a basis for inquiry.

4.1.5 The conduct of interviews by telephone

The original design of the study had not considered using telephone interviews. This additional method of data collection was requested by participants whilst the investigation was already under way. Telephone interviewing had therefore not been piloted in the way that had been carried out for questionnaires and face-to-face interviews.

The basic concern over this form of interviewing was its validity and the question of differing responses between participants being due to different interview procedures. Dicker and Gilbert (1988) examine the role of the telephone in educational research as a technique employed following the use of postal questionnaires. They review some of the research investigating the comparison of 'face-to-face and mouth-to-ear' interviews and refer to the results presented in 1985 by Sykes and Hoinville who 'suggest that there are few important differences in the data obtained by these two techniques' (op. cit., p.69).

It was considered necessary to have experience of at least one trial telephone interview prior to interviews with the eight participants who preferred this method. The trial telephone interview provided initial experience of the method, identifying possible difficulties which might arise. It was established that telephone interviewing required greater concentration of thought from both parties, since reliance on visual clues was absent. Instead interviewee and interviewer had to rely solely upon verbal communication. To avoid premature tiredness or disinterest it was particularly important to restrict the interview time to a maximum of thirty minutes. The trial interview produced valid information, demonstrating that questions were understood in the way they were intended to be interpreted.

The writer found it helpful to follow the recommendation by Dicker and Gilbert (1988, p.68) of providing encouragement to interviewees through 'the use of paralinguistic

utterances ... without influencing the nature of the information being provided by the respondent'. These authors also suggest sending the main questions to be asked during the interview to participants well in advance (op. cit., p.69). This technique, however, was not applied in this study, since it was felt that questions were uncomplicated, and such a different treatment for this particular group might have introduced inconsistency.

All telephone interviews were conducted either during an evening or at the weekend. Note-taking was found to be easier than during face-to-face interviews, since it could be carried out whilst candidates were responding and without them being visually distracted. The telephone interviews were successful in eliciting the required information and were found to be a useful resource when circumstances required their application.

4.1.6 Data processing and analysis

Data acquired from questionnaires and interviews needed organising and processing before being analysed.

Completed student and supervisor questionnaires were returned, with an overall response rate of 70% and 48% (see Table 14b) respectively, as survey packages by the relevant link tutor from each institution. They were numbered immediately on receipt by the writer ready for coding. This process is described below.

Teachers from the three institutions responded at an overall rate of 50% (see Table 14b). This rate was depressed by a 27% return from College C, this being one of the two colleges where the survey was carried out a year after the teaching practice. Some teachers had moved to other schools or had retired. The other institution where the survey was carried out a year after the teaching practice was College D, where teacher participation was not considered feasible by the college. A similar low response rate might have been expected had the teacher survey taken place there.

Each questionnaire was numbered and stamped with its date of return, the majority of responses being received within 16 days of distribution and reminders only increasing

the return by between three and seven responses within each of the three teacher groups.

By the first week in March 1989, the period for the return of questionnaires from all three participant groups was concluded, and the processing of survey data in preparation for their analysis began. Responses to questions in the questionnaires were coded to improve management of the data processing. A coding frame had been devised for all closed questions before the questionnaires were implemented, although this had not been printed on the questionnaire forms. The coding frame consisted of a number for each category available for selection by participants in response to a particular question. The completed questionnaires were coded by allocating the relevant code number to each response to a question and recording this in the margin on the questionnaire pages. This process was carried out by hand before transfer of data to the *Excel* file for analysis.

Questions such as 16, 17, 19, 21, 23 and 37 in the student questionnaire, were broken down into sub-questions. These questions presented a checklist of items to the respondents requiring ticks for the ones which applied. In processing the responses, items in these checklists were treated as separate variables with their own 'yes' and 'no' code or the code 'very useful', 'quite useful', 'of little value'. Processing responses in this way led to 78 items for the student questionnaire, 68 items for the teacher questionnaire and 27 items for the supervisor questionnaire.

For responses to open questions in the questionnaires and from the interviews a coding frame was generated after the completion of these two types of survey. This was achieved by creating categories from the answers given to individual questions as discussed in detail in section 3.2.4.3. Each response to an open question was extracted from the appropriate questionnaire and entered on a sheet of paper devoted solely to that particular question. This produced a sheet or sheets containing all responses to the particular question, each response having a unique number. This procedure permitted quick reference to the original questionnaire at any time and also simplified the process of obtaining a duplicate of a particular response, if this were required for allocation to a second category.

This method was found to be especially time-saving when checking the reliability of the writer's categorisation using external analysts. This checking involved a group of librarians, each member of the group being supplied with envelopes containing respondents' typed individual comments. They were invited to arrange these in categories, breaking each response into unitised comments and then categorising each unit. Co-operative work and discussion on categorisation took place within the group after the preliminary individual work. This independent categorisation produced sufficient agreement with that of the writer to support the reliability of the research in this activity.

Processing of the acquired data was carried out to facilitate the data analysis discussed in section 3.2.4.

4.2 Presentation of results

4.2.1 Introduction

The survey was exploratory and descriptive in attempting to determine whether and to what extent certain behaviours and beliefs existed. A series of research questions, which are presented in section 2.3, was devised, and these served as the basis for the design of the questionnaires and interview schedules for the three groups. This presentation of findings is structured around these questions.

Details of the total sample size are given in Table 14b (see section 4.1). Procedures described in section 4.1 produced completed questionnaires from 276 students, 117 teachers and 56 supervisors. The results were analysed on the responses received in these questionnaires. Table 16 presents information on the response rate overall and with respect to the different colleges.

Table 16: Rate of response to the questionnaire

	College A	College B	College C	College D	Overall
Students	63%	80%	75%	68%	70%
Teachers	54%	58%	27%	—	50%
Supervisors	45%	85%	48%	34%	48%

Raw data were submitted to descriptive and inferential statistics to measure the frequencies of response categories and to detect and quantify any significant statistical association between them. In the following presentation of results the response analysis is organised around answering the research questions discussed in section 3.2.3. Where common topics occurred within the research questions applied to the three groups, they were addressed together. Results are presented generally as percentages of students, teachers and supervisors responding in the specified manner, with raw data included where appropriate. All Phase One questionnaire questions and quantitative raw data are presented in Appendix 8. An example of qualitative data is presented in Appendix 7. All qualitative data have been analysed and are available in print or on disk. They are not all included in the Appendix due to space limitations.

Where it was considered of interest to investigate the existence of significant relationships between the surveyed variables, these were subjected to chi-square analysis. This provided an evaluation of chi-square, the degrees of freedom and the resulting significance of relationship measured against chosen critical levels of significance, generally 0.05. Findings considered to be of significance together with the results of chi-square analysis are presented in the commentary accompanying the tabulated results. Missing data have been excluded from tables and commentaries in the following sections for simplification purposes. In all cases of exclusion, the level of missing data was so small as to not affect the conclusions drawn.

4.2.2 Background information on the participants

4.2.2.1 The students

All students had completed their course on reading, although a small number (7%) indicated in completing the questionnaire that they were unaware of this. Of the 276 students who completed the questionnaire, 115 were training for early years (4 to 8), 80 for later years (7 to 11) and 81 for the total primary age range (4 to 11).

Eighteen students, six each from Colleges A, B and C, participated in interviews, 16 of these had previously completed the questionnaire.

4.2.2.2 The teachers

11% of teachers who answered the questionnaire had previously taken part in the Pilot Study. Pupils in their classes were evenly distributed over the primary age range. 82% of teachers had more than ten years of teaching experience, whilst 14% had four to ten years' experience and 4% had one to three years.

Fifteen teachers who had worked with students from Colleges A, B and C participated in interviews, eleven of these had previously completed the questionnaire.

4.2.2.3 The supervisors

For 21% of supervisors, English language was their main teaching commitment on the B Ed course. 23% of supervisors had had full-time experience in the teaching of primary pupils within the past five years, whilst for 46% this had taken place more than ten years previously. Most supervisors were responsible for students from both early and later years specialisation and had on average three to four students in their groups, making a school visit to each student once a week.

Twenty supervisors, five from each of the colleges, participated in interviews, 14 of these had previously completed the questionnaire. Included in the sample of 20 supervisors were eight language tutors, two from each college. Three of the non-responses to the questionnaire were from these language tutors who expressed concern

over the research topic, which they felt was too complex an area to be investigated by questionnaire.

4.2.3 Results related to research questions

4.2.3.1 Attention given to the teaching of reading in the students' preparations and evaluations

The survey investigated the frequency with which students considered the teaching of reading in their day-to-day preparations and subsequent evaluations, as well as establishing whether students had addressed this topic in their written outlines as schemes of work, before the practice and in their final evaluation.

Students' day-to-day preparation and evaluation

The responses of students from each of the surveyed colleges to the two questions – 'How often did you make reference to the teaching of reading in your daily lesson preparations?' (Table 17) and 'How often did you write an evaluation on an aspect of the teaching of reading?' (Table 18) – show that whilst 21% referred to reading each day in their preparations, 35% made no reference at all throughout the practice. The majority of students (57%) never referred to reading in their continuous written evaluations and only 3% evaluated reading on a daily basis.

Table 17: Frequency of reference to reading in students' daily preparations

	Not at all	Once a week	2–3 times/week	Every day	Total
College A	21	12	15	14	62
College B	20	13	25	12	70
College C	22	5	4	5	36
College D	35	20	27	26	108
Total	98 (35%)	50 (18%)	71 (26%)	57 (21%)	276

There was no significant relationship between colleges in the student responses to this question.

Table 18: Frequency of reference to reading in students' evaluations

	Not at all	Once a week	2–3 times/wk	Every day	Total
College A	40	15	6	1	62
College B	34	23	11	2	70
College C	28	6	0	2	36
College D	55	29	20	4	108
Total	157 (57%)	73 (26%)	37 (14%)	9 (3%)	276

chi-square = 18.9; $p < 0.05$

Whilst a significant relationship between the colleges and the student responses to this question was indicated, the contingency table contained four cells with expected values less than 5, and this cast doubt on the determination of significance. To obtain a meaningful conclusion the colleges were combined, with two CNAA-controlled ones (A and B) being treated together, as were the two university-controlled ones (C and D). Analysis of the new table indicates there to be no significant difference in students' response between these two categories of college.

Whilst the teachers had no responsibility for students' preparations and evaluations, the supervisors were required to take an active interest in this part of the students' performance. 9% of the supervisors stated that their students gave no attention to the teaching of reading in their daily written preparations whereas 39% thought that most of their students gave some attention to this matter.

Regarding students' attention to the teaching of reading in their continuous evaluations, a similar pattern is observed. 9% of the supervisors stated that no attention was given by their students, whereas 30% believed that most of their students evaluated their teaching in this area.

The teaching of reading in pre-practice plans and final evaluations

Reports from students and from their supervisors on the consideration of reading in written teaching plans as schemes of work prepared before the practice present similar findings – 56% of students reported that they 'in general' or 'in detail' dealt with reading and 34% that they discussed reading 'a little' or 'in detail' before the practice with their supervisor. Similarly, 52% of supervisors affirmed that they required their students to refer specifically to the teaching of reading in their written plans submitted before the start of the practice.

Thus 44% of students within their written overall plans for this final teaching practice attended to reading 'not at all', and 66% of students felt that they had 'not at all' discussed this topic with their supervisor.

85% of students reported themselves not having considered any aspect of the teaching of reading when carrying out their summative evaluations after the teaching practice. The corresponding question to supervisors dealing with students' reference to the teaching of reading in their summative evaluations produced results which were not comparable with the results from the relevant student question. This was due to an inappropriate selection of categories offered to the supervisors. Results which were comparable, however, were the 15% of students who claimed to have considered the teaching of reading in their summative evaluations and the 9% of supervisors who affirmed that most students considered this area.

An examination of the relationship between the variables, consideration of reading in the preparation for and continuous evaluation of the practice, revealed that out of those students who considered reading each day in their preparations, 14% also evaluated this area every day, 19% two to three times a week, 46% once a week and 21% not at all.

Table 19 shows the percentage of the student population corresponding to the four surveyed frequencies of daily preparation who either did or did not attend to an aspect of reading in their final evaluation.

Table 19: Relationship between preparation for the teaching of reading and final evaluation

Students' prep. for reading	Final evaluation on teaching of reading
Not at all (n = 98)	4%
Once a week (n = 50)	14%
2 to 3 times a week (n = 71)	21%
Every day (n = 57)	28%

Thus, 96% of those students who gave the teaching of reading no attention in their preparations also ignored this aspect in their final evaluation of the practice. Although those students who prepared for reading every day were the highest proportion who evaluated their teaching in reading, 72% of them did not reflect upon their teaching in this area after the school experience.

The results of analysis on the relationship between the students' age specialism in their training and the consideration of reading in teaching plans as schemes of work, carried out before the school practice, are given in Table 20.

It is evident that students specialising in the 4 to 8 age range were more inclined to prepare themselves in general or in detail for the teaching of reading before the practice. A significant difference exists between the age ranges concerning consideration of reading in the teaching plans before the practice. Similarly, significant differences exist regarding evaluations carried out during the practice (chi-square = 22.88; $p < 0.001$).

However, no significant differences were found between age-range specialists regarding daily preparations and final evaluations.

Table 20: Consideration of reading in teaching plans before the practice and age-range specialism

Consideration of reading in teaching plans prior to practice	Students specialising in age range		
	4 to 8 years	8 to 11 years	4 to 11 years
Not at all (n = 122)	37	44	41
In general (n = 142)	68	36	38
In detail (n = 12)	10	1	1

chi-square = 17.61; $p < 0.01$

Familiarity with the school's policy on reading prior to the practice

It was the students' responsibility during the pre-practice attachment days to familiarise themselves with various aspects of their school placement. An important part of this preparation was to learn about the school's policy for the teaching of reading. Responses to the student questionnaire provide the information that the majority of students (61%) learned about the school's policy in this area in general terms, 6% learned this in detail, whilst as many as 33% had no knowledge of it at all. It could reasonably be expected that students would have been supplied with the appropriate information concerning reading by their class teachers, 86% of whom stated in responses to their questionnaire that they had discussed the teaching of reading with their student before the practice. This difference between student and teacher perception is also present in the responses from supervisors, 75% of whom stated that they had discussed the school's policy on the teaching of reading with their students in preparation for the teaching practice.

4.2.3.2 Influences upon the students' approach to the teaching of reading during the final teaching practice

Influence of the school and college course

To perceive differences in influences upon their approach, students had to recognise and acknowledge the existence of these influences. The two main approaches which influenced the students' approach to the teaching of reading were those considered to arise from the college course and those from the school practice.

52% of respondents noted a significant difference between the two approaches. 68% of students felt that the school had influenced them more in the approach to the teaching of reading adopted during the practice than had the college reading course. However, 55% of students indicated that the teaching practice did not significantly influence their *overall* approach to the teaching of reading.

The teacher's influence was felt strongly regarding organising reading during the practice, as shown in Table 21.

Table 21: Factors influencing the students' organisation of reading

	Teacher's recommend.	Own favoured approach	Approach favoured by college
College A (n = 62)	54	8	0
College B (n = 69)	58	10	1
College C (n = 36)	31	5	0
College D (n = 107)	87	17	3

Of the responding students, 84% had organised reading in their classrooms according to the class teacher's recommendations.

Class teachers in turn were aware of their influence in organising reading. 87% of them stated that their student mainly followed their pattern in the organisation of reading.

Use of resources in teaching reading

Class teachers and students were asked to list the scheme and non-scheme resources they used for the teaching of reading with their pupils. For the students, this choice related to the final BSE, whereas for the teachers it referred to their general approach to reading. Frequently more than one resource material was named by respondents. Teachers overall named 41 and the students 26 different items. Table 22 lists those resources which were selected five times or more by either group of respondents.

There is a broad similarity between resources named by the two groups apart from item two, where students made considerably less use of a mixture of reading schemes.

Interviews with the teachers investigated whether they favoured particular resources in their approach to the teaching of reading. Only one of the respondents mentioned using one scheme only 'because it gives structure'. Approaches using a mixture of schemes and supplementing schemes by good quality books were favoured by the majority in this group.

When questioned regarding the main source of information on using scheme / non-scheme materials, the majority of students cited the teacher's explanation, with the student's own common sense ranking in second place. As Table 23 demonstrates, all respondents referred to several sources. In the analysis therefore each source of information was treated independently.

Table 22: Resources used by teachers and students for the reaching of reading

Resource	Named by % of teachers (n = 117)	Named by % of students (n = 276)
Ginn 360	65	53
Mixture of various schemes	62	10
Non-scheme, real books	54	45
1, 2, 3 and Away	17	14
Story Chest	16	5
Individualised reading (C. Moon)	11	7
Oxford Reading Tree	10	6
New Way / Gay Way	9	5
Wide Range Readers	9	4
Hummingbird	6	1
Open Door	5	1
Dominoes	4	0
Ladybird	4	3
Information / reference books	0	2
Through the Rainbow	0	2
TV programme 'Look and Read'	0	2

Table 23: Sources of information for use of teaching resources by students

Influence	%
Teacher's explanations (n = 271)	69
Own common sense (n = 271)	48
Knowledge from college course (n = 271)	13
Manual / publisher's instruction (n = 270)	5
Other students' advice (n = 271)	2
Supervisor's explanations (n = 271)	1

Students' perception of influence

The student interviews also raised the question of influence upon the students' knowledge and skills in the teaching of reading. With respect to the major influence upon their 'understanding of the process of reading', 16 out of the 18 students interviewed named the college course and the recommended reference reading, whilst only one student mentioned practical experience and one specified contact with a teacher. In contrast, 14 students identified their experience in school and with the teacher as having been a positive influence in their 'becoming a more effective teacher'.

On being questioned as to how they would approach reading if they had been able to go back to the same class without the class teacher's influence, the students identified the following changes they would introduce –

- a wider choice of books in the classroom, including reference books,
- book displays made more accessible and inviting,
- talking with children about their reading and encouraging enjoyment,
- arranging silent reading sessions (ERIC),
- approaching reading more meaningful, not just as skill development,

- involving parents in children's reading,
- giving more individualised support.

The question of influence was also raised during the interviews with the teachers. Both on the question of understanding the reading process and becoming an effective teacher, the majority of these interviewees believed that experience had been the strongest influence.

Responsibility for the teaching of reading

The question of influence is related to the feeling of responsibility for teaching. Taking full responsibility for a class was one of the requirements for the final BSE, and this was perceived as having been achieved by 89% of the students. Student and teacher responses regarding the students' responsibility for the teaching of reading are presented in Table 24.

Table 24: Students' responsibility for teaching reading as perceived by themselves and their teachers

	Full resp.	Shared resp.	No resp.
Students (n = 276)	30%	64%	6%
Teachers (n = 116)	31%	63%	6%

Agreement is recorded between the two respondent groups that the majority of students share responsibility with the teacher in this area of the curriculum. The teachers' response to their questionnaire indicated a similar level of sharing of responsibility regarding the planning for teaching reading (65%).

4.2.3.3 Approaches used in the teaching of reading

Students and teachers were asked to identify the approaches which they used in the teaching of reading. Their responses are given in Table 25 as percentages for each group and for each approach.

Table 25: Approaches in teaching reading as used by students and teachers

	Used by % of teachers (n = 117)			Used by % of students (n = 276)		
	Freq.	Occ.	Never	Freq.	Occ.	Never
Listening to children read	**86**	14	0	**71**	24	5
Paired / shared reading	41	47	12	18	33	49
Silent reading (e.g. USSR)	**57**	34	9	**38**	37	25
Reading interviews	16	40	44	5	20	75
Teaching phonics	**55**	37	8	16	37	47
Teaching whole words	43	43	14	13	48	39
Lang. experience approach	45	34	21	18	34	48
Dev. strat. for info. books	41	44	15	**19**	40	41

Listening to individual children read was clearly the most frequently used approach by both parties, with silent reading also frequently used. The teaching of phonics was frequently used by the majority of teachers. In comparing students and teachers regarding approaches never used, the biggest difference was recorded in the teaching of phonics which was 'never applied' by 47% of students but only by 8% of teachers. The other two approaches used much less frequently by students as compared to teachers were paired / shared reading and reading interview.

The frequency of different approaches employed by students' as perceived by their teachers were also analysed.

Table 26 presents a comparison of the approaches to reading used by students as reported by the students themselves and as perceived by their class teachers.

Table 26: Students approaches to reading as perceived by themselves and their class teachers

	Perceived by % of teachers (n = 117)			Perceived by % of students (n = 276)		
	Freq.	Occ.	Never	Freq.	Occ.	Never
Listening to children read	**44**	51	5	**71**	24	5
Paired / shared reading	15	33	52	18	33	49
Silent reading (e.g. USSR)	**33**	32	35	**38**	37	25
Reading interviews	5	22	73	5	20	75
Teaching phonics	24	34	42	16	37	47
Teaching whole words	14	42	44	13	48	39
Lang. experience approach	**26**	29	45	18	34	48
Dev. strat. for info. books	16	38	46	**19**	40	41

Both groups perceived listening to children read as the most frequently used approach by the students, with agreement by 95% of each group that this approach was employed either frequently or occasionally. Considerably more students (71%) than teachers (44%), however, believed that students had adopted this approach frequently in teaching reading during their practice. Overall, the table shows a high level of agreement between the two respondent groups. The differences in perception of

approaches in the 'never' category do not exceed 5% apart from 'silent reading' where the difference is 10%.

Taking the data from Tables 25 and 26, comparisons were made between the approaches frequently used by students and teachers (see Table 25) and between the students' and teachers' perceptions of the approaches frequently used by the students. Rank correlation was carried out for these two cases. There was a significant positive correlation ($\rho = 0.649$, $p < 0.05$) between the ranking of approaches used by the students and by the teachers (see Table 25). An even higher positive correlation existed ($\rho = 0.852$, $p < 0.01$) between the approaches used by the students as perceived by themselves and as reported by the teachers about the students (see Table 26).

Student initiative in introducing additional materials and approaches

58% of teachers stated that their student prepared activity and support materials besides those already used in their classroom. However, when asked whether the student introduced any approaches additional to those already used by the class teacher, only 18% of teachers responded positively.

4.2.3.4 Students' competence in the teaching of reading

Whilst the students and supervisors were asked directly to comment on student competence in the teaching of reading, this information was obtained from the teachers by means of a number of questions dealing with different aspects of the students' performance in the teaching of reading. The results in this section are therefore presented according to this general framework.

Table 27 presents information on the students' own feeling of competence in teaching the early and later stages of reading during their teaching practice as expressed by participants in the four colleges.

Table 27: A comparison of the feeling of competence in teaching reading at the early and later stages between students from the four colleges

	Students feeling competent in teaching reading at the early stages (%)			the later stages (%)		
	Yes	No	Missing	Yes	No	Missing
College A (n = 62)	39	60	1	47	48	5
College B (n = 70)	39	59	2	61	36	3
College C (n = 36)	25	75	0	50	50	0
College D (n = 108)	28	69	3	66	31	3
Total (n = 276)	33	65	2	58	39	3

Early stages – chi-square = 4.43; $p > 0.05$

Later stages – chi-square = 7.23; $p > 0.05$

Overall only 33% of students felt competent to teach the early stages in reading whereas 58% felt able to extend pupils' reading skills during the later stages.

There was no significant difference between colleges in students' perceived competence for the two stages of teaching reading.

Table 28 presents information on the students' feeling of competence in teaching the early and later stages of reading during their final block practice as expressed by the three age-range specialisms of students involved.

Table 28: A comparison of the feeling of competence in teaching reading at the early and later stages between students of the three age-range specialisms

	Students feeling competent in teaching reading at the early stages (%)			the later stages (%)		
	yes	no	missing	yes	no	missing
Early years students (n = 115)	37	61	2	56	41	3
Later years students (n = 80)	25	73	2	69	30	1
Mixed age-range students (n = 81)	35	64	1	52	44	4
Total (n = 276)	33	65	2	58	39	3

Early stages – chi-square = 3.05; $p > 0.05$

Later stages – chi-square = 4.53; $p > 0.05$

In all three age-range categories there was a higher proportion of students who felt more competent in extending pupils' reading skills than teaching the early stages of reading development.

There was no significant difference between the three age-range specialisms in students' perceived competence for the two stages of teaching reading.

In section 3.2.2.3, dealing with the organisation of final BSE in the colleges, it is explained that colleges held their final practice at different stages of the course. This meant the time between the completion of the practice and the survey was different between colleges. To determine whether this variation in lapsed time had an influence upon students' feeling of competence, this factor was examined, with the results given

in Table 29. College C completed the practice during Autumn 1987, College D during Spring 1988, and Colleges A and B during Autumn 1988.

Table 29: Students feeling of competence against time lapse since final teaching practice

	Students feeling competent in teaching reading in the early stages (%)			the later stages (%)		
	yes	no	missing	yes	no	missing
College C (n = 36)	25	75	0	50	50	0
College D (n = 108)	28	69	3	66	31	3
College A, B (n = 132)	39	59	2	55	42	3
Total (n = 276)	33	65	2	58	39	3

Early stages – chi-square = 4.43; $p > 0.05$

Later stages – chi-square = 4.62; $p > 0.05$

In all three categories, a greater proportion of students felt competent to teach the later stages than the early stages of reading. There was no significant difference between the three categories in students' perceived competence. Thus the time lapse between school practice and survey implementation does not have a significant effect upon students' perceived competence in teaching reading.

The supervisors' view of student competence and confidence in teaching reading was explored by seeking the overall impression supervisors had formed on this aspect of the students in their supervision group. Only 4% of supervisors felt that none of their students were sufficiently competent and 7% that none were sufficiently confident in teaching reading.

Knowledge of children's literature

The students expressed confidence in their knowledge of children's literature, with 82% stating that they had been able to foster children's interest. Similarly, 84% of the teachers considered the students' knowledge to be either adequate or very good. Teachers were asked during the interviews whether there were any aspects of the student's performance in the teaching of reading which impressed them. The ability to motivate children to read, choosing and talking about books were the most frequently mentioned.

In response to questions on the adequacy of the students' knowledge of children's literature and their ability to foster children's reading interest, only 2% of supervisors felt that they had students who had not been effective in either of these two areas.

Using resources for teaching reading

Table 30: Students' feeling of being prepared for the use of resources by the college course

	Not at all	Partly	Very well	Missing data
College A (n = 62)	29	68	3	0
College B (n = 70)	11	73	16	0
College C (n = 36)	75	25	0	0
College D (n = 108)	23	70	5	2
Total (n = 276)	28	64	7	1

Figures are percentages

As noted in Table 23, students indicated that during their practice the majority had used scheme and non-scheme resources mainly according to the teacher's explanations. Only 13% felt they had used the knowledge derived from the college course in this

respect. To a separate question, students expressed their opinion as to how well they thought the college reading course had prepared them for using these resources as indicated in Table 30 for each of the four colleges.

Overall, 71% of students felt either partly or very well prepared by the course for using resources, but this figure hides a significant deviation from the average in the case of College C where 75% of students felt completely unprepared by the college course for using resources. On the other hand, only 11% of students from College B felt unprepared.

To further investigate these anomalous findings, the views of the teachers associated with the separate colleges were examined. A comparison with the overall student responses is not straightforward since only teachers from Colleges A, B and C had been involved in the study. Also, the teachers had been offered slightly different categories in their questionnaire to those offered to the students. The intermediate category for the students was 'partly' whereas the teachers were offered 'superficially'. Table 31 presents the teachers' responses for each of the three colleges.

Table 31: Teachers' opinion of students' preparation for the use of resources by the college course

	Not at all	Superficially	Very well	Missing data
College A (n = 53)	17	60	19	4
College B (n = 51)	10	55	20	15
College C (n = 13)	15	39	31	15
Total (n = 117)	21	55	14	10

Figures are percentages

Inspection of Tables 30 and 31 shows that, whilst the overall results for students' and teachers' views are not vastly dissimilar, concerning College C there is a marked

difference. Whereas 75% of the students felt not at all prepared, only 15% of their teachers agreed with this view. Similarly, whereas none of the students considered themselves very well prepared, 31% of the teachers rated their students as very well prepared. This measure of disagreement is neither affected by the slightly different phrasing in the questionnaires nor by the exclusion of teachers from College D. A less marked but nevertheless significant difference is also noted in respect of College A where only 3% of students felt very well prepared for using resources whereas 19% of the teachers held this view.

For Colleges A, B and C, 14% of teachers, as compared to 8% of students, judged the preparation of students by the course for using resources as 'very well'. Whilst the difference in student and teacher opinion on this aspect of teaching reading is not statistically significant (chi-square = 5.17; $p > 0.05$), it may be of practical significance.

Responding to the question concerning the students' ability to use activity and support material in teaching reading, teachers were evenly split among the three categories 'very well', 'with some help', 'not well'.

4.2.3.5 Students' competence in components of teaching reading

The teachers' view

Teachers' views on the quality of student preparation for particular aspects of teaching reading are presented in Table 32, expressed in percentages of the total responses for each item.

Aspects of teaching reading for which the students were considered particularly well prepared were –

- selecting books and stories,
- motivating children to read,

Table 32: Teacher opinion on the quality of student preparation for aspects of teaching reading

	Very well	Adequate	Inadequate
Motivate children to read (n = 116)	32	53	15
Select books / stories (n = 116)	39	47	14
Use schemes / kits (n = 108)	9	52	39
Use support materials (n = 115)	15	54	31
Use support progs (TV, radio, computer) (n = 98)	16	50	34
Organise reading (n = 115)	17	48	35
Maint. records on children's progress (n = 115)	30	43	27
Teach phonics (n = 112)	13	49	38
Work with individual children (n = 115)	30	50	20
Work with the whole class (n = 115)	28	51	21
Develop children's strategies towards independent reading (n = 115)	10	50	40

Figures are percentages

whilst those aspects which were not considered to have received satisfactory preparation were –

- developing children's strategies towards independent reading,
- use of schemes and kits,
- teaching phonics.

In addition to information obtained from responses to closed questions, further comments from teachers to an open question identified those aspects of the teaching of

reading for which the students were well prepared / inadequately prepared. Teachers' responses identified twelve aspects for which the students were well prepared and nine for which they were inadequately prepared. Those items which received most mention are identifiable with the aspects given in Table 32. The most frequently mentioned items under the 'well prepared' category were the students' knowledge of children's literature and their ability to motivate children to read together with their ability to work with individual children. These items correspond to the 'well prepared' responses provided to the closed question in Table 32. Teachers also appreciated students' awareness of a variety of approaches to reading, knowledge of the appropriate 'jargon' and a 'theoretical' overview of recent reading schemes, most of which were available in college. A minority thought that students were well prepared to integrate reading into the total curriculum and realise the relationship between reading and other language modes.

The most frequently mentioned aspects under the 'inadequately prepared' category were the students' lack of practical ability in organising reading on a day-to-day basis for the whole class, the teaching of phonics and practical knowledge of individual schemes, in particular 'Ginn 360'. It was stated that students did not work with children with reading difficulties since 'there was no need, because these pupils were taken care of by the remedial teacher'. Again, these identified items correspond well with those in the 'inadequate' category given in Table 32 apart from 'developing children's strategies towards independent reading', which was not identified in the open question.

The use of these two similar closed and open questions in collecting information on the same topic provided a useful demonstration of internal reliability through the general correspondence in responses in weighting. The open question also provided supplementary information to some of the areas under investigation. Thus, while use of reading schemes was one of the three most frequently named aspects for which students had been inadequately prepared, awareness and 'theoretical' knowledge of such schemes were mentioned as an area in which students were well informed. It appears that it is not the knowledge, but the application of that knowledge which is inadequate.

A significant number of responses to the teachers' open question indicated an inability by them to provide the requested information due to a lack of familiarity with the content and objectives of the college course. Teachers also stated that the student merely followed the approach already used in the class with a typical comment that 'reading was not really an aspect of the practice that was open for the student to develop. She simply stood in for me.'

The supervisors' view

The supervisors' view was sought in an open form on their perceptions of the quality of student performance in aspects of teaching reading. Whilst seeking information corresponding to the teachers' questions discussed above, slightly different wording was employed to avoid respondent reaction against suggestions of inadequate preparation by the college. Thus, information was sought on the quality of student performance and the difficulties they experienced. It was considered reasonable to anticipate that information so provided would correspond to the teachers' views on state of preparation.

The supervisors' responses identified 15 items in which the students performed well and nine in which they experienced difficulty. Supervisors identified the students' positive performance in stimulating their pupils' interest in reading and their ability to select and make effective use of reading materials. Working with individual children and developing reading across the curriculum were other aspects in which students were considered to perform well. These aspects correspond well with those identified by the teachers.

Difficulties were perceived mainly in organising resources for reading and time to hear individual children read. One supervisor commented, 'the difficulty was that the student was obsessed with hearing children read as the class teacher did, but lacked the strategies for the hearing-read-syndrome'. Whilst supervisors acknowledged that students were keeping records on children's reading progress, they were critical of the mainly quantitative nature of these progress reports lacking the appropriate diagnostic aspect. This inadequacy led to problems in providing appropriate support to children experiencing difficulties in reading.

This apparent shortfall in performance matched the students' perception of their provision for children with reading difficulties, where only half of the surveyed students had been able to plan work for these children.

Another area of difficulty identified by the supervisors was the students' apparent exclusion by the teachers from responsibility for teaching on the basis that teachers were inclined to 'hang onto reading'.

A significant number of supervisors (16%) claimed an inability to identify areas of high performance or difficulty with comments such as 'impossible to generalise' or 'not made any observations'.

4.2.3.6 Increase in student competence in teaching reading through the practice

This aspect was investigated from the perception of all three participant groups as derived from open questions.

Student perception

Two questions in the student questionnaire sought their opinion on the benefits derived from the final teaching practice regarding the teaching of reading. Question 31 sought information on new skills developed during the practice and question 33b requested the students' view on the most important thing learned on the teaching of reading during the practice. Question 31 received a low response of 63%, compared with 93% for question 33b; 180 items were identified in response to question 31 and 331 items to question 33b. 28% of students who responded stated that they had not developed any new skills. An explanation for this high figure became apparent during analysis of question 31, when it was found that this question had been misinterpreted by a number of students as meaning new skills developed in their pupils rather than new skills acquired by themselves. From the students who had been able to identify new skills developed, the most frequently mentioned were – organising time to hear children read, promoting interest in books, extending pupils' reading skills, teaching phonics and using shared / paired reading.

Aspects most frequently mentioned in responses to question 33b which sought the students' view on the most important thing learned on the teaching of reading during the practice were –

- organising time to hear individual children read,
- awareness of the need to promote interest in books and motivation for reading,
- becoming aware of the problems related to teaching reading,
- seeing approaches and schemes in action and realising their uses and limitations,
- realising the need for organising time and resources for reading,
- realising that time is always against you.

Overall there is evidence of students having taken a critical stance during the practice, with criticism in three main categories – problems concerning classroom practice, difficulties imposed externally and problems related to the students' own performance. The first category, referred to by a number of respondents as 'I learned what not to do', concerned the restrictive manner in which resources were used, the limitations of using the same approach with all children in a class, teachers' pressing concern about hearing children read every day and its incompatibility with the available time. As students commented, 'reading should not just be a two-minute read to the teacher, without time to share or to analyse strategies used by the child', or 'I was told by my teacher to mark books and listen to readers at the same time, do you call that a skill?'.

Coping with parental pressure was the externally imposed difficulty which concerned students in the second category, whilst the third category was based on comments relating to the contrast experienced by some students between college preparation and school practice. These ranged from 'I realised how difficult it was and how ill-prepared I was' to 'I could not use what I had learned at college, my attempts were thwarted', and 'there are so many ways to teach reading and you are left to find your own way'. Students frequently referred to the neglect of reading in junior classes – 'I learned not to neglect reading, as happened in my class'.

A small number of students (2%) indicated very positive responses. They had gained from hearing about teachers' experience as well as put into action their knowledge from the college course. These students reported having learned 'how to develop my own style by taking the best from college and from school' and having used 'all approaches I knew to help children to progress'.

Teacher perception

Teachers were asked to state in what way the students gained in the teaching of reading during the practice. From an analysis of their responses, three groups emerged. The first group (18%) consisted of those teachers who felt that students had gained nothing or very little in the teaching of reading during their final teaching practice. Statements such as 'not sure', 'student had no responsibility for reading', 'reading had a low profile' were presented, as well as explanations that the student was unwilling to get involved or that the practice took place in a junior age class where most children were already fluent readers, and pupils with difficulties were extracted to be taught by the special needs teacher. Some of the teachers who had remained in charge of reading in their classes justified this by explaining that the student realised 'her inadequacies in this area, and the class would have dropped in standards if I had not continued with the work myself'. Several respondents were disappointed that students had not brought innovative ideas from college and demonstrated these in their practice, but there was also a minority declaring that teachers had little to offer themselves to the student. These teachers commented that they felt 'ill-prepared' themselves or that little teaching of reading was practised since theirs was a junior class and all pupils had learned to read.

Teachers in the second group (76%) believed that students had gained in two ways, through the opportunity to observe and work with the teacher as a model and through their own experience. The emphasis of the majority of teachers in this group was on the student's experience as 'a real teacher at work' and participation in the work with the teacher. Through this 'practical experience' students are seen as having gained 'understanding, awareness and realisation' in aspects of teaching reading. They are perceived as having gained from being willing to learn from the teacher. The most frequently mentioned items by teachers in this second group were –

- realisation that individual children differ in their interests, abilities and development,
- realisation of the importance of organising time and resources for reading,
- understanding the importance of hearing children read regularly to monitor their progress,
- the experience of seeing various approaches and schemes in operation in the classroom,
- understanding the importance of using 'good' children's literature in a 'real books approach',
- realisation of the problems of organisation and the pressure this creates for the teacher.

The third group (6%) perceived students as having gained in competence through using their own initiative by experimenting with different approaches 'heard of at college' and thus putting their 'knowledge into practice'. These teachers also felt that students had gained in confidence by this use of their own initiative to gain practical experience.

Supervisor perception

The supervisors were asked to indicate how the students had gained in the teaching of reading during this teaching practice. From an analysis, three response categories emerged – those expressing uncertainty about any gain the students might have made, those indicating that students had gained in awareness by working alongside an experienced teacher, and those suggesting that students had gained in competence through activities generated by themselves.

Those supervisors (39%) providing responses in the first group found 'any gain hard to judge', 'didn't know about details' or stated that the strong influence of the teacher limited students' experience based upon the students' own initiative, it 'reduced any experimental approach by the student'.

Responses in the second and third categories emphasised the awareness students had gained by experiencing teaching reading in co-operation with a practising teacher and the increase in 'competence by doing'. The most frequently mentioned aspects in the second category were –

- seeing various approaches and resources for teaching reading in action,
- greater awareness of the wide range of children's individual needs,
- insight into organisation in teaching reading,
- greater awareness of skills needed and problems associated with teaching reading.

Comments in category three stressed the students' gain in competence and confidence 'by doing' during this practice. The students' own active participation was perceived as an important ingredient in this process. Factors stated were the students' further practice working alongside an experienced teacher in the light of the knowledge gained from the college course and building on their previous experience, as expressed in some replies 'relating theory to practice, comparing reality with the ideal'. Gains mentioned include greater competence in organisation, selecting appropriate resources for individual pupils and record-keeping.

4.2.3.7 Summary of views on students' competence in teaching reading through the practice

A comparison of the views of the three participant groups on the question of student gain in teaching reading during this practice shows general agreement on the major categories of achieved gains. Organisation of reading, appreciation of children's individual needs, experience of approaches and resources in operation as well as recognition of practice-related problems appear prominently in the responses from each group. However, the practice-related problems identified by students differed from those of teachers and supervisors. Certain comments are specific to each group such as 'experiencing examples of record-keeping' from the supervisors and 'hearing children read' and 'promoting interest in reading' from the teachers and students. Only a

minority acknowledged the importance of students' own initiative and experience for students' professional development.

Comparison with student gain in competence in teaching reading through the college course

Students were asked about their principal gain in knowledge about the teaching of reading from the college course. Analysis of their responses enables a comparison to be made between their perceived learning experiences from the course and those gained during the teaching practice.

11% of responding students claimed that the course had offered them nothing, very little, nothing for the junior age group, or that they felt 'ill-prepared for the reality of the classroom' by a 'patchy course' which they 'can't remember'. The remaining responding students felt that the course had offered them useful learning experiences, with the most frequently named aspects being –

- the importance of fostering a positive attitude to reading, making reading enjoyable,
- the knowledge of the range of approaches used in teaching reading,
- the importance of introducing children to good quality literature,
- understanding the reading process (importance, purpose, complexity, as one language mode),
- ways of assessing children's reading strategies and development,
- the range of schemes and non-scheme resources available.

Above-mentioned items one, two, three and six were also included in the six most important things learned during the teaching practice (question 33a) named by the students. The remaining two (understanding the reading process and ways of assessing children's reading) are specific to the course in the students' view.

4.2.3.8 Monitoring children's progress in reading

The students and teachers were each asked to indicate which methods they adopted in assessing pupils' progress in reading. The results in Table 33 show some similarities in the selection of procedures by students and teachers.

Table 33: Methods used by teachers and students to assess pupils' progress in reading

	Teachers (n = 117)	Students (n = 276)
Method of assessment	%	%
None at all	0	13
Miscue analysis	24	10
Cloze procedure	33	19
Informal observation	88	77
Published tests	52	3
Reading profiles	31	30

For both groups, informal observation is the most common method of assessment. Apart from this and the administration of profiles, students used other assessment techniques much less than teachers. This is particularly apparent in the use of published tests. Overall, the data suggest that teachers retained responsibility for monitoring their pupils' reading progress and that their most common form of assessment (informal observation) was closely followed by the students.

Students were questioned about their record-keeping for individual children's reading performance. 82% of students confirmed that they kept such records, and both students and teachers provided information on the methods they employed for this activity. This information is given in Table 34.

Table 34: Methods of record-keeping used by teachers and students

	Teachers (n = 117)	Students (n = 276)
Method of keeping records	%	%
Recording books / pages children have read	94	86
Recording children's reading strategies	28	23
Noting children's needs	57	49
Recording children's reading interests	35	27
Recording children's phonic knowledge	45	16
Recording children's sight vocabulary	14	11
Recording results from published tests	51	6

The most frequently used approach to record-keeping by both teachers and students is the recording of books and pages which children have read. A common pattern of record-keeping is observed for both groups apart from the two methods, recording phonic knowledge and results from published tests, of which the teachers make significantly more use.

In response to a separate question, 40% of teachers indicated that their student required help with record-keeping.

4.2.3.9 Participants' views of reading and its teaching

This aspect was investigated from the perception of all three participant groups, who were asked to state what they considered to be the most important aims in the teaching of reading to primary-age children.

Student view

Students responded in considerable detail, mainly indicating that children should experience reading as an enjoyable and valuable process which was carried out to

extract meaning from written language. Children should develop a variety of skills and strategies with the help of a wide range of materials, fiction and non-fiction, and be given opportunities to use and develop reading with others and at their own pace. 764 individual itemised comments were received. The seven categories containing most frequently mentioned items expressed as percentage of respondents by whom they were mentioned, were –

- foster children's enjoyment in reading – 76%,
- emphasise the purpose for reading and reading for meaning – 34%,
- foster a love and appreciation of literature – 28%,
- develop independent, confident readers – 25%,
- help children gain basic skills and extended strategies – 19%,
- give breadth of experience with a wide range of materials and contexts – 16%,
- develop ability to read for information (non-fiction) – 15%.

This topic was also included in the student interviews. Responses confirmed and supplemented the beliefs expressed in the questionnaires. Students emphasised their regard for reading as an important but complex activity to be taught. Motivation for reading with a wide range of materials was seen as the necessary framework within which skills such as phonics and other strategies should be developed in a balanced and structured manner. Seventeen of the 18 students interviewed were familiar with the guidelines for reading set out in the National Curriculum. Analysis of the relevant interview questions indicates the students' strong interest in reading, all of them in reading for pleasure, and 17 out of 18 in reading and collecting children's books. One interviewed student was a member of a professional organisation (UKRA) concerned with the teaching of English. Most of the group expressed an interest in joining such an organisation if they were to receive the appropriate information.

Teacher view

The teachers' view of teaching reading, as expressed in their responses to this question, is very similar to that of the students. The seven categories containing the most frequently mentioned items, expressed as percentage of respondents by whom they were mentioned, were –

- foster children's enjoyment in reading – 78%,
- develop a love of good quality books and story – 37%,
- train children to read for information – 36%,
- let children experience reading for a purpose and for meaning – 32%,
- develop confident, fluent, independent readers for life – 27%,
- give broad experience through variety of materials to avoid failure – 18%,
- develop basic skills (phonics) and various strategies – 17%.

A difference in priority is given to reading for information, which was in third place in the teachers' rating and seventh in the students'.

This topic was again explored in the teacher interviews which confirmed that enjoyment of reading and love of books were regarded by the majority of the group as the most important aspect in teaching reading. All teachers stated that they discussed reading informally with other colleagues regularly and 13 claimed to have a particular interest in teaching reading, although only two belonged to a professional association (NATE & UKRA) concerned with teaching reading. The majority of interviewees felt positive towards the National Curriculum guidelines, believing that the document was 'in line with our views and practices'.

Supervisor view

The supervisors' view of teaching reading has the seven most frequently mentioned categories, expressed as percentage of respondents by whom they were mentioned, being –

- enjoyment in reading, motivated to read, positive attitude, pleasure – 70%,
- reading with purpose and for meaning, understanding, communication – 41%,
- acquiring basic skills (phonics) & variety of strategies at the appropriate stage – 38%,
- developing love of books, interest in literature – 30%,
- developing confidence through competence (fluency) – 27%,
- developing functional reading, reading for information – 25%,
- broadening children's experience (imagination, creativity, empathy) – 18%.

Supervisors, in common with the other two participant groups, considered enjoyment in reading to be the most important aim in its teaching. Generally their priorities compare well with those of the students and teachers. They do, however, consider developing basic skills and strategies for reading to be of more importance than the other two groups. This general comparison between the priorities of the three participant groups is investigated further below (Table 35).

Responses from the interviews with 20 supervisors supplied additional information on their views on reading and the teaching of it. Their comments on the main aims for teaching reading correspond with those expressed in the questionnaire. A higher proportion of supervisors (35%) in comparison to students (6%) and teachers (13%) belonged to a professional organisation concerned with reading. Although 80% of supervisors had come across particularly interesting information on teaching reading, 60% felt that they had not been able to keep abreast as much as they wished with developments. On being asked whether their college promoted a particular approach to reading, 29 responses were received of which 31% were 'not sure', 41% suggested that

the college would 'approve of a particular approach' and 28% indicated that it was college policy to create in students an awareness of a range of approaches to 'prepare them to fit into schools during their teaching practice and in their professional life after they have left college'.

Comparison of the views of the three groups

Table 35: Main aims for the teaching of reading

	Students			Teachers			Supervisors		
Category	No	%	Rank	No	%	Rank	No	%	Rank
Enjoyment	211	28	1	91	22	1	39	21	1
Meaning	95	12	2	37	9	4	23	13	2
Love of books	78	10	3	43	10	2	17	9	4
Confidence	69	9	4	32	8	5	15	8	5
Basic skills / strategies	59	8	5	20	5	7	21	11	3
Broad experience	43	6	6	21	5	6	10	5	7
Reading for information	41	5	7	42	10	3	14	8	6

Total comments made – students 764, teachers 412, supervisors 184.

Generally there was agreement by all three participant groups on the most important aims for the teaching of reading to primary age children. There were, however, differences in the ranking of these aims within each respondent group. Table 35 presents the seven most frequently chosen aims by the three groups with the number of comments for each aim, the percentage of the total comments made by each group and the ranking place of each aim for each group.

To investigate rank correlation, the data were examined using Spearman's coefficient of rank correlation for each of the three pairings. Analysis showed there to be no significant correlation between the ranking of the students and the teachers (ρ = 0.536), neither is there a significant correlation between the ranking of the teachers' and supervisors (ρ = 0.393). However, a significant positive correlation exists between the ranking of students and supervisors ($\rho = 0.858$, $p < 0.05$).

It should be noted that the above aims were not pre-set for the participant groups, but the data relating to these aims have been culled by the writer from comments made by the respondents. Thus the analysis may be influenced by the reliability of the categorisation of comments by the writer. This was tested however, as discussed in section 4.1.6, using external analysts, who supported the reliability of the writer in this activity.

Whilst only the first seven items were analysed for rank correlation, this does not weaken the findings, since the object was to compare ranking of the main aims identified by the three respondent groups. Inclusion of the lower ranked items might affect the correlation without yielding any benefit in the comparison of the important items. Furthermore, aims selected at lower frequencies were not common to all respondent groups and could therefore not be used in rank correlation.

4.2.3.10 Interest shown by the participants in the teaching of reading during the practice

The particular interest of the participants in the teaching of reading during the practice was investigated in the interviews. The majority of both teachers and supervisors stated that they had taken an interest in this curriculum area during the practice by observing the students teach reading. Most students, when asked how they had rated reading in comparison with other curriculum areas during this practice, reported that, although they regarded reading as important, they had given it less attention than other aspects of language, or other curriculum areas.

The interviews also examined how teachers and supervisors judged each others' and the students' interest in teaching reading.

Both teachers and supervisors considered their opposite numbers to have given other aspects of the teaching practice greater priority than reading. Teachers felt that supervisors had not shown interest in teaching reading, whilst supervisors believed that teachers did not wish to discuss reading with them, as one supervisor's comment expressed – 'teachers were rigid, forceful about their approach to reading and did not offer to discuss it'.

A significant majority of both teachers and supervisors considered the students to have given greater priority to other areas of the curriculum than to the teaching of reading.

4.2.3.11 The usefulness of the college course components for teaching reading

The students were asked to rate particular activities and sources as part of their college course in the teaching of reading. The results are shown in Table 36.

Most items were considered by the respondents to be 'quite useful' apart from 'practical work with children' where 82% of students rated it as 'very useful'. Other items figuring prominently in this category were – teaching resources library (52%), language resources room (44%), visiting speakers (38%) and discussions / seminars (36%). Items identified as of 'little value' were displays (34%) and journals (33%).

Table 36: Students' ratings of course components

	Very useful	Quite useful	Little value	Missing
	%	%	%	%
Lectures	21	62	16	1
Tutorials	25	38	25	12
Discussions / seminars	36	45	17	2
Video / films	14	56	23	7
Displays	22	41	34	3
Workshops	26	47	18	9
Language resources room	44	43	9	4
Teaching resources library	52	41	6	1
Practical work with children	82	10	5	3
Essays / assignments	19	53	25	3
Reference books	28	54	17	1
Handouts	29	56	12	3
Journals	13	51	33	3
Visiting speakers	38	44	11	7

n = 276. Each item in the above table was treated as a separate question.

The data from which Table 36 was derived were analysed with cross-reference to four factors –

- the colleges attended by the students (A, B, C, D),
- the students age-range specialisms (4 to 8 years, 7 to 11 years, 4 to 11 years),
- students' feeling of competence for teaching the early stages of reading (yes, no),
- students' feeling of competence for teaching the later stages of reading (yes, no).

This process involved chi-square analyses which assessed the significance of differences between the groups of students representing the above four categories, and their responses to the question of applying a value to each of the course components. The results of these analyses are shown in Table 37.

Table 37: Chi-square analysis of student ratings of course components by college, age-range specialism and early and later stages competence

Course component	Colleges	Age-range	Early stages	Later stages
Lectures	61.24§	16.81†	4.17	0.04
Tutorials	18.58†	9.85*	3.08	5.84
Discussions / seminars	3.55	1.59	2.45	4.98
Videos / films	12.38	1.74	5.37	1.27
Displays	15.09*	3.53	14.18§	0.65
Workshops	9.51	1.83	1.95	5.27
Lang. resource room	13.40*	5.83	2.42	2.10
Teach. res. library	5.65	4.12	10.16†	6.70*
Practical work	15.19*	4.67	1.01	0.83
Essays / assignments	24.64§	8.51	2.21	0.33
Reference books	5.93	6.48	7.09*	2.45
Handouts	21.51†	2.98	2.31	0.48
Journals	11.27	10.34*	6.19*	0.45
Visiting speakers	13.71*	11.66*	1.81	2.32

* $p < 0.05$; † $p < 0.01$; § $p < 0.001$

Regarding the analysis against the colleges, for those course components showing significant differences, further investigation into the variation of course design and implementation between the colleges is indicated. This might be an appropriate topic for further study.

Inspection of the contingency tables for the colleges relating to the three course components having the highest chi-square values (lectures, assignments, handouts) reveals the greatest contributions to be associated with College B, where these components were rated disproportionately more useful than in the other colleges. It could be inferred that the responses were positively influenced by the research being initiated from this college.

Analysis of the course components by students' age-range specialism revealed that regarding lectures, tutorials and visiting speakers, those students with early years specialism found them disproportionately more useful than students of the whole primary age range. Regarding journals, the early years students found them disproportionately more useful than later years specialists. No other statistically significant differences were discovered in the age-range specialism analysis.

Analysis of the course components by competence for teaching the early stages of reading revealed that those who felt competent to teach early stages found displays, teaching resources library, reference books and journals disproportionately more useful than those who did not feel competent. No other statistically significant differences were discovered in the 'competent for early stages' analysis.

Analysis of the course components by competence for teaching the later stages of reading revealed that those who felt competent found the teaching resources library disproportionately more useful than those who did not feel competent. No other statistically significant differences were discovered in the 'competent for later stages' analysis.

Students were asked in an open question to specify which aspects of the college reading course they found to be most / least helpful during their teaching practice. Responses (see Appendix 7) mention considerably more items (407) to be most helpful compared

with those regarded as being least helpful (185). Knowledge of reading schemes and approaches are listed as most helpful by 40% of students. Familiarity with children's literature, assessment methods, developing children's reading strategies and an understanding of the reading process all rank well before practical ideas, which appears in tenth place. 10% of the sample state that all aspects of the course were perceived as relevant.

The least helpful aspects can be considered in three categories. The first category consisted of those items which could be associated with a lack of success in developing practical teaching skills, such as organisation of time and resources, listening to children read, record-keeping and developing reading during the early stages – the latter being mainly mentioned by students with a 7 to 11 age-range specialism. Category two contained items not perceived as useful, such as the familiarisation with schemes and approaches without indicating which ones were the best to be used. Category three listed criticism of present course arrangements such as the course on reading being too short to reach the necessary breadth and depth in content. The integrated nature of the course prompted remarks that students 'could not remember ever having had a course on teaching reading', that 'there was no real course on teaching reading'. These comments together with those students who stated that 'a lot of useful ideas have been written down and forgotten' accounted for 24% of all students.

Questions on the college course, which had been selected for use in the student interviews were chosen to illuminate further the topic of perceived usefulness of its components regarding teaching reading (see Appendix 7). Familiarity with schemes and approaches were the items most frequently mentioned because this knowledge had proved useful during teaching practice. Students were all opposed to removing topics or activities from the course on reading. They felt strongly that a more extensive and distinctive course was required and suggested an optional course on teaching reading in addition to the compulsory one which was part of the language course. More information on the early stages of reading development was requested in particular by students specialising in the 7 to 11 age range. The activity regarded by most students as most supportive to their understanding and professional development regarding teaching reading was that of discussion, where ideas could be clarified and experiences

shared. This was seen as a necessary pre-requisite for the success of the other course components, such as lectures, practical work with children and visiting speakers, which were mentioned as particularly useful activities.

Consistent with responses from the total population presented in Table 36, the interviewees categorised the language resource room as useful. They were not sufficiently familiar with relevant journal titles to make use of them. Textbooks, handouts and lecture notes were only seen as useful for the writing of assignments, the latter being described by one interviewee as 'written, filed and forgotten'.

Supervisors were asked during interview for their judgement of components in the course dealing with teaching reading concerning their usefulness to the students. Analysis of comments reveals that supervisors regarded lectures as the least useful course component for students, seeing greater value in seminars and emphasising the need for more structured discussion.

In comparison with teachers and students, supervisors were more concerned with the attention given to reading in the college course and during school practice than with details of its content. In their responses they gave priority to developing a positive philosophy in students, who should experience examples of 'good' practice. The call for a positive attitude is expressed in one supervisor's comment – 'there is too little emphasis on teaching reading during teaching practice as against maintaining whatever is currently happening in the class (often this is surprisingly little)'. The need for more time to be allocated to reading in the course and the requirement for training and guidance for teacher trainers were also raised as future needs.

Responses from teachers and supervisors to both questionnaire and interview questions expressed concern over their lack of knowledge of aspects of teaching reading that were covered during the college course the student had followed. Table 38 shows the two groups' responses to the extent of information received.

Table 38: Information held by teachers and supervisors on teaching reading covered by the college course

	In detail	In outline	None
Teachers	1%	19%	80%
Supervisors	29%	46%	25%

Whilst most supervisors felt that they were not informed in detail about the course, they nevertheless considered themselves to have a better overview of it than the teacher. Interviews with both provided additional information on this aspect. Only a small number of supervisors felt themselves insufficiently informed on the course in reading, most had obtained information from course documentation, meetings and informal discussions with colleagues. They felt the main aims of the course in this area were to equip the students with the necessary knowledge and skills to teach reading and help them to understand the processes involved. As explained by one supervisor, the aim was to 'produce enthusiastic and reflective, competent teachers, *not* competent technicians'.

Conversely, none of the teachers interviewed had received information on their student's course on language or reading, nor had any of them received information by the college of expectations regarding the student's performance in the teaching of reading during their school practice. However, it was clear that teachers had obtained an impression of the students' preparation by the college in teaching reading, since the majority stated that the college did not promote a particular approach to reading, which teachers welcomed.

4.2.3.12 Participants' professional needs regarding teaching reading

The students' identified needs

The students were asked to specify what they considered their own needs to be regarding teaching reading at this stage of their training. The most frequently identified needs belong to the following three groups –

1 to learn through seeing approaches and resources in operation – (54%),

2 to learn through own experience – (19%),

3 to increase and reflect upon existing knowledge – (27%).

Needs classified in group one were for increased experience in diagnosing and catering for pupils with reading difficulties, the wish to see the beginning stages of teaching reading in operation and seeing schemes and approaches to reading at work. Students wished to see 'what to do with a complete novice on the first day and during the first week'. They were eager to know 'which was the most reliable approach and the most successful scheme'. Analysis reveals that students with an early years age-range specialism felt as much the need for experience of initial stages in reading as those training for later years or the whole age range. No significant difference existed between the three age-range specific groups in this requirement (chi-square = 2.17; $p > 0.05$).

The needs classified in group two were to experiment with ideas and approaches, free from the pressures of a BSE, in order 'to develop skills of my own'. Taking responsibility, but being able to consult with a skilled practitioner was considered ideal. One student stated – 'I need an opportunity to put all I've learnt into practice; more practice with guidance from an experienced person'.

Needs classified in the third group were to extend and deepen knowledge. 'I don't feel my knowledge is complete,' was a typical response and led to requests for additional sessions and an extra course on teaching reading. However, there were also students who strongly requested time to 'think over what I have learnt' and 'going over my college notes on reading to become clear in my own mind how to apply the knowledge'.

The final item of the questionnaire invited students to make further free comments on the study. An examination of these comments shows there to be much reference to the needs of students in this field. Whilst many students expressed a wish for more practical experience with children, a minority referred to future professional experience and development – 'until we are put in a position of having our own classrooms, we will be unable to draw fully on all the information we have acquired during our time at college. There is nothing like practical application for consolidating ideas, and we frankly did not have enough of this'.

Apart from a request for further input on the initial stages of reading, less emphasis was placed on their need to acquire specific knowledge and skills. Instead they outlined the shortcomings of the college course and suggested improvements which might be made to the school practice. Students stated that they felt 'ill-equipped and lacking confidence in teaching reading', although in general they found the college course to be useful. Those who reported the course on reading as inadequate specified the lack of detail and time as well as the wrong timing in implementation as deficiencies. 'The content of sessions went over our heads in the first year, lectures should be repeated during the fourth year.'

Students also expressed difficulty in remembering course details about teaching reading and felt that 'college work seems to be a muddle of theories we don't really understand how to use'. Suggested improvements for the school practice were that specific tasks be included with support from a knowledgeable person and a prepared programme, 'a "blitz" before the practice', as well as the inclusion of more follow up discussions to lectures or other activities. Students claimed that 'there are too few discussions / seminars where students are made responsible for searching out ideas and reporting back; you learn by discussing views'.

In their questionnaire, the teachers were invited to make comments concerning the design of future college courses on the teaching of reading (see Appendix 7). The responses were mainly concerned with their observation of students' professional needs in this field. The categories evolving from the teachers' comments are presented in Table 39.

Table 39: Teachers' recommendations for the design of future courses for teaching reading

Recommendation	
More experience of classroom practice (observing teachers & 'hands-on')	19%
Knowledge & use of wide range of approaches / resources	17%
Ability to organise reading for whole class (hearing individual children read)	17%
Recommended improvements of current college course and tutors	15%
Development of specific skills for teaching reading	15%
Suggested improvements to teaching practice	13%
General comments on students' competence	4%

n = 117; total comments = 168

The majority of comments (68%) related to the development of students' specific knowledge and skills and their experience of practice in teaching reading. The remaining responses related to the management and organisation of the college course and school practice. Teachers considered that some practical experience apart from the teaching practice to be an essential part of the college course. This was also the main view of teachers chosen for interview. They also identified a need for students to have more time for discussion with teachers and tutors on classroom practice in teaching reading. Another important concern was students being unsuccessful in organising time to hear children read. They expected students to possess this ability or to develop it by observing and 'carrying on with the teacher's way'.

A comparison of the student needs in this field, as identified by both the students and the teachers in questionnaires, shows agreement for more practical experience and modification of the college course to provide more specialised teaching skills for reading. Conversely, whilst the comment 'students are ill-prepared' is frequently

mentioned by the students (13% of all comments) in the case of the teachers, this amounts to only 4% of all comments.

Teachers' identified needs

Teachers were asked three questions in their questionnaire concerning their training. On the question as to how well they considered their own initial training had prepared them for the teaching of reading, 8% felt very well prepared, 26% adequately and 65% inadequately (1% did not respond). 62% of teachers stated that they had received in-service training in teaching reading within the past five years, whilst 15% had had no further training in this field for over ten years. The most popular type of in-service training received was the provision of information on schemes and methods for teaching reading. This type of further training was also identified as the most desired item when teachers were asked to specify what further training in the teaching of reading they would welcome.

Comparing the kind of further training in the teaching of reading that teachers would welcome with the information provided by the students on their perceived needs leads to Table 40, which presents a ranked list of the first twelve items of learning needs for professional development identified by the two groups.

Table 40: Professional needs for teaching reading

Category	Student ranks	Teacher ranks
Diagnosing and catering for difficulties in reading	1	2
Info on the teaching of initial stages of reading	2	12
Information on schemes and approaches	3	1
Experience of good practice	4	5
Organisation of time to hear individual children read	5	7
Extending existing knowledge	6	3
Time to reflect and discuss	7	11
Models of 'good' record-keeping and assessment	8	4
Children's books and how to interest pupils in them	9	5
Support and advice	10	9
Developing reading skills	11	8
Demonstration of resources	12	10

Diagnosing and catering for difficulties in reading, information on schemes and approaches used for teaching reading and experience of good practice are considered of high importance by both groups. The importance of these responses from the teachers was not influenced by the length of their classroom experience; as one comment by a teacher with more than ten years' experience illustrates – 'I would welcome the provision for observation of "good" teachers'. The composition of the teachers' sample was such that the majority of participants (82%) had more than ten years of teaching experience.

Overall the categories were subjected to a rank correlation test using Spearman's coefficient. No significant correlation existed between the two rankings.

4.2.3.13 Consultation and reference on the teaching of reading during the practice

Student consultation and reference

The students were asked to specify which sources they consulted on the teaching of reading in general during the practice. The results are presented in Table 41.

Table 41: Sources consulted by students on teaching reading during the practice

	Frequency of consultation		
Source	Freq.	Occ.	Never
Class teacher (n = 273)	143	113	17
Other student (n = 269)	31	138	100
College course notes (n = 271)	25	136	110
College supervisor (n = 269)	22	105	142
Reference books (n = 269)	15	92	162
Other teachers (n = 273)	14	75	184
Head teacher (n = 269)	9	29	230
Language tutor (n = 268)	7	45	216
Journal articles (n = 268)	7	37	224

The class teacher was claimed to be consulted by 93% of students, other students by 63% and college course notes by 59%. Language tutors (19%), journals (16%) and head teachers (14%) were the least consulted.

Students were also asked to describe the assistance given by the class teacher, any particularly helpful advice on the teaching of reading and the main areas of interest / concern by the supervisor. Analysis of responses indicates a significantly higher provision of assistance from the teacher than from the supervisor. Support provided by

teachers concentrated almost entirely on introducing the students to the current teaching / learning situation in a particular class so that the established climate could be maintained. Teachers were seen as maintaining or sharing responsibility for reading, this being welcomed as assistance by some students, but regarded by others as limiting. One student commented – 'I was not really given any assistance other than explaining how the system worked in the school. We worked together on the reading, as she used my being in the classroom as a good time to really concentrate on hearing certain children read who experienced difficulties.'

Supervisors' support, as perceived by the students, related more to general issues, such as motivating children to read or advising on more specific isolated or innovative tasks, including helping students devise detailed reading records, suggesting suitable books and assisting in creating book displays. Their main concerns were about students' lack of attention to reading and about the unsuitability of some of the approaches used by teachers.

Teachers were asked in the questionnaire to state whether the students sought their advice on the teaching of reading during the practice, on what aspects and whether and of what kind the student required practical assistance. The teachers stated that the students had frequently (18%) or occasionally (65%) sought their advice.

A comparison of the perceptions by the students and by the teachers on the frequency of students seeking advice on the teaching of reading is given in Table 42.

Teachers also stated that students frequently (23%) or occasionally (45%) required their assistance. In specifying the advice and assistance given, organising time to hear children read, providing books at appropriate levels for individual pupils, providing for children with difficulties in reading and assessing and recording pupils' progression were most frequently named. Assistance for students mainly consisted of teachers maintaining all or some responsibility for reading by participating in hearing children read. Helping with progression when a combination of schemes was used and encouraging students to take responsibility for reading were the other two major aspects mentioned.

Table 42: Students seeking advice on the teaching of reading from the teacher

	Frequently	Occasionally	Never
Students felt they had consulted the teacher (n = 276)	52%	42%	6%
Teachers felt they had given advice to students (n = 117)	18%	65%	17%

Of the teachers who were interviewed, 73% stated that they had discussed the teaching of reading with their student.

Supervisors were asked to state how frequently they referred to the teaching of reading in their written comments to the students. In response they stated that this occurred frequently (13%) or occasionally (70%). The supervisors were asked whether the students sought their advice on the teaching of reading during the practice. Their response together with the perception of the students is given in Table 43.

Supervisors were asked to specify which aspects of the teaching of reading were discussed with the students. Their responses differed from those specified by the teachers. Whilst teachers' concern had been more with the practical skills involved in reading and the continuation of their own approach, supervisors felt they were more interested in students' overall teaching philosophy in this field, drawing attention to the reading climate and encouraging a critical stance towards methods in operation.

It was noticeable, however, that students reported a greater range of topics discussed with their supervisors than the supervisors themselves.

Table 43: Students seeking advice on the teaching of reading from the supervisor

	Frequently (most)	Occasionally (some)	Never (none)
Students felt they had consulted the supervisor (n = 269)	8%	39%	53%
Supervisors felt they had given advice to student (n = 66)	13%	48%	39%

Supervisors perceived similar areas in which students sought their advice as did the teachers and the students themselves, the organisation of reading for the whole class to arrange time to hear individual children read being the most frequently nominated topic.

However, when students were asked during interviews what help they would have liked or found useful during the practice, the most frequently mentioned items, stated by 50% of the interviewees, were 'more professional discussion with the supervisor and the teacher / discussion with the teacher and other students'.

Teacher / supervisor consultation

Teachers were asked how frequently the supervisor discussed with them any aspect of the teaching of reading as related to the student's work. The supervisors were asked whether they discussed the student's performance in the teaching of reading with the class teacher. Whereas 35% of the teachers claimed some discussion to have taken place, 63% of the supervisors believed that they had discussed the matter with the teachers.

None of the teachers interviewed reported to have been approached by the supervisor for such a discussion. Teachers stated during interviews that supervisors were more concerned with the students' overall performance and 'did not realise the problematic nature of reading'.

Analysing the supervisors' main curriculum subjects revealed that those with English-language commitment observed 'most of their students' more than other supervisors (chi-square = 15.96, $p < 0.01$), they made more frequent reference to teaching reading in their written comments (chi-square = 14.94, $p < 0.05$) and felt that students sought their advice on teaching reading more than other supervisors (chi-square = 12.91, $p < 0.05$). There were, however, no significant differences between subject supervisors with respect to requiring students to carry out written preparations or evaluations or in discussing teaching reading with the students and their class teachers.

4.2.3.14 The participants' view of the study

Students, teachers and supervisors were given the opportunity during the interviews to express their opinions on the research topic and their involvement in it.

All 18 student interviewees were interested in the research topic and expressed appreciation of student involvement. They felt that the topic was important and that more priority should be given to the teaching of reading in the college course. They predicted that one of the main findings would be students' lack of preparation, in particular for teaching the initial stages of reading, and the lack of students' confidence in this field. They considered that completing the questionnaire had helped them to recognise their needs as well as making them aware of their knowledge in this area and reflecting on their own beliefs and philosophies about teaching children to read. As one student commented – 'We had a chat after filling in the questionnaire, and we felt that we had never thought about reading in that way before'.

All teachers interviewed welcomed the involvement of students and supervisors in the study. They felt that a consideration of three different views on the same situation would help to ensure a balanced picture is presented.

When asked to predict the findings of the research, teachers specified lack of student preparation for the classroom, lack of attention to teaching reading during teaching practice, teachers and students being ill-equipped for the work and lack of communication between supervisors and teachers. Feelings about the results of the study were described in one of the comments as 'basically, students are quite well

prepared for reading, but they need more practical experience – long-term contact with a friendly teacher, away from the pressures of the teaching practice'.

Teachers felt that their involvement in the study had made them think about their own practice and had also led to them giving more consideration to student involvement in teaching reading during teaching practice in future. They commented – 'I never gave consideration that students should do more in the teaching of reading. I shall approach it differently in future and not let it drift again.'

In general, the supervisors felt it beneficial to involve all three participant groups. Without students and teachers the study would 'lack realism and become ivory towered'. A minority had reservations about teacher involvement fearing that teachers might be too negative in their attitude. Their predicted findings of the study included the students' and teachers' beliefs in lack of student preparation in this area, the views of language tutor supervisors being of adequate preparation as distinct from the other supervisors who would share the students' and teachers' views. Other findings would be a mismatch between course intention by the college and perception by the students and teachers, insufficient liaison between college and schools and students being too dependent on the teachers. The supervisors' attitude was best represented by the comment – 'There is a mystique about reading. Students will perform well once they are working with their own class.'

Regarding the consequences of their involvement in the study, most supervisors felt that it had raised their consciousness about the teaching of reading during teaching practice. Several supervisors commented that the study would have an effect upon their future approach to reading during school practice. It had also added status to the teaching of reading. A minority (language tutors) expressed the view that research of this kind could only come to biased conclusions and that out of principle they would not complete questionnaires of this nature.

4.3 Summary and discussion of results

4.3.1 Introduction

The central issue for the study was the quality of initial teacher preparation for the teaching of reading in primary schools. General concern for this area was rooted in the writer's professional involvement in initial preparation of primary teachers which had led to recognition of the need for investigation to better understand and improve future teachers' professional development for teaching reading. The 'lack of enquiry by teacher educators into their own activities and the experiences of their students' (Tickle, 1987, p.13) was generally acknowledged in the literature at that time as well as being reflected in the paucity of research on this topic.

The performance in teaching reading of year-four students from four colleges during their final BSE, being regarded as an indicator of the nature and quality of the students' preparation, was selected for investigation. The perception of this performance by the students, their class teachers and their supervisors provided the data sources. Investigation was limited to one aspect, that of school practice. It made use of participants' perception rather than of direct observation. In spite of these limitations, the analysed data were expected to reveal crucial relationships, highlight certain trends and raise questions and issues requiring further investigation.

The questionnaires and interviews from which data were acquired had been structured by relevant underlying questions (see section 3.2.3.4 to 3.2.3.7) and these in turn had been generated by objectives expressed as basic research questions for the inquiry (see section 2.3). The collected data provided a rich source of information, which had the potential for much wider analysis than that deemed appropriate for this study and described in section 4.2, but the investigative findings presented therein retained the focus of the initially identified objectives. This section therefore makes use of the data to address the basic research questions. The findings from the analysis of data (see section 4.2) are summarised and discussed regarding the central issue of the nature and quality of student preparation for teaching reading which underlies the whole study. The discussion is structured by focussing on four main areas –

- interest and attention given to the teaching of reading by participants,
- an exploration of selected sources of possible influence upon students' approaches to teaching reading during the practice,
- views on the college course,
- received competence in teaching reading.

4.3.2 Extent of participants' interest and attention given to the teaching of reading

The importance of teaching reading within the primary school curriculum was identified by all three participant groups. The majority of interviewees described themselves as keen and regular readers, with most of the students taking an active interest and collecting children's books.

Most supervisors felt themselves to be abreast of developments in teaching reading and were familiar with reference reading on the topic. Conversely, the majority of students indicated that they found textbooks and journal articles on this topic difficult to understand and only read them when required to do so for the preparation of assignments or when specifically requested by the course.

Both teachers and students gave a limited, and to some extent dated, list of reference titles best known to them. Recent research, concerning reading course lists in initial teacher preparation, has made similar observations. Gorman (1989) found a limited choice of reference books and in particular a lack of books dealing with the initial stages of reading. Tate (Brooks et al., 1992) revealed that among the 30 most common reference books on reading lists for teacher trainees, no books dealt with 'the complex relationships between the writing system (the orthography) and the sound system (the phonology) of English' (p.41). Beard (Littlefair, 1994, p.148), whilst pointing out the need for teachers' professional knowledge in this area regarding the planning of teaching and learning to read, suggests that reference literature on this aspect of reading 'which deals with the topic in a way suitable for use in teacher education ... is still to be written'. The few authors who had published on aspects of the writing system and phonemic awareness concerning reading at the time of this study, such as Bryant and

Bradley (1985), Donaldson (1989), and Oakhill and Garnham (1988), although mentioned by some of the supervisors, were not identified by either students or teachers. In general, more interest was shown by these two latter groups in the practical rather than the theoretical aspects of teaching reading. When asked about students' needs in this area and for suggestions on future courses on teaching reading, both teachers and supervisors frequently suggested increased practical experience to assist professional development. However, there is agreement that, without some understanding of the theoretical perspectives which underpin the reading process, it is not possible to assess the quality of teaching reading. Tickle (1987) emphasises the importance of the partnership between theoretical knowledge and professional practice when he comments that 'it is by developing an understanding of teaching through theory that professional practice will be improved' (p.84).

An indication of the imbalance in this relationship was provided by students paying little attention to teaching reading in their written preparations and their evaluations before, during and after the teaching practice. It would therefore suggest that balanced relationship between theory and practice and its importance for the professional preparation of students for teaching reading be addressed. Thorough preparation and detailed evaluation of activities are generally seen as major contributors to the quality of the students' approach to teaching during their BSE. These two activities are fundamental to the process of linking the knowledge gained from the college course and through former experience in this field to the further development and extension of classroom practice.

Supervisors' responses indicated their awareness of the lack of attention to teaching reading in students' written preparation for the teaching practice, only half of them stating that they requested this work from their students. A significant number of supervisors (36%) and teachers (18%) thought that students had gained little in the teaching of reading during the teaching practice, both supervisors and teachers attributing this to the students' limited experience. Teachers also considered the lack of guidance from college as being a contributory cause. Nearly a third of students felt that they had not been able to develop any new skills in the teaching of reading during the practice. Rowland (1993, p.107) believes that 'whether or not we learn from our

experience depends largely upon how we focus our attention', and this raises the question as to whether the lack of attention given to the teaching of reading in preparation and evaluation before, during and after the practice was an important reason for students' perceived lack of learning in this area. It might also suggest the need for an exploration as to how and when this attention to teaching reading should best be given.

Analysis of data revealed that those students who included reading in their written preparations represented the highest proportion of those who prepared written evaluations on this aspect of their classroom practice. Whilst this applied to students across all colleges, some differences existed between students training for specific age ranges. Students preparing to teach age range 4 to 8 generally paid more attention than other students to the teaching of reading in their written preparations and evaluations. Concerning written schemes of work before the practice and formative evaluations during school experience, the difference was highly significant. Comments from supervisors that they would not expect written preparation for teaching reading if students worked with junior-age children, and responses from students that preparations for reading were only needed for the younger age group indicate the attitude that reading only needs the teacher's attention in the early stages.

No research of comparable breadth and depth has been identified in dealing with the nature and extent of student preparation and evaluation in teaching reading, but interview responses here throw some light on the type of attention paid by students to the teaching of reading. All three interview groups agreed that other aspects of language teaching and other curriculum areas were given priority over reading by the students as well as by teachers and supervisors. Only half of the supervisors interviewed expected preparations to be carried out for teaching reading and of these the majority felt that this should only involve practical measures such as preparing resources and activities. Students met this expectation when stating that their preparation for the practice was spent on choosing books, looking at schemes and making games and activity materials. Whilst students commented that written preparations were not officially requested, the majority of those interviewed thought this to be necessary 'in order to focus, plan and

think about it'. They felt, however, that more guidance in the form of 'discussion in small groups and with tutors' was required.

The opportunity for professional discussion with the supervisor or teacher was also highlighted by students as the 'sort of help they would have liked most during their practice'. Where activities were recognised as being particularly useful during the teaching practice, these were identified in interview comments by students as 'discussion with teachers, other students and the supervisor'. From responses to questionnaires and comments during interviews it seems, however, that such support as did take place was not of the 'professional' kind as desired by the students. Teachers explained the approach they adopted and expected to be followed by the student, while supervisors' advice was incidental and dealt with isolated practical aspects of teaching reading. Thus support from both the teacher and the supervisor appeared to be of the form 'do as I do' or 'practical tips for teachers' rather than helping students to reflect upon their own and their teacher's practice.

Tickle (1987) points out that –

> pre-service classroom experience has, however, largely remained at the conceptual and practical level of *training* in general technical competences – efficient use of resources; questioning techniques; classroom control; the presentation of information; organization and balance of learning activities. (p.2)

He argues that such narrow training does not lead to professional development where quality in performance is achieved though reflection. The decisive importance of reflection has increasingly been studied and acknowledged in the literature as the essential basis for the quality of teachers' professional development. Tisher and Wideen's (1990) choice of Holborn's definition of reflection as 'a critical examination of one's experience in order to derive new levels of understanding by which to guide future action' (p.9) places reflective activity at the centre of all teaching. The attention given to students' planning and evaluation of teaching activities in reading would thus provide a suitable basis for reflective discussion and should be regarded as one of the key factors for improved quality of preparation of future primary teachers in this field.

Thus the picture that is presented is one where all three participant groups admit their own awareness of the importance of teaching reading within the primary curriculum and within the initial preparation of teachers, but perceive a lack of interest in this area by the other parties. The acknowledged lack of communication over this aspect of the students' performance between the two supporting agents may have been a contributory factor to this perception.

Although the study only investigated the degree of attention given to teaching reading by participants during students' final BSE, it does provide some revealing insight into the kind of attention required by the students. An examination of the necessary content and quality of reflective discussion of the teaching or reading and an exploration of possible opportunities for their generation are areas worthy of further study.

4.3.3 Influences upon students' approaches to teaching reading during the practice

The survey identified teachers as the strongest influence upon students' organisation of reading, their use of resources and their approaches. This might have been expected, since students only had responsibility for their classes for six to seven weeks. However, in comparison to other curriculum areas, the teacher's influence and continuous involvement was significantly stronger in teaching reading. Less than a third of students felt they had been allocated full responsibility for this area compared with 89% of students perceiving to have had full overall responsibility for their class. Teachers' comments confirmed that a system of shared responsibility was adopted for teaching reading. Teachers were aware of their strong influence in the teaching of reading which they exerted over the student and regarded this as essential to the student's professional development.

Teachers and students adopted similar methods of assessment and record-keeping for the teaching of reading. Teachers' influence was apparent in the chosen method of informal observation of children's progress in reading by hearing them read regularly and by recording books and pages read by pupils. A national survey carried out in primary schools in 1991 (Cato et al., 1992) also provided evidence that 'listening to

pupils reading was the most common method used to assess pupils by informal method (80 per cent of teachers cited this)' (p.25). Although some students and supervisors in the present study were not in favour of this approach, the majority of students 'fitted in' without being unduly critical by using this 'traditional practice', which is regarded by many authorities in the field as 'requiring major revision' (Harrison and Coles, 1992, p.124). The college course programmes indicated that the students should also have been familiar with other methods of assessment. However, the students had little experience in the application of these methods, and it may be assumed that the method in operation in their classrooms by the teachers proved more attractive because of its availability. McNeil and Popham (Travers, 1973, p.231) explain that students may be judged effective or ineffective because a particular behaviour is valued or not valued by the observer, and this might have caused students to adopt what appeared to be the most valued method of their observing teachers. Nevertheless, more detailed investigation is required to ascertain whether teacher influence is the only deciding factor for the students' predominant use of this assessment method. Available findings from other inquiries point to 'assessment being a neglected area in many ITT courses' and to the fact that, during teaching practice, 'for many students opportunities to practise teaching reading are assumed but not specifically planned for' (Brooks et al., 1992, p.35). Student choice of assessment methods during their teaching practice represents a fruitful area for further investigation.

The organisation of the approach, mainly followed by the students, of listening to children read, was, however, the area mentioned by teachers with which students experienced most difficulties, in particular regarding managing time when arranging to hear children read, and the approach upon which they most frequently sought advice and assistance. The organisation of this activity was recognised by students as the 'most important thing they learned on the teaching of reading during school practice' (20% of students), as well as the most difficult part of teaching reading by those students interviewed (44%). In the HMI report (DES, 1992) this aspect of teaching reading was identified also as presenting problems for experienced teachers, in that poor standards in reading perceived in 20% of primary schools 'were strongly associated with weaknesses

in the quality and in the organisation and management of the work in the classroom' (p.2).

Teachers were by far the most consulted source by students on the teaching of reading during the practice. Analysis of responses demonstrated that the students felt that they had consulted the teachers more often than the teachers themselves felt they had been consulted. A difference in perception of consultation also existed for the supervisors and students, although here conversely with supervisors feeling they had been consulted more than was indicated by the students. Similar results were reported by Yates (1982), referred to in Tickle (1987, p.35), when he concluded that 'teachers were seen by students as being of greater help than supervisors, giving more time for observation and discussion'.

Nevertheless, the strong teacher influence upon their approach to reading during the practice noted by 68% of students only persisted for the duration of the teaching practice and did not have a lasting influence on students' overall approach, as 55% of the students confirmed. This was also demonstrated when participants' views of reading and the teaching of it were explored. Overall agreement existed among the three participant groups on the most important aims in teaching reading to primary-age children. The findings reflected those in the 1991 survey (Cato et al., 1992) in which teachers, when asked to describe the main skills in reading that they wanted their pupils to acquire, 'stressed their wish for the pupils to develop a love of books, and an enjoyment of reading' (p.9).

Participants' views of reading in the present study favoured a balanced attitude towards the teaching of this curriculum area which corresponds to that currently proposed by such authorities as Beard (1993) and Harrison (Harrison and Coles, 1993). The latter advocates teaching of the component skills of reading whilst emphasising that 'unless we also have the goal of helping children to become enthusiastic and self-motivated readers, we may find our efforts ineffectual' (p.17). There were, however, differences in the ranking of the aims of teaching reading as expressed by the students, teachers and supervisors, with an examination of rank correlation among the three groups (see section 4.2.3.9) revealing only a significant correlation between supervisors' and

students' views. This finding suggests that students' beliefs about teaching reading, being closer to those of their supervisors than of their teachers, may well have developed from the influence of the college course. Since educational practice has been defined as 'action informed by beliefs about how to achieve educationally important purposes' and therefore 'practices are more than behaviours, since they incorporate beliefs about what is important' (Robinson, 1993, p.5), the identification of this influence may be regarded as significant.

First impressions suggest that the college course is perceived by students as having little impact upon their approach to teaching reading. As a source of information for practice it only ranked in third place after the teacher's explanation and the students' own common sense. Donaldson (1992) in her discussion of the development of human minds gives a helpful theoretical account of the concept of 'common sense'. She views common sense as arising from learning that has taken place earlier and has subsequently led to the construction of beliefs and the 'taken-for-granted know-how'. Parts of the learning achieved 'are so taken for granted ... that they are assumed to be universal ... and these are what we mean by common sense' (pp.248 and 249). It may be that the students' knowledge of resources and approaches was being taken for granted by them and assumed to be 'universal common sense'. Students may therefore be unaware that their knowledge gained from the college course and previous classroom experience had become common sense to them.

Whilst the college course was acknowledged by students as a major influence upon their understanding of the reading process, it was not seen in relation to effective teaching where again the class teacher was viewed as the main influence. There seemed to exist a sharp division between theory and practice, and this was reflected in the attitude of the majority of students interviewed who stated that the knowledge gained from the college course was not applicable during the practice, since it did not offer anything practical. It is not possible to say what has created this attitude in the students. Calderhead (1988) makes the structure of initial teacher preparation responsible for the practice-theory divide, because –

> theory and practice are frequently regarded as separate entities in teacher education, sometimes the former being viewed as primarily the responsibility of the college which aims to build the theoretical knowledge of the student and the latter the responsibility of the school, where expertise is developed under the supervision of the experienced teacher. However ... this is a false dichotomy. (p.9)

Regarding benefits accrued by students from the teaching practice to their understanding of the teaching of reading, as discussed in section 4.2.3.4, only a small minority of students (2%) indicated that they had grasped the interactive relationship between knowledge gained from the college course in teaching reading and practical experience, by 'taking the best from college and from school and developing my own style' as was commented.

More than with students, teachers' opinions were polarised towards classroom practice which they credited with their own understanding of the reading process and with becoming an effective teacher of reading. In the teachers' opinion the 'understanding through observation and experience with a teacher' was by far the most important gain students made in the teaching of reading during the teaching practice.

Although teachers emphasised the need for a model for students as an important aspect in teacher preparation for teaching reading, indirectly expressing 'professional prejudice against theory' (Tickle, 1987, p.2), there is no proof that teachers' attitude in this study intensified students' beliefs. Suggestions of teachers' views as an influential factor upon student thinking can only be tentative. There is, however, evidence that teachers' beliefs and approaches to teaching reading had a powerful effect upon student activities during the final BSE of these four colleges and that explicitly this influence was considerably stronger than that of the supervisors or knowledge from the college course. Nevertheless, analysis of results did allow conclusions regarding the influence of the college course upon students overall professional beliefs concerning teaching reading. Further research is required to explore the possible change of attitude of students towards teaching reading during the teaching practice by comparing student beliefs in this field before and after the school practice.

4.3.4 Views of the college course

In general, students thought that those parts of the college course which dealt with reading were 'quite helpful and gave basic knowledge'. None of the students interviewed felt that they wanted to 'cut out' any of the parts presently offered during the course. On the contrary, students argued for more time to be given to teaching reading and suggested an option to be offered in addition to the compulsory course.

Practical work with children was rated as the most useful course component by the majority of students (82%), followed by the teaching resources library. Most course components were judged to be quite useful, although displays and journals were least favoured. Responses to the open questions and during interviews on the usefulness of the college course on teaching reading provided more enlightening information than the closed question of the questionnaire. Overall, students found the information received on reading schemes, approaches to reading and assessment of reading strategies helpful, and had gained an understanding of the reading process, familiarity with children's literature and ways to motivate children to read. They found least helpful the way the course dealt with the initial stages of reading and the teaching of phonics, where students felt the need for additional input from the course as well as in the area of providing for children with reading difficulties. Similar results were reported by Gorman (Brooks et al., 1992) where responses from 387 new teachers revealed that 60% of them felt that they 'had been taught little or nothing about phonics' (p.90) and where the area of need mentioned by the largest group of graduates concerned the teaching of children with special needs in reading (p.96). As part of the same research project, Tate (op. cit.) found through interviews with a sample of tutors and students from 20 institutions that most courses stressed reading for pleasure and enjoyment and 'placed great stress on familiarising students with the range of children's literature' (p.59). Whilst phonics featured in all courses, students were not felt to be 'thoroughly prepared for the teaching of phonics' (p.58). Course tutors' opinion that teacher training courses could only offer an introduction to teaching reading and that what students 'received in training was just an initial course to prepare them for their probationary year' (p.55) was reflected in supervisors' responses to the present survey by their expression of confidence about students' performance 'once they teach their own classes'.

The topic of perception of course content has been addressed by Owen (Littlefair, 1994), who found that this could differ from the actual course provision. She reports that 'many tutors at the time felt exasperated that students would maintain that aspects of the curriculum had "not been covered" or had "only been touched on" when the tutors could point to full coverage of such aspects and produce documentation of it' (p.153). The present survey seems to reflect similar findings concerning students' perception of the content of the course on teaching reading. When asked about most helpful aspects of the course for teaching practice, 10% of students 'can't remember', 14% of responses fell into the category 'we had no real course on reading', 8% stated that 'course information was written down and forgotten'. When asked to state the most important thing learned on the teaching of reading during the college course, 10% of students commented 'nothing, very little'. These findings suggest that on this topic further research by direct observation should be carried out into the delivery of college courses in all their components, since any conclusions derived from the findings of this investigation, being based solely upon participants' perceptions, must suffer from limitations inherent in this style of inquiry.

Donaldson (1992) offers a possible solution to the problem of discrepancy between knowledge intended by the course and knowledge perceived and accepted by the students. She makes a distinction between *knowing* and *knowing that one knows*, described as implicit or explicit knowledge, and re-introduces the concept for the latter of 'acknow' as 'to admit one's knowledge', as used in Middle English. 'We can know without knowing that we know. This at once raises the possibility that we can refuse to know without being aware of having done so' (p.21). Thus, according to Donaldson, individuals have control in protecting themselves by manipulating their own consciousness and by refusing to acknowledge their knowledge. 'We can know, yet decline to acknow' (op. cit., p.25).

It may be that students 'decline to know' those aspects of teaching reading which for them are complex, in which they lack the depth of knowledge and which would therefore require further clarification. 'Time for discussion' as one aspect of the college course was mentioned by the majority of students interviewed as outstandingly helpful. It was positively suggested more frequently by the students than practical experience

and was intended by them to clarify topics following lectures and reference reading as well as following teaching experiences. When students were asked in the questionnaire to specify their current needs concerning the teaching of reading, certain of the items listed had already been mentioned as having been the most useful topics of the course. Re-visiting aspects of teaching reading may thus help students to recognise their knowledge in the field, to become aware that they know. 'We can discuss our knowledge and reflect on it. This is acknowledge,' (Donaldson, 1992, p.23). Further research should investigate the possible effect of discussion of knowledge upon the students' acknowledgement of their knowledge.

4.3.5 Competence in teaching reading

The question of teaching competence is at the centre of quality of preparation for teaching reading and has increasingly encouraged national investigations over the past decade. Surveys involving experienced teachers (DES, 1990a; DES, 1990b; DES, 1992) as well as newly qualified teachers (DES, 1988; OFSTED, 1993a) have recently been extended to inquiries with teacher trainees and their training institutions (Gorman, 1989; Brooks et al., 1992). In common with findings of earlier research projects (Bassey, 1981) results have highlighted the lack of competence together with the feeling of inadequate preparation in the teaching of reading of newly qualified teachers.

The present study, in analysis of participants' general comments, has produced similar perceptions. During interviews, when asked about the likely findings of the survey, the majority of all three participant groups predicted that students would feel themselves to be ill-prepared for the teaching of reading.

When asked about the quality of their own initial preparation in this field, 65% of teachers felt that they had been inadequately prepared. The majority of these teachers had received in-service training in teaching reading over the previous five years, many of them asserting its value. Whilst the most frequent areas of in-service training already received dealt with the provision of information on approaches and schemes and also the teaching of children with reading difficulties, these topics were also those most requested by teachers for future courses. Teachers also asked for information on

assessment techniques and good record-keeping, help with organising reading for a whole class and requested visits to other schools to experience good practice. Thus, teachers' responses regarding their own training and their current professional needs in this area indicated a feeling of lacking in competence, and it is surprising that after years of experience they still felt the need for training in the crucial, and what may be regarded as the basic aspects of teaching reading. The need to experience further practice by seeing 'good teachers' at work was emphasised together with the wish for time to discuss issues on teaching reading with other professionals.

Similar results were found in a survey carried out by Hunter-Carsch (1986) with members of UKRA, where teachers expressed 'the wish to observe good practice and to discuss it in small groups' (p.9). Pollard and Tann (1993) justify such requests made by teachers by noting that the process of reflection leads to an improvement in the quality of education. 'Given the nature of teaching, professional development and learning should never stop. We believe that the process of reflection feeds a constructive spiral of professional development and competence' (p.4).

In spite of the recognition of their own need for development in practical aspects of teaching reading, teachers frequently recommended that the students should have more practical experience in schools and observe teachers at work during future courses on teaching reading in their initial professional preparation. This suggestion seems to stem from their established belief in what Fish (1989) calls the traditional teaching practice, 'the watch me and copy model' (p.169), where 'learning to teach is a simple process of working in an apprentice relationship to an experienced teacher with a college tutor as an overseer with an oil can ... leaving the student to learn from the practice by some unidentified form of osmosis' (p.166). It would be interesting to question teachers as to their feeling of competence in the role of a model for students involved in the teaching of reading during teaching practice.

The most frequently mentioned item under 'any further comments' in the student questionnaire was 'feel ill-prepared', 'not competent / confident', 'know very little'. There was, however, frequently a discrepancy between students' own feeling of incompetence and their level of competence as judged by teachers and supervisors

during this practice. Although direct comparison is difficult because supervisors were responsible for more than one student, only 4% of supervisors thought that none of their students were competent in teaching reading. When commenting on aspects of students' professional needs in this field, 13% of students stated they were ill-prepared, whilst only 4% of teachers felt this. Similar differences in opinion existed between students and teachers concerning the preparation of resources, where twice as many teachers as students assessed students' preparation for these in the 'very well' category.

The present study, as well as requesting students' responses of general feeling of competence in teaching reading also encouraged students to identify areas in which they felt more competent / less competent. The majority of all three participant groups felt that students were well prepared for using children's literature and able to motivate children to read. This finding is consistent with other research, which discovered that 'most courses placed great stress on familiarising students with the range of children's literature' (Brooks et al., 1992, p.59) and that creating positive attitudes towards reading (Owen, 1994, p.153) and using literature (Brooks et al., 1992, p.92) were strengths in students' perceived performance. Whilst students and their teachers felt that they were competent in working with individual children, and had adequate 'theoretical' knowledge of approaches and schemes used for teaching reading, the practical application of these schemes, the teaching of phonics and the organisation of reading for a whole class were identified by both groups as weak. The latter had also been identified by teachers as a weakness in their own performance.

The aspect in which the majority of students perceived themselves as lacking competence was that of developing children's reading during the early stages. Whilst 39% of students did not consider themselves to be competent to extend children's reading ability during the later stages, the majority (65%) perceived themselves as lacking in competence in dealing with the early stages. Although teachers had expressed some concern over students' ability to extend pupils' reading strategies, neither the teachers nor the supervisors had mentioned students' lack of competence with the early stages of teaching reading in any of their responses.

Degrees of competence are always difficult to quantify, since no criteria for their accurate measurement are available. Feelings of competence may also be influenced by students differing experiences during the practice, with well-supported students developing a more positive feeling of their own competence. Wray and Medwell (1994) point out that students' feeling of a lack of competence may in fact indicate the learning that has taken place through the course and that over-confidence would indicate that little has to be learned. This argument is based upon research with PGCE students in two colleges, when it was found that 'the students generally appeared to feel less competent at the end of their one-year course than they had at the beginning in terms of the number of things they felt able or not able to do' (p.3). The researchers conclude that regarding students' confidence 'at the beginning of their period of training, they do not have sufficient knowledge about the teaching of reading to enable them to know what they do not know' (p.4). As Wray points out, there has been 'very little research into the development of teacher competence' (Wray, 1993, p.7). Owen's survey (Littlefair, 1994) with a random sample of 50 students from each of three years of a four-year BA (QTS) course from her own institution investigated students' confidence in their own competence in reading. The findings demonstrated that, in comparison with students of the second and third year, there were less fourth-year students in the 'no confidence' category and more in the 'quite confident' category, although none felt fully confident regarding teaching reading (p.153). No results were available from the project which compared students' feeling of competence at the beginning of their course with that at the end of the fourth year, but it seems that during this four-year course the non-confidence level, continually decreases from a high in the second year to its lowest in the fourth year.

In the present study there were areas of strength and of weakness in students' competence in teaching reading which were unanimously recognised by students and other observers. However, the study also revealed a discrepancy of opinion where students' perception of their own lack of competence was not matched in degree by their teachers and supervisors, who presented a more positive picture. Through their comments on the college course as well as through their expressed view of the teaching of reading and the frequent critical stance they took towards teachers' approaches,

students indicated a wider knowledge of teaching reading than they explicitly claimed. Further research is indicated into the possibility of raising students' feeling of competence by increasing their awareness of their own knowledge of the teaching of reading and into its effect upon the students' subsequent performance in this area.

4.3.6 Concept definition

The major concept for this study was 'the teaching of reading', and the lack of a clear definition of this concept as a common framework for respondents may be considered an omission. This shortfall might have been responsible for ambiguities of meaning in that the terms used in the questionnaires and interviews did not match the respondents' and the researchers' definition of 'reading' or of its teaching. However, since one of the objects of the enquiry was to collect information on the respondents' broad understanding and beliefs in this field, it might have been limiting to provide what would have been for some, a restricted and too specific definition of the process. Some methodologists also point out that even if the researcher provides a 'common frame of reference' there may be difficulties for the respondents 'to put on the researcher's angle of vision' (Converse and Presser, 1988, p.18). It is nevertheless understood that, whilst there are justifiable reasons for avoiding a definition for shared meaning of the main concept, this does present circumstances where confusion and ambiguities can arise. The extensive and wide-ranging nature of this enquiry is considered to provide adequate mitigation against this effect causing any devaluation of the study.

4.4 Conclusions of Phase One and chosen area for the Phase Two investigation

Information on the beliefs and perceived activities of participants in the study have been analysed and associated with a review of available and relevant literature. The discussion of findings, besides providing information regarding trends and relationships, has also highlighted issues and generated questions concerning the nature and quality of teaching and learning for B Ed students at the four colleges in the area of teaching reading.

Without direct acknowledgement students have indicated possession of appropriate and adequate overall knowledge of the reading process and the main aspects of the teaching of reading. However, this knowledge was not suitably deployed in their classroom activities during the teaching practice. Students' actions during the practice were strongly influenced by the class teacher, and they did not apply their knowledge in this area to the appropriate extent. In the survey more students assessed themselves as lacking in competence in teaching reading as compared with the perceptions of their teachers and supervisors.

The findings of Phase One of this study suggest inter alia that the students' lack of awareness of their own knowledge in teaching reading had a significant effect upon the quality of their perceived and actual performance in this area. Phase Two therefore represents an investigation into the effect of an enhancement of students' awareness of their own knowledge upon this performance.

> 'It is worth remembering that possession of the knowledge is no guarantee that it will be used.' (Nisbet, 1988, p.34)

5 Phase Two of the Main Study

5.1 The context for Phase Two

5.1.1 Rationale, aims and hypothesis

Analysis of the results from the survey carried out for Phase One identified a number of issues requiring further investigation with the focus upon students, teachers or supervisors together with the interaction among these three groups.

The findings of Phase One suggested that students' classroom practice in teaching reading was strongly based upon their practical experience and observation of their class teachers' practice in this area. It was also apparent that students' knowledge gained from the college course, although implicit in their expressed views on such aspects as the aims for teaching reading, received little consideration and consequently had little influence on their practice. Similar observations were noted in a report by HMI (OFSTED, 1993b) in stating that students' school-based work was 'rarely linked directly to the institution-based parts of the courses' (p.2).

Reflective activities, which should have been demonstrated in the students' preparation and evaluation for teaching reading, were lacking. Instead the 'watch-and-copy-the-teacher' approach was generally adopted by the students, occasionally complemented by supervisor's provision of practical tips with what Galton (McClelland et al., 1989) terms 'a "golf training model", where the coach analyses the task of propelling the golf-ball from the tee to the fairway into a series of discrete tasks and then works steadily on the weakest part of the player's game' (p.43).

Whilst such craft knowledge passed on by experienced teachers is desirable, it is often limited to particular classroom settings and is therefore not regarded as appropriate as a predominant influence. Tickle (1987) discusses the 'sitting with Nelly' and apprenticeship approach to teacher training and argues that these 'are not sufficient for the development of teaching excellence, though they may, through a process like

osmosis, lead to some learning of classroom competence in its basic forms' (p.56). Bearing in mind the recent emphasis placed upon school-based training for the initial preparation of teachers, the aim of such training and the processes involved are worthy of examination. Tickle (op. cit.) poses the question central to teacher education –

> What kinds of teachers and teaching do we want? ... Competent technicians grounded in a narrow range of knowledge or educated professionals capable of generating and accommodating new knowledge with the capability of long-term professional self development. (op. cit., p.28)

Regarding the teaching of reading, the arguments point strongly to the need for the latter category of teacher. Research in this field is continuously striving for new and deeper understanding of the underlying processes, and teachers must be capable of attuning classroom practice to accept new insights and ideas into compatibility with their past experience and understanding. They must therefore be able to examine and adapt their own approach to teaching reading to accommodate new ideas. This is on-going, and it is important that from the beginning of their professional development, teachers should be accustomed to using their knowledge and understanding of the process of reading together with their practical experience to enhance their classroom practice. This principle should be an important feature of initial teacher preparation in general, and for the teaching of reading in particular. As Goodacre (Littlefair, 1994) points out, it is all the more important, since it is likely that teachers 'might increasingly have to be responsible for their professional development themselves' (p.163).

To promote their professional development, students need to use their entire knowledge in this field, encompassing knowledge gained from the college course as well as that provided by their practical experience and teacher observation of approaches to teaching reading during their time in schools.

The results of the survey in Phase One demonstrated that, whilst the teachers' model had a strong influence upon students' approach to teaching reading, students used little of their own knowledge to inform their classroom practice. They did not seem to be

aware of the knowledge they had acquired previously through their study during the college course and which they brought to the situation.

The limited influence of the college course on the teaching of reading was demonstrated in students' classroom activities, as well as being reflected in the perceived lack of competence expressed by a significant number of students. This perception was not matched by that of their teachers or supervisors. Writers such as Calderhead (1988) observe that student teachers generally do not draw on their theoretical knowledge base to inform their classroom practice.

> Student teachers with a well-developed subject matter knowledge base have been found when planning and teaching in this subject area, still to draw upon the observed practices of their supervising teacher rather than their own store of subject matter knowledge. (p.57)

The issue of professional concern is therefore the achievement of balance and interaction between the influences of students' theoretical knowledge and practical experience upon their classroom practice. Kagan (1992), in a review of forty studies concerned with the professional growth among students and newly qualified teachers, came to the conclusion that 'the practica ... stand apart from the content of course work; information presented in courses is rarely connected to candidates' experiences in classrooms' (p.154). It is speculated that the connection between course work and practice could be achieved by strengthening the influence of the students' implicit knowledge by making it more explicit. It is therefore suggested that through conscious manoeuvring students' own knowledge can be made to influence their practice.

No research has been found which has the aim of assessing the impact of students' increased awareness of their knowledge in teaching reading upon their performance during the teaching practice. This subject therefore is selected as the topic for inquiry in Phase Two of this study. The hypothesis for Phase Two generated from an analysis of findings from Phase One is that –

> *By encouraging students to reflect upon their knowledge in the teaching of reading they will become conscious of this knowledge and hence feel more competent. This will lead to*

increased use of this knowledge during their teaching practice with a positive effect upon their performance.

5.1.2 The process of learning to teach – a review

The process of learning is closely interrelated with the act of teaching, so much so that the quality of the first is mainly determined by the nature and value of the second. Thus the study of learning has always been a major concern for those who teach so as to best support those for whose learning they are responsible. Over time a number of definitions and a 'smorgasbord of approaches to the study of learning' (Hergenhahn, 1988, p.464) have evolved with a recent 'trend toward cognitive theory' and 'increased concern with the application of learning principles to the solution of practical problems' (op. cit., pp.458 and 459), one of them being the use of learning principles to improve teaching.

The Oxford Dictionary (1969, p.689) defines learning as – 'to get knowledge of or skill in by study, experience or being taught; commit to memory; become aware by information or from observation'. The definition supports the notion that learning is a complex and continuing process, and this recognition has given rise to the *phase theories of learning* by cognitive psychologists, where the learner is seen as passing through a series of phases. During these phases the learner progresses from being a novice through being competent towards being proficient and expert (Dreyfus and Dreyfus, 1986, in Shuell, 1990, p.535). In a recent review of the research literature on phase theories of learning, Shuell (1990) suggests a simplification of theories to three such phases –

- The *initial phase*, during which 'the individual encounters a large array of facts and pieces of information that are more-or-less isolated conceptionally' (p.541). Although the learner begins to form an overview of the new field of knowledge, he does not reach the state where interrelationships are recognised within an organised structure.

- The *intermediate phase*, where 'information acquired during the initial phase is now applied to the solution of various problems that the learner encounters' (p.542), concepts are organised through cognitive mapping and reflection helps to clarify knowledge acquired during the initial phase.

- The *terminal phase*, during which knowledge structures formed during the intermediate phase 'function more autonomously' (p.543). Although the emphasis is on performance, learning still takes place and consists of the addition of facts to already existing knowledge structures.

The emphasis in the above model is on learning as an active process over a period of time, during which transition from one phase to the next needs to be fostered, since it does not occur automatically. Thus Shuell (op. cit.) identifies as the most problematic part the transition between phases.

The phase theory of learning is an appropriate model for considering the process of 'learning to teach reading' by teacher trainees during their pre-service professional preparation. During the *initial phase* of their four-year B Ed course, students would have acquired new knowledge on concepts, approaches, resources and processes concerning reading and its teaching. These would have been derived from lectures, workshops and reference reading as well as from observation in schools and practical work with children. By the final stage of their training it would be reasonable to expect that students have moved into the *intermediate phase*. Isolated pieces of knowledge gained earlier should by this time have taken on structure and meaning, leading to an ability to generalise and be independent of specific context such as particular classroom settings or pupils. Students would be able to reflect upon their knowledge of teaching reading and use it in solving specific problems in teaching this area, feeling and giving the impression of being competent in utilising their knowledge.

The findings of Phase One of this study suggested, however, that most students at this stage had not progressed to the *intermediate phase*. They did not feel able to try out their knowledge, but instead wanted additional information and copied the teacher. Shuell (1990, p.542) considers that the emphasis on addition of knowledge instead of clarification of existing knowledge prevents progression from the *initial* to the *intermediate* phase.

Kagan (1992), in reviewing studies on pre-service teachers' professional growth, found that in many cases 'the effects of a teacher education program appear to be erased by classroom practice' (p.146). In an attempt to develop a model of professional

development which would give an opportunity for information presented in the course to be connected to the student's experiences in the classroom 'an increase in metacognition' is suggested by which 'novices become more aware of what they know and believe about pupils and classrooms' (Kagan, 1992, p.156). This process is defined as 'self-reflection', where the focus of reflection by students is inward – 'making their images and beliefs explicit ... to confront their own beliefs and images' (op. cit., p.163), since 'learning to teach requires a journey into the deepest recesses of one's self-awareness' (p.164). This is most likely what Alexander (Booth et al., 1990) envisages, when he draws attention to the superiority of the 'exploration' version of the apprenticeship approach in initial teacher training as compared with the 'imitation' version of apprenticeship which is characterised by 'unquestioning imitation of the expert by the novice' (op. cit., p.69).

In an attempt to point out the centrality of reflection, Furlong et al. (1988) refer to Schön (1983) who argues that 'using professional knowledge is always a reflective process' (Furlong et al., 1988, p.123). The idea of reflection in this context is understood as reflection upon the act of teaching which in turn is believed to lead to deeper understanding of the teaching / learning processes involved and thus to improved teaching performance. Reflection is a term frequently used in the current literature on teachers' professional development. It is, however, predominantly used in the sense of reflecting upon actual practice, as the expressions 'reflective practice' and 'reflective practitioner', who learns from experience, indicate. Considering the lack of students' awareness of their own knowledge in the teaching of reading identified in this study, the need for the concept of reflection to take on an alternative meaning becomes apparent. In Phase Two of the study reflection was used to focus on students' existing knowledge. The process of reflection still served the purpose of thinking deliberately about a matter in search of clarity in understanding, thus experiencing consciously the reflection, or mirror image, of one's knowledge and understanding in the field. The difference between the processes lay in the starting point for reflection – instead of using educational practice to draw upon underlying knowledge and beliefs, the existing knowledge and beliefs were made conscious with a view to future practice. Thus the reflection upon students' knowledge acquired during the initial phase of their

course was intended to encourage their transfer to the *intermediate phase* of learning to teach reading.

5.1.3 A model for reflection in learning to teach reading

The observed discrepancy noted in Phase One of this study between what students knew and what they were aware of knowing justified a further exploration of concepts and processes with respect to relevant literature to arrive at a model suitable for an investigation of this area in Phase Two. Considering the theory adopted for 'learning to teach' (see section 5.1.2), it was proposed that this model should be a process model aimed at increasing students' awareness of the knowledge they hold on the teaching of reading.

As previously discussed (see section 4.3.4) Donaldson (1992) makes the distinction between *knowing* and *knowing that one knows* and adopts the term 'acknow' for the process of making one's knowledge explicit for the purpose of coming to know precisely what one knows. For this to happen we must 'discuss our knowledge and reflect on it' (op. cit., p.23). Thus, discussion of knowledge becomes the crucial activity in the reflective process.

Similarly, Tennant (1991, p.140) uses the phrase 'awakening of critical consciousness' to differentiate mechanistic learning from the process where the learner is aware of what has been learned and able to define further learning needs.

Other theorists use the concept of *metacognition*, which encompasses the knowing about one's knowing. This idea was introduced by Flavell in 1970 and is defined as referring to 'one's knowledge concerning one's own cognitive processes and products and anything related to them, e.g. the learning-relevant properties of information or data' (Nisbet and Shucksmith, 1988, p.30). According to this definition, metacognition encompasses the consciousness of all processes in operation during learning, and this entails *metalearning*, the knowledge about learning, as well as *metacomprehension*, knowing what one knows. Nisbet and Shucksmith (op. cit.) draw attention to 'production deficiency' as a metacognitive deficiency, occurring particularly as 'the problem of the novice' (p.41). It concerns the shortfall between knowing and doing, and shows in that novices 'can

perform a strategy when asked or directed, but will act as if they do not possess this knowledge when given an appropriate task or problem' (p.40). The above authors discuss 'production deficiency' in particular with respect to children, and suggest that one way of triggering metacognitive knowledge and experiences into use is by causing children to reflect on what they have learned, that is to draw attention to metacomprehension.

The above model of reflection seemed appropriate for application with the students of this study who demonstrated 'production deficiency' in the teaching of reading by not applying the knowledge they had otherwise shown to possess. In using the principles of metacognition and giving students an opportunity to reflect on what they have learned about the teaching of reading, it was suggested that their 'production deficiency' might be overcome. For the purpose of this study, the term 'reading metaknowledge' is introduced, defined as 'knowing about one's knowledge about reading'. Thus, students would have *reading metaknowledge* if they are aware of the knowledge they hold about reading and the teaching of reading.

Recently, interest in the application of metacognitive principles for the improvement of learning in higher education has been demonstrated in the educational literature. Zuber-Skerritt (1992a) reports how undergraduates in her institution were helped to improve their learning by use of 'metalearning (i.e. a focus on the process of learning in combination with the content of the course)' (p.34). Through metacognitive group discussion, students gained insight into their own learning.

Rowland (1993) explores the process of professional learning by analysing his own and his colleagues' work with students and comes to the conclusion that it is beneficial for teachers and learners to articulate their 'tacit knowledge' to create awareness of professional knowledge, which is more than 'a list of competencies' or 'merely technical understanding' (op. cit., p.109). This author emphasises that awareness is thus a result of reflective discussion by use of which recognition of what we do know or need to know is achieved.

> The question of professional learning centrally involves the process of reflection. For reflection is necessary in order to bring knowledge tacitly held into a higher state of

> awareness. Only then can this knowledge become subject to a more critical reappraisal with a view to its development. (Rowland, 1993, p.110)

Kremer Hayon (Day et al., 1990) discusses 'a conceptual framework' within which reflection is perceived as a process and closely associated with professional knowledge. Starting from the definition of Dewey, who introduced the idea in the 1930s to mark the distinction between routine and reflective teaching, Kremer Hayon (op. cit.) reviews the literature in the search for a clear definition of the concept of reflection. As a result reflection is described as 'a process of assessment ... a re-exploration of past experiences. Its value lies ... in the slow construction of personal knowledge and meaning' (op. cit., p.60). Zuber-Skerritt (1992b) adds to this definition in identifying 'discussion among participants' as the main ingredient of reflection, 'leading to the reconstruction of the meaning' (p.111).

The above considerations on the role of reflection and metacognition in the professional development of 'learning to teach' provided a basis for the development of a model which underpinned the planning, implementation and evaluation of the investigation in Phase Two of this study. The principles underlying students' general professional learning were considered to be applicable to the learning of teaching reading. It was stated in section 5.1.1 that for the preparation of teachers in general and for the teaching of reading in particular it is important that professionals be encouraged to maintain a commitment towards improving their own practice. Fish (1989) suggests as a pre-requisite for this development that students experience the interactive relationship between theory and practice in that they are encouraged to 'reflect upon practice, to draw theory out of practice and to bring relevant formal theory up to practice' (p.182). Whilst the focus of the investigation in Phase Two was on the latter part of this process, it must nevertheless be realised that knowledge brought to the practice has been derived from theoretical knowledge acquired from the taught part of the college course as well as from practical experience in school.

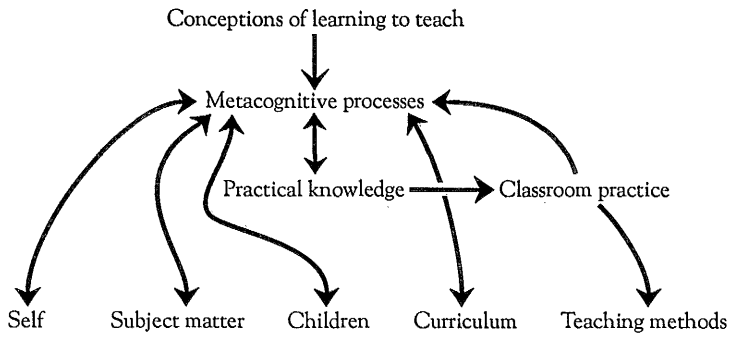
Calderhead's (1988) exploration of the nature and process of teachers learning to teach has served as a blueprint for the model upon which the investigation in Phase Two was based. The model he proposes (op. cit., p.59) is shown in Figure 4. Calderhead

differentiates between practical knowledge, which exists in the form of images derived from classroom observation and experience, and formal, academic knowledge. Both inform practice, but are processed first via the stage of metacognition.

Calderhead (op. cit.), in referring to teacher education in general, states that –

> These metacognitive processes play an important role in learning to teach, but their significance is frequently left out of account in teacher education courses. (p.60)

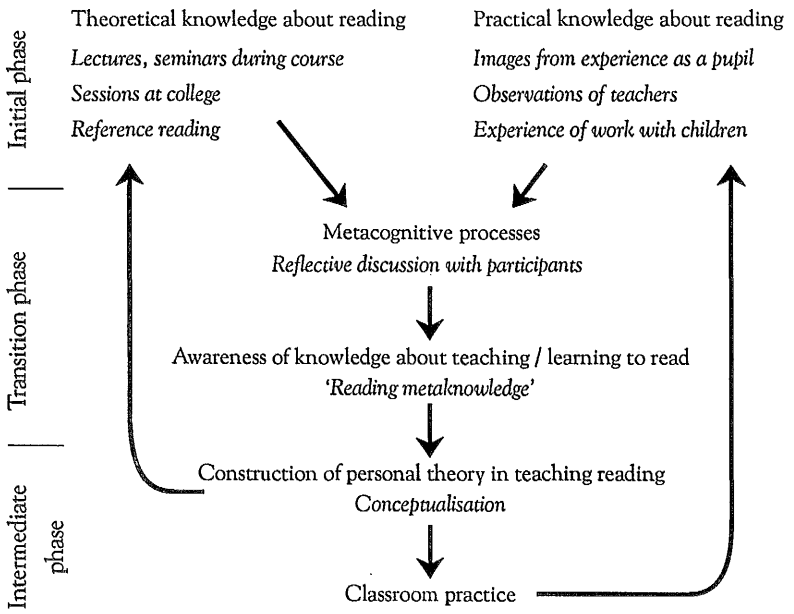
Figure 4: Calderhead's model of knowledge use in teaching (Calderhead, 1988, p.59)



The above model together with the 'phase theory of learning' and the notion of 'production deficiency' as a metacognitive deficiency, as discussed earlier in this section, have contributed to the construction of a model of learning to teach reading. This model underpinned the investigation in Phase Two, and is presented in Figure 5.

The proposed model presents the elements involved in the process of learning to teach reading and demonstrates the intermediary and fundamental role of metacognition. It makes use of available knowledge, prevents the blind application of theory or uncritical imitation of the teacher and helps students to develop personal concepts and theories, which will be fed into practice and in turn will be informed by practice. Metacognition is a necessary precursor to the conceptualisation process. The conceptualisation stage from which not only progression to classroom practice but also recycling through the theoretical / practical and metacognitive stage are generated, represents the point at

Figure 5: Model of learning to teach reading developed for Phase Two of this study



which transition from the students' initial stage of learning to the intermediate stage (as discussed in section 5.1.3) is attempted. Since it was at this stage that the students' 'production deficiency' in the teaching of reading occurred, demonstrated in a lack of awareness of existing knowledge, it is this level of the process which received attention during Phase Two. The investigation in Phase Two focused on the first part of the process of learning to teach reading in exploring two components of the model – the metacognitive process and *reading metaknowledge*.

No research has been found which has investigated the role of metacognitive processes in the initial preparation of B Ed students for the teaching of reading.

5.2 Planning Phase Two

5.2.1 Design of the investigation

The Phase Two investigation involved the total population of year-four B Ed students in College B, using an action research approach. It was carried out in three research cycles, each implementing with the students a programme of reflection upon their existing knowledge in the teaching of reading. Each research cycle consisted of three stages – planning of the programme, implementing the programme and evaluating the programme, leading to its modification for the following cycle. The cycles were preceded by a pilot programme, which was designed to assess whether the proposed procedure was appropriate for progressive action research.

Whilst students were the focus for implementing and evaluating the programme in all three cycles, teachers and supervisors were also involved in the evaluation process. The participation of these two groups was limited to Cycles One and Two. This reduced involvement, as compared with Phase One, was due to a need to contain the scale of the study within available resources, and to reduce the burden on teachers at the time of the introduction of the National Curriculum. This burden was evident from the low response of teachers in the 1990 cycle and an even lower return in 1991 (see Table 14 in section 4.1). For the 1992 programme and its evaluation, it was decided that students would be the only participants.

The plan for Phase Two has already been discussed in section 3.2.1 as part of the structure of the Main Study. Details of the design are presented in Figure 2, section 3.2.3.3 (see Table 13) and section 4.1 (see Table 14). Research methods employed are considered in section 3.2.3.2 and the sample in section 3.2.2.1.

The dependent variable for study during Phase Two was the students' learning to teach reading, as illustrated by their performance during the final Block School Experience (BSE) and their feeling of competence in this field. The independent variable was the metacognitive process, as discussed in section 5.1, which took the form of a programme

of structured reflective group discussion, aimed at helping students achieve *reading metaknowledge*.

The purpose of Phase Two was to explore, through modification to the form and extent of the independent variable, how the degree of student learning and the application of this learning could be enhanced, thereby achieving a positive reinforcement to the dependent variable. This procedure represented the rationale for the changing conditions in the cycle programmes of Phase Two. Modification of the programme for each cycle was determined from the evaluation of the results of each preceding cycle. Figure 6 illustrates the sequence of studies comprising Phase Two represented by progressive cycles, each addressing the same question of how students' competence and feeling of competence could be enhanced.

Each cycle tested, with a modified input programme, the common hypothesis that metacognition positively influences student competence and hence the quality of their learning to teach reading.

5.2.2 Modification of instruments for data collection

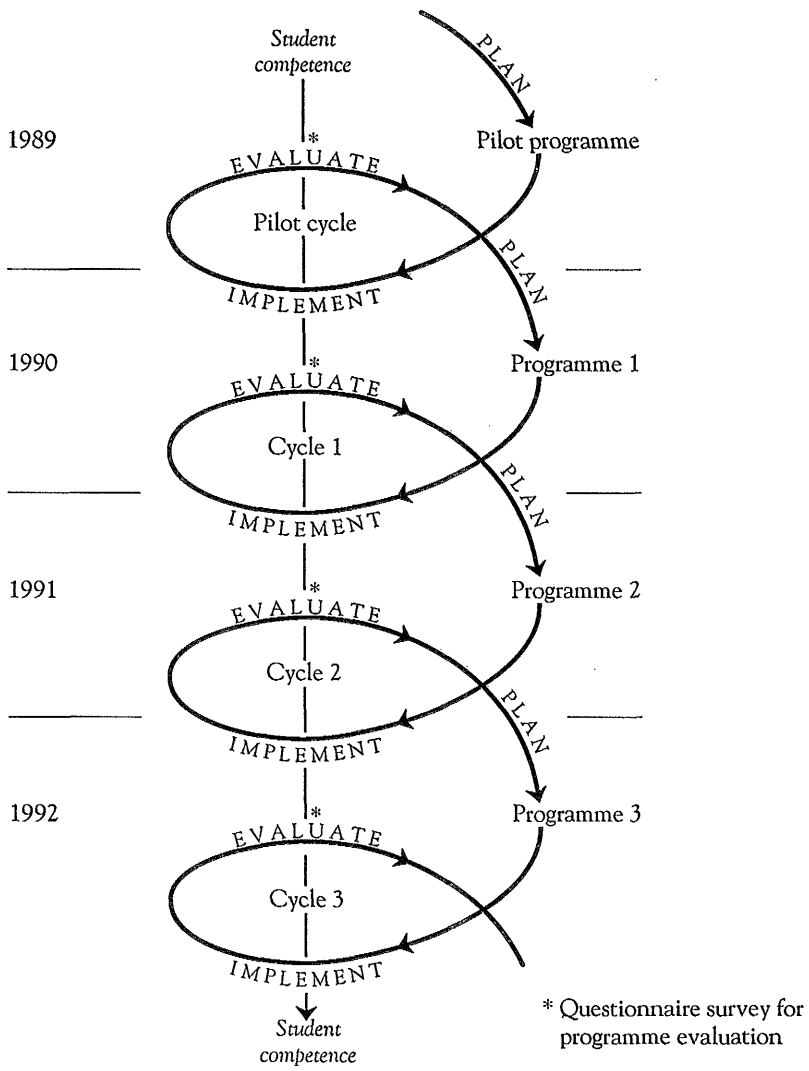
It was explained in section 3.2.3.2 that programmes implemented during each of the three cycles of Phase Two were evaluated by a survey, employing modified versions of the questionnaires used in Phase One as the main instruments for data collection. These modifications applied to the questionnaires for all three participant groups.

The Pilot Cycle, which was designed to assess the appropriateness of the proposed procedures for the progressive action research, used brief student questionnaires solely for this purpose. These questionnaires therefore differed in content and presentation from those of the rest of the study.

Questionnaires for Phase Two were maintained as closely as possible in design and content to those used in Phase One. However, certain questions needed to be added to furnish information concerning the value of the programmed input implemented during each cycle of the action research of Phase Two.

Figure 6: Cycles of the investigation of Phase Two

Baseline – students' perceived lack of competence related to their lack of 'reading metaknowledge'



The main consideration for the investigation was – 'has the progressive programme of reflective discussion implemented during Phase Two significantly changed the students' performance in the teaching of reading during the teaching practice and their feeling of competence in this area?' This phase of the investigation therefore needed to explore broadly the same areas as were examined during Phase One. For this reason most of the research questions which formed the original basis for the study, and which were discussed in sections 2.3 and 3.2.3, were retained. Those questions which were not directly related to the main area for investigation in Phase Two, such as the background information sought during Phase One, were deleted.

To effect a reduction to the teacher burden, their questionnaire was considerably condensed in comparison with that for Phase One. Teachers' own approaches to teaching reading were not investigated in detail. Information on the students' approach to reading, their methods of assessment and record keeping was collected as an integrated response to a single question. The teacher questionnaire for Cycle Two was further compressed. Although these changes affected direct comparison with previous surveys, they reduced the 'teacher burden' and encouraged their participation whilst providing the required information on the students' performance and competence as perceived and judged by the teachers.

No adjustments were made after the initial modifications to the student and supervisor questionnaires, apart from those incurred by the change in cycle programme. In Cycles Two and Three the programme adjustment resulted in different questionnaires for early and later years students.

In addition, investigation into the domain of competence was widened to include the participants' identification of areas of strong and weak performance in the teaching of English as a whole, thus providing a comparison in performance between reading and the other language modes.

5.3 Procedures used in the implementation of Phase Two

Phase Two used as its main approach the method of action research, which is described by experts as 'an organised process of learning ... a spiral of cycles of planning, acting, observing and reflecting' (Zuber-Skerritt, 1992a, p.15). The planning and action of each cycle are fully integrated within this continuous process, and are influenced by the preceding cycle. The characteristic of action research is 'solving concrete problems in real situations' (Robson, 1993, p.60), and this sets it apart from the experimental approach carried out under laboratory conditions. Some of the specific measures and procedures used during the action research process cannot be accurately planned in advance and require discussion at the particular point within the process. The approach and its merits have already been discussed in section 3.2.3.2.

Each input programme during Phase Two was carried out when students were facing the problem of preparing for the final BSE. The programmes were designed to raise students' *reading metaknowledge*, their consciousness of their knowledge about teaching reading. Students were provided with a structure for discussion of reading and the teaching of reading. They needed to draw on their existing knowledge to carry out the set task which in all cycles was related to the forthcoming teaching practice.

All cycles included a survey which followed each particular programme implementation and the succeeding teaching practice. This involved the use of questionnaires with each of the participant groups. Procedures for implementing these questionnaires are discussed in section 4.1.2. Procedures employed for data analysis were those discussed in sections 3.2.4 and 4.1.4.

All cycles involved the total population of B Ed primary students in their fourth year at College B. All students had followed the course in Teaching English in the Primary School during their first, second and third years. The teaching of reading was part of this course during all years, with a particular emphasis during the second year. Students completed the Teaching English course by the end of the Autumn Term of their third year.

Their final BSE consisted of seven weeks with full teaching responsibility in a primary classroom during the Autumn term of their fourth year. The first two weeks of that term were generally allocated to the students' preparation for BSE and consisted of sessions in college and visits to school. At the same time, students were expected to plan their teaching, prepare resources and produce written schemes of work for all curriculum areas. Schemes of work had to be presented to the supervisor in the student's school file before the start of the practice. During the practice, daily written preparations for teaching and evaluations were kept in this file together with any written comments from the student's supervisor and teacher. The file presented a record of the student's professional development and was regarded as an open document for inspection by the school and the college and as a working document and record for the student.

The input programmes of the cycles of Phase Two were implemented before the final practice. Surveys aimed at assessing the impact of these programmes were carried out after the end of the practice, students completing the questionnaires following a course session in college. Supervisor questionnaires were distributed and returned via the college internal mail, whilst teacher questionnaires were send via the county mailing system, enclosing stamped and addressed envelopes for their return. Generally the same procedures were used, such as the enclosed letter covering anonymity and confidentiality, as were employed during the survey of Phase One (see section 4.1.2).

Since each cycle was restricted to the final BSE for the particular year, and therefore involved the total year-four student population for that year the student population for each cycle was different.

5.4 The Pilot Cycle – Autumn Term 1989

5.4.1 Introduction

The questionnaires as instruments for data collection had been piloted for Phase One and been assessed as suitable to acquire the necessary information. The Pilot Cycle of Phase Two, rather than being primarily concerned with the testing of the response

system and the research instruments, was carried out to assess the suitability of procedures which were to be used during this phase in addition to those employed during Phase One.

A programme of group discussion was planned to raise students' *reading metaknowledge*. The purpose of the Pilot Cycle was to assess the validity of this approach in fulfilling its role in the strategy of Phase Two and to test student response to it. The procedures adopted for the Pilot Cycle involved a small-scale application of the methods chosen for the three main cycles of Phase Two. Since this phase involved an action research approach, it was important that the Pilot Cycle had the same characteristic of a real situation, an 'intervention in the functioning of the real world and a close examination of the effects of such intervention' (Cohen and Manion, 1984, p.174).

5.4.2 Procedures for the Pilot Cycle

During the academic year 1989 / 90, year-four students undertook their seven-week final BSE between 16th October and 1st December. A week before the practice a full morning meeting was arranged by the year-four tutor to prepare students for the school experience. An hour of the session was allocated to this study in respect of the students' preparation for the teaching of reading.

Forty-two students with early years and 27 with later years age-range specialism attended the session on 9th October 1989. Its aim was to heighten students' *reading metaknowledge*, leading them to a greater consciousness of the knowledge and skills in this area which they had acquired during their training years and thereby encouraging its use in classroom practice over the following weeks.

The students were divided into groups, and the task was presented to them in the following manner –

> *You know a great deal about the teaching of reading through your course and your experience in schools. It would be useful for class teachers at the beginning of your teaching practice to be informed of the knowledge and skills you have in the teaching of reading. During this session you have the opportunity to collate this*

information. This should be helpful for your own use and as a basis for discussion with your class teacher and your supervisor.

Your task is to list –

1 What do I know about the teaching of reading, and what skills have I developed?

2 What can I put into practice during BSE?

3 What do I want to find out (my questions and uncertainties)?

For the first 10 minutes you are asked to produce your own list of points under the above three questions. Following this you are asked to discuss your lists within your group and produce an agreed and summarising document 'Reflections on the teaching of reading' within your group. This document should contain agreed points under the above three sections. All members of your group will receive a typed copy of their document before the beginning of the Block School Experience.

Eleven groups containing either six or seven members were formed, some groups being age-range specific, others being mixed. Group documents were collected at the end of the session and were typed, duplicated and distributed to each student by the end of that week (see Appendix 9).

During the week immediately following the teaching practice two students selected at random from each of the eleven groups (14 early years and eight later years students) were asked to complete a questionnaire (see Appendix 10). Students were assured of the anonymity and confidentiality of their responses. The questionnaire used in this Pilot Cycle was not the one to be implemented during the other cycles of Phase Two, but was focused on the value of the procedure used, the group exercise of reflecting on teaching reading, as perceived by the students.

Students were also generally invited to discuss their experience of teaching reading during their recent teaching practice and the usefulness of the document with the writer who allocated time for this purpose during that week.

5.4.3 Presentation and discussion of findings

All 22 questionnaires were completed and returned within ten days of their distribution. Nine students took advantage of the opportunity to discuss their experience with respect to the 'Reflection on the teaching of reading' activity.

Student opinion on the reflection exercise was positive. Comments made immediately after the group session expressed surprise at the extent of knowledge possessed on the teaching of reading – 'I didn't realise how much I knew' being a typical statement. Appendix 11 presents the quantitative data collected by questionnaires during the Pilot Cycle survey. Only four students out of the surveyed 22 did not use the document 'Reflections on the teaching of reading' at all in connection with the practice.

Nine students had discussed the document with their teacher, but only two with the supervisor. The majority of students (13) felt that the document had helped them to focus on particular aspects of teaching reading, such as considering a wider range of activities than during previous practices, adopting the school's approach more quickly, generally being more aware of reading during the teaching practice. Students found parts one and two of the document to be particularly helpful. They felt that 'it was good to pool ideas' and to 'be able to state our fears and difficulties'. The exercise was described as 'a confidence boost before BSE' which 'helped us to realise that we *did* know something about reading'. Eighteen out of 22 students felt that it would be helpful for future students to repeat this programme of reflection on reading, but suggested that more time should be allocated to it and at an earlier date so that it could be useful for the preparation of schemes of work. Several students commented that the discussions had been useful in reviewing the difficulties they had experienced with teaching reading. The joint discussion sessions for early and later years students, when the 'Reflection' documents were produced, were seen as a useful opportunity for cross-fertilisation of ideas between students with different age specialism. One student suggested that the section two contributions 'What can we put into practice' from all eleven documents should be integrated and distributed to all students.

Just over half of the students felt they had been able to clarify some of the questions and uncertainties stated in section 3 of their documents with the help of teachers in their

schools, but there was concern that 'some of the clarifications will become uncertainties again in a different school', as one student commented. A number of students had 'no time to find a solution', were 'bogged down by having to hear all children read every day' or stated that their 'teacher found the teaching of reading difficult, too'.

Although the focus of the questionnaire was not the students' performance in teaching reading, some of the student responses confirmed findings from Phase One of the study. The search for practical ideas, the greater involvement of the class teacher than the supervisor, the lack of time for reading, the over-occupation with hearing children read in some classrooms and student request for more input on teaching the initial stages or children with reading difficulties were common themes. The small-scale programme of this Pilot Cycle also confirmed the assumption drawn from the analysis of the findings of Phase One that students' knowledge of teaching reading is wider than their awareness of it, as shown in the students' own comments and the content of the documents.

Overall, the Pilot Cycle demonstrated that a programme of structured group discussion based on the students' own knowledge on teaching reading received a positive reception from the students and had raised their *reading metaknowledge*. A programme of this type could therefore be regarded as appropriate for progressive action research. Subsequent programmes would need to explore whether and to what extent programmes could significantly affect the students' perceived performance in the teaching of reading and their own feeling of competence in this field. This exploration began with Cycle One.

5.5 Cycle One – Summer and Autumn Terms 1990

5.5.1 The programme and hypothesis for Cycle One

Experience with the programme of metacognition employed in the Pilot Cycle provided the basis for the planning of Cycle One. Reflective group discussions on the students' knowledge of the teaching of reading and recording of the main points of that discussion in the form of a policy document were retained as the main features of the programme. Comments made by the students during the Pilot Cycle confirmed that the

group discussions had increased their awareness of knowledge in the teaching of reading and had encouraged them to discuss and clarify their thoughts on this topic.

The programme for Cycle One was similarly structured and closely related to the subsequent teaching practice. Providing a framework for carrying out the task was seen as offering students foci for particular aspects in their discussion, relating the task to the teaching practice gave the exercise a purpose and realistic character.

The hypothesis to be tested during Cycle One was that –

> *In producing a document based upon their knowledge in teaching reading immediately before their teaching practice and using this document during the practice, students will become more aware of this knowledge. This awareness will affect their feeling of competence in teaching reading and will have a positive influence on their performance in this area during the practice.*

Most students involved in the Pilot Cycle had suggested modifications to the timing and duration of the programme. Students requested time for more detailed consideration of points and discussion of problems experienced previously in teaching reading. Earlier implementation of the programme, such as at the end of year three, was suggested to allow time for consideration in the schemes of work well before the beginning of the final practice. These suggestions were taken into consideration in the planning of the programme for Cycle One.

Students who had been allocated to mixed age-range groups during the Pilot Cycle programme reported benefit from the mix of knowledge and experience, and this procedure was therefore used in forming the groups for Cycle One. In addition, students with English as their main subject were chosen to act as group leaders. This was intended partly as preparation for these students' future role as subject specialists and partly to provide expertise in each of the groups. Group members were encouraged to maintain contact with each other during the seven weeks of their teaching practice, so that use of the 'other student', which had appeared prominently in the Phase One survey, would be a contributory factor to continuous reflection. Access to college

language tutors was felt to be necessary for cases of specific support and this formed part of the programme.

Whilst the programme of the Pilot Cycle had focused solely on the teaching of reading, it was felt that reflection on reading within the framework of teaching all language modes would be more relevant. The programme for Cycle One was therefore extended to include reflection upon reading within the whole of English-language teaching.

5.5.2 Procedures for Cycle One

The programme implemented during Cycle One comprised student group discussion for preparation of a Language Policy document to be used during their final BSE. A two-hour session was allocated for this purpose on 26th June 1990 with the third-year early and later years students. The purpose of this session was to increase students' awareness of their knowledge in the teaching of reading by initiating reflective group discussion focused on the final BSE of the Autumn Term (15th October to 30th November 1990).

During this session students were allocated to fifteen groups of seven students, each group being led by one or two students whose main subject was English. Care was taken over the presence of early and later years specialists with, where possible, a variety of subject specialists in each group to emphasise the role of reading across the curriculum.

The task was structured by presenting groups in writing with the following instructions –

DEVELOPING LANGUAGE IN THE PRIMARY CLASSROOM

— a framework for practice —

Introduction to the task

Today's session is intended to provide you with a framework for your year-four BSE work in language (Autumn Term 1990) and also prepare you for your work as a member of a teaching team when you leave college in the Summer next year.

You are asked to carry out the following simulation exercise.

You are a group of 7 teachers preparing to take on teaching posts in various primary schools in this county. You have been called to this meeting to prepare a Language Policy for teaching 4 to 11 year olds. This policy should consider the processes involved in teaching language and contain practical suggestions for implementation.

Your team has one or two members who are English main subject specialists and who will lead this session. Language Advisers (college language tutors) are also present and you may ask any of them for support, i.e. your team adviser, advisers from other teams and the Adviser on Children's Literature (College Teaching Resources Librarian).

All members of your team are expected to contribute to the preparation of the document with regard to their specialist knowledge.

You are also advised to consult the National Curriculum document, your language course notes, your index card system of children's books and any reference material in the Language Room or the Library.

Your team leader is expected to send the completed Language Policy document to Hanne Lambley within the next week and not later than 6th July (end of Summer Term).

Each member of the team will be issued with a typed copy of their Language Policy document at the beginning of next term (before BSE), when it might be useful for your team leader to arrange another meeting of the group with or without your team adviser.

When you start teaching (during your BSE) you should continue to seek each other's support within your team. It is suggested that you arrange a team meeting during half-term at which you discuss and try to resolve any problems experienced by members of your team. You are also entitled to continue seeking advice from your team adviser and may do this as an individual or by asking for 'in-service' sessions for your team.

The task

Devise an appropriate policy for language learning of 4 to 11 year-old pupils within the context of the National Curriculum, using all the information available from members of your team. It will be necessary to discuss relevant ideas and issues with your team before you decide on specific and practical suggestions for inclusion in the document.

You will need to attend to all modes of language (oracy and literacy), bearing in mind that they are complementary and interrelated. On this occasion you are asked to particularly concentrate on reading development in more detail and make this the central point of the document. You may want to call an additional team meeting to complete the work.

During your School Practice

- *Keep in touch with your team*
- *Keep in touch with your advisers*
- *Keep a record of any questions / problems you experience*

Please contact me if you have any difficulties with arrangements.

I hope you will find this work useful and wish you a successful and enjoyable practice.

Hanne Lambley
26th June 1990

Typed copies of appropriate Language Policy documents were distributed to students shortly before the beginning of the practice.

Both teachers and supervisors were made aware in writing that a Language Policy document had been prepared collaboratively and was held by all students for this practice. The use of these documents for general information on the students' knowledge and as a basis for discussion was emphasised.

Ten days before the completion of their practice, all students received a letter from the writer asking them to annotate their Language Policy document indicating its use,

problems they had encountered and questions that had arisen concerning the teaching of literacy and oracy. Students were also invited to attend a session in college after the completion of their practice for an evaluation of their work in this area and the use of the document.

5.5.3 Evaluation of Programme One

5.5.3.1 Organisation of the programme during BSE

Group meetings

Five requests were made by students during the teaching practice for consultation with language tutors. Three requests by individual students related to children's literature and were addressed to the Teaching Resources librarian who specialised in this topic. Two further group meetings were arranged by a group of five students with the writer. Apart from seeking information on a structure for teaching and recording phonics, students were keen to discuss their experiences in teaching reading with each other. Students worked together on ways of recording individual children's phonic development and requested and received suggestions for further reading.

A certain amount of communication within teams took place. Eight meetings were arranged for teams either by team leaders or one of the other members. Meetings took place during weekends, in the evenings and during the half-term holiday either in the library seminar room, the college canteen or in student accommodation. On no occasion, however, was the full team involved in the meeting.

During these meetings it was noted that early and later years students were able to provide each other with advice on their specialist areas. Students also used knowledge from their main subject areas to supply each other with ideas for teaching. These sessions, which were intended as part of the programme during the teaching practice, were perceived as valuable by those students who made use of them. However, most students were unable to maintain contact with the others due to the remoteness of school placements and they commented in the questionnaire that this had been an unrealistic expectation. Half-term was taken up with the preparation of resources,

mostly for topic work, and taking a rest after the strain of the first part of the practice. Most students did not return to college during that week. Similarly, contact with language tutors proved to be difficult because of students' distant placements from college and tutors' lack of available time. Overall this part of the programme did not prove as successful as intended due to logistical constraints. Co-ordination between the programme and the allocation of school placements would be necessary to facilitate significant communication within groups.

5.5.3.2 Information provided by questionnaire responses

Questionnaires for students and supervisors, as discussed in section 5.3, were implemented after the completion of the students' teaching practice early in December 1990. Teachers had again expressed a preference for dealing with the questionnaire after Christmas and this was accepted. Sample sizes and return rates are shown in Table 14.

Cycle One was to test the hypothesis that a programme of the kind implemented during this cycle would raise the students' awareness of their knowledge of teaching reading, increase their feeling of competence and cause an enhancement of their performance. Analysis of the questionnaire data from the three participant groups sought an association between the variables identified in the hypothesis. The evaluation therefore sought participant opinion on the programme as well as assessing its effect. Results of the analysis are discussed with respect to the research questions stated in section 2.3 and related to the discussion in section 4.2 of the corresponding survey in Phase One. By this means an attempt was made to decide to what degree the implemented programme had had an influence upon students' performance and beliefs. Discussion was confined to the results of the survey which related to the hypothesis for Cycle One. Quantitative data from student questionnaires are listed in Appendix 12. Where the significance of results was investigated, responses were compared to those of College B obtained during Phase One, these being representative of the student population who were not exposed to the programmed inputs associated with Phase Two.

5.5.3.3 Use of the Language Policy document

Students were asked for their impression of the Language Policy document and whether they had used it during the practice. Roughly equal numbers found it either supportive, challenging or threatening, whilst almost two-thirds made use of it during the practice.

As shown in Table 44, the document was used by nearly all students who felt it was supportive, but by only half of those who perceived it as challenging or threatening.

Table 44: Use of document by perceived support

Language Policy document	Supportive	Challenging	Threatening	Total
Used sometimes	28	14	11	53
Used not at all	2	13	14	29
Total	30	27	25	82

n = 90; missing data: 8

No significant difference existed in frequencies of consultations of the three sections of the document – reading, writing and oracy. A majority of students (63%) reported that they had discussed the document with their teacher, 53% discussed it with other students, 33% with students in their own group and 23% with their supervisor. With respect to having the school's policy explained to them, more students (11%) than during the survey of Phase One (6%) had experienced this 'in detail'. This difference was, however, not statistically significant. Just under half of the students felt that preparation of a Language Policy document would be useful for future students.

74% of teachers reported that they had seen their student's Language Policy document; 66% found this informative about the student's knowledge and 77% regarded the preparation of such a document for the final practice as quite / very useful. In the Phase One survey, 76% of teachers had received no information at all from college on the students' knowledge in teaching reading.

The majority of teachers discussed the document with their student, but only 6% did so with the college supervisor. Out of eleven supervisors, only four had seen the Language Policy document.

All participant groups were encouraged in open questions to make suggestions for modifications in the preparation of the document. Generally, the production of the document was considered to be beneficial. Students, however, requested more time for a more detailed preparation and considered that it should have been prepared earlier. With other constraints just before the teaching practice, preparation of the document was perceived by some as an additional burden. This observation was also made by some supervisors. Students also wanted prior knowledge of the exercise in order to prepare themselves. A frequent criticism was that, although the document was useful for revision and as a brainstorm, during the practice the school's policy was imposed. Some teachers suggested that the students' policy should be linked to the school's policy and should be given a greater priority.

5.5.3.4 Attention given to the teaching of reading in the students' preparations and evaluations

Fewer students indicated having given no attention to reading in their written preparations or evaluations and more had attended to this 'every day' than in the Phase One survey. Significant increases were registered with respect to schemes of work prepared before the beginning of the practice (chi-square = 20.12; $p < 0.001$), students' daily preparations (chi-square = 10.34; $p < 0.05$) and their evaluations (chi-square = 11.36; $p < 0.01$) compared with Phase One findings.

All teachers reported that they had discussed teaching reading with their student before and during the practice, which is a significant increase (chi-square = 9.13; $p < 0.01$) from the Phase One findings, where 18% of teachers had not discussed this curriculum area with their students before the practice.

5.5.3.5 Influences upon the students' approach to teaching reading

The teacher was still the most frequently consulted source for information on the use of scheme and non-scheme resources. Significantly more students than previously felt, however, that they had used these resources according to their knowledge from the college course (chi-square = 9.18; $p < 0.01$) and to their common sense (chi-square = 5.67; $p < 0.05$). The latter can also be attributed to the college course, since the students' knowledge in general in the form of 'common sense', using Donaldson's (1992) definition of common sense, arose from learning that had previously taken place (see discussion in section 4.3.3).

In addition, early years students had made more use of available manuals when using resources for teaching reading than those students of the survey in Phase One had indicated (chi-square = 5.20; $p < 0.05$).

With respect to sources consulted generally on teaching reading students made significantly less use of their notes from the college course than stated in Phase One (chi-square = 9.23; $p < 0.01$). Since the course notes had already been used in the production of the Language Policy document, it is likely that the document had been used instead. 23% of students reported using neither the Language Policy document nor their college notes, which compares with 36% during Phase One who never turned to their course notes during the practice. This represents an increase in use of the students' own knowledge resource on the teaching of reading.

A change in the level of consultation of class teachers, although not at a significant level, was noted in that class teachers were not consulted as frequently, but more occasionally than earlier. This indicates a more independent attitude by the students and a weakening of teacher influence.

Shared responsibility for the teaching of reading between teachers and students was still predominant in the students' as well as the teachers' perception. The teacher's influence also remained strong in the organisation of reading, where most students followed the pattern of their class teacher.

5.5.3.6 Students' competence in the teaching of reading

The students' feeling of competence in the teaching of reading from this survey (1990) for both early and later years specialisation is shown in Table 45 with comparable results from the Phase One survey (1989).

Table 45: Feeling of competence in teaching reading by age-range specialism

		Early stages			Later stages		
Survey	Age-range specialism	yes	no	missing	yes	no	missing
1989	Early years (n = 40)	45	53	2	48	50	2
	Later years (n = 30)	30	67	3	80	17	3
1990	Early years (n = 42)	57	43	–	74	26	–
	Later years (n = 48)	33	67	–	63	37	–

Figures are percentages

In respect of competence for the early stages of reading, no statistically significant differences exist between the two surveys, with considerably more early years than later years students still feeling competent for this stage. However, for the later stages of reading there is a marked and significant increase (chi-square = 5.39; $p < 0.05$) in the early years students feeling of competence. A decrease (not significant) was noted in the feeling of competence for the later years students.

Thus the early years students gained appreciably in their feeling of competence towards the later stages so that for the 1990 survey there was no significant difference between the two age specialist groups (chi-square = 1.31; $p > 0.05$), whereas the 1989 survey had shown a significant difference (chi-square = 8.29; $p < 0.01$).

Overall, the implemented programme does not appear to have effected a gross and general change in feelings of competence, although some of the more detailed analyses indicate a shift in the direction predicted by the hypothesis. Nevertheless, it also

indicates that a large number of students (43% early years and 67% later years) still perceive themselves as incompetent for teaching the early stages of reading.

In relating questions dealing with 'feeling competent' and 'consultation of the Language Policy document' (Questions 27 and 4), 50% of those feeling competent for early stages and 40% feeling competent for later stages did not at all consult the document (see Table 46). This may suggest that the process of preparing the document has a greater influence than using the finished product, as expressed in one of the students' comments – 'Although I didn't use it, some of it sank in'.

Table 46: Students feeling competent and whether they consulted the Language Policy document

	Feel competent for early stages		Feel competent for later stages	
Document consulted	Yes	No	Yes	No
Sometimes	20	34	36	18
Not at all	20	16	25	11

$n = 90$

In answer to open questions considering areas of strength and weakness noted during the teaching practice in the teaching of English, twice as many students considered themselves weak as compared to strong in teaching reading with teachers broadly confirming this view (see Table 47).

Organising time to listen to individual children read was the teachers' and some supervisors' main concern. Students, in addition to this area, felt they lacked the ability to teach the early stages of reading and children with reading difficulties. It is surprising that none of the students recognised their strength in children's literature which was acknowledged by the teachers.

Table 47: Students' strong and weak areas in the teaching of English, indicated by themselves and their teachers

	Teacher opinion		Student opinion	
Language area	Strong	Weak	Strong	Weak
Writing	14	1	49	11
Oracy	12	0	26	3
Reading	9	13	18	36
KAL (grammar)	0	3	0	12
Handwriting	0	3	6	8
Spelling / phonics	2	8	2	9
Poetry	3	0	4	6
Children's literature	15	0	0	0

Only the main areas are listed

5.5.3.7 Approaches used in teaching reading

The students' perceptions on the approaches to reading adopted in this cycle were similar to those from Phase One. However, significantly more students in Cycle One reported having used paired / shared reading (chi-square = 12.06; $p < 0.01$) and also kept records of children's reading interests (chi-square = 9.35; $p < 0.01$). Significantly more students of the early years age range group declared an increased involvement in teaching phonic skills (chi-square = 7.40; $p < 0.05$). These three perceptions of change in student performance were, however, not confirmed by the teachers. The only area where teachers reported greater student involvement was in one aspect of assessing children's reading. 32% of teachers, instead of the previous 22%, felt that students were

using cloze procedure techniques. This difference was, however, not statistically significant.

5.5.3.8 Usefulness of course components as perceived by the students

Students did not perceive any increase in usefulness for components of the reading course as compared with the Phase One survey, in fact some of the course aspects were judged as useful by fewer students. Although the reading component within the language course had been unaltered and had been implemented by the same tutors over the time of the study, some differences in implementation may have occurred. Also, whilst the students involved in the survey were all at the same stage of their course, there were different groups of individuals involved in the two surveys. Thus the results of each survey need cautious interpretation in respect of each implemented programme. Practical work with children, discussion, assignment writing, handouts and visiting speakers were all perceived as useful by considerably fewer students. It may be that by promoting greater awareness of knowledge held, the programme made the students more critical of the course. The main criterion for judging the influence of Programme One, however, was the students' perceived performance and competence during the teaching practice, not their view of the college course.

5.5.4 Conclusions for Cycle One of Phase Two

Phase Two of the study involved an entry into the year-four students' professional preparation with a programme designed to heighten *reading metaknowledge*. This programme was expected to improve their feeling of competence and hence raise the quality of their performance in this area.

To effect further development of the action research programme of Phase Two the following questions needed to be addressed –

- What aspects of the students' beliefs and actions were influenced by Programme One?
- How do these findings relate to the hypothesis for Cycle One?

- What modifications are suggested by this evaluation for Cycle Two?

The response analysis for Cycle One demonstrated students' increased attention to the teaching of reading in their schemes of work preceding the practice, and consideration being given to teaching reading by more students in their daily preparations and evaluations during the practice. Generally, students expressed surprise at the extent of their knowledge in teaching reading as well as frustration with being unable to implement this knowledge during the teaching practice. One student commented – 'The exercise was useful as a reminder of the things I already knew. It was a useful revision, but I didn't have the chance to try out my gained knowledge.'

Although there was a small shift from over-reliance upon the teacher as a consulted agent towards an increased reliance upon knowledge previously gained ('common sense'), including knowledge from the college course, the teacher was still the strongest directive and influence upon students during the practice. Students' performance in the classroom had only been affected in a minor way, with more students reporting that they were involved in paired / shared approaches to reading, in teaching phonic skills and recording their pupils' reading interests, and more teachers observing students using cloze procedure techniques with their pupils.

Students' feeling of competence was affected less than expected, with only a modest increase in those students who felt confident. A large proportion of students (43% of early years and 67% of later years students) still did not feel competent in teaching the early stages of reading.

The improvement in performance in teaching reading during the practice anticipated by the Cycle One hypothesis (see section 5.5.1) was not perceived as extensive and some modification to the programme and hypothesis was needed before proceeding to Cycle Two.

Metacognition promoted by the group discussions of Programme One before the production of the Language Policy document had led to students' heightened *reading metaknowledge* and greater attention being paid by them to the teaching of reading in their written preparations and evaluations. With respect to students' classroom practice,

however, the planning of activities for teaching reading seemed to be strongly directed by the teachers with students assisting within the methods prescribed for them. This denied students the practical experience they felt was needed through the application of their own knowledge in this field. Whilst teachers could not be expected to accept a change in approach to reading for a short seven-week period, it was nevertheless important for the students' professional development in this field to be given opportunities within the teaching of reading to become more actively involved in teaching using their own knowledge. Enhanced awareness of knowledge and opportunity to employ this knowledge should lead to an increased feeling of competence in teaching reading. Thus a basis would need to be provided for the students' effective professional learning in this field, which is 'characterised by self-regulatory or metacognitive capabilities, such as knowing what one knows and does not know, predicting the outcome of one's performance, planning ahead, apportioning time and resources, monitoring and adapting one's efforts' (Raaheim, 1991, p.10).

The aspect of teaching reading chosen to provide the students with this opportunity was the assessment and monitoring of children's reading development. Experience in this area is important for future teachers, is applicable within various approaches used to teaching reading and hence does not interfere with the variety of methods used by teachers. Both surveys, 1989 and 1990, demonstrated an overuse of informal observation in assessing children's reading. A more structured approach to the assessment of reading and one known to the students through their college course therefore formed part of the programme of Cycle Two.

The programme, in addition to reflective discussion, featured specific requirements for student involvement in teaching reading during the teaching practice.

The hypothesis to be tested in Cycle Two was that –

> *By enhancing students' awareness of their knowledge in teaching reading before their teaching practice in addition to making specific demands on them to use this knowledge during the practice, the quality of their performance in this area will improve, and their feeling of competence will be increased.*

5.6 Cycle Two – Summer and Autumn Terms 1991

5.6.1 Planning the programme for Cycle Two

The programme for Cycle Two was again closely related to the final BSE of year-four students (14th October to 6th December 1991) and consisted of two parts. **Part one** involved the setting of specific tasks to be carried out by all student participants during their teaching practice and comprised hearing five children read twice a week over the seven weeks and producing a running record of these children's reading performance by using the 'miscue analysis' technique.

All students were given detailed instructions for this task in the guidelines for the teaching practice, including directions for carrying out the miscue analysis for the running record (see Appendix 13). This part of the programme was intended to create an official opportunity for students to become more actively involved and to apply their knowledge and skills in the teaching of reading during their teaching practice. The need for this opportunity resulted from the evaluation of Cycle One.

Setting specific tasks for students to be carried out during the teaching practice was also in line with the college's move towards a more competency-based approach in the initial preparation of teachers. The selection of the particular task in the area of reading assessment had been influenced by the observation from Cycle One that the majority of students, although familiar with the technique of miscue analysis from course sessions, had not reported the use of structured and systematic assessment and monitoring of their pupils' reading development. Instead they had relied mainly upon informal observation, which was also the preferred method of their teachers, and resulted principally in the recording of books and pages children had read.

Part two of the programme was implemented with the early years students only and consisted of group discussions leading to the production of a Language Policy document similar to that of Cycle One, but omitting the feature requiring groups to maintain contact and arrange meetings during the practice which had proved difficult to organise during Cycle One.

Thus the programme for early years students consisted of specific tasks to be carried out during the teaching practice together with the preparation of a Language Policy document before the practice, whilst later years students were only given specific tasks for the practice. This variation in the programme between age-specific student groups provided an opportunity to assess the effects of the components of the programme upon the students' perceived performance and their feeling of competence, to identify which variable was more likely to influence the nature and quality of the performance.

5.6.2 Procedures for implementing the programme for Cycle Two

5.6.2.1 Part one of the programme

All students were provided with the documentation for the final BSE two weeks before the start. Apart from general administrative information, the guidelines contained specific instructions for analysing and recording the reading performance of a group of five children over the duration of the teaching practice (see Appendix 13). The techniques of miscue analysis and running record had been introduced to students during previous course sessions, and they had used miscue analysis on at least one occasion during their second year of training, when a class of primary children had spent an afternoon with the students in college and all students had to assess a child's reading behaviour using this method.

5.6.2.2 Part two of the programme

At the end of their third year, in June 1991, the early years students carried out the same exercise for production of a Language Policy document as occurred in the programme of Cycle One (see section 5.5.2). The documents were distributed to the students at the beginning of the Autumn Term during which the teaching practice took place.

Both teachers and supervisors were informed in writing of both parts of the programme for Cycle Two and provided with the names of two language tutors as contacts for any queries or comments.

Immediately following the teaching practice all student participants were asked to complete the planned questionnaire, whilst their class teachers and supervisors were send appropriate questionnaires immediately after the Christmas vacation.

5.6.3 Evaluation of Programme Two

As shown in Table 14, student and supervisor response rates were satisfactory, whilst those from teachers, who at the time were heavily involved in the introduction of the National Curriculum, was low (29%). The questionnaires for the three participant groups were used to seek their opinion of the programme as well as assessing its effect. The purpose of the evaluation was to examine if and to what extent the implemented programme had influenced student belief and perceived quality of performance.

Responses obtained during Cycle Two were compared to those received from participants of College B during Phase One. Only those areas are discussed where a change had occurred. In order to assess the two parts of the programme most student responses were analysed with respect to early and later years groups. This differentiation was not possible with the teachers' responses, since all responding teachers indicated in their questionnaires being concerned with 'early years' students.

The number of supervisors involved in this cycle was too small to provide statistically significant data. However, their responses, in particular to open questions, were useful.

5.6.3.1 Participants' opinions of the programme

The first part of the students', teachers' and supervisors' questionnaires sought the participants' view of the programme.

Most students had consulted the guidelines on the specific tasks to be carried out during the teaching practice with 56% finding them helpful.

With respect to the Language Policy document, 63% of the early years students perceived this as supportive for the teaching practice, 40% stating that they had used it sometimes or frequently during this practice. No significant difference existed in the use by students of the three different sections of the document dealing with reading, writing

and oracy. Just over half of the students felt that the preparation of a Language Policy document would be useful for future student years.

Of the 33 teachers who completed the questionnaire, 31 had seen the guidelines with set tasks for all students and found them supportive or informative, but two teachers felt that the set tasks were of no use. Twenty-four of the teachers had seen the Language Policy document, all of them judging it as useful.

Six out of seven supervisors who had completed the questionnaire were familiar with the set tasks for reading to be carried out by all students, whilst only two supervisors had seen their students' Language Policy document.

5.6.3.2 Attention given to the teaching of reading in the students' preparations and evaluations

Students were asked if they had considered reading in their schemes of work in preparation for the practice. Whilst considerably more later years students than in Phase One had done so (chi-square = 20.23; $p < 0.001$), there was no significant difference for the early years students. From these students' informal comments it seemed that the early years group, who had been given their Language Policy documents at the time of writing their schemes of work, did not include reading in their written preparations since they regarded the document as being sufficient. During Cycle One, students had not developed this attitude since documents had been disseminated shortly before the practice when most written preparations were already in progress.

There were significant differences with respect to daily preparations (early years chi-square = 8.06, $p < 0.05$; later years chi-square = 9.77, $p < 0.05$) and evaluations (early years chi-square = 14.22, $p < 0.01$; later years chi-square = 9.68, $p < 0.05$) compared to Phase One in that both groups of students gave more attention to reading and both considered it more frequently with no significant difference between the groups. Since only part one of the programme was administered to the later years students and since the two groups were similarly affected by the programme, then part one must have influenced the student behaviour in a similar way to that experienced in Cycle One for

the equivalent of part two. Thus both parts of the Cycle Two programme are considered to enhance the students' attention to the teaching of reading.

Although most students claimed to have given attention to reading in their preparations and evaluations, this was not perceived by the supervisors. None of the supervisors stated that most of their students had acted in this way, six out of seven felt that none of their students had considered reading in their daily preparations. All the teachers and supervisors believed they had discussed reading with the students either in general or in detail, which differed significantly from the responses in Phase One.

During the 1991 teaching practice, the method of 'focused observation' was introduced, which involved student, class teacher and supervisor selecting a specific focus for observation and discussion of the students' teaching. Each student was intended to experience two such focused observations during the practice, one led by the teacher and one by the supervisor. Of the 33 teachers who responded only one stated that reading had been chosen for a focused observation.

5.6.3.3 Influences upon the students' approach to teaching reading

The teacher was still the most frequently consulted source of information on the use of resources, showing little change from the Phase One survey.

However, significantly more students than previously reported having used these resources according to available manuals, their knowledge from the college course and their own common sense. Analysis of the data for early and later years students showed statistically significant differences between Phase One and Cycle Two for only early years students (see Table 48).

Table 48: Differences between Phase One and Cycle Two responses for students consulting agencies for use of resources in teaching reading

	Early years	Later years
Agency consulted	chi-square	chi-square
Manual	7.11*	1.23
Knowledge from course	12.72†	1.37
Own common sense	19.04†	3.14

*$p < 0.01$; †$p < 0.001$

The different programmes implemented with early and later years students are considered responsible for these differences in student behaviour. Although no change was noted for later years students during this cycle when they did not prepare a Language Policy document, in Cycle One, when a document was prepared by all students, significant differences were noted for later years students with respect to using knowledge from the college course (chi-square = 4.29; $p < 0.05$) and their own common sense (chi-square = 3.99; $p < 0.05$).

5.6.3.4 Students' competence in the teaching of reading

56% of early years students, as compared to 46% from Phase One, believed they were competent to teach the early stages in reading. In answer to an open question on their present needs concerning teaching reading, knowledge of teaching the 'early stages' was the most frequently mentioned item. The feeling of inadequacy in this area could be rooted in the general lack of knowledge of this field at that time. Research on children's early phonemic development and its relation to the development of literacy published during the time of the study provided important new insights into early reading development, but was in the process of dissemination, not having been part of these students' course on reading.

Whilst the response from later years students on competence in developing pupils later stages in reading had not changed, more of the early years group perceived themselves as competent in this area (chi-square = 11.35; $p < 0.001$).

The relationship between 'feeling competent' and 'consultation of the Language Policy document' was investigated and showed that 63% of the students who felt competent for the early stages and 64% of those who felt competent for the later stages said they had not used the document during the practice. Similar findings during Cycle One reinforce the suggestion that the process of preparing the document has a greater influence on feeling of competence than the use of the finished product.

In an open question participants were asked in which aspects of teaching English students were perceived to be strong or weak. Tables 49 and 50 present the students' and teachers' view on these aspects expressed as percentage of the total comments made by each of the participant groups.

Table 49: Areas of strength in the students' performance in English

Perceived by	Writing	Reading	Oracy	Others
Students	40	28	14	18
Teachers	50	23	17	10

Figures are percentages

The two sets of data show broad agreement between the teachers and students concerning students' strong areas of English teaching.

Table 50: Areas of weakness in the students' performance in English

Perceived by	Writing	Reading	Oracy	Others
Students	19	68	0	13
Teachers	29	18	6	47

Figures are percentages

These data highlight the significant discrepancy between students' and teachers' perception of student weakness in reading in that nearly four times as many students perceived teaching reading as a weakness compared with the teachers' perception.

When teachers were asked to identify difficulties students had experienced in teaching reading, 78% of their responses stated organisation and time management in hearing individual children read.

In response to a question on the students' quality of preparation for knowledge of resources significantly fewer teachers than during Phase One felt that students were 'not at all' prepared (chi-square = 6.40; $p < 0.05$).

5.6.3.5 Approaches used in teaching reading

Few differences in approaches to reading as perceived by the students occurred compared with responses of the Phase One survey. Significantly more early and later years students reported in Cycle Two to have used silent reading ERIC (early years chi-square = 6.22, later years chi-square = 6.59; $p < 0.05$). Significantly more early years students than in Phase One stated that they used phonics within their approach to teaching reading (chi-square = 15.43; $p < 0.001$). It might be that this increased attention to their pupils' phonic development by early years student is not due to the students' participation in part two of the programme, but to the attention drawn to it by the National Curriculum at that time. However, this development should have also affected the later years student group to some extent. Since this was not noted, it can be assumed that part two of the programme had influenced student activity in this aspect.

In reporting on methods of assessment of pupils' reading performance used, significantly more early years (chi-square = 22.35; $p < 0.001$) and later years students (chi-square = 7.35; $p < 0.01$) used miscue analysis than previously. This change must be attributed to part one of the programme which required students to use this technique during the practice. However, it was particularly noticeable for early years students and was probably reinforced by part two of the programme.

With respect to recording pupils' reading performance, considerably fewer early and later years students than in the previous surveys reported to have considered the whole class. Most students had only monitored the reading development of groups of five children, as stated in the set task for the teaching practice. This was criticised by some supervisors as well as several teachers. Teachers felt that in order to provide suitable tasks for a class, students needed to have knowledge of all children's reading performance. One of the supervisors stated that 'the idea of keeping in-depth records of few children distracted students from considering how they will assess and record the reading development of all children in the class'. Both groups thought that work with small groups should be carried out during the early stages of training and not during the final year.

An increase in students recording their pupils' reading behaviour was noted in comparison to reported approaches during Phase One. Only those for early years students were, however, at a significant level –

- recording reading strategies – chi-square = 13.59, $p < 0.001$
- recording reading interests – chi-square = 17.65, $p < 0.001$
- recording phonic knowledge – chi-square = 10.07, $p < 0.01$

5.6.3.6 Usefulness of course components as perceived by students

Few changes were noted in students' opinion of course components, and where they did occur, as in the judgement of the language room which was perceived as 'little use' by more students than previously, there was no pattern indicating the change as being due to the implemented programme.

5.6.4 Conclusions for Cycle Two of Phase Two

Cycle Two investigated the influence of a two-part programme on year-four students' beliefs and perceived actions with respect to teaching reading during their final BSE. The hypothesis underlying the programme suggested that setting a specific task for teaching reading during teaching practice (part one) and increasing students' awareness of their knowledge in teaching reading before the teaching practice (part two) would increase their involvement in the teaching of reading, improve the quality of their performance and subsequently strengthen their feeling of competence. By implementing both parts of the programme with the early years but only part one with the later years students it was hoped that possible factors of influence could be more easily identified.

The response analysis demonstrated that both parts of the programme had increased students' as well as teachers' and supervisors' perceived attention to the teaching of reading. This resulted in significantly more students considering reading in their daily preparations and their evaluations and also led to more teachers and supervisors reporting discussions on reading with their students. These effects were noted with both early and later years students. Since part two of the programme had already promoted this effect when implemented during Cycle One to both early and later years students, and since later years students gave increased attention to reading during this cycle without experiencing part two of the programme, then part one would appear to have had a similar effect on students' attention to reading.

As might be expected, part one of the programme effected considerable changes in students' approach to assessing pupils' reading performance. Significantly more students used miscue analysis techniques in reading assessment than previously. Analyses for both early and later years students indicated that a significant difference between the use of miscue analysis and the teacher favoured form of informal observation of children's reading no longer existed. This effect was not noted in Cycle One, when the equivalent of part two only was implemented, and so must be attributed to part one of the programme.

Whilst both student groups still perceived the teacher as the main source for information on teaching reading, increased consultation of other agencies was noted for

early years students. More of them felt they made use of their knowledge from the college course and their 'common sense' in the use of resources, employed a wider variety of approaches to reading, such as the teaching of phonics, and kept records on a wider range of aspects, such as recording children's reading strategies, interests and phonic knowledge. Since most of these changes in the student activity had already been found in Cycle One and were only noted for early years students in Cycle Two, then it is reasonable to assume their cause to be part two of the programme.

These results suggest that the production and use of the Language Policy document had a strong influence upon students' perceived performance in the teaching of reading. However, closer analysis of the effects noted above against the student use of the document during the practice revealed some inconsistency between these variables with students registering the modified behaviour without claiming to have used the document. Similar inconsistency was noted between 'feeling competent' and 'use of the policy document'. Comments by students such as the following were common – 'there wasn't time to consult my document during the practice, but I did take account of what was discussed'. This suggests that the production process of this document may have been more important and influential than the final product.

Of suggested modifications by students to the Language Policy document, 61% requested further time for the production of a more detailed document, revised time-tabling so that the preparation of the document did not coincide with preparation for the teaching practice, and that the exercise should form part of the course rather than being additional to it. It was therefore decided for Cycle Three to place more emphasis on the process of reflective discussion by extending the available time.

This increase in time to be allocated to metacognitive processes was expected to further influence the nature and quality of student perceived performance, leading to an increased feeling of competence for teaching reading. The latter had not been effected by part one of the Cycle Two programme, but had been experienced to some extent as a result of part two of the programme. Those students who had registered this experience had also been perceived by fewer teachers as inadequately prepared for the use of resources.

Overall both parts of the Cycle Two programme were considered to have positively affected the quality of students perceived performance in the teaching of reading, and whilst they were retained for Cycle Three, part two was modified to allow more time for the process of metacognition, since the earlier analysis indicated this process to be more effective than the document itself.

The hypothesis to be tested in Cycle Three was that –

> *By giving students the opportunity to reflect upon their knowledge of teaching reading over an extended period of time and in addition by setting specific tasks for teaching reading during the teaching practice, the students' quality of performance and their feeling of competence in this curriculum area will be significantly improved.*

5.7 Cycle Three – Academic Year 1991 / 92

5.7.1 Planning the programme for Cycle Three

The implementation and evaluation of the programme in Cycle Two showed that both setting specific tasks during the teaching practice and increasing students' *reading metaknowledge* influenced the nature and quality of certain aspects of the students' performance. Setting specific tasks in assessing and recording the reading performance of a suggested number of pupils created an opportunity for the students to be actively involved in applying knowledge gained from the college course. Several students commented after the practice that 'it was helpful to have definite instructions from college in that certain tasks had to be carried out during the practice' and that 'this helped to get away from the sole influence of the school'. Some of the more confident students 'wanted a chance to try out my own ideas' and 'prove that I have my own approach'.

From a consideration of Cycles One and Two there seemed to be a need to expand further upon opportunities for active student involvement in the teaching of reading during the final BSE, without being too prescriptive. With the decision having been made to modify part two of the programme implemented during Cycle Two, it was

considered necessary, however, to retain part one in the same form as employed during Cycle Two, to avoid confusion of responsibility for changes noted between the cycles.

Modification was therefore limited to the metacognitive activity which by use of reflective group discussion was intended to increase students' *reading metaknowledge*. Discussion during the preparation of the policy document for teaching language had been welcomed by most students as 'a useful pooling of ideas' that had helped them to 'realise what I know and don't know, making me want to find out more'.

Despite this generally positive attitude towards reflective group discussion there nevertheless existed a significant minority of students who felt that 'discussions amongst students without inputs from lecturers are useless', whose wish it was 'to be told the correct way of teaching reading' and who believed that 'the college's fear of being prescriptive leads to vagueness'. These students felt that they had been 'rushed' in producing the document. Further criticism was expressed by all three participant groups concerning the timing immediately prior to the teaching practice, which added to the already considerable pressure.

Part two of the programme was therefore integrated as four one-hour sessions into the final part of the students' language course during the Autumn Term of year three, with the opportunity for further meetings of groups during the Spring Term. The first four meetings during course sessions also provided opportunities for groups to involve one of the two language tutors in their discussions.

Apart from the expansion in time, the programme remained the same as that carried out during Cycle Two; part one consisting of the specific tasks to be carried out during the practice and being implemented with all students, part two involving discussion sessions in preparation for a Language Policy document for early years students only.

Programme evaluation was restricted to the students, since teachers and supervisors were experiencing difficulty in participation due to extra commitments related to the implementation of the National Curriculum.

5.7.1.1 The Literacy Group

Following the 1990 survey of Cycle One, several students expressed a wish for further consideration of the teaching of reading as part of their preparation before qualifying at the end of that academic year. The students had completed the compulsory language course and no further training was officially planned. In recognition of their own needs, a group of year-four students in co-operation with the writer formed the *Literacy Group* in the Spring of 1991. Monthly meetings were arranged with topics suggested by the membership, which soon comprised second and third as well as fourth-year students. Discussion of approaches during the early stages of reading, including reviews of particular schemes, was a recurrent topic. Other themes chosen were an open debate between two language tutors for and against the 'real books approach' and schemes, the teaching of phonics, children with reading difficulties and discussion of new publications in children's literature as well as visits to the Language Information Centre at Reading University.

During the summer of 1991, the group became involved in the Newspaper In Education Project, which included writing for children in the local newspaper and, in the spring of 1992, participated in a national research project of the *Northcliffe Newspaper Group* investigating children's reading habits. For the latter, members of the group helped to devise a questionnaire for primary-age children and to plan and prepare sample newspaper pages to be used with children during this investigation (see Lambley et al., 1992).

The Literacy Group seemed to provide for a small core of students a forum for reflective discussions similar to those identified for the programmes of Phase Two. It was therefore decided to assess the possible effect of this group upon students' beliefs and their performance during their final BSE by including a relevant question in the questionnaire of Cycle Three.

5.7.2 Procedures for Implementing the Programme

Part one of the programme provided early and later years students with the assessment tasks in reading to be carried out during the teaching practice, using the same

procedures as those described in Cycle Two (see section 5.6.2). Instructions were included in the general guidelines for the final seven-week teaching practice, distributed to all year four students before its start on 12th October 1992. Teachers and supervisors were again notified in writing of both parts of the programme.

Part two of the programme for this cycle began during the early years students' final section of their Teaching English course in the Autumn term of 1991. In the course of the last four sessions, students were given the task of preparing a Language Policy document for their final BSE due to take place during the following academic year. They worked in groups of eight with one or two English main subject specialists leading each group and were given similar instructions to those described in section 5.5.2. Groups were encouraged to make use of their course notes, their previous experience with children, the National Curriculum Guidelines for English as well as resources in the library or the language room. Copies of Language Policy documents from some local schools were provided for inspection during these sessions.

The date for completion of the Language Policy documents was May 1992, by which time copies of the document were supplied to all group members. Thus groups had the opportunity to continue discussion beyond the course sessions and to revisit the document, which met a request expressed by several students during the previous cycles.

The evaluation of the programme was carried out immediately after the completion of the practice during the week beginning on 7th December 1992, using student questionnaires.

5.7.3 Evaluation of Programme Three

Evaluation of Programme Three examines the influence of both parts of the programme upon the students performance in teaching reading during their final BSE. The students' questionnaire responses on their perception of this performance provide the focus for investigation. The group discussions of part two of the programme during preparation of the Language Policy document would also be worthy of analysis, but since this was outside the scope of the study, a brief description of the characteristics of the product of the discussions was nevertheless of interest.

Data obtained from the student questionnaires were analysed and compared mainly with the findings of Phase One to assess the influence of the Cycle Three programme on students' nature and quality of performance during the practice, as perceived by themselves. Comparison was also made with results of the survey of Cycle Two to assess the effect of the modification made to part two of the programme. For the purpose of establishing the influence of both parts of the programme, responses were analysed with respect to early and later years groups.

Whilst all data were analysed, only those are discussed where a change was noted.

5.7.3.1 The Language Policy documents

Students were conscientious and demonstrated considerable enthusiasm in the preparation of these documents. All groups used their course notes, the National Curriculum document *English* and additional reference reading, and also their previous experiences in school. All groups arranged additional meeting sessions during the Spring Term. Generally students took a critical stance in their search for practical suggestions based on their beliefs and knowledge of the field. As one group wrote in their introduction to the document – 'This document is a practical working document. It considers how aspects of language are learned and how the learning can be assisted.' All documents were completed on time and demonstrated care with the presentation. Most were prepared as a spiral bound booklet of A4 size, some containing a contents page. Style of writing showed a healthy amount of collaborative confidence, witnessed in expressions such as – 'we believe that...', 'we encourage...', 'we are convinced that...', 'we welcome feedback'. Some groups had carried the simulation exercise to the point of creating a name for 'their school'.

As might have been expected from the increased time allowed for the preparation, the standard of presentation of these documents and the detail in content was superior to that shown in those prepared during previous cycles. The outlines on the teaching of reading demonstrated that students had a well-grounded knowledge of the field.

Documents generally dealt with the following points of teaching reading –

- aims,
- the process,
- approaches,
- purpose,
- resources, including suggested schemes and children's literature,
- progression,
- assessment and monitoring,
- meeting individual's needs,
- parental involvement,
- reading across the curriculum.

Several students expressed the opinion that they would have liked the documents to form part of the course assessment.

5.7.3.2 Students' opinions of Programme Three

In comparison with Cycle Two, no significant changes in student opinion were noted with consultation of guidelines for the set tasks of part one of the programme or with the use of the policy document of part two. Most students again stated that they had not used the policy document during the teaching practice and explained this with some of their open comments –

> The Language Policy document was in opposition to the school's practice which I had to follow; it was not worth the battle.

> It's a pointless exercise as a working document, since one has to follow the school's policy.

> We spent a lot of time preparing this document, but had to stick to the school's own policy.

Most schools in the area had in fact prepared a language policy over that year and were committed to it.

Whilst discussion of the school's policy with the students was unaltered from Cycle Two, significantly fewer students reported that the teacher had discussed their prepared policy document with them (chi-square = 11.79; $p < 0.001$). This decline in teacher discussion might be the reason for a significant increase of discussion of this document with other students (chi-square = 6.82; $p < 0.05$).

5.7.3.3 Attention given to the teaching of reading in the students' preparations and evaluations

Over 80% of the early and later years students had given attention to teaching reading in their written schemes of work in preparation for the teaching practice, which was a significant change to the results of the Phase One survey. In the Cycle Two survey no such significant difference had been noted for early years students. It was speculated at that stage that the distribution of Language Policy documents at the time of preparation for the practice had contributed to the students' attitude that attention to reading in the schemes of work was superfluous. The much earlier distribution of documents during this cycle is considered to be responsible for this change of attitude.

As with Cycle Two, significantly more of both early and later years students than in Phase One reported giving attention to teaching reading in their daily preparations and evaluations with no significant difference existing between the two age-specific student groups. This finding supports the argument put forward under the same topic in section 5.6.3 that both parts of the programme seem to have similar effects upon students' attention to teaching reading in their written preparations and evaluations.

5.7.3.4 Influences upon the students' approach to teaching reading

The teacher remained the main source of consultation for both early and later years students in the use of resources for teaching reading during the teaching practice. As with Cycle Two, significantly more early years than later years students stated that they used resources for reading according to their knowledge from the college course, their

common sense and by consulting a manual, as compared to responses from the Phase One survey. This supports the argument in section 5.6.3 concerning the likelihood of different parts of the programme being responsible for the difference in responses from early and later years students.

The teacher also remained the most frequently consulted agent on teaching reading in general. Previously, most early years students had consulted the class teacher frequently, but for this cycle the majority only called on the class teacher occasionally, this being a significant difference (chi-square = 6.99; $p < 0.05$) to the findings of the Phase One survey. Considerably more early years students than previously rated journals as useful (chi-square = 7.32; $p < 0.05$), having made use of journal articles during the preparation of the Language Policy document. No such change, however, was noted in the response of later years students, suggesting that these changes had been brought about by the implementation of part two of the programme. Furthermore, since no significant change of this kind occurred in Cycle Two, it is suggested that the increase in time for group discussion during this cycle is responsible for the change in student behaviour, characterised by decreased dependence upon the teacher and increased professional confidence in the teaching of reading.

5.7.3.5 Students' feeling of competence in the teaching of reading

An increase to 66%, compared with 46% in Phase One, of early years students believed themselves to be competent to teach the early stages of reading (chi-square = 3.15; $p < 0.1$). This change, in contrast to later years students where no change was noted, gives rise to a significant difference (chi-square = 8.24; $p < 0.01$) between the feeling of competence of the two groups (see Table 55).

This significant difference between early and later years students also existed with respect to the later stages of reading (chi-square = 9.86; $p < 0.01$) in that again considerably more early years students stated their confidence in this aspect. Compared to Phase One, no change in later years students' feeling of competence was noted, whereas a significant increase was registered (chi-square = 20.51; $p < 0.001$) for the early years students.

In an open question, students were asked in which aspects of teaching English they believed to be strong or weak. Table 51 presents the students' view on these aspects expressed as percentage of the total comments made for Cycles Two and Three of Phase Two.

Table 51: Areas of strength and weakness in the students' performance in English as perceived by themselves

	Writing		Reading		Oracy		Others	
	Cycle 2	Cycle 3	Cycle 2	Cycle 3	Cycle 2	Cycle 3	Cycle 2	Cycle 3
Strong area	40	29	28	27	14	36	18	8
Weak area	19	32	68	50	0	3	13	15

Figures are percentages

In comparison with Cycle Two, reading, whilst still being the area most frequently mentioned by students as weak, achieved closer to parity with writing in Cycle Three. Thus the considerable difference in student perception of strength / weakness between reading and writing noted in Cycle Two is not present in Cycle Three responses.

Those aspects of teaching reading mentioned by students as requiring development were their knowledge of organising time for reading with a whole class, children with difficulties in reading and the beginning stages of reading development.

5.7.3.6 Approaches used in teaching reading

Increased use was reported by students concerning approaches in teaching reading in the following areas –

- teaching phonics,
- recording children's reading strategies,
- needs,

- reading interests and phonic knowledge,
- using miscue analysis,
- profiles for assessment.

Table 52 records the extent of these increases for early and later years students expressed in chi-square, when compared with the responses of the Phase One survey.

Table 52: Differences between Phase One and Cycle Three responses for students' approaches to teaching reading

	Early years students chi-square	Later years students chi-square
Teaching phonics	10.67†	1.12
Recording reading strategies	6.66†	24.01§
Recording needs	0.23	9.33†
Recording interests	9.46†	5.22*
Recording phonic knowledge	13.67§	7.62†
Using miscue analysis	13.00§	18.45§
Using reading profiles	4.05*	8.49†

* $p < 0.05$; † $p < 0.01$; § $p < 0.001$

A large proportion of the topics in Table 52 received significantly more use during this cycle than with Phase One. With respect to recording children's needs in reading, the lack of change within the early years group was due to the high level of attention given to children's needs by the majority of early years students in both surveys. This level was only achieved by the later years students in this cycle.

Both groups paid more attention to phonic skill development, although the later years understandably less to the teaching of it. As discussed in section 5.6.3 it is possible that influences outside the implemented programme, such as the National Curriculum, may have been related to this change in approach.

All other aspects in Table 52 were related to the set tasks, as provided in part one of the programme (see Appendix 13). Since increased use of these approaches occurred in both early and later years groups and, apart from recording children's reading interests, no changes in these areas were noted in the Cycle One survey when a version of Programme Two was carried out, this suggests that part one of the programme was responsible.

5.7.3.7 The Literacy Group

Data collected in the Cycle Three survey were analysed with respect to the students' membership of the Literacy Group (see section 5.7.1.1) to explore any significant differences in beliefs or behaviour between members and non-members of this group. Such increases between students having attended or not attended this group were identified in the seven aspects of teaching reading listed in Table 53.

Table 53 reveals behaviour and attitudes demonstrating enhanced professional confidence of those students belonging to the Literacy Group, providing a correlation between these behaviours and group attendance. Since no information is available of this group's pre-membership performance, it may be argued that the Literacy Group would have attracted only those students who were more interested in teaching reading. However, it was these students' expressed lack of competence in reading which had led to the formation of the group, and there is good reason to attribute the greater feeling of competence of this group to the activities carried out within the group.

Table 53: Significant differences between members and non-members of the Literacy Group in aspects of teaching reading

	Chi-square
Employed common sense for use of resources	5.42*
Consulted journal articles on reading	3.90*
Felt competent for early stages of reading	6.93†
Used prepared index cards on children's books	9.92†
Rated practical work in college course as useful	7.04*
Rated college language events as useful	8.84*
Rated journal articles as useful	4.90*

* $p < 0.05$; † $p < 0.01$

When asked to comment on the activities of the group, students described these as 'real, useful, good for keeping up to date in the field'. Activities with a real purpose such as writing for children in the newspaper, contact with students of the other age-range specialism and across the years of study, informal and regular contact in small groups with tutors who were experts in the field were particularly valued and judged as 'more useful than the compulsory course in language and literacy'.

5.7.4 Conclusions for Cycle Three of Phase Two

Cycle Three repeated the implementation of the two parts of the programme of Cycle Two, but increased the duration of the part two exercise. The belief underlying the modification of the hypothesis for Cycle Three was that by providing more time for metacognition, the students' *reading metaknowledge* would be further strengthened, leading to increased involvement in teaching reading and an enhanced feeling of competence. By implementing both parts of the programme with the early years but

only part one with the later years students, as with Cycle Two, it was intended that the individual influence of the two parts of the programme could again be identified.

The response analysis generally provided similar findings to those of Cycle Two. Both part one and part two had increased students' attention to reading in their written preparations. The set tasks of assessing and recording children's reading positively influenced students performance in teaching reading, but were nevertheless restricted in their effect to the areas specified in the tasks. Early years students who had participated in part two of the programme, demonstrated in their responses an increased use of their knowledge with respect to resources for reading, approaches to reading and some enhancement in feelings of competence.

Similar effects involving the above aspects of teaching reading had been noted in Cycle Two. The main additional changes in Cycle Three registered at the $p < 0.05$ level were the less frequent and more occasional consultation of the class teacher by early years students and the increased appreciation of journals on reading, with an increased feeling of competence for teaching the early stages of reading, observed at the $p < 0.1$ level of significance. Although no further effects were noted, these are important changes enhancing the students' professional development, and are considered to provide adequate justification for the extra claim on time.

The students, however, did not feel that the extended use of time in part two of the programme was justified. They were aware of their heavy investment in time and were disappointed in being unable to make full use of the document – 'we spent a lot of time preparing this document, but had to teach to the school's own policy'. The apparent need for an increase in time had been recorded in student comments during previous cycles and the extended process of metacognition to enhance students' awareness of knowledge in the field should therefore have been received more positively. It was surprising to still receive comments such as – 'Often I actually know more than I think. Ideas need to be refreshed in your mind before teaching practice. Perhaps a sheet of teaching ideas constructed by students shortly before the practice would help.'

5.8 Summary and Conclusions for Phase Two

Findings from Phase One provided a baseline for the inquiry in Phase Two. Whilst the analysis of data from Phase One identified a number of issues worthy of further investigation, the main concern regarding student performance was the imbalance between the predominant influence of the teacher and the under-use of the students' own knowledge to inform their practice in the teaching of reading. The students' knowledge of teaching reading, implicit in their responses and recognised in the perceptions of their teachers and supervisors, was neither reflected in their classroom performance nor in their feeling of competence.

The topic for inquiry selected for Phase two was to assess the impact of students' increased *reading metaknowledge* upon their feeling of competence and performance during the final BSE. Action research was chosen as a methodology for systematic inquiry into the effects of planned changes to student learning within the context of their college preparation for the teaching of reading. In this way it was possible that 'a close relationship is maintained between practical action in the cause of change, systematic inquiry and the evaluation of process and outcomes, unintended as well as intended' (Hegarty and Evans, 1985, p.141).

Phase Two involved controlled modifying of the existing college course in the form of programmes and also evaluating the effects of these programmes upon the students beliefs and perceived performance in teaching reading during their teaching practice. The use of appropriate methods of analysis established the statistical significance of results, excluding those cases where change might have been due to chance.

The intervention programme was based on the model developed for the investigation of Phase Two in section 5.1.3 and expressed in the hypothesis put forward in section 5.1.1. The aim was to increase students' *reading metaknowledge* by the introduction of a specially designed programme through group discussion which subsequently would enhance their feeling of competence and perceived performance in this field. In the implementation of the programme students re-visited aspects of teaching reading which

required them to draw on their knowledge, reflect upon it, organise it and thus become more aware of it.

In order to foster the planned change in the students' performance, the programme was modified throughout the three cycles of its implementation. A summative evaluation of the changes which occurred during these cycles established the extent to which the intervention influenced the students' performance in teaching reading and their feeling of competence. The assessment is required to address the following two questions –

- Which aspects of the students beliefs and performance in teaching reading were affected by the intervention programme?
- How do these effects relate to the hypothesis and the model underpinning the intervention programme?

5.8.1 Significant changes from Phase One noted during Phase Two

The evaluation of Cycle One confirmed significant differences in support of the hypothesis concerning the increased attention given to teaching reading by the students' in their written preparations and evaluations, and by more supervisors and teachers discussing this aspect of teaching with the students. A greater number of students had applied their own knowledge or common sense in the use of resources for reading during the practice. Apart from more students reporting the recording of children's reading interests, few changes were noted in students' approaches to teaching reading. Regarding students' feeling of competence, the only change noted was that of more early years students expressing competence for the later stages of reading.

Although indications of a shift in the direction predicted by the hypothesis was noted, overall the implemented programme did not appear to have effected a gross and general change in either the students' feelings of competence or their performance.

The subsequent two cycles therefore implemented modified programmes by firstly introducing set tasks to be carried out by students during the practice and secondly by increasing the duration of time for students to reflect on their own knowledge about

reading. By systematically controlling these modifications in the programme between groups within the student population, it was possible to assess their effect.

Table 54 relates the programmes to the students' responses by indicating those areas where significant changes were noted as compared to the Phase One survey, and, with respect to Programme Three, differences between members and non-members of the Literacy Group. Table 54 is based on data received from students, since response rates from teachers and supervisors were too low to derive reliable conclusions. Nevertheless, it was noted that considerably more teachers and supervisors discussed the teaching of reading with their students, and fewer teachers than previously stated that students lacked knowledge in the use of resources. In the Phase One survey, teachers and supervisors had overall presented a more positive picture of the students' performance in teaching reading than the students themselves, and thus the focus of the programme during Phase Two was to change the students' perception of their own performance and competence in teaching reading.

Table 54: Significant changes in student responses in relation to the implemented programmes

	Programme 1		Programme 2		Programme 3		
	Discussion	Discussion	Discussion & set tasks	Set tasks	Ext disc'n & set tasks	Set tasks	Lit'cy Grp
	Early yrs	Later yrs	Early yrs	Later yrs	Early yrs	Later yrs	
Attention given to reading in preparation & evaluation	*	*	*	*	*	*	–
For use of resources:							
use course knowledge	*	*	*	–	*	–	–
use common sense	*	*	*	–	*	–	§
use manuals	*	–	*	–	*	–	–

	Programme 1		Programme 2		Programme 3		
	Early yrs	Later yrs	Early yrs	Later yrs	Early yrs	Later yrs	LG
Consult:							
teacher less frequently	–	–	–	–	*	–	–
index on literature	–	–	–	–	–	–	§
journal articles	–	–	–	–	–	–	§
Feel competent:							
for early stages	–	–	–	–	†	–	§
for later stages	*	–	*	–	*	–	–
Approach used:							
silent reading (ERIC)	–	–	*	*	*	–	–
paired/shared reading	*	–	*	–	*	–	–
phonics	*	–	*	–	*	–	–
listen to child read	–	–	–	–	*	*	–
Assessment used:							
miscue analysis	–	–	*	*	*	*	–
profiles	–	–	*	–	*	*	–
Recording:							
phonic knowledge	–	–	*	–	*	*	–
reading strategies	–	–	*	–	*	*	–
reading interests	*	*	*	–	*	*	–
needs	–	–	–	–	–	*	–

	Programme 1		Programme 2		Programme 3		
	Early yrs	Later yrs	Early yrs	Later yrs	Early yrs	Later yrs	LG
Rating as useful:							
journal articles	–	–	–	–	*	–	§
pract. work w. children	–	–	–	–	–	–	§
Coll. Language Events	–	–	–	–	–	–	§

* *p < 0.05 (change from Phase One)*

† *p < 0.[illegible]1 (change from Phase One)*

§ *p < 0.05 (difference between members and non-members)*

Evaluation of Phase Two has to recognise that each cycle was carried out with a different population. This has the advantage of excluding the possibility of contamination, which could have presented a problem with the same participants when comparing programme influences. However, there is no strict experimental control, since participants' beliefs and performance *before* the implementation of the programme were not established.

The cycles provide an opportunity for comparison between cases where the intervention programme consisted of –

- the introduction of metacognitive processes through reflective discussion before the teaching practice,
- the setting of specific tasks to be carried out during the teaching practice,
- a combination of specific tasks and the reflective discussion,
- a combination of specific tasks and the reflective discussion with extended time given to these discussions.

All programme variations resulted in significant increase in the attention given to reading by students, teachers and supervisors.

The set tasks of assessing children's reading behaviour led to more students using the recommended technique as well as attending to reading in their preparations and evaluations. More students also made use of other related approaches in assessing and recording children's reading development, such as use of profiles and recording reading strategies. No significant changes were noted regarding the feeling of competence by those students who were only involved in carrying out set tasks.

A regular pattern of increased application of students' own knowledge in the use of resources for teaching reading was noted when students took part in a programme of reflective discussion before the teaching practice. Since significantly more students who had participated in the discussion programme recorded children's reading interests, it can be deduced that these participants made more use of their knowledge of children's literature. The existence of this knowledge had been recognised by teachers and supervisors previously, but was not acknowledged by the students. For other approaches to reading, such as use of paired / shared reading and teaching of phonics, changes were not noted when the reflective discussion programme was implemented with later years students, since these techniques are more specific to teaching the early stages.

Two aspects of student behaviour were significantly affected by the extended time for reflective discussion – more students consulted their teacher occasionally instead of frequently and more rated journal articles on reading as useful.

Whilst the reflective discussions aimed at increasing *reading metaknowledge* resulted in students relying more on this knowledge, indicated by a reduction in dependence upon the teacher, the application of this knowledge was, however, limited. The requirement to carry out specific tasks, although limited in extent, gave further support to the students' employment of their knowledge. Thus both parts of the programme, reflective discussion and set tasks, are complementary.

Table 55 shows expressed feeling of competence by early and later years students for the early and later stages of teaching reading in Phase One and the three cycles of Phase Two.

Table 55: Percentage of early and later years students' expressing feeling of competence for teaching reading at the early and later stages as recorded in Phase One and Cycles One, Two and Three of Phase Two

	Phase One		Phase Two					
			Cycle One		Cycle Two		Cycle Three	
			discussion		disc'n & set task	set task	ext. disc'n & set task	set task
	Early yrs	Later yrs	Early yrs	Later yrs	Early yrs	Later yrs	Early yrs	Later yrs
Early stages	46	32	57	33	56	42	66	31
Later stages	49	81	74	63	84	80	92	66

Figures are percentages

Regarding the early stages of reading an increased proportion of early years students felt competent during the cycles of Phase Two, although only in Cycle Three with extra time for reflective discussion could the change be considered significant ($p < 0.1$). In comparison, little discernible change occurred for later years students with the result that for Cycle Three a significant difference in feelings of competence was registered ($p < 0.01$) between early and later years students.

For the later stages of reading a significantly increased proportion of early years students registered feelings of competence during Phase Two, the proportion increasing further through the cycles. On the other hand, the later years students already felt competent in Phase One and no significant change was noted.

This significant difference in feelings of competence for the early stages of reading also existed between those students who did and did not attend the meetings of the Literacy Group. Members of this group had experienced small group discussions similar to those provided by the reflective discussion programmes in Phase Two, with students across age ranges and years, related to real activities and in close contact with tutors over the

previous eighteen months. A similar difference in response was noted between members and non-members of this group for other items, such as use of common sense, journals and their index card systems on children's literature, as had been noted for those students who had experienced the programme of metacognition. The surveyed data from Cycle Three relative to the Literacy Group, whose formation arose during the process of the study, supports the findings of the planned intervention during Phase Two in that small group discussion which reflected on the students' knowledge of teaching reading led to enhanced *reading metaknowledge*, and, within the limits already discussed, encouraged its use and enhanced the feeling of competence.

With both the Phase Two intervention programme and the Literacy Group the discussions had a real purpose – the production of a policy document for the forthcoming teaching practice and the preparation of newspaper reading materials for children, a difference being that the first was imposed upon the students whilst the latter was selected by them. The analysis of student responses from Phase Two established that the product was considered to be of less value to the students than the processes involved in its preparation.

Despite the significant changes in students' behaviour and attitude reported above, 34% of early years students during Cycle Three still felt lacking in competence to teach reading during the early stages. Whilst this compares favourably with the 54% lacking competence before the implementation of the programme, it is nevertheless of concern to those responsible for student professional preparation. The three areas of need consistently identified by the majority of students, their teachers and supervisors and still present at the end of Phase Two were the early stages of reading, supporting children with reading difficulties and the organisation and management of reading for a whole class. Similar findings were published by Gorman (Brooks et al., 1992, p.96) when asking newly qualified teachers to specify aspects of teaching reading in which they would have liked more help during their college course. Gorman (op. cit.) refers to the lack of reference books for students with information on the initial teaching of reading (p.41) and course coverage of initial reading aspects commonly regarded as introductory by institutions, suffering from 'severe time constraints' (p.54). However, a

more detailed investigation of students' learning experiences provided by schools and colleges in these three aspects of teaching reading is required.

Students were asked during each of the three cycles of Phase Two in which area of English teaching they felt particularly strong. Table 56 shows student responses for reading and writing over the three cycles.

Table 56: Areas of English teaching in which students felt strong

	Cycle 1		Cycle 2		Cycle 3	
	Reading	Writing	Reading	Writing	Reading	Writing
Students feel strong	17	47	28	40	27	29

Figures are percentages

No significant differences were noted in students' feeling of strength for teaching reading. However, for Cycles One and Two, feelings of strength for teaching writing were significantly higher than for reading. No such difference was observed for Cycle Three, with a significant decrease being noted in respect of teaching writing. This could be due to the increased attention given to reading by the research project, a point which was made by some supervisors as creating an imbalance between these two aspects of literacy during teaching practice.

5.8.2 Implications of the findings for the model underpinning the Phase Two programme

Phase Two was an exploration of possible ways to improve the quality of student preparation for the teaching of reading. An action research programme was chosen to provide further understanding of procedures which might be expected to bring about change in the students' performance in teaching reading.

The rationale and aims for the programme of Phase Two are discussed in detail in section 5.1.1. An issue of concern, identified during Phase One, was the lack of balance

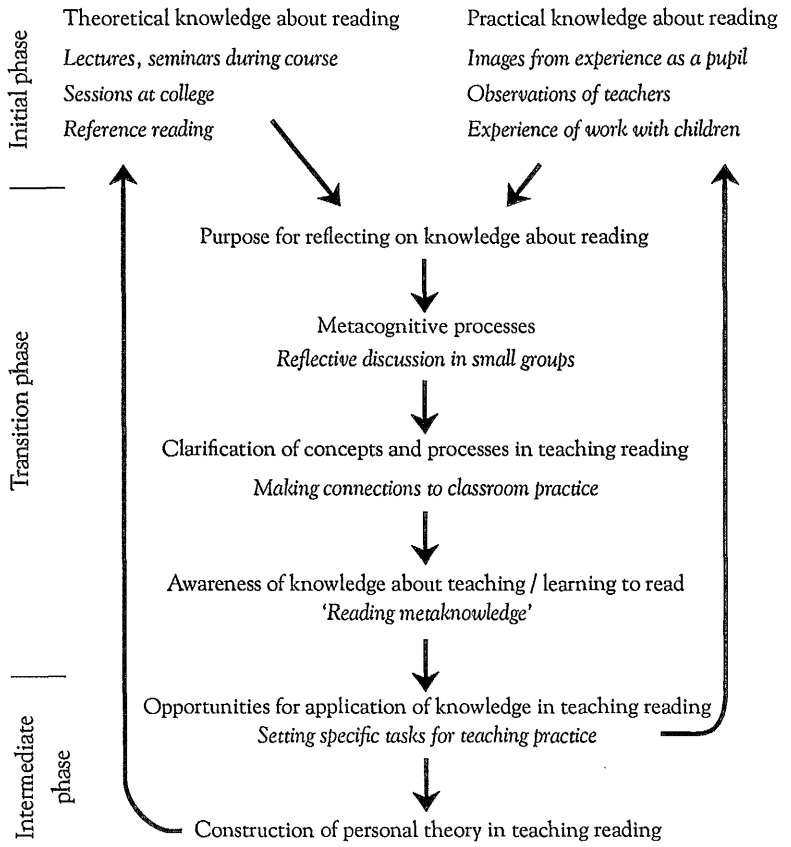
between the use of the students' own knowledge and the influence from the teacher in the teaching of reading during the students' final BSE. The initial hypothesis for Phase Two stated that by encouraging students to reflect upon their knowledge in the teaching of reading, they would become conscious of this knowledge and hence feel more competent. This was also expected to lead to increased use of this knowledge during the teaching practice. Using their own knowledge to inform their practice would not only make the link between the college based course and practice but also enhance the quality of students' preparation by leading the way to becoming an 'educated professional' instead of a 'competent technician' (Tickle, 1987, p.280).

In their responses to the questionnaire most students did not rate highly those brief discussions which already formed part of their course and which were commonly implemented with larger groups during sessions. They commented instead, in response to open questions, on the usefulness of extended small group discussion. The value of small group discussion was confirmed by both the results of the intervention programme of Phase Two and the effect of the Literacy Group activities upon its members.

A review of the whole cycle of action research in Phase Two suggested that additional procedures to those originally planned were required to effect the desired change in student belief and performance. Whilst metacognitive processes in the form of reflective discussions had achieved *reading metaknowledge*, it was necessary to extend its influence by introducing opportunities for the application of this knowledge in the performance of set tasks. There was also an indication that the time for metacognition should be extended. A combination of these activities was considered necessary to achieve optimum results.

Thus the model of learning to teach reading developed for the action research programme of Phase Two (see Figure 5 in section 5.1.3) was revised during Phase Two to that shown in Figure 7.

Figure 7: Revised model of learning to teach reading for teacher preparation



6 The Follow-up Study

6.1 Aims and procedures

The Follow-up Study was a small-scale inquiry planned to supplement the information gained during Phases One and Two. It was carried out with fairly small representative samples from those past students of College B who had been involved in the previous surveys and was intended to –

- provide a picture of the beliefs and classroom practices in the teaching of reading of these students after having experienced teaching reading in their own classrooms for at least one year,
- identify effects of the action research programmes implemented during Phase Two with some of these participants.

Section 3.2.2.2 discusses the sample involved, and Table 14 in section 4.1.1 presents details of sample size, response rate and time of surveys. Survey methods are described in section 3.2.3.2.

Similar to procedures adopted for the Phase One survey, postal questionnaires of the Follow-up Study were accompanied by letters explaining the purpose of the investigation (see Appendix 14) and prepaid envelopes. Reminders to participants were sent twice, a week before the date of return and two weeks after this date.

The questionnaires comprised of four sections – section A covered general information, section B investigated participants' views of reading and approaches used to teaching reading, section C sought opinions on the college course and section D invited further comments. Questionnaire questions are presented with the quantitative data in Appendix 15.

6.2 *Presentation and discussion of findings*

Overall, 86 questionnaires were completed (response rate of 66%) by past students of College B. A small proportion of the sample of students selected for this study had not entered primary education, having taken up posts in secondary and special education or industry. Detailed comments were generally offered, frequently accompanied by personal letters, expressing interest in the research topic and commenting on the thought-provoking nature of the questionnaire. Participants expressed appreciation of the interest shown in their professional development and the attention paid to the topic.

The survey involved students who had qualified and left college between 1988 and 1992, and who had been involved in the Pilot Study, Phase One and the first two cycles of Phase Two. To involve Cycle Three students, it would have been necessary to wait until Autumn 1994, by which time the study was completed. Although this limited the scope of the follow-up investigation, it was not regarded as essential to the survey.

For strict comparison to be made between follow-up responses and those from the respondents' earlier survey, the Follow-up Study would have needed to involve many more newly qualified teachers than was practicable. To derive statistically valid information from groups of the appropriate size, it was decided for the purpose of analysis to combine participants into two groups. Group one contained students from the Pilot Study and Phase One, who had not been exposed to any intervention programme, whilst group two was formed by students of Phase Two, who had experienced some form of intervention programme.

Where comparison is made between follow-up data and the earlier results, it was considered appropriate to use the results of the Phase One survey in College B as a baseline.

6.2.1 Beliefs and practices of newly qualified teachers in teaching reading

As with the findings from the previous surveys, most past students reported their use of reading schemes as well as 'real books'. Their views on the important aims in teaching

reading to primary-age children were similar to those expressed in the Phase One survey when the need for enjoyment of books as well as the development of appropriate reading strategies were emphasised. One past student summarised appropriately by stating the aims as 'to equip the child with the variety of skills to become an independent, fluent, motivated reader with a critical opinion of a variety of different text forms including fiction and non-fiction books'. When questioned about the national debate on approaches to the teaching of reading, most participants emphasised the need for balance and criticised the misinterpretation of teaching methods used in schools by the media which they considered responsible for creating confusion among parents as well as teachers.

The past students considered their current fellow teachers to be the primary influence upon their overall approach to the teaching of reading, followed by the college-based course and Block School Experience. 33% of them had received in-service training in teaching reading since they had left college. 93% of them expressed a wish for further opportunities of in-service courses in this area, with priority given to reading difficulties, phonic skill development, early stages, keeping up-to-date with new developments and computer software.

An open question sought to establish what knowledge and skills had been developed since leaving college. The skill of organising reading for a whole class was the most frequently mentioned item followed by teaching phonics, experiencing the step-by-step reading progress of children, in-depth knowledge of approaches and materials introduced during the college course and greater confidence in dealing with parents. 'Working through my own ideas without external pressure' was generally appreciated by participants.

Since leaving college, most past students identified the teachers in their school as being the most frequently consulted source on teaching reading. This strong influence of the teacher, as well as the approaches used by most past students of 'listening to children read' and 'recording books and pages read by pupils', had also been observed in the Phase One survey.

Further analysis of the responses concerning approaches to reading, including methods of assessment, demonstrated significant changes from Phase One with considerably increased use of activities such as paired / shared reading, phonics, reading interviews, miscue analysis, cloze procedure, informal observation, published tests and reading profiles. The quantified changes from Phase One were generally at a higher level for group two, and a significant change with regard to two further items, 'silent reading' and 'developing strategies used for information reading', was noted between groups one and two. Overall, responses regarding classroom activities in teaching reading were closer to those given by the teachers rather than the students in the Phase One survey.

Participants were asked which sources they had consulted on teaching reading since they had left college and their responses were compared to those given by students in Phase One on the sources they had consulted on teaching reading during their final teaching practice. Significantly more past students reported to have used reference books and journal articles frequently as well as occasionally for both groups one and two. Notes from the college course on reading were reported to be used by more past students now than had been the case whilst at college, although less frequently and more occasionally, and with the difference being more pronounced for group two than group one.

6.2.2 Past students' opinion on their college course in reading

Further open questions sought the past students' retrospective perceptions on their college course, seeking information on those aspects of the teaching of reading covered well by the course and those in which the course was considered lacking together with suggested improvements for future courses. Overall agreement with the student opinion expressed in Phase One was noted in that students felt themselves to be well equipped with knowledge of the reading process, having developed an overview of the approaches and resources employed in teaching reading, whilst at the same time lacking the ability to organise reading for a class, teach the early stages of reading, handle pupils with reading difficulties and develop phonic skills. A considerable change in attitude to that previously expressed in Phase One by students was, however, present in that generally

and frequently participants accepted an active role in their professional learning and development. This attitude was present in comments such as the following –

> Having studied the process at college put me in the strong position to make informed judgements.

> College gave me the knowledge of a range of approaches and resources from which I could devise an overall approach.

> Things are changing all the time. College prepared us to take on board new ideas and reject others; to think things through.

> I don't feel that the college course should be relied on to 'teach' future teachers to teach reading. We had a responsibility to ourselves to develop (and to continue to develop) our own expertise in this area.

It was, however, suggested that for this development to be successful, support should be available during the early stages of teaching for newly qualified teachers. Proposals for future courses included more time being allocated to that part of the course that dealt with reading, more attention being paid to reading during teaching practice by increasing the number of specific tasks, experience being provided for students in teaching reading outside teaching practice, opportunities being offered for small group discussion, a course being designed with common sessions for later and early years students and tutors sharing their own teaching experiences with the students more openly and frequently.

Past students in group two had already experienced some of these suggested activities, and it was not surprising therefore that the majority of them (68%) made positive comments about the intervention programmes of Phase Two. Some reported the usefulness of the prepared document as a source for ideas when they started teaching or as supportive in preparing a policy in their new school, others stating not to have used it, but 'keeping the ideas in their mind'. It was also felt that in the preparation of the Language Policy document, important connections between reading and other language modes as well as across the curriculum were made. Nevertheless there was still a

significant minority of participants who either did not remember the activity (15%) or perceived it as 'of little use' (17%), since 'we did not learn anything new, the document only referred to things we already knew'.

Comments from former members of the Literacy Group who had requested and received additional input in dealing with children's reading development confirmed the usefulness of small group discussion for the sharing of problems or clarification of ideas and the sharing of experiences with a tutor.

Past students were asked to indicate the usefulness of the activities and sources which were part of their course on reading whilst at college. The change in opinion, in particular regarding library and journals, was towards a feeling of greater usefulness of these components by members of group two. No change in opinion since the students had left college was noted concerning practical work with children, which was rated as very useful by most students as part of the college course.

6.2.3 Comparison of responses between groups one and two of the past students

All quantitative data (see Appendix 15) were subjected to non-parametric tests to investigate the existence of significant differences between the beliefs and activities of the group one students, who had only experienced the compulsory college course, and those of group two, who had participated in some of the intervention programmes of Phase Two. It was recognised that certain variables were not strictly controlled in this comparison. The newly qualified teachers were located and influenced by different schools and different education authorities and whilst those in group one had two or three years of teaching experience, those in group two had been teaching for just over one year.

Two significant differences between the two groups were observed, one concerning participants' approaches in teaching reading and the other relating to the retrospective judgement of college course components. Considerably more students (chi-square = 6.56, $p < 0.05$) in group two taught their pupils strategies to use context in reading occasionally, fewer of them teaching these strategies frequently. There is no obvious reason for this change in approach to be related to the intervention programme, and it

is likely that the introduction of the National Curriculum and dissemination of research in reading development at that time drew attention to the teaching of other strategies. Within this survey there is, however, no evidence of this shift in other areas.

The second significant difference occurred regarding college course handouts as a source of information on teaching reading, where significantly more members of group two (chi-square = 13.48; $p < 0.01$) thought these to be useful.

Members of group two were also more appreciative of the value of reference books and journals than those of group one.

The past students were asked how well the college course had prepared them for teaching reading. Whilst 39% of respondents from group one felt themselves to have been inadequately prepared, this figure dropped to 25% for group two participants. It is interesting to compare the figures with the finding from the Phase One survey that 65% of the teachers questioned felt their initial training had prepared them inadequately for teaching reading and Bassey's research which identified 50% of teachers in this category.

In the Phase One survey, students had been asked how competent they felt for teaching the early and later stages of reading. Although the two questions, posed in Phase One and the Follow-up Study, were phrased differently, the underlying purpose in both was to establish whether participants considered themselves competent at the conclusion of the college course to teach reading. This semantic parity of the two questions justified a comparison of responses from the Follow-up Study with those from Phase One. Comparisons were made between responses from past early and later years students with responses from the respective student groups of Phase One regarding their competence for early and later stages. Thus the same general responses from participants of the Follow-up Study were compared twice, firstly to Phase One responses to early stages and secondly to Phase One responses to later stages. The results of this analysis are presented in Table 57.

Table 57: Chi-square values as indication of significant differences in feeling of preparedness / competence for teaching reading between student responses from Phase One and past students from the Follow-up Study (groups one and two)

	Early years students		Later years students		Early & later years students	
	Early stages	Later stages	Early stages	Later stages	Early stages	Later stages
Group one	5.68*	4.94*	(0.004)	(9.72)†	3.61	0.023
Group two	14.96§	13.55§	4.46*	(4.08)*	16.13§	2.05

( ) More students than expected feeling inadequately prepared in groups one and two of past students than in the Phase One Study. Other chi-square values refer to more students feeling adequately prepared.

* $p < 0.05$; † $p < 0.01$; § $p < 0.001$

Table 57 indicates that in the early years student group, the feeling of preparedness / competence has increased significantly since leaving college, being even more pronounced in respect of group two. Within the later years students, group two also shows a greater feeling of competence / preparedness for teaching reading than group one.

6.3 Conclusions to the Follow-up Study

The Follow-up Study had the purpose of identifying possible changes in belief and behaviour which had developed since students had embarked upon their full-time teaching career. It also investigated the possible influence of the intervention programme of Phase Two upon these newly qualified teachers. The Follow-up study, although offering potential for wider analysis, was supplementary to Phases One and Two and its analysis was therefore confined to the above stated aims.

A number of changes were observed in all students since they had left college and had experienced teaching full time in primary schools. Overall their approaches in teaching reading had moved considerably closer to those used and reported by teachers in the Phase One survey. Wray (1988), who studied the comparative influence of educational theory and contact with experienced teachers upon students' approaches to teaching reading during their time at college, came to the conclusion that the influence of the teacher was considerably stronger in that 'trainee-teachers pick up a great deal of their approach to teaching from the teachers with whom they work' (p.33). This influence of the teacher on student approaches during teaching practice had also been noted for some activities in the current study and appears to have continued and been reinforced by contact with teachers after the students qualified and began teaching.

Participants of the survey did acknowledge the benefit of long-term practical experience when identifying gains made in knowledge and skills of teaching reading since leaving college. The organisation of reading for a whole class, previously perceived as one of the major shortcomings in students' activities, was identified as the main gain by these newly qualified teachers. Whilst recognising the important role of practical experience also for the deeper appreciation of approaches and resources used in teaching reading, past students were keen to point out that their basic understanding of processes obtained during the college course was the pre-requisite for this professional development. Reflecting upon the experiences provided by the college course in teaching reading they decided that they did 'not want to miss out on the theory, but would have benefited from more practical experience' during their training.

Practical experience since leaving college was also noted to have made an impact upon these students' feeling of competence / preparedness for teaching reading in that significantly more participants than previously perceived themselves as competent. This suggests that by carrying out certain tasks over an extended period of time participants became aware of their knowledge and abilities. The finding that this difference in feeling adequately prepared was at a highly significant level for those students who had experienced the programme of intervention during Phase Two, suggests that these, by greater awareness of their own knowledge and heightened *reading metaknowledge*, had a

head start. The usefulness of this intervention was acknowledged by the majority of participants.

Not only did group two have a more positive perception of their preparation for teaching reading than group one, when compared to students' perceptions of Phase One, significantly more of those who had experienced the intervention programme judged reference books, journals and handouts as part of their college course on reading as useful. This positive view of reference reading may be a significant factor in these young teachers' future professional development. The dissemination of research findings and new developments in teaching reading is carried out by this means, and to keep abreast of developments in the field, teachers will have need of this form of consultation. It will be the decisive factor for the development of teachers into 'educated professionals' or 'competent technicians', as discussed in section 5.1.1.

7 Conclusions and implications

7.1 Summary of the study and main findings

The questions the study set out to explore were broadly –

- What is the nature and outcome of initial teacher preparation for the teaching of reading?
- How can learning experiences for teacher trainees be modified to improve this outcome?

These questions arose as a result of the writer's professional involvement in the initial preparation of primary teachers for the teaching of reading and a discovered scarcity of relevant published research in the field.

Whilst the findings from all stages of the study have implications for the practice of teacher educators, their relevance to the wider issue of teacher preparation for the teaching of reading is discussed further in section 7.3.

The study had two aims, firstly by investigating characteristics of students' perceived performance in the teaching of reading to obtain information on their knowledge, skills and beliefs, and secondly by effecting modifications to the preparation of students in teaching reading based upon this acquired information, to determine whether and to what extent their performance could be improved.

Phase One of the study, carried out in four colleges, provided an insight into the outcome of the initial preparation of teachers for teaching reading, as indicated by students' perceived performance in this area during their final Block School Experience (BSE). Analysis of the Phase One data, presented and discussed in section 4, supplied information on the nature and quality of student preparation for teaching reading by scrutinising aspects of student performance in teaching reading in order to clarify the complex nature of the activity being investigated.

The main finding from Phase One was that, whilst students possessed a contemporary view and knowledge of the way children learn and become literate, they did not apply this knowledge during the BSE in the development of appropriate professional skills, but mainly sought to teach reading with their teacher as a model. A substantial proportion of students and teachers felt inadequately prepared for teaching reading by their initial training course. During the BSE, experience at the school seemed to be a more powerful influence on the student teaching than the knowledge gained from the college course.

As the study progressed, its focus changed from a general investigation of students' practice in teaching reading to the deployment of students' existing knowledge in their teaching activities. It was hypothesised that raising students' awareness of their own knowledge in teaching reading would lead to greater use of this knowledge in their classroom practice and an increased feeling of competence in the field. Phase Two of the study involving a programme of action research, was carried out in one of the colleges to promote awareness of knowledge possessed in reading, introducing the notion of *reading metaknowledge*. Its impact was explored and findings reported.

The first major product of the study was the finding that heightened *reading metaknowledge* led to increased use of students' existing knowledge in teaching reading during BSE and also resulted in an increased feeling of competence in the field. These changes were reinforced when students were allocated additional time to reflect upon their existing knowledge and were assigned set tasks in teaching reading to be carried out during the BSE. The awareness programme with students retained its effect after they qualified and taught their own classes, as shown in the Follow-up Study with past students from the five years who had previously been involved in the research.

Experience with the study influenced subsequent practice for teacher preparation within the college involved in Phase Two. A programme of knowledge awareness, similar to that used during Phase Two of the study, was established in the course programme for teaching English. It is considered that optimisation of the programme in respect of timing, frequency and extent of implementation over the four-year course will be of

further benefit. Barnes (1989) emphasises the importance of knowledge awareness for the design and delivery of teacher preparation programmes –

> Featherstone (1987) reminds us, 'knowledge doesn't mean anything until it is remade in the present' (p.33). Helping teachers remake their understandings of teaching requires serious consideration of ways to transform knowledge about teaching into a coherent curriculum for learning to teach. (p.20)

The second major product of the study was a model containing the elements of student learning to teach reading. Whilst the need for such a model was recognised early in the study, its form was enhanced by cumulative reflection throughout the investigation. The model, which is discussed in sections 5.1.3 and 5.7, was initially derived from the findings of Phase One. It provided a conceptual framework for further inquiry during which it was modified and refined. The model is not concerned with ways or styles of learning, but relates to that level within the process of learning to teach where already acquired knowledge on teaching reading serves as a basis for action. Although this stage within the process of learning to teach reading represents the link between theoretical knowledge and practice, it is not regarded as the platform which facilitates the simple transfer of theory into practice. Instead, through the process of metacognition, existing knowledge is seen as offering the student teacher a repertoire from which to select so as to inform teaching activities and to serve as a basis for reflection and evaluation of teaching performance. In this model it is the interaction between existing knowledge and teaching activity which supplies the essential ingredient in the professional development for teaching reading. It is suggested that within this process of mutual enrichment, both components become refined.

The investigation of Phase Two identified and focused upon *reading metaknowledge* as one of the influential elements within this interactive process between theoretical knowledge and practice. Further research of this type, apart from applying the model to different contexts of institutions and courses, should explore the function of other elements within the model, such as the effect of classroom experience upon the students' developing knowledge base. Whilst the model is based upon the concept of teaching as having a reflective component, it is not, however, dependent on a particular

view of the reading process or the teaching of reading. The model is sufficiently flexible and comprehensive to allow for changes in view of what constitutes reading and the teaching of reading. The key concern is not for the form of knowledge, but for the relationship between knowledge and classroom practice.

The third major product of the study consisted of questionnaires specifically designed as instruments for data collection on students' perceived performance, beliefs and feeling of competence in the teaching of reading. They were used to establish a baseline for the study during Phase One and to gather information on participants' changes in perceived behaviour during the study.

The following sections discuss and evaluate the research process and appraise the product by reflecting upon the notions, ideas and theories inherent in the interpretation of the study results.

7.2 Further critique of the research design and methods of exploration

The study was designed to examine and promote a deeper understanding of the nature of student learning to teach reading by concentrating upon the final BSE as part of student preparation. Content and delivery of the college-based part of the course, although recognised as having an effect upon the area of inquiry, were not examined directly.

The feature of the research design which was particularly successful concerned the surveys, which required the construction of questionnaires for establishing students' perceived performance and beliefs in the field. These specifically developed instruments for data collection were used throughout the study. Their content was based firmly on the contemporary view of the process and teaching of reading. A re-visit of the topic would need to take account of any subsequent changes in the view of reading which might affect classroom practice in the field. New information on reading development, for instance young readers' phonemic development, has become part of the content of college courses since this study was carried out and would have to be considered in future questionnaires.

Overall the questionnaires were found to be sufficiently comprehensive to investigate the chosen field for inquiry. They evoked a satisfactory response and succeeded in providing the required information. There were, however, limitations and shortcomings, some dictated by the research design, and others which could have been contained more effectively. Depth of information on certain topics was sacrificed for breadth in order to gain an overview of students' activities and beliefs in the field. Timing of implementation following the BSE rather than contemporaneously, although considered to be necessary to permit participants time for development, may have influenced the validity of some responses. Coolican (1990) notes that 'memory is notoriously error-prone and subject to distortion' (p.86).

A question might arise as to the absence of a prior precise definition of 'teaching reading' and this is discussed in section 4.1.3.6. On the other hand, topics on which information was sought and for which response categories to closed questions were pre-selected, might be considered too precise and sharply focused. Although this constraint was alleviated by the use of open questions and interviews, it nevertheless introduced an element of limitation.

Some lack of congruence of response categories between questionnaires for the same or different participant groups in different surveys, although generally overcome in analysis by combination of categories, made direct comparability unnecessarily difficult at times. The predominant use of nominal scale categories in the questionnaires omitted any precise criteria for judgement in responses, which limited the generation of information such as that on students' feeling of competence. Eraut (1990) explains that a considerable qualitative gap exists between the categories 'competent' and 'not competent' and that there is a need for a response model 'which is graduated rather than binary in character' (p.183). A repeat of the study should avoid the binary system and solicit specific information regarding competence in particular aspects and elements of teaching reading.

The employment of questionnaires as the main method of data collection for this exploratory study was imposed by resource limitations. Additional direct observation of students during the practice would have provided further useful information. However,

the breadth of information secured is considered adequate compensation for the restricted data collection methods, with the scale of Phase One and the length of Phase Two and the Follow-up Study reaching the limit of a project manageable by a single researcher.

The study in Phase Two was restricted to students in the writer's college, and, although its findings relate only to the particular sample, they have implications for initial teacher training in reading in general and may be replicated.

Whilst conclusions from the findings must be drawn in the light of recognised limitations, the study has nevertheless made a significant contribution to the understanding of the preparation of primary students for teaching reading. It provided the necessary breadth of baseline information and, by the involvement of participants from four colleges and two types of institutions, created a reliable basis for the subsequent research. Its focus throughout the study on the final BSE as a single common event during teacher preparation and its exploration of the role of metacognition within the process of learning to teach reading represents a novel approach. The study was carried out at a time of comparative stability in teacher education so that investigations over the six-year period were not grossly affected by changes in course design which would have presented an additional variable for consideration.

To date investigations concerning primary teachers' preparation in teaching reading have either been surveys involving practising teachers (Bassey, 1981) and representatives from institutions (Brooks et al., 1992) or short-term studies with students of either a general nature (Owen, 1994; Hatt et al., 1994; Wray, 1988) or following an opportunist topic involving a small sample (Wray, 1993). Most of these studies have explored student opinion about their competence in teaching reading. What appears to be needed is a systematic approach to research in this field, for studies to be less piecemeal and to follow a common pattern in focusing on the nature and quality of students' performance. By this means it would be possible to create a knowledge base for the benefit of those involved in the planning and practice of preparing students to teach reading. This study has indicated a starting point for further investigation into the complex process of learning to teach reading. It was an inquiry

into the writer's own practice and views, and the field of investigation would benefit from similar studies in comparable or differing contexts. However, this study has proposed and developed a model for student learning to teach reading, which may need further refinement and development, but which offers potential for structure and direction to be taken in future research.

7.3 Implications of the study findings

The outcome of the study has meaning for both theorists and practitioners in the teaching of reading. Its implications include the need for further investigation into the revealed discrepancy between students' perceived competence and their actual knowledge and the further exploration of ways and methods to heighten students' *reading metaknowledge*. The theoretical model and research instruments generated during the study require further development and refinement by systematic trialling and wider testing. The model, which was solely related to the teaching of reading, may have relevance for other curriculum areas in teacher training, or for learning to teach in general.

The following discussion considers the implications of the findings from each part of the study for practices and policies in the preparation of students for the teaching of reading, raising a number of important relevant issues and questions requiring further inquiry. The study, although limited to the initial preparation of primary teachers, could also provide a basis for inquiry in the secondary sector.

Implications of study findings are discussed below in relation to the concepts involved and with respect to recent relevant literature and other published research.

7.3.1 Preparation of teachers – the notion of competence

Findings of the study focus attention on the importance of students' awareness of their existing knowledge to their feeling of competence and teaching performance in the teaching of reading. This raises the question as to whether and if so to what extent

courses provide opportunities for student reflection on their existing knowledge and its use in the classroom.

The Department of Education consultation document on future arrangements for initial teacher training (1989) proposed in section 2.7 that –

> Institutions should satisfy themselves that students' practical work in schools, particularly during final teaching practice, demonstrates a level of competence appropriate to a newly qualified teacher entering the period of induction.

Analysis of data from Phase One of the study revealed a significant proportion of students during the final stage of their training perceiving themselves as lacking in competence to teach reading. In addition little attention was paid by students, teachers and supervisors to the teaching of reading in the students' preparations for and evaluations of their classroom activities. Similar findings are identified by other recent research (Brooks et al., 1992; OFSTED, 1993b; Hatt et al., 1994; Wray and Medwell, 1994).

Students' perceived lack of competence at the end of their course is not unique to teacher preparation but has also been observed in other disciplines of Higher Education. Raaheim (1991) refers to a 1988 survey by Brennan and McGregor with 4000 CNAA graduates from 122 courses which found that newly qualified students from virtually all academic disciplines felt they had gained in knowledge during their courses, but were dissatisfied with 'the provision of general transferable skills' (p.2). These graduates had passed their examinations, but felt incompetent. Raaheim (op. cit.) sees the root of the problem to be in higher education courses which do not clearly relate programmes to the needs of students, and those who teach these courses who 'are less interested in how and why students learn than in merely what they know, as exhibited in examinations' (p.13). Calderhead (1988) shares this attitude when discussing teachers' professional learning –

> Teacher education courses have sometimes conformed more to a certification process than a genuinely professional learning process. Student teachers have learned to demonstrate a

> narrow range of contrived competencies in order to be favourably assessed and certificated as a teacher. (p.10)

This correlates with students in the present study, who, in spite of having demonstrated their knowledge in teaching reading through assignments and examinations during their course, did not feel sufficiently competent to teach reading. It is matched by the belief in the divide between theory and practice of teaching reading expressed by students and teachers in the study. Theory was seen to be under the control of the college, whereas practice belonged to the school. Both students and teachers felt that students required more practice in teaching reading. It was surprising therefore that the teachers did not arrange for students to have this additional practice, but instead carried out most of the teaching of reading in their classes themselves. A high proportion of students felt they had not gained in this area from the BSE, but needed more practical experience.

Supervisors in the study were of the opinion that, once qualified and in their own classes, students would, with growing experience, feel and demonstrate greater competence in their approach to reading. Experience in practical tasks was understood to develop competence. Recent development in teacher education has responded to this belief by a move towards school-based training and renewed attention to the competency-based approach. For this, teaching skills and knowledge in areas of the primary curriculum are precisely defined at various levels, and students are judged on their ability to carry out specific tasks in the classroom. The CATE Report 1992 refers to competency statements that apply to training for the teaching of reading. These specify the competencies which students are required to achieve and demonstrate within their practical work in the classroom.

Research is indicated into whether competency-based training courses rather than other courses lead to students feeling more competent in teaching reading than other courses. From the experience with later years students in Phase Two of this study it seems that the requirement to carry out set tasks in teaching reading, whilst drawing attention to reading in general and creating opportunity to practice a particular task, has little effect upon the students' overall feeling of competence in teaching reading. Being able to

carry out specific tasks in teaching reading was only registered as having developed skill with respect to those specific tasks and was not transferred to teaching reading in general. Relating this to the previously discussed model of 'competent technician' and 'educated professional' (section 5.1.1), a competency-based approach would appear to develop the former by the process of *training*.

This does not imply that practical aspects in learning to teach reading should take a minor role. On the contrary, successful teaching of reading requires the development of a range of skills, but 'a great deal of competent behaviour depends not just on being able to do certain things (output) but also in the correct reading of the situation (input) so that the appropriate action is taken' (Eraut, 1990, p.179). Being competent in teaching reading is not the sum total of competencies in teaching skills. A competent teacher needs the capacity for a judgement on the kind of teaching skills to be applied in a particular context. Competence in teaching reading involves beliefs and an understanding of the processes as well as the application of skills. For such behaviour to develop the course emphasis needs to be on teacher *education* in preparing students to make informed choices by use of their existing knowledge base. The study demonstrated that by the process of metacognition in purposeful small group discussion, students' ability to make the connection between theoretical knowledge and practice was enhanced.

The question is therefore – does current teacher preparation for teaching reading aim to develop student s' general competence in teaching reading or does it concentrate on developing competencies in specified skills?

7.3.2 Policies for teacher training

There is evidence from the study that during BSE, students were mainly influenced by the teachers' approaches to reading and made very little use of their theoretical knowledge in teaching reading. This observation has implications for teacher preparation as courses become more school based. Alexander (1990) explains that such a school-based apprenticeship approach in teacher preparation may adopt versions on a continuum from 'unquestioning imitation of the expert by the novice' to 'the kind of

dialogue and collaborative exploration of ideas and practices by student and mentor which characterizes not just apprenticeship but teaching at its best' (p.69). His warning that the former version would be easily adopted, indicates the need for those involved in the planning of courses to ensure that students have an opportunity to make the link between theory and practice and to approach practical problems with a greater feeling of competence. During times when demands for the major involvement of schools in teacher training (TES, 20th January 1995, p.5) are made from organisations such as the newly formed *Teacher Training Agency* it is important to plan for that version of a school-based approach, which promotes student competence instead of 'unquestioning imitation'. This suggests a continued involvement of colleges working in close collaboration with the schools in student preparation. The aim should be to assist students to make use of theory to inform practice and to examine practice with a view to modifying personal theory. This true partnership in supporting students in the teaching of reading was not apparent in the four colleges surveyed in Phase One of the study, where teachers with little knowledge of the college course commented on the lack of communication with supervisors over the students' performance in this field. The programme implemented in Phase Two not only assisted students to make the necessary connection between theory and practice but also provided a connection between college and school in that it provided information for teachers on the students' existing knowledge. Without this link, a school-based approach could lead to an even greater divide between theory and practice and hence between the two agencies involved in the preparation of future teachers.

The survey in Phase One and previous research projects (Morris, 1959; Goodacre, 1969; Southgate, 1971; Bassey, 1981) have identified the limitations in classroom practices in teaching reading and the feeling of incompetence in this field expressed by teachers themselves. This does not recommend the use of the teacher as a model as an important feature of teacher preparation and calls into question any major shift in emphasis towards increased school-based preparation. If students are left to a 'do as the teacher does' approach. then an even greater divide between theory and practice would arise unless appropriate corrective measures are introduced. As Fish (1989) states 'refocusing the training is far more important educationally than relocating it in schools' (p.178).

The present study has shown that the use of metacognitive processes with students can effect such a refocus.

Within the context of the above debate it may be of value to examine policies for teacher preparation elsewhere. In Germany, for instance, the preparation of primary teachers is organised in two phases, the first being the responsibility of universities during a three-year course, the second being school based but supervised by a local training centre and lasting two years. Strong emphasis is placed on the acquisition of theoretical knowledge during the first phase as a pre-requisite for reflection during professional training in the second phase, which is 'designed to interweave theory and practice ... is delivered by teachers ... but not handed over to individual schools' (OFSTED, 1993c, p.17).

Apart from offering a solution to the question of institutional control over teacher preparation, the German model also includes planned support for teachers during their induction period. Responses from the Follow-up Study of this research showed that most newly qualified teachers felt a need for participation in in-service training courses in the teaching of reading. A high proportion of these teachers welcomed the contact with and interest taken by their former college in their professional development. The benefit to be derived from this contact has been suggested by Willey and Maddison (1971) in 'that effective teaching of reading would only come about when colleges took far greater interest in their former pupils during the probationary year' (p.35). If institutions continue to regard courses in teaching reading as merely an introduction to the field, as expressed by supervisors in this study and reported by other researchers (Brooks et al., 1992, p.54), then the continuation of support of further professional development for newly qualified teachers should be regarded as essential.

7.3.3 Implications for training institutions

Findings in Phase One of students' perceived lack of competence in teaching reading accord with findings reported by Wray and Medwell (1994). Following their research with 176 PGCE students' from two institutions, the authors offer an explanation for students' reduced feeling of competence in teaching reading after the completion of

their course as compared with their feeling at the beginning of the course. They see this as an indication of the professional development brought about by the course –

> The teaching of reading seemed to have become for these students a problematic activity, whereas at the beginning of the course they had seen it as a set of recipes for action. (p.45)

These researchers feel that the course has helped students to acquire 'sufficient knowledge about the teaching of reading to enable them to "know what they do not know" ' (p.45). Whilst Hatt et al. (1994, p.48) make similar observations in noting that the feeling of inadequacy in teaching reading goes hand in hand with an increasing understanding of the reading process, these findings pose further questions –

- Should teacher educators, in accepting this interpretation, feel complacent regarding the success of their courses?
- Is this interpretation a justification for allowing a high proportion of newly qualified teachers to enter the profession 'knowing what they do not know'?
- Are there ways of helping students to become aware of 'knowing what they *do* know'?

The present study in having tackled the discrepancy between students' existing knowledge and their awareness of this knowledge, has sought to address these questions. The implementation of a programme of metacognition with the students in Phase Two raised the students' awareness of their knowledge in teaching reading and positively influenced their performance and feeling of competence. Small group discussion with a real purpose, the preparation of a document relevant to the final BSE, was the core element in this metacognitive process for establishing the connection between theoretical knowledge and practice. Developing awareness of students' existing knowledge in reading, *reading metaknowledge*, was functional in –

- diminishing the gap between theory and practice,
- utilising existing student knowledge,
- avoiding uncritical acceptance of the teacher as a model,

- regarding practice as part of the college course,
- providing a basis for reflection upon practice.

The study drew attention to the students' need to become aware of the knowledge they possess and suggests that training institutions should make provision in their courses to encourage students' reflection on their existing knowledge of teaching reading.

There are good reasons why courses in teaching reading proceed at a brisk pace. They are part of the compulsory courses in teaching English and share the available time with other modes of language. Time allocation for language and literacy courses over the past decade has diminished (Wray, 1991) with too little time being allocated during course sessions for important topics such as phonics (Brooks et al., 1992, p.54). In spite of this time pressure it is important, however, that students have the opportunity to reflect upon their acquired knowledge. There is evidence from the study that reflection on existing knowledge is more effective if it is extensive and more than just a quick consolidation exercise. It needs to have a purpose, such as preparation for BSE or the Literacy Group project (section 5.7.1), in order for students to select and organise from their available knowledge. Findings of the study also demonstrated the longer-term effect of such organised and extensive metacognitive process. In the Follow-up Study involving past students with at least one year of teaching experience those who had participated in a programme of metacognition expressed a greater feeling of confidence in teaching reading and judged reference reading to be more useful than those who had had no such programme.

Garforth and Duncan (1991) in an article on how teacher education colleges prepare future primary teachers for the teaching of reading suggest that students need 'time to reflect on their developing knowledge about teaching children to read' (p.12). No indication is provided, however, as to how opportunities for reflection should be organised. Evidence from the present study suggests that opportunities for reflection cannot be assumed but must be purposefully and systematically planned. It is important that this issue is addressed by the institutions responsible for teacher preparation.

Reinking et al. (1993) from the USA report on a model for a course on teaching reading where, apart from being introduced to teaching strategies in reading, students had to select and 'implement' these in hypothetical teaching situations to make their newly gained knowledge operational. The authors believe that 'familiarity with strategies is not enough to ensure that they will be used' (p.459).

Similarly, Barnes (1989) states that 'before practitioners can use knowledge of a given principle to guide their actions they must be able to recognise an event in the classroom as an instance in which one or more general principles apply' (p.19). This identifies a further area for inquiry. Whilst students in the present study became aware of their knowledge by anticipating events in teaching reading during their forthcoming practice, it would be worthwhile exploring students' ability to recognise situations for the application of their knowledge during BSE.

7.3.4 Delivery of the college course

An appraisal is required of the way courses in teaching reading are delivered within colleges. Whilst the present study examined the role of the course in reading with respect to BSE, certain aspects of course delivery also require investigation. One such factor is the personal interest shown in the teaching of reading by tutors in colleges. The study demonstrated how the increased attention of a tutor in this field created additional student interest in reading. This is what Raaheim (1991, p.12) describes as the 'orectic' component of a successful learning environment which he considers to be of equal importance to the cognitive element. The formation of the Literacy Group by students during the study took place when students recognised the writer's particular interest in teaching reading indicated by the current research. Meetings and activities of this group provided a platform for students to apply, test, interpret and develop the knowledge already acquired in the field. They offered reflection upon the students' existing knowledge similar to that arranged in the programmes of Phase Two which showed a positive influence upon students' teaching performance. This indicates that 'orectic' factors within course implementation should receive attention in future research.

Wyatt and Pickle (1993) found that tutors' basic beliefs concerning teaching influence the way students acquire and use their knowledge. Tutors with a 'transmission belief system' saw themselves as transmitting established and absolute knowledge. Those with an 'interpretation view' believed that students had to be active in their acquisition of knowledge, interpret it, explore it in discussion with others and modify it. The belief systems of tutors in college can therefore either facilitate or inhibit the connection students have to make between their existing theoretical knowledge and practice. The current study has demonstrated the importance of this connection for students' performance in teaching reading and suggests that the 'interpretation view' is the one more likely to bridge the gap between knowledge and practice.

Close attention should also be paid to the role allocated to BSE within the delivery of the college course. Although participants in the study expressed the students' need for practical experience in teaching reading, comparatively little attention was paid to this area during the BSE. The findings of Phase Two demonstrated that planned opportunities for teaching tasks in reading as well as the enhancement of *reading metaknowledge* increased the attention given to reading during the BSE. Teaching practice should be recognised as an integral part of the college course on the teaching of reading and other effective ways of promoting attention to teaching reading during BSE should be explored. This can only be achieved by purposefully linking and co-ordinating the college-based course in reading with the students' BSE as demonstrated in the programmes during Phase Two.

Several writers (Fish, 1989; Rowland, 1993; Calderhead, 1988; Tickle 1987) argue for a reconceptualisation of the traditional BSE to 'research-based' supervision, where student, teacher and supervisor work in partnership for inquiry in and reflection on teaching. In such a practice the student would be neither expected to adopt the teacher as a model in the approach to reading nor to simply apply theories previously introduced during the course. Instead by the use of own knowledge and in collaboration with the teacher and supervisor, students would enquire into approaches to teaching reading and find solutions to problems in this area experienced during their BSE.

The process of 'focused supervision' which operated during the final BSE of Phase Two was a variant of 'research-based supervision'. It was noted, however, that most participants did not select aspects of teaching of reading as a focus. It is likely that the lack of knowledge of the students' course in teaching reading, as expressed by both teachers and supervisors, was responsible for this lack of selection. A number of supervisors also expressed their lack of expertise in teaching reading. Further research into the role of the teacher and the supervisor is required together with an investigation into means of developing these roles through in service training so as to provide maximum support to students learning to teach reading.

The study also identified those aspects of teaching reading in which students' frequently expressed a lack of knowledge, such as the beginning stage of reading development, reading difficulties, organising reading with the whole class, assessment and phonics. Other research (Goodacre, 1969; Brooks et al., 1992; Owen, 1994) has also reported these perceived inadequacies in the students' knowledge. The feeling of inadequate preparation for the beginning stages of reading particularly with students training for the junior age range was reported by Morris (1959) thirty years ago and by a survey of ILEA in London in 1969. As Start and Wells (Melnik and Merritt, 1972, p.336) emphasise, reading is a skill whose acquisition cannot solely be assigned to the infant classroom, and this should be reflected in the training of teachers. Systematic research within colleges and on a national level should provide useful information as to what degree characteristics of the design and delivery of college courses in reading are responsible for these shortcomings.

7.3.5 Concluding reflections

The study began with a consideration of pupils' success in learning to read, which was identified as being intrinsically linked to the quality of teaching received by pupils. The writer's professional involvement in the initial preparation of primary teachers for the teaching of reading and the recognised lack of information from published research led to a study project which examined students' perceived performance in the field during their final BSE and subsequently explored ways of improving this performance. Whilst the study was in progress reading standards in schools received increased attention in

continuous national debate leading to official inquiries on reading standards (Gorman and Fernandes, 1992) as well as reports on (Brooks et al., 1992; OFSTED, 1993b) and recommendations for (CATE, 1992) teacher preparation. At a time when the teaching of reading frequently has become a political issue, it is important for teacher educators to concentrate upon questions of professional importance. One such question concerns the form of training best suited to equip new teachers for the teaching of reading. The study has followed the course of a 'problem-based methodology' (Robinson, 1993) in that it has contributed to the understanding and improvement of an identified problem in the nature of student preparation for the teaching of reading. Although the findings related primarily to the practice in the college where the study was carried out, they also have implications for students learning to teach reading, teacher educators and training institutions in general. The function of *reading metaknowledge* as one of the elements within a proposed model of student learning to teach reading has been identified. Together with the instruments specially designed to assess the nature of students' perceived performance and beliefs in teaching reading this has provided a framework for similar studies to be carried out in other institutional contexts. It has also created a base for professional discussion and revealed avenues for further investigation of those related aspects which are considered likely to promote a deeper understanding of how best to support students in their learning to teach reading and thus to ensure the quality of teacher preparation in the field.

> Such an understanding can enable us to examine critically our current teacher education practices and to build teacher education courses which equip student teachers not only with basic classroom competence but with the knowledge, skills and confidence to continue learning. (Calderhead, 1988, p.63)

This understanding and sharing of knowledge is essential for teacher educators. Harrington (1994, p.191) in considering the relationship between 'Teaching and Knowing' states that 'teaching is about knowing' and that 'we must provide prospective teachers with opportunities to struggle with what it means to know'. Students need opportunities to reflect upon their knowledge in discussing it with others. It is then to be 'transformed in the sharing. Dialogue allows students to become aware of what they

share in common' (op. cit., p.192). Whilst it is important for students to reflect upon their knowledge, teacher educators also need to share their knowledge in order to refine their understanding of how their students learn to teach and how that learning is best facilitated.

> Should we all be considered learners and teachers?
>
> Should we not critically reflect as we prepare our students to critically reflect?
>
> (Harrington, 1994, p.197)

APPENDICES

APPENDIX 1

Pilot Study questionnaires

Appendix 1

STUDENT QUESTIONNAIRE

As part of a current enquiry into the teaching of reading during initial teacher training, I am asking students to help identify some of the factors involved. This questionnaire focuses on the Block School Experience. It is not intended to examine the students but to examine critically the College reading course.

It is your opinion I am seeking, and it is important that you give your personal, honest impression.

All replies will be in strict confidence and are used only in connection with this investigation.

Your co-operation is greatly appreciated.

Thank you for your help. HANNE LAMBLEY

SECTION A. Please tick appropriate box

1. On what year of your course are you?

   1st ☐ 2nd ☐ 3rd ☐ 4th ☐

2. For which age range are you training?

   Early years ☐ Later years ☐

3. Which age group did you teach during your recent Block School Experience?

   Reception ☐ J_1 ☐ J_3 ☐

   Middle Infants ☐ J_2 ☐ J_4 ☐

   Top Infants ☐

   (You might have to tick more than one box.)

4. How many pupils were in your class?

   5 - 10 ☐ 11-15 ☐ 16-20 ☐ 21-25 ☐

   26-30 ☐ More than 30 ☐

SECTION B.

5. During your recent Block School Experience, was the school's policy for the teaching of reading explained to you?

   Not at all ☐ Vaguely ☐ In detail ☐

6. With respect to the teaching of reading in your class, were you given:

Full responsibility ☐

Shared responsibility with the class teacher ☐

No responsibility ☐

7. How much did the teaching of reading feature in your written schemes of work in preparation for your recent B.S.E.?

Not at all ☐ A little ☐ A lot ☐

8. Did you timetable reading?

Yes ☐ No ☐

9. Which of the following items influenced your approach to the teaching of reading during the recent B.S.E.?

(Please number in order of influence, starting with the strongest as No.1)

Knowledge and skills developed during the College reading course ☐

Information received from the teacher and school during B.S.E. ☐

Observation of work with the class teacher ☐

Experience from previous B.S.E.'s ☐

Guidance from Supervisor ☐

Others ☐
(Please specify)

10. How often did you make reference to the teaching of reading in your daily lesson preparations?

Not at all ☐ Once a week ☐

2-3 times a week ☐ Every day ☐

11. How often did you choose to write an evaluation of an aspect of the teaching of reading?

Not at all ☐ Once a week ☐

2-3 times a week ☐ Every day ☐

12. Did you use a reading scheme or kit with your pupils?

Scheme	Yes	!__!	No	!__!
Kit	Yes	!__!	No	!__!

If 'Yes' please specify which.

13. Did you have sufficient knowledge to use the reading scheme or kit in your class?

Before B.S.E.	Yes	!__!	No	!__!
After B.S.E.	Yes	!__!	No	!__!

14. Did you use the scheme/kit according to:

The manual (publisher's instructions)	!__!
The teacher's explanations	!__!
Knowledge from your College course	!__!
Your own common sense	!__!

15. Which of these approaches to reading did you use in order of frequency?

(Start with No.1 for the most frequent)

Listening to individual children read aloud	!__!
Reading with children (paired and shared)	!__!
Silent reading	!__!
Teaching phonics	!__!
Teaching whole words	!__!
Others (Please specify)	!__!

16. How did you organise your reading sessions?

Individual !__! In groups !__! As a whole class !__!

(You may tick more than one; in which case you should number them in order of frequency.)

17. Was the choice of reading books directed by:

Topic work (topic related books) |__|

The reading scheme/s or kit |__|

Free choice according to the child's interest |__|

18. Were the reading books mainly chosen by:

You |__| The teacher |__| The child |__|

19. Did you assess your pupils' reading performance?

Yes |__| No |__|

If 'Yes' please state the method(s) used.

20. Did you keep any reading records about individual children?

Yes |__| If so, how many? |___|

No |__|

21. What did your records <u>mainly</u> consist of?

(Please number in order of priority.)

Recording books and pages the children had read |__|

Recording children's reading strategies |__|

Noting children's needs |__|

Recording children's reading interests |__|

Recording children's phonic knowledge |__|

Recording children's sight words |__|

Others |__|
(Please specify)

22. Were you able to help plan work for children with reading difficulties?

Yes |__| No |__| If 'No' please explain why not.

23. During your B.S.E. did you consult on the teaching of reading:

(Please number in order of priority)

Your own notes from the College course on reading	|__|
A reference book on reading	|__|
The manual of a reading scheme/kit	|__|
Your class teacher	|__|
Your supervisor	|__|
Another student	|__|
Other (Please specify)	|__|

24. Were you invited to discuss the teaching of reading in your class by:

Your class teacher	Yes	|__|	No	|__|
Other teachers in the school	Yes	|__|	No	|__|
The head teacher	Yes	|__|	No	|__|
Your supervisor	Yes	|__|	No	|__|
Other students	Yes	|__|	No	|__|

25. How much help and advice were you given by your teacher?

None	|__|	Very little	|__|
Some	|__|	A great deal	|__|

26. If appropriate, describe in as much detail as possible the assistance which was given by your teacher.

27. How much help and advice were you given by your supervisor?

None	☐	Very little	☐
Some	☐	A great deal	☐

28. If appropriate, describe in as much detail as possible, the assistance given by your supervisor.

29. Describe aspects, if any, of your College reading course you found helpful on B.S.E.

SECTION C.

This section of the questionnaire consists of statements. Please consider them carefully and indicate whether you:

Strongly Agree, Agree, are Uncertain,
Disagree or Strongly Disagree.

30. The approach to the teaching of reading during my recent B.S.E. differed considerably from the one presented in the College reading course.

SA |__| A |__| U |__| D |__| SD |__|

31. During my B.S.E. I was able to develop new skills in the teaching of reading.

SA |__| A |__| U |__| D |__| SD |__|

32. I mainly followed the class teacher's approach in the teaching of reading.

SA |__| A |__| U |__| D |__| SD |__|

33. During my recent B.S.E. I did not feel sufficiently competent to teach reading effectively.

SA |__| A |__| U |__| D |__| SD |__|

34. The recent B.S.E. has influenced my overall approach to the teaching of reading.

SA |__| A |__| U |__| D |__| SD |__|

35. Fourth year students are not sufficiently trained in the skills of teaching reading to take over full responsibility.

SA |__| A |__| U |__| D |__| SD |__|

36. There were aspects of the teaching of reading for which my College course should have prepared me better.

SA |__| A |__| U |__| D |__| SD |__|

(Please specify)

37. Students learn more how to teach reading during B.S.E. than from the College course.

SA |__| A |__| U |__| D |__| SD |__|

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38. What do you consider your own need to be with respect to the teaching of reading at this time of your course?
(Please specify.)

THE TREATMENT OF THE TEACHING OF READING IN INITIAL TEACHER EDUCATION

BLOCK SCHOOL EXPERIENCE

TEACHER QUESTIONNAIRE

SECTION A Please tick appropriate box

1. How many pupils were in your class at the time of the Teaching Practice?

   5-10 [ ] 11-15 [ ] 16-20 [ ] 21-25 [ ]

   26-30 [ ] More than 30 [ ]

2. Is your class:

   Reception [ ] J_1 [ ] J_3 [ ]

   Middle Infants [ ] J_2 [ ] J_4 [ ]

   Top Infants [ ]

   You might need to tick more than one box.

3. Have you previously had a student in your class on Teaching Practice?

   Once [ ] 3-5 times [ ]

   Twice [ ] more than 5 times [ ]

4. Have you had a 4th year student on Teaching Practice before?

   Yes [ ] No [ ]

5. Which College course was your student following?

   Early years [ ] Later Years [ ]

SECTION B

6. How do you organize reading in your class?

   (a) integrated [ ]

   (b) timetabled [ ]

   (c) a mixture of (a) and (b) [ ]

7. Are your reading sessions arranged:

Individually [ ]

For small groups [ ]

As whole class sessions [ ]

(You may tick more than one box, in which case you should number them in order of frequency.)

8. Did the student mainly follow your example in the organization of reading?

Yes [ ] No [ ]

9. Which of these approaches do <u>you</u> use frequently/ occasionally/never?

	freq.	occ.	nev
(a) listening to individual children read	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]
(b) reading with children (paired & shared)	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]
(c) silent reading	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]
(d) teaching phonics	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]
(e) teaching sight vocabulary	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]
(f) group reading	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]
(g) comprehension/cloze procedure exercises	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]

(h) others (please specify)

10. Which of these approaches did the student

(a) concentrate upon:

(b) generally avoid:

11. Does the teaching of reading in your class involve

scheme(s) : Yes [ ] No [ ]

kit(s) : Yes [ ] No [ ]

other approaches : Yes [ ] No [ ]

If 'yes' to any of the above, please give details.

12. Did the student show familiarity with...

the scheme(s)	Yes [ ]	No [ ]
the kit(s)	Yes [ ]	No [ ]
methods/approaches	Yes [ ]	No [ ]
activity materials/ games	Yes [ ]	No [ ]

...used in your class for the teaching of reading?

13. Do you keep reading records of your pupils?

Yes [ ] No [ ]

If 'yes' please explain briefly.

14. During the recent 4th year teaching practice, did you have an opportunity to explain the school's policy for the teaching of reading to the student?

Yes [ ] No [ ]

15. Did the student consult you on the teaching of reading and ask to discuss aspects with you?

Not at all [ ] Occasionally [ ] Frequently [ ]

16. How much practical assistance did the student require with the teaching of reading?

None [ ] A little [ ]

A considerable amount [ ]

17. Please describe briefly the assistance which was required.

18. How frequently did the supervisor discuss any aspects of the teaching of reading as related to the student's work with you?

Not at all [ ] Occasionally [ ] During each visit [ ]

SECTION C

19. With respect to the teaching of reading in your class, did you give the student

Full responsibility [ ]

Shared responsibility with yourself [ ]

No responsibility [ ]

20. Did the student maintain records of children's reading progress?

Yes [ ] No [ ]

21. How well, in your opinion, was the student prepared by his/her College course on reading in

	very well	ade-quately	inade-quately
(a) knowledge of schemes/kits	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]
(b) knowledge of methods/approaches	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]
(c) ability to organize reading	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]
(d) ability to maintain records on children's progress	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]
(e) ability to assess pupils' reading progress	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]

22. Did the student introduce materials or approaches additional to the ones already used by yourself?

Yes [ ] No [ ]

If 'yes' briefly describe.

23. For which aspects of the teaching of reading does the College course, in your opinion, prepare students well?

24. For which aspects of the teaching of reading does the College course appear to prepare students inadequately?

SECTION D

This section of the questionnaire consists of statements. Would you please consider them carefully and indicate whether you:

Strongly Agree, Agree, are Uncertain,
Disagree, or Strongly Disagree.

25. In general, 4th year students are capable of accepting full responsibility for the teaching of reading in a class.

SA [ ] A [ ] U [ ] D [ ] SD [ ]

26. The approach to the teaching of reading in my class differs considerably from the one presented to students in their College course.

SA [ ] A [ ] U [ ] D [ ] SD [ ]

27. Students learn more about the teaching of reading during their teaching practice than from the College course.

SA [ ] A [ ] U [ ] D [ ] SD [ ]

28. The College course presents the students with unnecessary theory on the teaching of reading which they do not need in the 'real world' of the classroom.

SA [ ] A [ ] U [ ] D [ ] SD [ ]

29. Students do not rely upon their College course during the Teaching Practice. They mainly follow the class teacher's approach.

SA [ ] A [ ] U [ ] D [ ] SD [ ]

SECTION E

This section of the questionnaire relates to your teaching experience and pre-service and in-service training.

30. How many years teaching experience have you?

1-3 [ ] 4-6 [ ] 7-10 [ ]

11-15 [ ] 16-20 [ ] more than 20 [ ]

31. What was the duration of your initial training course?

1-2 years [ ] 3-4 years [ ]

32. For which age group did you train?

5-8 [ ] 7-11 [ ] 12-15 [ ]

You may need to tick more than one box.

33. Do you feel that your own initial teacher training prepared you adequately for the teaching of reading?

Yes [ ] No [ ]

34. If 'no' to question 33. would you briefly describe what was lacking.

35. Have you had in-service training in the teaching of reading?

		Details
During the past year	[ ]	
During the past 3 years	[ ]	
During the past 6 years	[ ]	
During the past 10 years	[ ]	
During the past 15 years	[ ]	

36. Would you welcome more opportunities for in-service training in the teaching of reading?

Yes [ ] No [ ]

---

37. Do you have any further comments which you feel might be useful in determining the essential features of a College course in this area?

Thank you for your help.
HANNE LAMBLEY
1988

APPENDIX 2

Interview schedules

Appendix 2

Student interview

What is reading?

1 You already know that I am particularly interested in reading in the primary school. What is important to you about reading and the teaching of it?

Involvement in research

2 Did you fill in the questionnaire?

3 Did you feel it was 'just another questionnaire', or were you genuinely interested?

4 How do you feel about having been involved in this research?

5 Are you generally interested and read about any research on reading?

6 Do you read textbooks, journal or newspaper articles on reading voluntarily?

The questionnaire

7 Can you remember, and would you like to comment or add to the questionnaire's content?

8 Which part of the questionnaire raised your interest the most?

9 Most of the questionnaire contained direct questions. Which did not give you an opportunity to make particular points? Is there anything you would like to raise in more detail now?

10 Would you like to give me your general opinion about ways in which you were helped to –

a) understand reading (process)

b) become a more effective teacher (role of course, supervisor, tutors, teacher on BSE.)

The college course – content and conduct of the reading course

11 What, in your opinion, was the most useful / important topic / aspect of your college course on reading?

12 If the college course had to be cut down, which parts would you cut out?

13 If you could have an additional session / lecture on the teaching of reading before you leave this college, what topic should it cover?

14 Do you feel the college course recommends / favours a particular approach?

15 How do you feel about activities and resources of your college course on reading? (Lectures, tut, disc / seminar, videos, displ, Teach Res Library, textbooks, handouts, vis speak, journals.)

16 Which were outstandingly helpful? Why?

17 Which were not so useful? Why?

Any suggestions?

18 How useful did you find textbooks and journals? (Easy to locate, know of any journal titles, own any textbooks.)

Block School Experience (most recent)

19 About which aspects did you feel most confident / competent? (Schemes, records, assessmts, progress, organisation.)

20 About which aspects did you feel least confident?

21 As a result of your BSE, which parts of the teaching of reading did you find easy / difficult?

22 What kind of attention did you give to individual children? (Time, difficulty, able)

23 I realise the influence of the school and class teacher on your approach. If you'd go back to the same class next week on your own, how would *you* approach reading?

24 What sort of help would you have liked during BSE? (Teacher, supervisor, others)

25 Was there anything or anybody (person, article, book ...) you found particularly useful during BSE? In what way?

26 Did you use your notes from the college course? How / why not?

27 Did you have a chance to see and read the scheme material?

28 Did you spend time in preparing for the teaching of reading before and during BSE? (Doing what? How much time – more or less than an hour?) What sort of preparation? (Whole scheme? Daily?)

29 How did reading rate in comparison with –

a) other aspects of language?

b) other curriculum areas?

30 Is written preparation for the teaching of reading necessary?

31 Do you remember any particular lesson you taught in reading? (Enjoyable, went well, difficulties, class, group, individual.)

General

32 Are you a member of a professional organisation concerned with reading or English in general? (UKRA, NATE ...)

33 Will you join such an organisation in future?

Reading

34 Are you familiar with the requirements of the National Curriculum for English – reading in particular? (Sources, details, affected your way of thinking.)

35 Do you read for pleasure? (What recently?)

36 Do you read / collect children's books? (Remember any titles read this year?)

Research

37 How do you feel about the topic of this research?

38 Have you talked to other students about how they feel about it?

39 Has the involvement in this research influenced your thinking about the teaching of reading / helped you in any way?

40 What, in your opinion, will be the findings?

41 Are you quite happy about everything you've told me? Is there anything you would like to change or add?

College supervisor interview

General

1 Did you complete the questionnaire for supervisors?

2 Did any part of the questionnaire interest you particularly?

3 Would you like to comment about or add to the questionnaire?

4 Are you a member of a professional organisation concerned with language or reading?

5 In your teaching experience did you specialise or have any particular interest in the teaching of reading?

6 In your teaching course do you make specific reference to the teaching of reading?

Reading

7 What do you consider to be the most important aspect of the teaching of reading to primary age children?

8 Does your college promote a particular approach to reading?

9 What is your view of the approach to reading in the National Curriculum? (Change?)

10 Have you come across any material and information on the teaching of reading which you found particularly interesting?

11 Have you been able to keep abreast of developments in the teaching of reading?

Block School Experience

12 How many year-four B Ed students did you supervise during their final practice?

13 How many visits did you make to each student during this final practice?

14 What would you expect in terms of written preparations for the practice from your students? (Before, during, after; ask for written preparation, discussion.)

15 Did you expect your students to take responsibility for the whole class with respect to teaching reading? (Opportunities given / way students handled situation.)

16 What attitude did the students take to the teaching of reading? (Special interest in reading?)

17 Do you know if the class teachers had a particular interest in reading?

18 Did you have an opportunity to observe the students teach reading? (How much / often)

19 What particularly pleased you about the students' performance in teaching reading?

20 Were there any aspects in the students' performance you were concerned about? (Least prepared, support, class teacher.)

21 What experiences in the classroom do you think can add to students' skills on teaching of reading?

College course in language / reading

22 How do you and your colleagues keep informed on the college course in language / reading? (Planned opportunities, where, SCR, staff meetings.)

23 Do you discuss the teaching of reading with colleagues?

24 What do you think is the main aim of the college course on the teaching of reading?

25 Are there any changes which you would recommend in the content of the course for teaching of reading? (Added or taken out.)

26 Do you think the balance of course approaches (lectures, tutorials, disc., seminars, videos, vis speakers) is appropriate? (Most / least helpful to students.)

Research

27 Do you think that the involvement of students and teachers is essential to this research?

28 What do you think will be the findings of this investigation?

29 Do you think your involvement in this research will upon your own or the students' work? (What impact?)

For language tutors

30 What information materials do the students receive on the language / reading course? (Separate outline sample set.)

31 What is the timing of the course? (How many hours over how many years?)

32 Do the students receive a list of reference reading concerned with the teaching of reading? (Copy, set course book.)

33 Do you expect students to use journals?

34 What form of assignments are set on the teaching of reading? (Example, part of formal assessment?)

Teacher interview

General

1 Did you complete the questionnaire for teachers in the spring term?

2 Did any part of the questionnaire interest you particularly?

3 Would you like to comment on or add to the questionnaire?

4 Are you a member of a professional organisation concerned with language or reading?

5 Do you specialise or have a particular interest in the teaching of reading?

Reading

6 What do you consider to be the most important aspect of the teaching of reading to primary age children?

7 Do you favour a particular approach to the teaching of reading? (Organise, time-table, integrated, scheme.)

8 Are you familiar with the approach to reading in the National Curriculum? (Your opinion.)

9 Do you discuss the teaching of reading with other colleagues?

10 What has most influenced the current way you teach reading to your pupils –

a) understanding of process?

b) becoming an effective teacher?

11 Have you come across any material, publications (books, journals) or other information on the teaching of reading which you found particularly useful?

12 If you had an opportunity to receive In-service training in the teaching of reading, which aspects would you find most useful?

Block School Experience

13 What were your expectations of your 4th-year student in terms of teaching reading? (Listening to children, responsibility for class.)

14 Did the student's approach to the teaching of reading differ from your own? (How?)

15 What attitude did the student take to the teaching of reading? (Special interest, how did it rate in comparison to other areas of the curriculum?)

16 What kind of preparations did the student make for the teaching of reading?

17 Did the student plan / discuss the teaching of reading with you?

18 What attitude did the supervisor take to the teaching of reading? (Discuss with student and yourself?)

19 Did you have an opportunity to observe the student teach reading? (How much / often?)

20 Were there any aspects about the student's performance in the teaching of reading which impressed you?

21 Were there any aspects about the student's performance you were concerned about? (Least prepared)

22 What particular benefit do you consider the student to have derived from the experience in your class?

23 Do you feel you or your pupils have derived any benefit with respect to reading by having the student in your class?

College course in language / reading

24 How did you gain information on your student's college course in language / reading? (Written, meetings, informal, how much?)

25 How were you informed by the college of their expectations regarding the student's performance in the teaching of reading during Block School Experience? (Meeting, letter, booklet, supervisor...)

26 Do you feel the college promotes a particular approach to the teaching of reading?

27 Are there any changes you would recommend for the college course on the teaching of reading? (Training of teachers, add to / take out of course, involvement of practising teachers.)

Research

28 Do you think the involvement of students and supervisors is essential to this investigation?

29 What do you think will be the findings of this investigation?

30 Do you feel your involvement in this research has affected your thinking with respect to the teaching of reading?

APPENDIX 3

Letter from LEA

Appendix 3

County Council

County Education Officer

Telephone 763763 Extension 3306

6665

Your reference

My reference A/DAJS/LAT

Please ask for Mr

Date 14 November 1988

Mrs H Lambley
College of St Paul and St Mary
The Park
Cheltenham
Gloucestershire
GL50 2RH

Thank you for your letter of 7 November.

I have no objection to your approaching Headteachers of Primary Schools concerning the teaching practice of fourth year students at College of Higher Education, assuming always that your research has the approval of the College.

It is for Headteachers to decide, of course, whether they wish their staff to respond to questionnaires.

If you have identified the schools concerned and obtained the Headteacher's agreement. I should have no objection to forwarding previously addressed material through the internal post.

Any such material should be sent to the County Education Office, marked for my attention.

Yours sincerely

Principal Education Officer (Schools)

APPENDIX 4

Letter from College D

Appendix 4

College of Higher Education

Telephone: 171
Director: H

Faculty of Initial Teacher Education
Dean:

Extension

Your ref

Our ref AGJ/JP

Date 13 September 1988

Dear Mrs Lambley

Thank you for your letter.

The students in the 1985/89 cohort followed compulsory courses in Language and Communication in years 2 and 3 of the B Ed programme. I enclose booklets for the corresponding courses in the coming year, which you can assume to be largely similar to those taken by the cohort.

We have no block teaching practice in year 4 of the B Ed programme followed by that cohort, only Serial School Experience (at least one, and in most cases two, half-days per week throughout Autumn and first half of Spring term). The number of students involved is 160. In the absence of any teaching practice supervisors, I suggest that the tutors responsible for the Serial School Experience (I T/INSET) would be the best channels of communication : there are 18 tutors involved.

I hope this information is helpful

Yours sincerely

Principal Lecturer in Curriculum Studies

Mrs H Lambley
College of St Paul & St Mary
The Park
CHELTENHAM
Glos GL50 2RH

APPENDIX 5

Letter to teachers

Appendix 5

College of St Paul and St Mary
The Park, Cheltenham,
Gloucestershire, GL50 2RH
Telephone: 0242 513836

Principal: Miss J.O. Trotter BD MA MSc

January 1989.

Dear Colleague,

I am currently carrying out an exploratory study of the preparation of future primary teachers for the teaching of reading. Part of the study is concerned with students' teaching practice. It is hoped that the results of the investigation will lead to recommendations for improvement in teacher training courses.

During the Autumn Term 1988 you had a fourth year B.Ed. student from a College on Block Teaching Practice in your class. I am enclosing with this letter a questionnaire which is concerned with the performance of this student whilst with you.

I consider your observations and opinions to be extremely important in establishing critical factors in this analysis and would, therefore, be most grateful for the time and attention which is required for completion of this questionnaire. You might have completed a similar questionnaire during the Spring Term 1988 for the Pilot Study. Your replies will be anonymous and strictly confidential, and I hope that you will feel free to express your personal opinions. I have permission from the LEA and the College for this enquiry.

The timetable for the research project requires receipt of the completed questionnaire by Monday, 13th February 1989, and I enclose a stamped addressed envelope for this purpose.

May I thank you sincerely in advance for your co-operation, and hope that you find the exercise interesting and feel it to be worthwhile.

Yours sincerely,

Hanne Lambley

Hanne Lambley
Faculty of Education.

APPENDIX 6

Letter to interviewees

College of St Paul and St Mary
The Park, Cheltenham,
Gloucestershire, GL50 2RH
Telephone: 0242 513836

Appendix 6

Principal: Miss J.O. Trotter BD MA M

18th April 1989

Dear

I am currently carrying out an exploratory study of the preparation of future primary teachers for the teaching of reading.
During January / February of this year you might have completed one of my questionnaires on this topic.
I have meanwhile had an opportunity to study questionnaire comments and would welcome some time with individuals to explore further some of the topics.
I would therefore be grateful if you could spare a few minutes

on.....

in.....

at.....

The session will take a maximum of 30 minutes.
I should emphasize that it is not intended to examine you in any way but to broaden my knowledge in certain areas of the field.
You are assured of strict confidentiality.

Would you please let me know in the enclosed envelope if this arrangement is convenient to you.

Thank you for your co-operation

Yours sincerely

H. Lambley

Hanne Lambley

Faculty of Education

.....

Name:..... College:.....

I shall / shall not be able to attend at the proposed time.

.....

APPENDIX 7

Typical results of qualitative analysis

Appendix 7

Student questionnaire

Question 29

During your teaching practice, which aspect of your College reading course did you find

a) most helpful

Category	Frequency
knowledge and appraisal of a range of reading schemes	67
information and awareness of various approaches/methods to teach reading	42
familiarity with children's literature and how books are best used	33
assessment of reading (cloze procedure, miscue analysis, tests, profiles)	33
dev. and extending various strategies, including reading for information (9)	31
nothing really, can't remember	27
importance of enjoyment, purpose, meaning; how to develop interest in reading	26
reading process with stages of reading development	23
dev. phonic knowledge & skills, including use of activ. material & 'Letterland' (5)	23
practical ideas, case study, incl. practical work with children (3)	18
course work (lectures, assignments, rec. reference reading, discussions)	16
reading environment at school and at home	14
paired/shared and silent reading	14
individual needs, providing for children with difficulties & bilingual needs	14
connection with other language modes & across curriculum	12
how to listen to children read (assessing progress and interests)	9
advice from visiting speakers	2
use of college resources	2
early stages of reading (reception)	1

n = 276; total items mentioned: 407

b) least helpful

Category	Frequency
nothing, all was relevant	27
can't remember, had no real course on reading; all part of language course	25
useless: review of schemes without indicating which is the best	21
neglected: early stages of reading & phonics(particularly on later years course)	17
neglected: advice on organisation of time and resources	16
course knowledge is written down & forgotten, on BES we fit in with teacher	14
information on reading too brief, too general; it's important & needs more time	13
neglected: record keeping, particularly with a large class	12
neglected: time needed to listen to children read every day	9
tests and assessment	8
too much complicated theory, not enough practical ideas	6
not needed: helping children with difficulties	5
no use: different approaches to reading without telling which is best	4
non-availability of tutors for discussion	3
not useful: analysing political correctness of children's books	2
everything, no gain from college or school that I did not already know	2
previous work in school	1

n = 276; total items mentioned: 185

Student interview

Question 11

What was the most useful / important topic / aspect of your college course on reading?

Category	Frequency
evaluating available reading schemes	9
receiving information on various approaches to reading	9
importance and use of children's literature	4
understanding the reading process and skills involved	3
producing own activity materials	2
practical work with children at school and at college	2
Language Resources Room and ethos behind it (balance between creating interest in reading and developing skills)	2

n = 18; total items mentioned: 31

Question 12

If the course had to be cut down, which parts would you cut out?

Category	Frequency
nothing, more is needed and a longer course	18

n = 18; total items mentioned: 18

Question 13

If you could have an additional session on the teaching of reading before you leave college, what topic should it cover?

Category	Frequency
more information on the early stages of reading	10
more time given to reading during the language course, an option on reading should be offered in addition to compulsory course	6
more on assessing and providing for children with difficulties	5
further analysis of schemes and approaches	4

n = 18; total items mentioned: 25

Question 14

Did you feel the college course favours a particular approach?

Category	Frequency
no, it was balanced, allowing us to make up our own minds	9
yes	9
interest in books and reading purpose was more important than skills	6

n = 18; total items mentioned: 18

Question 16

Which aspects of the course on reading were outstandingly helpful?

Category	Frequency
discussions/seminars, following lectures for students to share ideas	14
Resources Room displays to 'draw on like money in your pocket'	11
lectures, for knowledge on topics, but need follow-up discussion	7
visiting speakers, esp. practising teachers	7
handouts	3
tutorials	3
practical work with children	3
videos	1
journals	1

n = 18; total items mentioned: 50

Question 17

Which aspects of the course on reading were not so useful?

Category	Frequency
lectures in large groups and without follow-up discussions	4
tutorials/seminars which only discussed assignments	4
journals, used only for assignment writing; otherwise no guidance	3
handouts: just collected and filed away	3
nothing	3
visiting speakers	1

n = 18; total items mentioned: 18

Suggestions –

Category	Frequency
more discussion to clarify topics after lectures and to share practical experiences after BSE, teacher does not discuss in the same way	15
more practical experience with children outside Block School Experience	12
more videos demonstrating certain approaches	4
more visiting speakers to 'bring things alive'	2

n=18; total items mentioned:33

Question 18

How useful did you find textbooks and journals?

Category	Frequency
journals	
not used, not able to name journal dealing with teaching reading	14
used and found helpful ('Reading': 3, 'Reading Teacher': 1)	4
textbooks	
found helpful to supplement course sessions	8
hardly used them, difficult to understand, need discussion	10

n = 18; total items mentioned: 36

Authors of textbooks which students owned – Hutchcroft, D (4); Moon, C (4); Clay, M (3); Beard, R (2); 'Bright Ideas' (2) and Teacher's Manual to 'Breakthrough to Literacy' (1).

Question 26

Did you use your notes from the college course during the teaching practice?

Category	Frequency
no (did not apply, nothing practical)	13
yes (handout for assessment, to make activity materials)	5

n=18

Teacher questionnaire

Question 34

Do you have any further comments concerning the design of future College courses on the teaching of reading?

Category	Frequency
students need considerable practical experience outside BSE	32
course must combine theoretical input and practical experience	12
students should observe skilled teachers	10
students should have 'hands-on' experience	10
knowledge / use of wide range of approaches/schemes/books	29
variety of approaches	13
range of schemes	9
range of children's literature	7
knowledge & experience of organising reading for a whole class	28
organising listening to children read individually to the teacher	12
need for modifications in College	26
information of course content needs to be passed to teachers	10
more in depth input, more time for course on reading	7
reading treated as important area, encouraging student interest & questioning	4
insistence on reference reading	1
tutors to be more practice oriented & giving more support during BSE	4
students should develop specific skills for teaching reading	25
extend children's reading strategies, not just teach basic skills	8
know how to cater for children with reading difficulties	5
have knowledge and experience of assessment and record keeping	4
be able to motivate children to read	3
be able to present reading for meaning & different purposes	2
be able to teach phonic skills with use of appropriate resources	2
be able to promote children's development during the initial stages of reading	1
suggestions for Block School Experience	22
experience of reading across the curriculum & in relation to writing	9
reading to be given priority during BSE, giving direction beforehand	6
to be prepared how to deal with parents	4
provide experience of progression in children's reading by hearing them read	3
students are currently ill equipped to teach reading	6

n = 117; total items mentioned: 168

APPENDIX 8

Questions and quantitative data for Phase One

Appendix 8

Quantitative data – Main Survey (1989)

Student questionnaire

Question	Category	College A (62)	B (70)	C (36)	D (108)	Total (276)	Missing
1. For what age range are you training	4-8	1	40	7	67	115	0
	8-11	0	30	18	32	80	
	4-11	61	0	11	9	81	
2. Have you completed the college reading course	yes	60	68	34	96	258	0
	no	2	2	2	12	18	
3. When was your last block teaching practice	Autumn 87	0	0	36	0	36	0
	Spring 88	0	0	0	108	108	
	Summer 88	0	0	0	0	0	
	Autumn 88	62	70	0	0	132	
4. Was the school policy explained to you	not at all	19	26	8	39	92	0
	in general	40	40	27	61	168	
	in detail	3	4	1	8	16	
5. Did you deal with reading in your written preparations	not at all	32	34	23	33	122	0
	in general	29	32	11	70	142	
	in detail	1	4	2	5	12	
6. Did you discuss reading with your supervisor before practice	not at all	48	44	31	58	181	0
	a little	13	23	5	48	89	
	in detail	1	3	0	2	6	
7. Did you take full responsibility for class	yes	52	66	33	95	246	0
	no	10	4	3	13	30	
8. What degree of responsibility did you take for reading	full	23	22	15	22	82	0
	shared	35	46	19	76	176	
	no resp.	4	2	2	10	18	
9. Was reading allocated timetable space	yes	25	29	14	30	98	0
	no	37	41	22	78	178	
10. Which influenced your approach more	coll.course	14	28	7	38	87	2
	school pract	48	41	29	69	187	

Question	Category	College A	College B	College C	College D	Total	Missing
11. Was the difference between these influences	significant	28	29	25	50	132	4
	small	34	40	10	56	140	
12. How often did you refer to teaching reading in your daily preparations	not at all	21	20	22	35	98	0
	once/week	12	13	5	20	50	
	2-3 times	15	25	4	27	71	
	every day	14	12	5	26	57	
13. How often did you write an evaluation on an aspect of teaching reading	not at all	40	34	28	55	157	0
	once/week	15	23	6	29	73	
	2-3 times	6	11	0	20	37	
	every day	1	2	2	4	9	
14. Which reading schemes or non-scheme book resources did you use with your pupils?							
15. How well did your course prepare you for using resources	not at all	18	8	27	25	78	2
	partly	42	51	9	75	177	
	very well	2	11	0	6	19	
16. Did you use resources mainly according to –							
the manual	yes	4	0	0	9	13	6
	no	58	67	34	98	257	
the teacher's explanation	yes	50	45	28	65	188	5
	no	12	22	7	42	83	
college course knowledge	yes	4	9	1	20	34	5
	no	58	58	34	87	237	
other students' advice	yes	1	1	1	3	6	5
	no	61	66	34	104	265	
supervisor's explanation	yes	2	1	0	1	4	5
	no	60	66	35	106	267	
own common sense	yes	29	27	16	57	129	5
	no	33	40	19	50	142	
17. How often did you use these approaches to reading –							
listening to individual children read	frequently	44	45	25	80	194	2
	occasionally	15	22	9	20	66	
	never	3	2	2	7	14	

Question	Category	College A	College B	College C	College D	Total	Missing
paired/shared reading	frequently	15	11	3	20	49	3
	occasionally	20	21	12	38	91	
	never	26	37	21	49	133	
silent reading (ERIC)	frequently	31	31	8	34	104	4
	occasionally	20	28	17	35	100	
	never	9	10	11	38	68	
reading interviews	frequently	5	2	1	5	13	4
	occasionally	20	11	9	15	55	
	never	35	56	26	87	204	
teaching phonics	frequently	13	15	6	9	43	3
	occasionally	19	21	10	52	102	
	never	30	33	20	45	128	
teaching whole words	frequently	8	8	4	14	34	4
	occasionally	27	34	18	52	131	
	never	25	27	14	41	107	
language experience	frequently	5	15	4	24	48	8
	occasionally	12	24	9	47	92	
	never	42	30	20	36	128	
strategies for information	frequently	11	21	5	14	51	4
	occasionally	28	28	13	40	109	
	never	21	20	18	53	112	
18. Was teaching reading organised according to –	teach.'s rec.	54	58	31	87	230	2
	own favour.	8	10	5	17	40	
	coll. course	0	1	0	3	4	
19. Which methods did you use to assess pupils –							
none	yes	5	8	11	13	37	2
	no	57	61	25	94	237	
miscue analysis	yes	5	15	1	7	28	1
	no	57	55	35	100	247	
cloze procedure	yes	7	22	1	21	51	1
	no	55	48	35	86	224	

Question	Category	College A	College B	College C	College D	Total	Missing
informal observation	yes	49	58	23	83	213	1
	no	13	12	13	24	62	
published tests	yes	1	3	4	0	8	1
	no	61	67	32	107	267	
profiles	yes	21	12	9	40	82	1
	no	41	58	27	67	193	
20. Did you keep records of individual children	yes	53	60	27	86	226	0
	no	9	10	9	22	50	
21. Which method of record keeping did you mainly use –							
recording books and pages read	yes	58	57	31	90	236	4
	no	3	10	5	18	36	
recording reading strategies	yes	12	25	6	20	63	4
	no	49	42	30	88	209	
noting needs	yes	31	34	17	53	135	4
	no	30	33	19	55	137	
recording reading interests	yes	23	18	6	27	74	4
	no	38	49	30	81	198	
recording phonic knowledge	yes	7	14	6	16	43	4
	no	54	53	30	92	229	
recording sight words	yes	7	10	5	8	30	4
	no	54	57	31	100	242	
recording test results	yes	3	5	4	5	17	4
	no	58	62	32	103	255	
22. Did you plan for children with reading difficulties	yes	34	31	21	54	140	2
	no	28	39	15	52	134	
23. Which sources did you consult –							
course notes	frequently	4	10	1	10	25	5
	occasionally	34	34	6	62	136	
	never	21	25	29	35	110	

Question	Category	College A	College B	College C	College D	Total	Missing
reference books	frequently	3	4	2	6	15	7
	occasionally	27	18	13	34	92	
	never	27	47	21	67	162	
journal articles	frequently	1	3	0	3	7	8
	occasionally	11	5	3	18	37	
	never	44	61	33	86	224	
supervisor	frequently	6	6	1	9	22	7
	occasionally	16	27	12	50	105	
	never	35	36	23	48	142	
college language tutor	frequently	0	1	0	6	7	8
	occasionally	6	5	6	28	45	
	never	50	63	30	73	216	
class teacher	frequently	37	40	17	49	143	3
	occasionally	21	25	16	51	113	
	never	3	4	3	7	17	
other teacher	frequently	5	4	1	4	14	3
	occasionally	26	18	9	22	75	
	never	30	47	26	81	184	
head teacher	frequently	2	3	0	4	9	7
	occasionally	6	9	3	12	30	
	never	49	57	33	91	230	
other student	frequently	9	8	6	8	31	7
	occasionally	27	43	14	54	138	
	never	21	18	16	45	100	
24. If relevant, describe the assistance given by your classteacher.							
25. Did you recall any particularly helpful advice on teaching reading given by your supervisor?							
26. If relevant, indicate the main areas of interest expressed by your supervisor.							
27. Was practice approach significantly different to college approach	yes	30	29	24	52	135	16
	no	29	39	8	49	125	

Question	Category	College A	College B	College C	College D	Total	Missing
28. Did you carry out a final evaluation of practice	yes	10	13	1	18	42	1
	no	52	57	35	89	233	
29. During your practice, which aspect of your College reading course did you find most / least helpful?							
30. Did you feel competent to teach reading during the practice							
early stages	yes	24	27	9	30	90	6
	no	37	41	27	75	180	
later stages	yes	29	43	18	71	161	8
	no	30	25	18	34	107	
31. State any new skills you were able to develop in teaching reading during your practice.							
32. Could you foster an interest in literature	yes	52	58	28	88	226	5
	no	8	11	8	18	45	
33. What is the most important thing you learned on teaching reading during the College course / during your practice?							
34. Did the practice influence your overall approach	yes	24	27	18	53	122	3
	no	36	43	18	54	151	
35. What in your view are the most important aims in teaching reading to primary-age children?							
36. At this stage in your training what do you consider your own needs regarding teaching reading?							
37. How do you rate these parts of the college course –							
lectures	very useful	6	35	2	15	58	3
	quite useful	48	31	22	69	170	
	little value	8	2	12	23	45	
tutorials	very useful	10	11	8	40	69	33
	quite useful	26	16	12	50	104	
	little value	24	18	11	17	70	
discussions / seminars	very useful	17	26	14	41	98	7
	quite useful	34	28	14	48	124	
	little value	11	10	7	19	47	
video / films	very useful	13	11	3	12	39	20
	quite useful	34	41	13	66	154	
	little value	14	8	12	29	63	

Question	Category	College A	College B	College C	College D	Total	Missing
displays	very useful	14	22	7	17	60	8
	quite useful	28	32	15	39	114	
	little value	20	14	10	50	94	
workshops	very useful	22	19	8	24	73	24
	quite useful	30	31	12	56	129	
	little value	9	7	10	24	50	
language room	very useful	24	32	12	52	120	11
	quite useful	28	31	9	51	119	
	little value	9	5	7	5	26	
resources library	very useful	38	34	20	50	142	4
	quite useful	21	30	12	50	113	
	little value	3	4	4	6	17	
practical work with children	very useful	57	53	27	89	226	8
	quite useful	4	13	2	9	28	
	little value	1	1	4	8	14	
essays / assignments	very useful	11	26	3	14	54	8
	quite useful	38	33	18	57	146	
	little value	13	9	12	34	68	
reference books	very useful	15	22	12	27	76	4
	quite useful	38	37	14	61	150	
	little value	9	9	9	19	46	
handouts	very useful	16	31	4	28	79	8
	quite useful	37	36	19	63	155	
	little value	9	1	8	16	34	
journals	very useful	8	14	1	14	37	9
	quite useful	30	33	15	62	140	
	little value	23	21	17	29	90	
visiting speakers	very useful	19	33	13	39	104	19
	quite useful	28	27	13	54	122	
	little value	14	3	3	11	31	

38. Do you have any further comments?

Teacher questionnaire

Question	Category	College A (53)	B (51)	C (13)	D -	Total (117)	Missing
1. Were you involved in the Pilot Study in 1988	yes	0	13	0	-	13	3
	no	53	35	13	-	101	
2. What was the age-range of your class	1	3	4	0	-	7	0
	2	7	14	2	-	23	
	3	11	7	0	-	18	
	4	12	6	0	-	18	
	5	10	7	3	-	20	
	6	10	13	8	-	31	
3. What was the age-range of your training	4-8	10	21	1	-	32	3
	8-11	18	24	8	-	50	
	4-11	22	6	4	-	32	
4. How many years' teaching experience do you have	1-3	4	0	1	-	5	0
	4-10	5	9	2	-	16	
	over 10	44	42	10	-	96	
5. How often do you use these methods – listening to individual children read	frequently	44	44	11	-	99	1
	occasionally	8	7	2	-	17	
	never	0	0	0	-	0	
paired / shared reading	frequently	24	20	4	-	48	0
	occasionally	27	22	6	-	55	
	never	2	9	3	-	14	
silent reading (ERIC)	frequently	30	29	6	-	65	1
	occasionally	19	16	5	-	40	
	never	4	5	2	-	11	
reading interviews	frequently	9	8	2	-	19	2
	occasionally	21	21	4	-	46	
	never	23	20	7	-	50	
teaching phonics	frequently	29	31	4	-	64	0
	occasionally	20	15	8	-	43	
	never	4	5	1	-	10	
teaching whole words	frequently	21	24	4	-	49	2
	occasionally	22	19	8	-	49	
	never	9	7	1	-	17	

Question	Category	College A	B	C	D	Total	Missing
language experience approach	frequently	26	23	2	-	51	1
	occasionally	19	15	6	-	40	
	never	8	12	5	-	25	
strategies for information	frequently	19	20	8	-	47	1
	occasionally	26	23	3	-	52	
	never	7	8	2	-	17	
other		1	5	1	-	7	
6. Which of these assessment methods do you mainly use –							
none	yes	0	0	0	-	0	0
	no	53	51	13	-	117	
miscue analysis	yes	14	12	2	-	28	0
	no	39	39	11	-	89	
cloze procedure	yes	21	11	6	-	38	0
	no	32	40	7	-	79	
informal observation	yes	47	47	9	-	103	0
	no	6	4	4	-	14	
published tests	yes	27	26	8	-	61	0
	no	26	25	5	-	56	
profiles	yes	20	12	4	-	36	0
	no	33	39	9	-	81	
7. Which of these methods of record keeping do you mainly use –							
recording books and pages children have read	yes	49	50	11	-	110	0
	no	4	1	2	-	7	
recording reading strategies	yes	20	10	3	-	33	0
	no	33	41	10	-	84	
noting needs	yes	29	31	7	-	67	0
	no	24	20	6	-	50	
recording reading interests	yes	20	16	5	-	41	0
	no	33	35	8	-	76	
recording phonic knowledge	yes	21	25	6	-	52	0
	no	32	26	7	-	65	

Question	Category	College A	College B	College C	College D	Total	Missing
recording sight words	yes	7	7	3	-	17	0
	no	46	44	10	-	100	
recording test results	yes	26	27	7	-	60	0
	no	27	24	6	-	57	
8. When did you have the student in your class	Autumn 87	0	0	13	-	13	0
	Autumn 88	53	51	0	-	104	
9. Did you discuss reading with the student before the practice	yes	46	42	13	-	101	0
	no	7	9	0	-	16	
10. Did you get information from the college about the reading course	in detail	0	0	1	-	1	0
	in outline	7	12	3	-	22	
	none	46	39	9	-	94	
11. Did you give the student responsibility – for planning	full	9	13	5	-	27	3
	shared	39	30	5	-	74	
	none	3	7	3	-	13	
for teaching	full	13	18	5	-	36	1
	shared	38	28	7	-	73	
	none	2	4	1	-	7	
12. How do you organise reading in your class: whole class	yes	25	24	8	-	57	2
	no	26	27	5	-	58	
group	yes	34	33	9	-	76	3
	no	17	17	4	-	38	
individual	yes	48	49	12	-	109	2
	no	3	2	1	-	6	
13. Did the student mainly follow your pattern	yes	46	44	12	-	102	1
	no	7	6	1	-	14	
14. Which schemes and non-scheme resources do you use?							
15. How well did the college prepare the student for using resources	very well	9	5	2	-	16	12
	superficial	32	28	5	-	65	
	not at all	10	10	4	-	24	

Question	Category	College A	B	C	D	Total	Missing
16. Was the student able to use materials	very well	22	15	5	-	42	7
	with help	15	19	4	-	38	
	not well	15	11	4	-	30	
17. Did the student prepare additional materials	yes	32	30	6	-	68	1
	no	21	20	7	-	48	
18. How often did the student use these methods –							
listening to individual children read	frequently	26	20	5	-	51	1
	occasionally	26	26	7	-	59	
	never	1	4	1	-	6	
paired / shared reading	frequently	8	8	1	-	17	1
	occasionally	24	15	0	-	39	
	never	21	27	12	-	60	
silent reading (ERIC)	frequently	15	19	4	-	38	2
	occasionally	21	12	4	-	37	
	never	16	19	5	-	40	
reading interviews	frequently	3	2	0	-	5	6
	occasionally	14	8	3	-	25	
	never	35	36	10	-	81	
teaching phonics	frequently	15	10	3	-	28	1
	occasionally	18	19	2	-	39	
	never	20	21	8	-	49	
teaching whole words	frequently	7	5	3	-	15	6
	occasionally	21	22	4	-	47	
	never	22	21	6	-	49	
language experience approach	frequently	12	17	1	-	30	3
	occasionally	19	13	1	-	33	
	never	21	19	11	-	51	
strategies for information	frequently	7	8	3	-	18	2
	occasionally	18	21	5	-	44	
	never	27	21	5	-	53	
others		0	0	1	-	1	
19. Did the student introduce other materials / approaches	yes	9	12	0	-	21	2
	no	44	37	13	-	94	

Question	Category	College A	College B	College C	College D	Total	Missing
20. Did the student seek your advice	frequently	11	8	2	-	21	2
	occasionally	35	33	7	-	75	
	never	6	9	4	-	19	
21. On what aspect of teaching reading did the student seek your advice most frequently?							
22. Did the student need practical assistance	frequently	12	11	4	-	27	5
	occasionally	24	23	5	-	52	
	not at all	16	14	3	-	33	
23. If relevant, please describe the kind of assistance that was required.							
24. Did the student need help with record-keeping	yes	22	17	8	-	47	5
	no	30	30	5	-	65	
25. How well did the student demonstrate knowledge of children's literature	very well	17	15	2	-	34	2
	adequate	30	26	9	-	65	
	inadequate	5	9	2	-	16	
26. How well was the student prepared to –							
motivate children to read	very well	15	19	3	-	37	1
	adequate	32	22	7	-	61	
	inadequate	6	9	3	-	18	
select books / stories	very well	19	25	1	-	45	1
	adequate	26	19	10	-	55	
	inadequate	8	6	2	-	16	
use schemes / kits	very well	4	5	1	-	10	9
	adequate	27	23	6	-	56	
	inadequate	17	21	4	-	42	
use support materials	very well	9	8	0	-	17	2
	adequate	27	29	6	-	62	
	inadequate	17	13	6	-	36	
use support programmes (TV, radio, computer)	very well	9	6	1	-	16	19
	adequate	23	20	6	-	49	
	inadequate	17	12	4	-	33	
organise reading	very well	13	7	0	-	20	2
	adequate	22	23	10	-	55	
	inadequate	18	19	3	-	40	

Question	Category	College A	College B	College C	College D	Total	Missing
maintain records	very well	17	15	3	-	35	2
	adequate	23	21	5	-	49	
	inadequate	13	13	5	-	31	
teach phonics	very well	9	6	0	-	15	5
	adequate	28	22	5	-	55	
	inadequate	15	22	5	-	42	
work with individual children	very well	17	14	3	-	34	2
	adequate	26	24	8	-	58	
	inadequate	10	11	2	-	23	
work with whole class	very well	18	12	2	-	32	2
	adequate	27	23	9	-	59	
	inadequate	8	14	2	-	24	
develop children's strategies towards independent reading	very well	5	4	2	-	11	2
	adequate	29	24	5	-	58	
	inadequate	19	21	6	-	46	
27. How often did the supervisor discuss teaching reading with you	frequently	3	0	0	-	3	0
	occasionally	16	21	1	-	38	
	not at all	34	30	12	-	76	
28. In what way did the student gain in teaching reading during the practice?							
29. Regarding this practice, for which aspects of teaching reading does the College course prepare students well / inadequately?							
30. What are the most important aims in teaching reading to primary-age children?							
31. How did your own initial training prepare you for teaching reading	very well	3	5	1	-	9	2
	adequately	14	11	5	-	30	
	inadequately	34	35	7	-	76	
32. Have you had any in-service training in teaching reading	past year	11	9	3	-	23	17
	past 5 years	25	22	2	-	49	
	5+ years	5	10	2	-	17	
	10+ years	2	6	3	-	11	
33. What kind of in-service training in teaching reading would you welcome?							
34. Do you have any further comments concerning the design of future courses on teaching reading?							

Supervisor questionnaire

Question	Category	College A (9)	B (17)	C (13)	D (17)	Total (56)	Missing
1. What is your main subject area	maths	0	4	1	3	8	0
	English	2	6	2	4	14	
	science	0	2	1	4	7	
	other	7	5	9	6	27	
2. What age ranges are students on your courses training for	4-8	0	6	1	2	9	0
	8-11	2	2	1	8	13	
	4-11	7	9	11	7	34	
3. How long ago was your last experience teaching primary children	0-5 years	7	11	2	4	24	3
	6-10 years	1	0	1	4	6	
	10 + years	1	6	7	8	22	
	no exper.	0	0	1	0	1	
4. When did you supervise Y4 B Ed students during their most recent BSE	Autumn 87	0	0	13	0	13	0
	Spring 88	0	0	0	17	17	
	Autumn 88	9	17	0	0	26	
5. How many students did you supervise in the following age ranges –							
4-8 age range	1 student	0	4	4	5	13	
	2 students	2	3	2	1	8	
	3 students	2	1	0	1	4	
	4 students	0	1	0	0	1	
	5 students	0	2	0	3	5	
	6 students	1	2	0	0	3	
	7 students	0	0	0	1	1	
8-11 age range	1 student	2	1	3	3	9	
	2 students	1	3	7	2	13	
	3 students	3	1	1	3	8	
	4 students	0	3	1	3	7	
	5 students	0	3	0	1	4	
	6 students	0	1	0	0	1	
4-11 age range	2 students	1	0	0	0	1	
	4 students	0	0	1	0	1	
	6 students	1	1	0	0	2	
6. Did you receive information on language courses followed by your student	in detail	4	3	2	7	16	0
	in outline	3	6	11	6	26	
	none	2	8	0	4	14	

Question	Category	College A	College B	College C	College D	Total	Missing
7. Did you discuss the school's policy –							
with school	yes	3	5	7	12	27	0
	no	6	12	6	5	29	
with the student	yes	6	12	11	13	42	0
	no	3	5	2	4	14	
8. Did you require written plans from students before BSE	yes	5	6	7	11	29	0
	no	4	11	6	6	27	
9. If not, did you discuss teaching reading before BSE	yes	2	6	5	4	17	0
	no	2	7	6	9	24	
	N.A.	5	4	2	4	15	
10. Did your students give attention to reading in daily preparations	most	3	5	4	10	22	0
	some	5	11	8	5	29	
	none	1	1	1	2	5	
11. Did you have to explain reading approaches and resources	frequently	0	0	0	0	0	0
	occasionally	2	7	6	9	24	
	never	7	10	7	8	32	
12. Did the students show knowledge of children's literature and ability to foster interest in reading –							
knowledge	most	5	3	6	9	23	0
	some	4	14	7	8	33	
	none	0	0	0	0	0	
foster interest	most	4	5	8	7	24	0
	some	5	12	5	9	31	
	none	0	0	0	1	1	
13. Did the students refer to teaching reading in evaluations	most	3	3	3	8	17	0
	some	5	13	9	7	34	
	none	1	1	1	2	5	
14. Did you observe student teaching reading	most	3	6	5	8	22	0
	some	4	8	5	8	25	
	none	2	3	3	1	9	
15. Did you refer to teaching reading in your written comments	frequently	1	1	1	4	7	0
	occasionally	7	12	10	10	39	
	never	1	4	2	3	10	

16. In which aspect of teaching reading did you express most interest in your discussions and comments?

Question	Category	College A	College B	College C	College D	Total	Missing
17. Did the students seek your advice on reading	most	0	2	1	4	7	0
	some	7	8	5	7	27	
	none	2	7	7	6	22	
18. On which aspect of reading did the student seek your advice most frequently?							
19. Did you consult colleagues on an aspect of reading	yes	1	0	2	3	6	0
	no	8	17	11	14	50	
20. Did you refer the student to a colleague for assistance	yes	0	1	6	1	8	0
	no	9	16	7	16	48	
21. Did you discuss the student's performance with the teacher	yes	6	8	7	14	35	0
	no	3	9	6	3	21	
22. Was the school's approach to reading different from the College's	frequently	1	2	1	4	8	15
	occasionally	8	8	5	8	29	
	never	0	1	1	2	4	
23. How do you feel the student gained in teaching reading during the practice?							
24. Did the students carry out a final evaluation on any reading aspects	most	0	1	1	3	5	0
	some	6	8	6	8	28	
	none	3	8	6	6	23	
25. Were the students sufficiently confident / competent to develop children's reading ability – confident	most	2	2	10	3	17	1
	some	7	13	3	11	34	
	none	0	2	0	2	4	
competent	most	3	7	7	5	22	3
	some	5	9	4	11	29	
	none	1	1	0	0	2	
26. In which aspects of teaching reading did the students perform well?							
27. In which aspects of teaching reading did the students experience most difficulty?							
28. What are the most important aims of teaching reading to primary-age children?							
29. Do you have any further comments as a result of the practice?							

APPENDIX 9

Student document 'Reflections on the Teaching of Reading'

Appendix 9

COLLEGE OF ST PAUL & ST MARY

Group 2

'Reflections on Teaching of Reading'

1. What do I know about teaching of reading?

Reading Schemes.
Flashcards. Word tins. Word banks.
Visual discrimination.
Auditory discrimination.
(Semantic Cues.
(Syntactic Cues.
(Phonic knowledge.
(Visual Memory.
Perception.
Miscue analysis.
Context Cues.
Laterality/crossed Laterality.
Context-bound text.
Motivation & interest.
Teacher provides model.
Real books.
Left-right directionality - Top to bottom.
Linked to early stages of writing.
Purposeful reading - for information eg.
Sentence builders.
Real books.
Oral language - related.
Literate environment - book corner - quality of books and print important.
Storytime.
Shared reading/Paired reading/Parental involvement.
Letterland.
Relationship with other aspects of literacy and other curriculum areas.

2. How can I put my knowledge into practice?

Ensure book corner well stocked - books displayed so that children can see covers.
Storytelling - reading and telling from memory.
Library visits.
Labelling around classroom.
Reading games - to promote reading readiness.
Effective teaching of reading scheme plus Letterland - including use of songs, rhymes etc.
Create reading environment.
Turn home corner into literacy corner - provide various materials for 'reading' - newspapers, magazines, telephone directories, catalogues, recipe books, pencils, pens, paper - encourage children to copy what their parents do at home.
Parental involvement - awareness amongst parents to attempt to prevent competitiveness
Tape recordings of stories to be listened to by children in one's or two's.

3. Queries about the teaching of reading - questions and uncertainties

Pacing the reading scheme.
Beginning of reading - assessing needs of individuals - providing tailor made route for each child.
Correcting children's mistakes - all the time?
Choosing the reading scheme/adapting reading scheme to needs of particular children and class as a whole.
Explaining to parents that their child (according to scheme used) may not yet be ready for book - avoiding competitiveness.

APPENDIX 10

Phase Two Pilot Cycle questionnaire

Appendix 10

THE COLLEGE OF ST PAUL AND ST MARY

To : year 4 B.Ed. (Hons) Primary (EY and LY) students 1989/90
From: Hanne Lambley

Before you started your BSE you attended a session with me during which you produced a document 'Reflections on the teaching of reading' with your group. The document had 3 sections: What do I know about teaching reading? - What can I put into practice during BSE? - What do I want to find out (my questions and uncertainties)?
You received a typed copy of the document your group produced. Your completion of this form will help to assess the value of the document and will influence the planning of similar exercises as support for future student groups on BSE.
I am grateful for your co-operation.

1. Were you able to use the document 'Reflections on the teaching of reading' (Please tick, where appropriate):

   a) before BSE for planning

   b) during BSE

   c) after BSE for evaluation

   d) not at all

2. Did you use it for discussion

   a) with your classteacher

   b) with your supervisor

3. Do you feel the document helped you to focus on particular aspects of teaching reading in your class? Please comment.

4. Which aspects or parts of the document did you find particularly

   helpful:

   not so helpful:

5. Were you able to clarify some of your questions and uncertainties you had listed in section 3 ?

6. Were you able to carry out what you had listed under section 2 of the document ('What can I put into practice during BSE?'):

   everything:

   some things (please specify):

   nothing:

7. Do you feel it would be helpful to future student groups on BSE to produce and use a 'Reflections on reading' document ?

8. Have you any suggestions for modifications of this procedure?

9. Have you any other suggestions and ideas which would be helpful to students on BSE with respect to teaching reading?

10. Please add any other comments you wish to make with respect to your preparation for developing children's reading (College course, BSE, other work with children, main subject.....):

Please return the completed form to Hanne Lambley at the Park Site (pigeon hole, Main Reception, Library) by the end of this Term.

I shall also be at the Early Years Suite (Primary Centre) on Tuesday, 12th December 1989 from 11.00 to 12.40 p.m. and would be most interested to talk to you and hear your opinion about your experience in teaching reading during your recent BSE, the usefulness of the document and any other aspects.

Thank you for your interest and co-operation.

Hanne Lambley

APPENDIX 11

Phase Two Pilot Cycle quantitative data

Appendix 11 PHASE TWO - PILOT CYCLE (1989)

STUDENT QUESTIONNAIRE – QUANTITATIVE DATA

(N=22)

Question	Category	Number of Responses	Missing
1. use document			
before BSE	yes	5	0
	no	17	
during BSE	yes	10	0
	no	12	
after BSE	yes	3	0
	no	19	
not at all	yes	4	0
	no	18	
2. use for discussion			
with teacher	yes	9	0
	no	13	
with supervisor	yes	2	0
	no	20	
3. document helped	yes	13	2
	no	7	
5. clarify uncertainties	yes	11	4
	no	7	

6. carry out list 2			
everything	yes	1	3
	no	18	
.....			
some things	yes	14	4
	no	4	
.....			
nothing	yes	4	3
	no	15	
7. helpful to future students	yes	18	0
	no	4	
8. modify procedure	yes	14	1
	no	7	

APPENDIX 12

Phase Two questions and quantitative data from student questionnaires

Appendix 12 PHASE TWO: CYCLES ONE (1990), TWO (1991), THREE (1992)

STUDENT QUESTIONNAIRE QUESTIONS AND QUANTITATIVE DATA

Question	category	1990 N=90	1991 N=88	1992 N=71
1 What age range are you training for?	early years	42	43	42
	later years	48	45	29
2 Did you consult the handouts? (guidelines for set tasks)	yes	-	78	62
	no	-	10	7
3 Did you find the handouts (guidelines for set tasks)	helpful	-	49	44
	challenging	-	12	6
	useless	-	10	10
	threatening	-	11	3
4 Did you consult the National Curriculum document?	frequently	-	35	32
	sometimes	-	48	37
	never	-	5	1
5 Did you find the Language Policy document? *(EY students only in 1991 & 1992)*	supportive	30	27	9
	challenging	27	2	7
	threatening	25	3	3
6 Were you able to meet students from your group during BSE? *(EY students only in 1991 &1992)*	once	21	1	1
	more that once	5	6	4
	not at all	64	36	35
7 During BSE were you able to consult the Language Policy document? *(EY students only in 1991 & 1992)*	sometimes	54	15	9
	frequently	0	2	0
	not at all	36	26	31
8 Have you ever attended any Literacy Group meetings? Please comment on their value.	yes	-	-	23
	no	-	-	48
9 During BSE did you consult any language tutor? *(EY students only in 1991 & 1992)*	once	7	3	9
	more than once	9	10	0
	not at all	74	30	31

10 Which section of the document did you use?		R /W/ O	R /W/ O	R /W /O
reading development (R)	frequently	2 / 4 /3	6 /7 /4	2 /2 /2
writing development (W)	occasionally	39 /38 /35	18 /14 /12	14 /12/12
oracy development (O)	never	49 /48 /52	19 /22 /27	20 /22/22
(EY students only in 1991 & 1992)				
11 Did you discuss the document with the	teacher yes	57	18	3
	no	33	22	32
	supervisor yes	21	6	1
	no	69	34	34
	group yes	30	2	4
	no	60	38	31
(EY students only in 1991 & 1992)	students yes	48	12	21
	no	42	28	14
12 Did anybody have time to explain the school's Language Policy to you?	not at all	36	20	17
	in general terms	44	20	21
(EY students only in 1991 & 1992)	in detail	10	3	4
13 If you were to write the Language Policy document again, what modifications would you make?				
14 Do you feel it would be useful for future students to prepare a Lang.Pol. document for use during BSE?	yes	43	22	18
	no	47	21	24
(EY students only in 1991 & 1992)				
15 Please indicate aspects of English language teaching where, during BSE, you felt strong / weak.				
16 Was the Lang.Pol. document of help in identifying the areas stated in question 15?	yes	21	15	10
	no	69	26	25
(EY students only in 1991 & 1992)				
17 Please add any other comments you wish to make with respect to the Language Policy document.				
18 With respect to children's reading development in you class did you take responsibility?	full	33	18	15
	shared	52	64	55
	no	5	6	1
19 Did you consider your pupils reading development in your schemes of work prior to the teaching practice?	not at all	17	17	12
	in general terms	61	66	56
	in detail	11	5	3

		D / E	D / E	D / E
20 How often did you make reference to	not at all	10 / 21	6 / 14	4 / 11
reading in:	once a week	16 / 31	22 / 35	14 / 32
your daily preparations (D)	2-3 x a week	28 / 22	29 / 31	32 / 23
your evaluations (E) ?	every day	30 / 9	31 / 5	21 / 4
21 Which resources (schemes, non-scheme books) did you use with your pupils?				
22 How well do you feel your college course	not at all	18	18	8
prepared you for using the above resources?	partly	57	51	43
	very well	15	17	20
23 Did you use the scheme(s) and resources				
mainly according to: the manual	yes	6	9	10
	no	83	79	61
the teacher's explanation	yes	69	57	51
	no	20	31	20
knowledge from the college course	yes	31	33	28
	no	58	55	43
other students' advice	yes	9	9	3
	no	80	79	68
your supervisor's explanation	yes	1	0	0
	no	88	88	71
a language tutor's advice	yes	0	1	4
	no	89	87	67
knowledge from reference reading	yes	5	12	12
	no	84	76	59
your own common sense	yes	53	65	45
	no	36	23	26
24 Which of these approaches to reading did				
you use?: listening to ind. children read aloud	frequently	63	64	64
	occasionally	24	22	5
	never	3	1	1
paired / shared reading	frequently	21	20	17
	occasionally	45	29	33
	never	24	38	19

silent reading (ERIC, USSR)	frequently	47	63	39
	occasionally	27	15	25
	never	16	10	5
reading interviews	frequently	4	6	8
	occasionally	16	13	19
	never	69	67	41
teaching phonics	frequently	21	26	30
	occasionally	33	34	23
	never	36	27	17
teaching sight vocabulary	frequently	9	13	14
	occasionally	28	37	26
	never	52	35	28
published schemes	frequently	43	50	45
	occasionally	18	17	16
	never	28	20	8
'real books'	frequently	55	68	48
	occasionally	25	17	18
	never	10	2	5
strategies for use with information books	frequently	27	21	19
	occasionally	39	45	32
	never	23	21	16
state any other approaches used				
25 Was the reading in your class organised mainly according to:	teacher's recom.	70	72	58
	own fav. appr.	14	14	12
	appr.fav.b.coll.	6	2	1
26 Did you keep any records of individual children's reading performance? whole class:	yes	47	21	30
	no	43	67	40
groups up to 6 pupils:	yes	22	53	39
	no	26	35	31
groups of 6-12 pupils:	yes	11	18	20
	no	37	70	50

27 If relevant which of the following methods of record keeping did you use?

	none at all	4	4	1
record books/pages read by the child	yes	67	63	63
	no	23	25	8
record pupil's reading strategies	yes	46	54	57
	no	44	34	14
noting child's needs	yes	47	44	50
	no	43	44	21
recording reading interest	yes	46	48	42
	no	44	40	29
recording phonic knowledge	yes	25	36	42
	no	65	52	29
recording sight vocabulary	yes	16	20	20
	no	74	68	51
recording results from tests	yes	5	4	5
	no	85	84	66
recording ATs (Nat. Curriculum)	yes	35	21	16
	no	55	67	55
	others	9	10	3

28 Which of the following methods did you use to assess progress in reading?

	none at all	8	4	3
miscue analysis	yes	27	55	48
	no	63	33	23
cloze procedure	yes	15	5	18
	no	75	83	53
informal observation	yes	66	67	56
	no	24	21	15
published tests	yes	2	3	2
	no	88	85	69

ATs (National Curriculum)	yes	28	20	16
	no	62	68	55
profiles	yes	9	32	31
	no	81	56	40
	others	8	5	2

29 Which sources did you consult on developing children's reading?

notes from the college course	frequently	2	9	8
	occasionally	43	55	42
	never	44	24	19
reference books	frequently	2	2	6
	occasionally	18	24	19
	never	69	62	45
journal articles	frequently	2	0	2
	occasionally	3	9	8
	never	84	79	60
your supervisor	frequently	5	8	2
	occasionally	22	26	21
	never	62	54	47
a college language tutor	frequently	2	2	2
	occasionally	4	6	8
	never	82	79	60
your classteacher	frequently	35	48	26
	occasionally	50	32	39
	never	4	8	5
the Language Policy document	frequently	1	5	1
	occasionally	41	21	9
(EY students only in 1991 & 1992)	never	46	17	31
students from your group	frequently	1	1	2
	occasionally	30	8	11
(EY students only in 1991 & 1992)	never	56	31	26
your index cards on children's books	frequently	-	6	4
	occasionally	-	38	27
(assessed in 1991 & 1992 only)	never	-	32	35

		others	5	13	-
30 If relevant describe the assistance/advice given for developing children's reading by : your class teacher, your supervisor, a language tutor, another student.					
31 During BSE did you feel sufficiently competent to develop children's reading effectively	during the early stages	yes	40	43	36
		no	50	45	34
	during the later stages	yes	61	72	56
		no	29	16	12
32 How do you rate the following activities/ sources as part of your college course on developing children's reading?	lectures	very useful	20	27	29
		quite useful	61	56	36
		little value	9	5	5
	tutorials	very useful	7	6	3
		quite useful	30	24	14
		little value	42	49	37
	discussions/seminars	very useful	20	14	13
		quite useful	46	51	40
		little value	23	22	15
	videos/films	very useful	18	7	4
		quite useful	36	42	35
		little value	29	31	29
	displays	very useful	10	7	4
		quite useful	34	28	21
		little value	41	48	41
	workshops	very useful	10	19	12
		quite useful	42	42	40
		little value	33	22	15
	Language Resources Room	very useful	9	23	13
		quite useful	50	41	33
		little value	26	20	22
	Teaching Resources Library	very useful	37	47	27
		quite useful	38	30	33
		little value	12	10	10

practical work with children	very useful	58	56	50
	quite useful	17	22	18
	little value	12	2	1
assignments	very useful	18	24	27
	quite useful	52	56	35
	little value	18	6	7
reference books	very useful	17	26	24
	quite useful	51	49	37
	little value	20	10	8
handouts	very useful	17	27	18
	quite useful	56	51	40
	little value	15	8	11
journals	very useful	8	5	21
	quite useful	41	42	35
	little value	39	39	12
visiting speakers	very useful	35	25	13
	quite useful	38	37	19
	little value	15	18	33
Language Events	very useful	18	17	14
	quite useful	53	47	25
	little value	16	17	24
others		2	3	2

33. At this stage of your training what do you consider your own needs to be with respect to your knowledge/skills in developing children's reading?

34 Please add any further comments you wish to make.

APPENDIX 13

Phase Two set tasks

Appendix 13

CHELTENHAM AND GLOUCESTER COLLEGE OF HIGHER EDUCATION

Year Four. BSE. Hearing Children read / Miscue analysis

The aim of this experience is to gain an insight into how children read and to have experience of keeping records and carrying out analysis.

Hear five children read twice a week over the seven weeks. Make sure that there is a relaxed atmosphere.

Here are a variety of ways of approaching reading:-

Let the child choose the text.
Preview the book together.
Let the child read silently and then discuss.
Let the child practise a section before reading aloud.
Discuss the text.
Ask what has happened and what might happen next.
Read story, poetry and non-fiction.

Keep daily notes on the reading session in a file or book. Make these as soon as you have shared the book with the child. Use the following format -

* Date

*Title/known or unknown?

*Overall impression of child's reading.
(Confidence, independence, involvement in text, fluency, expression)

*What you noticed when the child was reading aloud.
(Making sensible guesses, using phonics, predicting, self-correcting).

*Child's response to the text.
(Personal response, understanding).

*Any specific experiences needed for this child?

****
When the child is reading try to help develop positive strategies such as rereading the first part of the sentence or reading on to the end of the sentence. Make sessions enjoyable. Talk with the children about the text.

Remember **PAUSE - PROMPT - PRAISE !**

The form of miscue analysis we will use is known as a 'Running Record'. It has been used during this year's S.A.T.s. The running record should help you look more closely at what a child is thinking and doing as they read, to analyse miscues and so make plans on how best to take the child forward.

Procedure.

1. You may wish to make a photocopy of the part of the text which the child is going to read or you may wish to use a blank sheet using the same linear arrangement as the text of the book. Taping the session makes it far easier to analyse.

A stroke / indicates a word written correctly.

If the child substitutes a word write it above the correct version so that if the text says - 'Are you hungry?' and the child reads 'Are you hiding?' - you should note - hiding / hungry

A word omitted can be circled - (no)

If you tell or prompt you could use T or P T P

A self correction is noted with the two words and SC - hiding / hungry (SC)

Insertion could be shown as an inverted V - / / the ^ / /

To keep the record divide the page in half -

Text	Comments
/ / / / / / /	
/ / / (no) / / /	
/ / hiding / hungry (SC) / /	"that's not right"

You should note the child's comments but may also wish to use this column for your own notes afterwards. Consider all the miscues - is the child reading for meaning, is it grammatical, is the child using visual clues from the letters and words, is the child letting the structure help them read, does the child use phonics, does the child overuse one cue at the expense of others, are there patterns in the way in which they read ... At the bottom of the analysis consider what this sample reveals about the child as a reader - and what you think might assist the child in developing.

At the end of the seven weeks summarise your notes keeping a copy for yourself and give a copy to the teacher in the form of a profile.

APPENDIX 14

Letter to teachers in Follow-up Study

Appendix 14

Principal:
Miss J O Trotter BD MA MSc

CHELTENHAM
&
GLOUCESTER
COLLEGE OF HIGHER EDUCATION

PO Box 220, The Park Campus
The Park, Cheltenham
Gloucestershire GL50 2QF
Telephone: 0242 532700
Fax: 0242 532810

Dear

July 1991

You probably remember participating in a survey I carried out whilst you were a student at this College. Over the past 4 years I have been involved in research on the preparation of B.Ed. students for the teaching of reading.

I have greatly appreciated the full comments which have been returned to date, and it has been gratifying to discover the involvement in the project has been considered by many to be valuable for their own professional development.

It would be particularly helpful if at this stage of your career you would share with me your professional opinion on the topic. On the basis of their previous involvement in this research I have selected a small number of students who completed their training at this College between 1988 and 1990 for a follow-up study. It is as a member of this sample that I am now seeking your further co-operation.

I would be most grateful if you would complete the enclosed questionnaire and return it to me in the addressed, stamped envelope provided as soon as possible and no later than 30th September 1991.

All contributions will be anonymous and confidential and will be solely used in connection with this research.

I value your opinion and am sure that your contribution will be of value in the development of the teaching of reading within future teacher training courses.

I hope you find the questionnaire interesting. Please feel free to add any extra comments

I look forward to hearing from you and thank you for your interest and help.

Best wishes

Hanne Lambley

Hanne Lambley

(Faculty of Education & Health)

APPENDIX 15

Follow-up Study questions and quantitative data

Appendix 15

FOLLOW-UP STUDY WITH PAST STUDENTS FROM COLLEGE B

QUESTIONNAIRE QUESTIONS AND QUANTITATIVE DATA

		Year of Qualification					
Question	**category**	**1988** n=13	**1989** n=13	**1990** n=13	**1991** n=20	**1992** n=27	**Total** n=86
A. 1 When did you finish your initial teacher training?		13	13	13	20	27	86
2 For which age range were you trained?	early years	9	7	6	11	14	47
	later years	4	6	7	9	13	39
3 How much teaching experience do you have?	one year	-	-	13	20	27	60
	two years	-	13	-	-	-	13
	three years	13	-	-	-	-	13
4 Which age group are you teaching currently?	infants	8	8	6	10	14	46
	juniors	5	5	7	10	10	37
	other	-	-	-	-	3	3
B.5 What in your view are the most important aims in the teaching of reading to primary age children?							
6 How frequently do you use any of the following: listening to child read aloud	frequently	12	11	13	17	23	76
	occasionally	1	2	0	3	1	7
	never	0	0	0	0	2	2
paired/shared reading	frequently	7	5	7	6	9	34
	occasionally	6	8	6	14	15	49
	never	0	0	0	0	2	2
computer programs	frequently	2	5	5	6	11	29
	occasionally	10	3	7	10	8	38
	never	1	5	1	4	6	17
silent reading (ERIC, USSR)	frequently	8	9	11	12	17	57
	occasionally	5	3	2	6	6	22
	never	0	1	0	2	3	6
reading interviews	frequently	2	0	2	2	1	7
	occasionally	3	6	6	11	13	39
	never	7	6	4	7	10	34

teaching phonics	frequently	9	6	7	13	19	54
	occasionally	4	7	6	7	5	29
	never	0	0	0	0	2	2
teaching sight vocabulary	frequently	8	5	3	10	15	41
	occasionally	5	7	10	9	8	39
	never	0	1	0	1	3	5
teach. strategies to use context	frequently	10	6	4	9	8	37
	occasionally	3	3	9	8	14	37
	never	0	4	0	3	4	11
published schemes	frequently	10	6	8	15	17	56
	occasionally	3	5	2	4	5	19
	never	0	2	3	1	4	10
'real books' (picture, story)	frequently	11	12	13	17	23	76
	occasionally	2	1	0	3	3	9
	never	0	0	0	0	0	0
strategies for information	frequently	4	4	5	8	5	26
	occasionally	9	6	7	11	15	48
	never	0	3	1	0	4	9
involving parents	frequently	8	10	10	10	16	54
	occasionally	4	3	3	9	5	24
	never	1	0	0	1	3	5
7 You probably use several approaches to monitor your pupils' progress. How frequently do you use the following?							
ATs of Nat. Curriculum	frequently	8	5	9	8	13	43
	occasionally	4	8	4	11	11	38
	never	1	0	0	1	2	4
miscue analysis	frequently	0	2	1	3	2	8
	occasionally	11	7	6	9	15	48
	never	2	4	6	8	9	29
cloze procedure	frequently	0	3	1	1	3	8
	occasionally	11	5	4	14	9	44
	never	2	4	8	5	12	31

informal observation	frequently	13	12	10	19	20	74
	occasionally	0	1	3	1	5	10
	never	0	0	0	0	1	1
published tests	frequently	0	2	1	1	0	4
	occasionally	7	4	5	9	11	36
	never	6	7	7	10	14	44
recording books/pages read	frequently	10	11	13	15	20	69
	occasionally	3	1	0	2	4	10
	never	0	1	0	2	2	5
profiles	frequently	2	5	6	7	13	33
	occasionally	6	6	3	8	10	33
	never	4	2	4	3	2	15
others		7	3	5	5	1	21
8 How much have the following elements influenced your overall approach to the teach. of reading? Rank,strongest as 1,weakest as 5							
college course	1	4	4	4	3	2	17
Block School Experience	1	1	0	0	4	7	12
college tutor(s)	1	0	1	2	1	0	4
reference reading	1	1	1	0	0	2	4
teachers your present school	1	7	8	8	12	16	51
9 What new knowledge have you gained, and which skills have you been able to develop in the teaching of reading since you have left college?							
10 Since you have left college, which of the following sources have you consulted on t. o. read.?	frequently	0	0	0	1	0	1
notes from college course	occasionally	7	12	7	11	25	62
	never	6	1	6	8	1	22
reference books	frequently	3	1	1	1	3	9
	occasionally	7	7	7	12	17	50
	never	3	5	5	7	6	26

articles in journals	frequently	3	1	0	0	3	7
	occasionally	9	8	8	15	18	58
	never	1	4	5	5	5	20
teachers in school	frequently	12	10	12	18	19	71
	occasionally	0	3	1	2	7	13
	never	1	0	0	0	1	2
advisory teachers/advisors	frequently	3	1	4	5	1	14
	occasionally	6	2	6	9	11	34
	never	4	10	3	6	12	35
college tutors	frequently	0	0	0	3	2	5
	occasionally0	0	0	0	0	0	0
	never	13	13	13	17	23	79
others		3	4	2	9	2	20
11 Have you received any in-service training in teach.reading since you have left college?	yes	6	6	2	6	8	28
	no	7	7	11	14	19	58

C. 12 For which aspects of the teaching of reading did your college course prepare you well?

13 For which aspects of the teaching of reading should your college course have prepared you better?

14 With respect to their usefulness for your teaching,how do you rate the following activities and sources as part of your coll. course on 'developing children's reading?	very useful	2	6	4	6	4	22
	quite useful	9	4	7	11	23	54
lectures	little value	1	2	1	3	0	7
tutorials	very useful	0	2	2	4	4	12
	quite useful	7	3	8	5	10	33
	little value	5	6	1	6	12	30
seminars/discussions	very useful	5	1	4	2	7	19
	quite useful	6	9	7	17	14	53
	little value	2	2	1	1	6	12
videos/films	very useful	3	1	5	6	6	21
	quite useful	6	8	4	9	14	41
	little value	2	2	2	5	7	18

displays	very useful	1	2	2	2	3	10
	quite useful	10	6	9	8	14	47
	little value	2	4	1	9	10	26
workshops	very useful	3	2	1	3	9	18
	quite useful	9	9	9	13	11	51
	little value	1	2	1	4	7	15
Language Resources Room	very useful	4	9	6	5	5	29
	quite useful	7	2	5	11	19	44
	little value	2	1	1	4	3	11
Teaching Resources Library	very useful	5	9	8	11	21	54
	quite useful	8	3	4	9	6	30
	little value	0	1	0	0	0	1
practical work with children	very useful	10	12	13	15	24	74
	quite useful	2	0	0	5	3	10
	little value	1	0	0	0	0	1
assignments	very useful	3	6	7	4	7	27
	quite useful	9	5	5	11	18	48
	little value	1	2	0	4	2	9
reference books	very useful	4	7	6	4	7	28
	quite useful	7	3	5	14	17	46
	little value	2	3	1	2	3	11
handouts	very useful	3	5	7	9	12	36
	quite useful	6	5	5	10	14	40
	little value	4	3	0	0	1	8
journal articles	very useful	3	4	5	6	6	24
	quite useful	8	6	7	11	20	52
	little value	2	3	0	2	1	8
visiting speakers	very useful	8	5	9	13	8	43
	quite useful	5	6	2	3	15	31
	little value	0	2	1	3	3	9
language events	very useful	1	1	7	4	8	21
	quite useful	8	7	4	12	15	46
	little value	3	1	1	1	1	7

15 How well do you consider	very well	0	2	2	3	2	9
your college course prepared you	adequately	7	7	8	11	19	52
for the teaching of reading?	inadequately	6	4	3	6	6	25

16 If you left college in 1990 you would have prepared as a group a document 'Reflections on the teaching of reading'; if you left in 1991 or 1992 and were an 'Early Years' student you would have prepared with a group of students a Language Policy document in preparation for your final teaching practice. Please comment on the usefulness of this activity then for BSE and later for your work when you started teaching.

17 During your time in college	most	-	-	-	-	2
did you attend any meetings of	some	-	-	-	-	7
the 'Literacy Group?	none	-	-	-	-	18

Please comment *(1993 survey only)*

D. 18 Please give any suggestions you have concerning the design of future college courses on the teaching of reading

19 Would you welcome further							
in-service training in the	yes	12	11	13	17	27	80
teaching of reading?	no	1	2	0	3	0	6

If 'yes', please specify topics.

20 What is your opinion about the current debate on reading standards and approaches ('real books' - reading schemes, etc) to the teaching of reading?

21 Please add any further comments you wish to make. You may continue overleaf. Thank you.

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This section concentrates on a discussion of the separate components of the Main Study. It discusses the sample selected for the study, the questions underlying the investigation and the mode of questioning used for the inquiry. Since subsections of this section are inevitably interrelated, a certain amount of cross-referencing between related areas occurs. Normally this is carried out without provision of a full detailed description of the cross-referenced item, since this level of information is provided at the appropriate location within the section.

Cronbach (1987, p.4) in referring to the 'functional theory of design' argues that 'investigations have functions and that a form highly suitable for one investigation would not be appropriate for the next'. The research design therefore has to be tailored to the questions which need to be asked to elicit the required information.

The rationale and aims for the study have been described in section 3.1. In that section, the writer's professional interest in issues from her own practice in the preparation of teacher trainees for the teaching of reading is identified. Professional inquiry was intended to generate new insights in this area to inform practice. The purpose of the investigation was exploratory and analytical. Although the study was instigated by personal and professional interest in this area of education, the recent national debate on the teaching of reading and teacher preparation gave the investigation a much greater sense of urgency.

The design chosen for the study was that of an exploratory rather than strictly experimental kind, although the inquiry did contain important elements of scientific investigation –

- it was empirical in that structured information was gathered by reproducible methods,
- it proposed an approach to changing student's perceived teaching behaviour which was testable.

The Main Study was designed to be carried out in two separate but inter-related phases (see Figure 2). Phase One was of a non-experimental form using triangular survey methodology and incorporating two survey instruments, questionnaires and interviews.

This phase was designed to explore the performance in the teaching of reading of a group of students from four colleges as perceived by those concerned during their final BSE. This led to the identification of those factors having a significant influence upon student behaviour in the teaching of reading and to the proposal of a hypothesis which dealt in more detail with the influential effect of one of these factors.

Phase Two of the research was designed to explore and test this hypothesis by the implementation of an action research programme. This was designed to investigate the resulting degree of modification to student performance.

The Follow-up Study was carried out with small representative samples of the students, who had participated in the previous surveys. These surveys investigated the change of behaviour in the teaching of reading once these students were qualified and had gained experience in their own classrooms and were intended to provide an insight into the effect of the action research input upon this behaviour.

This section on the design of the Main Study has three further sections. The following section focuses on the participants of the study, describing how and why subjects were selected and giving information on the context. Section 3.2.3 presents a discussion of research methods and the instruments employed. Section 3.2.4 deals with methods of data analysis.

3.2.2 The study sample

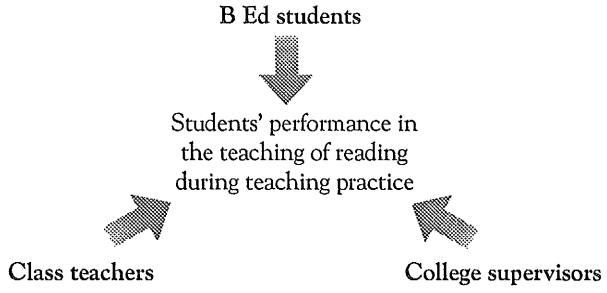
The purpose of the study was to seek information on the nature and quality of preparation of primary B Ed students for the teaching of reading. This was to be achieved by studying variables in the natural environment of the classroom by means of non-experimental systematic investigation into the educational practice of teacher trainees in the area for inquiry during their final BSE. The preparation of teachers during the time of carrying out this study was regarded mainly as the function of the training institutions, which organised and operated the teaching experience of their students in partnership with schools. During the practice it was anticipated that students would be helped to develop classroom skill and that the integration of theory and practice was furthered by support from skilled practitioners in schools. Links with

training institutions were maintained during this period by the college tutors acting as supervisors and having overall responsibility for co-ordination of the practice.

3.2.2.1 Sample for the Main Study

To obtain as comprehensive as possible a picture of the activities of the students, all three groups involved in the teaching practice, students, their class teachers and their supervisors, were chosen as the target population for the Main Study (see Figure 3).

Figure 3: Representation of participants' perceptions for Phases One and Two



As discussed in section 2.7.1, this triangulation method was designed to provide stronger validity of the acquired data, by focusing on the same aspects of the students' ability and performance from three different sources, and also identifying possible differing viewpoints, concepts and value systems of the three groups.

Selection of the sample for this study adopted the method of 'cluster sampling' in that a specific number of institutions were selected, and the whole target populations in those chosen institutions were involved in the investigation. Cohen and Manion (1984) explain that cluster sampling is appropriate 'when the population is large and widely dispersed' (p.76), and Hoinville et al. (1982, p.64) describe the characteristic of this sampling technique as the interviewer having 'a substantial batch of interviews in a single area'. The survey was therefore conducted involving all members of the target groups in the four selected institutions. Thus the source for the collection of primary

data was the entire population of the three target groups – students, their class teachers and their college supervisors for teaching practice in these four different institutions where the initial preparation of primary teachers took place.

Limitations of the study to four institutions placed some constraint upon generalisability of the results. The normal constraints of time and resources imposed upon an exercise of this type meant that it was not possible to involve in the research all teacher training institutions offering a four-year B Ed primary course in England and Wales at that time. This limitation to a form of cluster sampling, however, does not carry with it the normal limitations to generalisability which are characteristic of cluster sampling involving random selection of clusters, since in this case the choice of institutions, i.e. the clusters, is not considered to be entirely random. The chosen institutions included two from each of the main categories of CNAA-controlled (Colleges A and B) and university-controlled (Colleges C and D), this being in the correct proportion to the total number of such institutions. In addition, differences between colleges throughout the country concerning the field under investigation are not considered to be significant. Grounds for this assumption relate to the typicality of the teacher trainee population of these colleges concerning gender, age, entrance qualifications, social and ethnic background, together with common course specification and control. The specification of these courses was provided by the Council for the Accreditation of Teacher Education (CATE), which laid down the regulations governing the extent and content of teacher training courses. The CNAA also exercised control over course design and implementation within those colleges not associated with universities. Thus it can be argued that the selected colleges can be considered as sufficiently representative of the institutions involved in the area under study as to permit cautious generalisation. This aspect of 'purposive sampling', where 'the researcher handpicks the cases to be included in his sample on the basis of his judgement of their typicality' (Cohen and Manion, 1984, p.77) was used in conjunction with the cluster sampling. Thus both random and non-random sampling techniques were applied and were complementary. Geographically the colleges were located within 150 miles of the writer's base for convenience of the multiple visits required in the data acquisition,

making sure, however, that institutions were sufficiently remote from one another as to avoid inter-college pollution of results.

The total target population involved in the survey of Phase One is shown in table 11.

Table 11: Number and distribution of participants involved in Phase One of the Main Study

	B Ed students	Class teachers	College supervisors
College A	98	98	20
College B	88	88	20
College C	48	48	27
College D	160	—	50
Total	394	234	117

An unforeseen difficulty arose when, a few weeks before the survey implementation, College D expressed concern and reservations about the involvement of class teachers in the study. The college felt that as there was already a heavy demand on teachers' time by the college and through the introduction of the National Curriculum, an additional claim might put unnecessary strain on the college / school relationship. At that stage it might have been possible to have approached another institution, but in view of the otherwise suitability of the college concerned, the possibility of further unforeseen difficulties being experienced with a latecomer and the comparatively generous composition of survey population for all other aspects, then, to avoid the risk of disruption and delay to the survey, the abandonment of participation of class teachers with respect to College D was considered acceptable.

Phase Two of the study, which investigated the effect of modification to student learning as a selected variable, and students' perceived performance in the teaching of reading, was confined to the total population of the three defined participant groups in a

single institution (College B). Whilst the number of students involved in the investigation during Phase One could not be regarded as sufficient for absolute definite and generalisable evidence on the performance of all B Ed students in their final BSE throughout the country, it was nevertheless considered adequate for identifying relevant processes and variables required to provide the basis for Phase Two of the inquiry. Emphasis was placed on determining important qualitative aspects of data in the chosen institutions, and achieving absolute representativeness of the chosen population was not necessary. Rudestam and Newton (1992, p.65) point out that qualitative approaches to research may rely more on what the researchers 'deem reasonable to develop a convincing argument, independent of statistical testing', such as power calculations, which are used to determine the appropriate number of subjects, when a sample of the population is selected for an investigation. Thus, when conclusions on apparent differences between colleges involved in Phase One were drawn, they were based upon data collected from complete populations for each college and did not require analytical justification concerning the appropriateness of number of subjects.

Sample size was, however, important regarding statistical considerations. The statistical tests applied for the analysis of data were of the non-parametric kind and involved the use of chi-square tests in calculating the frequencies in which subjects were allocated to categories according to their responses. For the calculations to be meaningful 'the minimum is usually considered to be at least twenty subjects' (Greene and D'Oliveira, 1993, p.69). This requirement was fulfilled for all three participant groups of the Main Study.

Findings from Phase Two of the study were solely derived from work from the three participant groups in one institution, and their generalisability for other colleges cannot be claimed. The action research programme implemented was of a qualitative nature in a naturalistic setting, and Rudestam and Newton (1992, p.75) use Bailey's (1992) description in explaining that in this kind of study 'there is no attempt to claim an ability to generalise to a specific population, but instead, the findings are relevant from the perspective of the user of the findings'. Thus the study aimed to generate reflection upon course design and implementation and to arrive at a deeper understanding of the students' professional needs concerning teaching reading than would have been

generated by the sole use of survey methods with a larger and more representative sample. It could also be assumed that the conclusions drawn from this in-depth study in one institution may serve as a basis for further research in the field, using methods which will allow the claim of generalisability.

Sample for the interviews of Phase One

The implementation of the questionnaires with the total population of the three participant groups was followed by interviews with a sample of participants. Whilst the sample of interviewees selected from each participant group was limited in size, sampling techniques for the selection of a stratified sample were used to ensure the representation of important sub-categories. Male / female applied to all groups, and for specific groups additional criteria were as follows –

- *Student group* – early and later years route; candidates who were English specialists and those who were non-English specialists; fresh and mature students.
- *Teacher group* – teachers who had students from early and later years routes for teaching practice; less / more experienced teachers.
- *Supervisor group* – tutors of early and later years students; language / non-language specialists.

Because of the comparatively small sample size, sub-categories within the interviewees could not be represented in proportion to the numbers in the population from which they were selected. This represents a limitation of this part of the study, bearing in mind that the use of small samples carried with it the risk of bias of research results. However, since the implementation of interviews was only supplementary and additional to the main survey technique of questionnaires as research tools, this shortfall was unlikely to seriously affect the overall results.

Interviews were planned with 24 students, six from each institution, with fifteen teachers, five related to each of three institutions, and with twenty supervisors, five from each institution.

3.2.2.2 Sample for Follow-up Study

The Follow-up Study with a sample of the student population of College B was carried out with the intention of investigating the classroom practices in the teaching of reading and the underlying beliefs of newly qualified teachers from College B, who had been involved in the earlier surveys during their final year at that college. This inquiry did not involve the total past student population, but attempted to select a representative sample from each of the years during which surveys had been conducted. It was decided that the sample size should be at least 30 students, this being a sufficiently large number to enable the necessary statistical analysis to be carried out. Coolican (1991, p.26) points out that 'a truly representative sample is an abstract ideal unachievable in practice', only to be attained theoretically and if the sample is reasonably large. The process of stratified sampling was used in this study to obtain a sample which, for the purposes of proposed statistical analysis, could be considered representative of the whole population. By random selection of subjects from identified strata of the total population in proportion to their distribution in the population, the representation of sub-groups of the population from which they were drawn was achieved. The sub-categories considered for this survey were – gender, subject specialism and age specialism (early / later years). It should be noted, however, that a sample size of thirty which considers a number of strata is not sufficiently large to exclude the possibility of sampling bias. 'In general, the larger the sample the less the likely sampling bias' (Coolican, 1991, p.30).

Details of sample numbers for the Follow-up Study are given in Table 14d.

3.2.2.3 Background information to the sample

The teaching of reading within the B Ed *courses*

In all four colleges surveyed during Phase One of the study, students followed a four-year course as initial preparation for teaching primary-age children, leading to the qualification of Bachelor of Education (B Ed Hons) degree. The B Ed courses in all of these institutions identified as their aim the development of students' academic and professional knowledge, including practical classroom skills. Thus the courses, apart

from offering professional education and training, involved the study of one or two selected subjects at the students' own level of knowledge, including 'an understanding of the special field at first degree level in terms of concepts, generalisations and processes,' (The College of St. Paul and St. Mary, 1987, p.27). The latter was in response to the requirement for subject specialist knowledge, as set out in the CATE note 3 of August 1985, which considered it to be important that primary students should have 'higher education experience' and 'the depth of specialist knowledge which the equivalent of two years of subject study makes possible'. This in-depth study of one or two special fields provides the basis for specialisation in the teaching of one or two aspects of the primary curriculum. These two elements of subject study and professional education were arranged concurrently within the courses in all four institutions. In all four courses under survey students were prepared to teach pupils of the age range 4 to 11, but in three of the colleges, students were offered the choice of an age-range specialism in junior (later years) or infant (early years) teaching as part of their general training. In those cases where additional specialism was offered, the English-language course teaching was largely separate for both age ranges with some components taught together. Colleges were obliged to design their courses in teacher preparation according to the requirements of CATE regulations, and this obligation was responsible for the high degree of similarity in course design.

With respect to the area under investigation at the time of this study, primary teachers during their initial preparation were required to complete a course in teaching English language with the minimum time of about 100 hours (CATE note 3, August 1985, paragraph 15). This encompassed the promotion of listening, speaking, reading and writing in the primary classroom. According to the information given in course documentation and from interviews with language tutors, the number of hours devoted to the teaching of reading during these courses represented about one third of the total time. This could not be established precisely, since the teaching of reading was not always dealt with as a separate topic, being interrelated to and implicit in other themes and subject areas across the curriculum.

However, the following topics specific to reading were identified in the documentation presenting the syllabus of the English language course in all four B Ed courses –

Definition of 'reading'
The reading process
Emergent literacy
Reading development and special educational needs
The relationship of reading to other language modes
Methods and approaches of teaching reading
Evaluation of main reading schemes
Exploration of the importance of phonics
Developing and extending reading skills
Organising reading resources in the classroom
Encouraging children's motivation to read
Assessing reading development and keeping records
Listening to children read / identifying reading strategies
The language of books
Reading across the curriculum
Children's fiction as a resource
Parental involvement in learning to read

In all four colleges it was common practice to supply students with written outlines at the start of the English-language course and supportive handouts during sessions, thus providing students with the rationale and content of the course, tasks to be completed, definitions of main concepts and reading lists. Students in all four colleges had submitted at least one assignment on the teaching of reading while following the course. College D had collated the course outline and all handouts in a study programme booklet.

All colleges emphasised to students the importance of reference reading through publications in books and journals and provided students with recommendations during course sessions and printed reading lists. Students' familiarisation with teaching materials was regarded as essential. The establishment of a Resources Centre within

teaching rooms or as part of the library provided the opportunity to inspect and use available assessment / diagnostic / teaching materials in all four institutions. During visits to the colleges there was evidence in displays that students were encouraged to produce their own activity materials for the teaching of reading in workshop sessions and during their private study time. This seemed to demonstrate an intended link between the college course and classroom practice with the expressed intention that students would use these home-made resources during their teaching practice. Tutors responsible for the B Ed course unanimously drew attention to links with classroom practice in the design of the English-language course. The underlying policy of courses in all the surveyed colleges included teachers as guest speakers during course sessions, and observation tasks given to students for school visits, in particular during year one of their course.

In three of the colleges, the English-language course was implemented during years one, two, and three. Only College C offered inputs in the language area during years two to four. However, the students in all four institutions had completed the section on the teaching of reading by the time they embarked upon their final teaching practice. This was of importance for the planning of the investigation, since there were differences in the timing of the final BSE.

The organisation of final BSE

Whilst for students in Colleges A and B (CNAA-validated courses), the final BSE took place at the beginning of year four, the organisation of school experience differed in the two university-controlled B Ed courses. Students in College C completed their final BSE at the beginning of year three (2nd November to 10th December 1987). This college offered a three-year B Ed (Ordinary Degree) or alternatively an additional fourth year for students studying for a B Ed (Honours Degree). The survey was carried out amongst the latter group. College D placed all BSE in years one to three. During their fourth year students were required to complete a serial school experience, which consisted of teaching practice for two half-days per week during the Autumn Term and part of the Spring Term. For this college therefore the final BSE under survey took place in Spring 1988. The amount and timing of the teaching practice is given in Table 12.

Table 12: Times of teaching practice in the four surveyed colleges

	Teaching practice				
	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4	Final Block Practice
College A	2 weeks	4 weeks	5 weeks	8 weeks	10th Oct – 2nd Dec 1988
College B	5 weeks + 18 days att.	5 weeks	——	7 weeks	10th Oct – 25th Nov 1988
College C	20 days attachmt	6 weeks	6 weeks	——	2nd Nov – 10th Dec 1987
College D	2 weeks	5 weeks	6 weeks	2 half-days per wk	18th Jan – 26th Feb 1988

It is possible that the difference in timing of the final BSE might contribute to any variations in students' perceived performance between colleges. The longer time lapse for students of Colleges C and D between the completion of their practice and the date of the survey may have had some effect upon the student responses. This factor was considered when data were analysed regarding possible similarities or significant differences between responses from the colleges in these two categories.

Since the CNAA-administered colleges held their final BSE during the fourth year of the course and the university-administered colleges placed it in the third year, it was necessary to decide at what stage of the students' courses the survey should be administered. On the one hand, carrying out the survey immediately following the final BSE would have been appropriate when considering the difference in time elapsed between teaching practice and survey. This would, however, have meant that two colleges would have been surveyed at an earlier stage, during the third year of teacher preparation for the students. On the other hand, surveying all students during the fourth year of their training course, whilst involving students at the same stage of their teacher training, would create a delay of a year between practice and survey for two of the colleges. Since four colleges were involved, two colleges in each category, sufficient data would be acquired in any case for comparisons to be made between the two colleges within each category, regardless of which method was adopted. This being the

case, it was felt that the disadvantages associated with the former option, with students being surveyed midway through the third year of teacher preparation, outweighed those associated with the latter option, and it was decided that the administration of the survey would be presented to all students during the fourth year of their course during the Spring Term 1989.

Practical experience of observation and teaching in primary schools was included in all four degree courses and described by those responsible for planning as closely related to course studies. All students had encountered school practice during day visits and as block arrangements during previous years before embarking on their final BSE. Times spent in classrooms before this final practice varied between seven and thirteen weeks for students from the four different institutions, but this did not include short spells spent in classrooms working with children individually or in groups as part of course requirements in mathematics, art and English language.

All four colleges supplied lists of final BSE arrangements, giving information on school placements, students and college supervisors allocated to particular schools. This made it possible, for the purpose of the survey, to identify and approach the appropriate supervisors and teachers concerned. Whilst supervisors were contacted through their colleges, communications with class teachers were posted via head teachers of the schools after permission from all Local Education Authorities had been sought and granted by letter.

The role of teachers and supervisors

All colleges had arranged pre-practice attachment days during which students had the opportunity to visit their schools, become familiar with the classroom situation and discuss details of the forthcoming BSE with the class teachers. An allocation of three such days was the norm.

It was common practice for the colleges to have a short introductory meeting before the beginning of the final block practice, at which teachers were given details of the B Ed course and made familiar with the college's expectations of student performance. On these occasions, supervisors, teachers and students were also given the opportunity to

meet. College A had compiled a Teaching Practice Handbook for Schools, containing guidelines for school staff, students and supervising tutors, and notes on the assessment of teaching practice.

Colleges generally saw the role of tutors and teachers as providing support to the students in their planning of classroom work, helping to evaluate teaching and advising on modification of approaches. They were also involved in assessing students' classroom performance and advising the panel of examiners of the student's professional competence, which was expressed as a pass / fail mark, apart from College C where students' performance in the final teaching practice was judged on a scale of distinction / credit / pass / fail. Teachers and college supervisors were generally expected to co-operate in these matters, although each was allocated specific responsibilities.

Teachers gave supervisory support on a daily basis which involved discussing with students the implementation as well as the planning of teaching. Students were encouraged to observe the class teachers' practice, particularly at the start of their school experience. Teachers were regarded as being in the best possible position to familiarise students with the specific context within which they were working and assessing the quality of children's responses in their class. This was regarded as an important factor in the student's continuous move to independence in taking over responsibility for class teaching whilst completing their final block practice.

Supervisors were consulted by students before the start of the practice to authorise the prepared schemes of work which were planned for each curriculum area, indicating aims, objectives, content outline, methods and resources used. The schemes then provided the basis for planning and evaluating daily lessons. All written preparations and evaluations were presented in a file for the student's own use as well as for inspection by the class teacher, head teacher and supervisor.

It was common practice in all four colleges that supervisors visited students on average once a week to see them teach, review their file, discuss the observed teaching session with the student and talk to the class teacher about the student's progress. It was seen as essential that supervisors witnessed a range of lessons. Supervisors were also required to leave written comments with the students following each visit.

3.2.3 Methods of inquiry and data collection

3.2.3.1 Type of investigation

The research methods were determined by the set of questions directing the study (see section 2.3). These are presented and discussed with respect to the questionnaires in sections 3.2.3.5 to 3.2.3.7.

Whilst the chosen field for exploration was the students' final BSE, the sources of information were the three target groups involved in perceiving student performance – the students, their class teachers and their college supervisors. Thus, by using triangulation, factors were studied in the natural environment of the classroom during the students' teaching experience.

This firmly classifies the investigation as non-experimental. Coolican (1991, p.41) notes that one of the weaknesses of non-experimental design 'is that, since the researcher does not have control over all relevant variables, confounding is much more likely.' On the other hand, field studies have by definition a higher ecological validity than those of experimental design, since they are carried out within the natural environment of the topic of study without the introduction of artificial influences. Therefore a non-experimental design with its aim of measuring existing variables was deemed to be the most suitable way to meet the purpose of the study.

By identifying the presence of existing variables in the teaching of reading in students' classroom practice during the final BSE, it was considered likely that common trends, behaviours and beliefs would be applicable to all four institutions. On the other hand, by the involvement of different institutions belonging to two different organisational types it was intended to identify any practices and beliefs specific to individual or groups of colleges. This cross-institutional design presented the study with the opportunity to compare populations from different organisations on identified variables and attributed the project with a 'cross-cultural' aspect (Coolican, 1991, p.117).

3.2.3.2 Research methods

Justification of methods used in the study

Course documentation supplied by the institutions, and interviews with B Ed course leaders during initial visits to colleges provided the information required to form the background to the study. However, the use of survey techniques for gathering primary data was considered to be the most appropriate method for the study, and the use of self-completion questionnaires with follow-up interviews as the main research tools to be the most appropriate way of collecting data. The inclusion of interviews in Phase One of the Main Study was seen to be of value from the experience of the Pilot Study in that they were able to resolve any difficulty on the part of the respondent in understanding a question. Useful supplementary information was also gleaned by means of this technique.

The two most common available alternative techniques for data collection were not considered to be as suitable. Observation and direct measurement had to be excluded because of the limitation on available resources in carrying out the research. The employment of secondary research, which uses data already in existence from previous research as a source, was not a realistic proposition since no substantial published information was available in the area of this study at that time to make this method viable. It was of course necessary to bear in mind that the self-reporting survey methods used in this study were based upon subjective evaluations and that discrepancies might exist between the participants' perception and reality. The use of survey research was however chosen as the main method for all phases of this study, since survey techniques seemed to offer the appropriate tools for the set tasks. Rea and Parker (1992, p.4) identify the three informational, not mutually exclusive, categories derived from survey research as 'description, behaviour and preference' and point out that the three are of equal use and often interrelated.

> Scientific investigation requires that relationships be identified in terms of descriptive, behavioral and preferential data, so that we may fully understand the differential complexities of the population from which a sample has been drawn. (op. cit., p.5)

Phase One survey methods

Using survey methods was considered particularly appropriate for Phase One of the study, which aimed to collect the information needed to address the research questions (see sections 3.2.3.5 to 3.2.3.7) which derive from the core questions presented in section 2.3. This information was intended to provide a baseline to give direction to the succeeding investigation of Phase Two. The survey data obtained were viewed as reflecting the behaviour, opinion and preferences of subjects in the sample population, enabling the researcher to derive the sought information in each of the above survey categories suggested by Rea and Parker (1992, p.5).

The extensive survey of Phase One carried out in the four colleges was solely exploratory and had the purpose of being descriptive and analytical. Coolican (1991, p.90), in discussing major research purposes of a survey, notes that 'the researcher wants an accurate description of what people, in some target population, do and think and perhaps with what frequency'. He also points out, that 'often, from a large descriptive survey, hypotheses can be formulated' (op. cit., p.91). Data collected during Phase One were analysed to generate a hypothesis concerning the effectiveness of student preparation for the teaching of reading so as to provide a focus and direction to the investigation undertaken in Phase Two.

Phase Two action research

Phase Two was intended to test the hypothesis generated by the analysis of the descriptive data obtained during Phase One, and an action research approach was planned for College B. The essence of action research could be characterised as 'action taken to improve practice'. It follows the identification of a problem or an issue from the researcher's own practice and attempts to produce findings through action, which requires the involvement of the researcher or a group of researchers, usually in their own educational or social situation. This approach has been seen as an opportunity to make a contribution to the researcher's professional development and leads to reflection on practice which could produce effective innovations in the particular field under investigation.

> Action research investigates problems identified by practitioners, and is essentially directed towards greater understanding and improvement of practice over a period of time.
>
> (Cohen and Manion, 1987, p.41)

The action research programme in Phase Two of this study was designed to assess the influence of a series of activities upon students' perceived performance. Each stage of the action research involved modifications and additions to the preparation of students for the teaching of reading, and was followed by a survey aimed at testing the hypothesis, using the entire target population in the college. The action research programme was carried out in three annual stages. For this type of investigation an action research approach was considered the most appropriate, since it has commonly been applied in dealing with questions concerning practical issues. 'The idea was to enter a social situation, attempt change and monitor results' (Coolican, 1991, p.125). Cohen and Manion (1984, p.175) distinguish action research clearly from applied research, which uses rigorous scientific methods in testing theories with a view to generalisation.

> Action research, by contrast, interprets the scientific method much more loosely, chiefly because its focus is a specific problem in a specific setting. The emphasis is not so much on obtaining generalisable scientific knowledge as on precise knowledge for a particular situation and purpose. (Cohen and Manion, 1984, p.175)

This approach therefore was appropriate for the situation in which the writer was already involved in preparing students for the teaching of reading, and where a participatory function in implementing the project was guaranteed to monitor closely and continuously the effects of intervention. The final aim of this part of the study was 'to add to the practitioner's *functional knowledge*' (Cohen and Manion, 1984, p.174) and thus to use the gained information in increasing the efficiency of future practice for herself and others. Zuber-Skerritt (1992, p.15) specifies as one of the main features of action research its 'spiral of cycles of planning, acting, observing and reflecting', thus emphasising the close relationship between research and action. In fact, taking into consideration the stages of action research specified by authorities of this kind of approach, it could be suggested that the study overall and throughout used the method

of action research by diagnosing a problem through analysis of data, formulating a hypothesis and planning, evaluating and further developing a cycle of research actions. It is recognised, however, that the large-scale survey carried out as part of Phase One of the study, although contributing to the analysis of the problem, is not typical of the usually small-scale first stage of an action research approach.

Survey methods used in the Follow-up Study

The Follow-up Study involved surveys of a sample of newly qualified teachers who were past students of College B and had been involved in the Pilot Study, Phase One or Phase Two of the Main Study. Section 3.2.2.2 presents a discussion of the sample involved.

The purpose of these surveys carried out between 1991 and 1993 was to investigate the classroom activities and beliefs concerning the teaching of reading of a small sample of past students and explore differences from those held by their appropriate year group when investigated during the final year of the course. The first survey of the Follow-up Study was carried out in 1991 with past students who had participated in either the Pilot Study of 1988, Phase One of the Main Study of 1989 or the Pilot Cycle of Phase Two. The second survey was carried out in 1992 with students who had left college in 1991, having participated in the Cycle One programme in 1990 (see Figure 2). A third survey in 1993 was carried out with 1992 leavers who had been participants in the Cycle Two investigation in 1991.

The Follow-up Study solely employed self-completion postal questionnaires. The contents of these questionnaires closely followed the student questionnaires implemented in the relevant surveys carried out previously with the fourth-year students at the college, although in an abbreviated form, and modified to take account of the findings from the previous surveys of that particular college. Consideration of the questionnaires for these surveys and the procedures employed are discussed in section 6.

Aspects of a Problem-Based Methodology

A discussion of methodology, which by definition is a description and justification of methods applied, should recognise that some characteristics of a 'Problem-Based

Methodology' (PBM), as introduced by Robinson (1993), should apply. Robinson sees as the characteristic nature of this approach, the closer connection between research and practice. In investigating theories which influence people's actions in a problem situation, PBM delves rather deeper into underlying beliefs and motives than action research, which concentrates on the development of change as a solution to the problem.

> To understand an educational problem, therefore, is to understand the theories of action of relevant agents and the factors that sustain those theories. (Robinson, 1993, p.vii)

3.2.3.3 Discussion of chosen method of data procurement

Overview of application of the study

The inquiry conducted in the survey of Phase One attempted to identify the practice, beliefs and theories which underpinned the practice of individuals and groups.

Phase Two, which consisted of three action research cycles and investigated the influence of planned programmes upon student behaviour in the teaching of reading, employed survey methods at the end of each cycle to evaluate individual programmes.

The Follow-up Study, also conducted as a survey, was initiated after the first stage of Phase Two, and ran concurrently with it. It involved a representative sample of past students from College B, who had participated in the previous surveys.

Thus the whole study was conducted over a period of five years, between 1988 and 1993, including the piloting of the questionnaires. Whilst this characterises the investigation as long-term or longitudinal, different subjects were involved at the various phases and stages of the study, the only common characteristic being their membership of the same target population. Only for the Follow-up Study were 'successive measures taken at different points in time from the same respondents' (Cohen and Manion, 1984, p.49), which justified the scientific use of the term 'Follow-up Study'.

Table 13 presents an overview of the survey research conducted, following the Pilot Study, and the different phases of the project.

Table 13: Surveys conducted following the Pilot Study

Phase One – Main survey, based on research questions

	College involved	Target population	Programme	Method of inquiry
Jan – Feb 1989	Colleges A, B, C, D	Students, teachers & supervisors	——	Questionnaire and interview

Phase Two – Action research, based on the hypothesis of Phase One

	College involved	Target population	Programme	Method of inquiry
Pilot Cycle Dec 1989	College B	Students	Pilot programme	Questionnaire and field notes
Cycle 1 Dec 1990	College B	Students ,teachers & supervisors	Programme 1	Questionnaire and field notes
Cycle 2 Dec 1991	College B	Students ,teachers & supervisors	Programme 2	Questionnaire and field notes
Cycle 3 Dec 1992	College B	Students	Programme 3	Questionnaire and field notes

Follow-up Survey – Based on research questions

	College involved	Target population	Method of inquiry
July 1991	College B	Past students – 1988, 1989, 1990 leavers	Questionnaire
Sept 1992	College B	Past students – 1991 leavers	Questionnaire
Oct 1993	College B	Past students – 1992 leavers	Questionnaire

Questionnaires and interviews as complementary instruments

The use of survey techniques involved the gathering of self-reported information from the target population. Prior to the design of research instruments it was necessary to specify –

1 What information was to be collected.

2 From whom would it be collected.

3 How it would be collected.

Item 2 has been discussed in section 3.2.2, which justifies the process of selecting participants from the target population. With respect to items 1 and 3, which were closely interrelated, the most suitable approach, bearing in mind the limitations on resources, was to gather the primary data by using self-reporting methods and face-to-face interviews. The primary research tool used in this study was the self-completion questionnaire provided for all participants, followed by stratified sample interviews as discussed in section 3.2.2.1. Verbal self-reporting, with a small representative sample of each participant group was used as an additional data-gathering technique.

The complementary function of questionnaires and interviews was acknowledged and the employment of both best served the process, since the benefits of the one method were able to counter the disadvantages associated with the other method of inquiry.

Whilst questionnaires were convenient and straightforward to administer, and by their guaranteed anonymity and confidentiality were thought to encourage participants' honest responses, they nevertheless achieve a lower response rate than interviews. However, by using larger numbers of participants, questionnaires were expected to provide a greater fund of information from a greater number of respondents with a modest demand on resources. They produced more reliably quantifiable data and made standardised conditions for administration more feasible. Interviews, on the other hand, generated richer information, since they offer a more flexible style of response than a questionnaire and were able to take account of the individual respondent's situation. Interviews involving a sample of the target population are therefore considered to have a higher validity, but lower reliability than questionnaires over the whole target population. Whilst questionnaires for this study consisted mainly of fixed choice questions with a few open-ended questions, interviews were in general 'structured but open-ended' (Coolican, 1991, p.81). Coolican describes the characteristic features of this type of interview with 'pre-set questions in a pre-determined order to every interviewee' as keeping 'the multiplicity of interpersonal variables involved in a two-way conversation to a minimum', and ensuring 'greater consistency in the data gathered. The respondent is still free to answer, however, in any way chosen. Questions are open-ended' (op. cit., p.82).

Both questionnaires and interviews adopted a qualitative approach concerning the chosen questions, inviting participants to describe their experiences and beliefs. Some of these apparently qualitative data were, however, amenable to a form of quantitative analysis. This was achieved by categorising and measuring the degree of frequency responses of the qualitative data and then applying the appropriate quantitative methods of analysis. This is discussed in section 3.2.4.

Both research instruments of questionnaire and interview were applied to all three groups of participants in the Main Study. The questioning attempted to generate data on student performance in the teaching of reading by identifying characteristics of student effectiveness and investigating colleges' and schools' influence on student behaviour and learning in the teaching of reading (Phase One) and subsequently by attempting to explore how this could be modified (Phase Two). In attempting to gain

an insight into the effectiveness of student preparation for the teaching of reading, the study aimed to explore the existence of significant associations between certain variables and hence to identify possible reasons for success. By the investigation of ongoing behaviour, a hypothesis was formulated and tested in an action research approach concerning the improvement of such behaviour. The study was concerned with the two concepts of 'effectiveness' and 'improvement', which, although investigated separately during Phases One and Two of the study respectively, were closely interlinked in the development of the provision of appropriate student preparation.

Information sought by both questionnaires and interviews was required to be obtained from participants' genuine, but complex experiences. The focus in reporting, however, was on experience and therefore depended on the subjects' memory of what they did and what in their opinion they thought they did. Coolican (1991, p.86) warns that 'memory is notoriously error-prone and subject to distortion'.

3.2.3.4 Designing the questionnaires

The function of the questionnaire

The use of self-reporting questionnaires evolved as the main instrument for the broad collection of information during all stages of the study and from all three groups of the target population – students, class teachers and college supervisors. The research instruments being designed to suit the purpose of the investigation, the content, design and layout of the questionnaires were strongly governed by the aims of the study (see sections 1.4 and 2.4). The main aim was to gather evidence concerning the activities and underlying beliefs of student teachers regarding the teaching of reading during their final BSE. This was best achieved by the extensive use of questionnaires which provided the required information in the form of perceptions of the students, their class teachers and their college supervisors on these matters. This information was then suitable for an assessment of the effectiveness of student training in this field. Thus there existed a need to locate a research instrument that would meet the requirements of the study.

As stated in section 2.4, no questionnaires fitting the purpose of this study were found to be available at the time of the Pilot Study and a close examination of more recent investigations concerning the preparation of B Ed students for the teaching of reading (Gorman, 1989; HMI, 1988) revealed that the research instruments used in these surveys were also unsuitable for the purpose of this study, since they differed in their aims and rationale. Even the *Graduate Questionnaire* (Brooks et al., 1992, p.109) used in the CATE inquiry into initial teacher training for the teaching of reading during May 1991, concentrating on newly qualified teachers' experience of their college course, would not have been a satisfactory instrument for data collection in this study which had chosen the students' activities during their final BSE as its focus. To carry out the survey and collect the desired information it was therefore necessary to construct and develop a new research instrument specifically tailored for the purpose and aims of this study in the form of questionnaires and interview schedules for students, teachers and supervisors. Designing these new instruments as well as assessing their validity and reliability represented an important part of the research process.

The students' and class teachers' questionnaires which had been generated at the outset of the study were extensively piloted with the total population of the writer's own institution during the year before the Main Study to identify any shortcomings and incorporate modifications. During this process the reliability and validity of these questionnaires were also assessed.

The participation of the college supervisors as an additional group to the target population was introduced to enhance triangulation aspects of the inquiry. This addition, which took place as a result of experience with the Pilot Study (see section 2.7.1), required the design and development of a questionnaire for this further target group. Piloting of the supervisors' questionnaire was carried out with ten tutors in the writer's college during the BSE of year-two students in the Summer Term preceding the Phase One survey. Some of the experience gained from piloting the other two questionnaires was of benefit in constructing the supervisor's questionnaire, so that subsequently only minor modifications had to be made for its use.

To increase the validity of the information collected, the technique of triangulation was used in building and co-ordinating the three questionnaires, so that a focus on the same aspect under investigation was obtained from multiple standpoints. Cohen and Manion (1984, p.208) note that 'triangulation is used in interpretive research to investigate different actors' viewpoints'. For the purpose of this study 'investigator triangulation', which by definition involves more than one observer or participant in a research setting, was selected as the most appropriate out of the six principal types of triangulation listed by these two authors (op.cit., p.211). The particular value in the application of triangulation for this study was seen in the possible reduction of distortion resulting from one-sided subjective information, and to make use of participants with 'different perspectives or paradigmatic biases' to check for divergence in data which might be obtained. For this type of study it is considered that 'triangular techniques are suitable when a more holistic view of educational outcomes is sought' (op.cit., p.214).

The survey of Phase One was designed to explore aspects of student performance in the teaching of reading during their final BSE. Through this particular field of inquiry, the focus was on the quality of initial preparation for the teaching of reading as examined through the nature of students' class room work during this final teaching practice, and this is reflected in the content of individual questionnaire questions .

Questionnaires used with the three participant groups in College B for the subsequent surveys during Phase Two were maintained as closely as possible in design to the questionnaires of Phase One. They differed, however, concerning the specific questions which needed to be added to seek information on the programme of work implemented as part of the teacher preparation programme during the particular action research cycle of Phase Two, which was under investigation. These modifications to the questionnaires of Phase Two are discussed in section 5.

The Follow-up Study with newly qualified teachers, who had earlier participated in the study whilst receiving their professional preparation at College B, made use of questionnaires for these subjects as the sole tool for data collection. The design of these

questionnaires was strongly influenced by the results from the Main Study and their review is part of the discussion on the Follow-up Study in section 6.

The questions which formed the original basis for the Main Study and which appear in section 2.3 required addition in the light of the results of piloting the questionnaire. This modified set of questions underpinned the design of the three questionnaires used in the Main Study. Data collected via the questionnaires were intended to be used to address these questions identified before the study.

In using this ethnographic trait the content and purpose for investigation had been established, but no fixed hypothesis had been provided.

Shaver and Larkins (Travers, 1973) suggest that 'foreshadowed problems' are expressed in questions of this kind which provide a focus for observation.

> The ethnographer does enter his study with questions in mind, with the intent of probing problems he deems important. Because these questions, identified *prior* to the study, do, in a sense, cast shadows that guide and restrict the researcher's view, Smith calls them *foreshadowed* problems. (op. cit., p.1257)

This reference to *foreshadowed problems* is apposite in that such an uncertainty was experienced during the preparation of the questionnaires. This dealt with the possible identification of discrepancy between students' expected and perceived performance in the teaching of reading as indicated by themselves, their college supervisors and class teachers. Use was made therefore of a perspective of ethnography as one of the research strategies in setting up the design of the study.

Analysing data from Phase One and studying the relationship between identified factors was 'a useful stage in developing a theory about what might be the most important factors affecting a particular type of behaviour' (Greene and D'Oliveira, 1993, p.7). Phase Two of the study explored educationally more effective ways of organising student learning experiences concerning the teaching of reading.

The main issues to be covered and common to all questionnaires employed during Phases One and Two were –

- students' preparation for the teaching of reading before the final block practice,
- the nature and quality of their approach to teaching reading during the final block practice,
- their opportunities to develop skills during the final block practice,
- interactions between participants during this practice, and
- participants' expressed views on the teaching of reading.

In addition, the questionnaires implemented during Phase Two contained questions relevant to the hypothesis generated from the findings of Phase One and in relation to the particular programmes of the action research cycles.

The following questions were derived from those in section 2.3 which were considered as the basic questions from which the various questionnaires were derived. The references to questions within the commentaries relate to the actual question which appeared on the appropriate questionnaire.

(See Appendix 8 for questions of student, teacher and supervisor questionnaires.)

3.2.3.5 Student questionnaire

1 How much attention was given to the teaching of reading in the students' preparations and evaluations?

It was essential to establish how much attention the students felt they had allocated before their final teaching practice to prepare for the teaching of reading. Included in this was their degree of familiarity with the particular school's policy in this area (question 4), the discussion of reading with the supervisor prior to the practice (question 6), and the inclusion of the teaching of reading in the schemes of work prepared prior to the practice (question 5). Was reading included in daily preparations (question 12) and evaluations during (question 13) and reflected upon after the practice

(question 28)? These activities of preparation and evaluation should contribute to students' development and their general feeling of competence and would indicate whether their activities were part of the planned structure of student development.

2 What exerted the greatest influence upon the students' approach to the teaching of reading during the final teaching practice?

Piloting the questionnaire had demonstrated the strong influence of the class teacher. It was therefore important to investigate this further by determining the influence which the college course exerted upon the subsequent final teaching practice (questions 10 and 11). Did the students' choice of resources for reading (question 14) correlate with the teachers' choice (teacher, question 14), and what sources did the students consult on the use of resources (question 16)? What did they perceive as the strongest influence upon the way they organised reading in their classrooms (question 18)? Question 34 was intended as a double-check on student opinion of the significant influence of the final teaching practice on students' teaching approach.

This knowledge was important for the design of future courses in the teaching of reading.

3 Which approaches to the teaching of reading did students use?

Question 17 investigated the variety of approaches used by students and their frequency. This should indicate whether a balanced approach by students existed, and how this compared with the approach used by teachers (teacher, question 5). This comparison might have provided further information regarding the influence of the teachers on the students' chosen approach.

4 Did students perceive a difference in the approach to the teaching of reading between the college course and schools?

The final question of section B II, referring to performance during teaching practice, related to the approach to the teaching of reading as observed in the classroom compared to that presented during the college course (question 27). It was an indirect check on the strength of the message regarding the approach to the teaching of reading

received from the course, since a comparison could only be made if students had received a clear message from the course.

5 How competent do students regard themselves to be in the teaching of reading?

Exploration of student competence in the teaching of reading was fundamental to the study. It was essential therefore to examine the students' own perception of their competence. To be meaningful, questions needed to be related to specific aspects and activities. The chosen focus therefore was the final teaching practice of their course. Students were asked to judge their competence in fostering pupils' reading development during the early as well as the later stages (question 30). In addition, students had to comment how well they felt prepared for the use of resources (question 15), if they were able to provide for pupils with reading difficulties (question 22), and if they felt equipped to foster children's interest in literature (question 32).

School practice as part of future teachers' professional training is intended to provide the opportunity for students to increase their competence by developing new skills, and reflecting upon this experience should not only help to identify these (question 31), but also help in specifying the most important learning experience during both the final BSE and the college course (question 33).

6 Is there a significant difference in responses to questions on performance of teaching reading between early years and later years students?

To date, researchers have paid little attention to the possible difference in teaching reading between teachers trained with a particular emphasis on the early years (age range 4 to 7) and those specifically prepared to teach later primary years (age range 7 to 11). The information on the age range training (question 1) was intended to investigate if a significant difference existed between the two groups of students in perceived behaviours, skills and opinions.

7 How did students monitor their pupils' reading development during this practice?

Assessment is an essential part of the complex process of teaching reading. The way in which assessment was approached (question 19) and the manner in which pupils'

development was recorded (questions 20 and 21) would indicate the students' model of reading.

8 What is the students' view on the teaching of reading?

The students' model of reading was further investigated in section C of the questionnaire. Identifying the most important aims in the teaching of reading for primary-age children (question 35) should present their interpretation of the reading process, which forms the basis for the teaching approach. This would then provide the ground for examining how the behaviours and opinions stated in earlier sections of the questionnaire agreed with their understanding of reading.

9 How do students rate components of the college course relevant to the teaching of reading?

College courses offered a variety of teaching modes and strategies in aiming to develop future teachers' knowledge and skills in the teaching of reading. Whilst it was established practice in all institutions to carry out summative evaluations with students at the end of courses, it seemed most appropriate to find out at a time when students were closest to the reality of the classroom how they rated parts of their college course (question 37), and which aspects they regarded as most or least helpful (question 29). This would also indicate the ease of transfer of knowledge gained previously.

10 What do students consider their own professional needs to be with respect to the teaching of reading?

This final teaching experience should have provided students with an awareness of the extent and limitation of their professional skills developed to date. Question 36 was intended to assist students in an appraisal of their professional practice and to help specify those knowledge and skill requirements which had not been met during their training. Responses might therefore identify possible shortfalls in the preparation of future teachers for the teaching of reading. Any existing discrepancies between what students thought they ought to achieve and what they feel they are achieving should become apparent in the responses to this question. Question 2 established whether students had completed their college course on the teaching of reading, whilst Question 3 was intended to confirm the time of students' final BSE.

11 How much consultation / interaction over the teaching of reading occurred in the students' view between

a) the teacher and the student

b) the college supervisor and the student?

The two most important agencies for professional contact during the students' BSE were the class teacher and the college supervisor. Whilst they had to make a judgement on the students' suitability for the profession by the end of the teaching practice, their role lay also in providing support in the development of skills during this time. The aim of the inquiry was to investigate the extent and type of support the students felt they had received from these two professional agents (questions 23, 24, 25, 26) concerning the teaching of reading during this teaching practice. The same area was chosen for investigation in the supervisor (questions 16, 17, 18) and teacher questionnaire (questions 20, 21, 22, 23, 24), which would allow for a comparison of perceptions of all three participants on this aspect.

12 Did students feel that they had been given full responsibility for the teaching of reading during this final teaching practice?

The final teaching practice presented an opportunity for the students to demonstrate their ability to plan and organise the total curriculum of a class. It was therefore assumed by training institutions that students took full responsibility for a class. The aim of the investigation was to examine how, according to the students' perception, full responsibility for a class (question 7) compared with responsibility taken for the teaching of reading (question 8), and if this was demonstrated by a specific arrangement in the time-table (question 9).

3.2.3.6 Teacher questionnaire

1 What educational practices did teachers involved in this study use with respect to the teaching of reading, and what was the length of their teaching experience?

Supervisors as representatives of the college and teachers as representatives of schools were the two agents who judged and influenced student learning and behaviour during the final teaching practice. A detailed exploration of these agents' own experiences,

practices and beliefs was considered important if their perceptions of classroom performance of the students were to be meaningful. The judgement of student behaviour by teachers and supervisors had to be seen within the framework of their own belief systems and their educational practices.

Part of the teacher questionnaire therefore intended to provide background information on respondents' approaches to the teaching of reading (questions 5, 14), their ways of monitoring pupils' progress (questions 6 and 7) and on their length of teaching experience (question 4).

2 How much support / advice did teachers feel they were able to give to students in the teaching of reading during this practice?

Providing support to students to assist in their development of skills in the teaching of reading was an important aspect of the teaching practice. It therefore merited specific exploration from the viewpoint of all three participants, and was included in all questionnaires. There has recently been a demand for greater involvement of practising teachers in initial teacher education, and the information gathered in this area (questions 9, 20, 21, 22, 23, 24) should reveal how teachers perceive their supportive role. This could then be compared with the students' perception of teacher support as investigated in the student questionnaire (questions 23 and 24). The responses to question 28 not only provided a useful summary of student learning during the final practice, but also indicated what teachers held high in their esteem and therefore valued in the teaching of reading.

3 Do schools work collaboratively with colleges to ensure the provision of effective experiences in the teaching of reading for student teachers?

The partnership between schools and teacher training institutions in recent years 'has become a major part of DES strategy for improving the quality of schools through the improvement of teacher education' (Tickle, 1987, p.3). It was felt that the quality of student experiences would depend upon the way this partnership is put into practice. The questionnaire was intended to obtain the teachers' perception of the efforts made by the college to support this partnership. Specific aspects, directly related to the