

Running Head: TEACHER READ ALOUD

Teacher Read Aloud:

Exploring an Educational Tradition Through a Social Practice Framework

By

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Abstract

Teacher read aloud is perceived as a long-standing, common classroom practice. The purpose of this study was to examine this educational tradition in a framework of literacy as social practice that supports the ideas of apprenticeship, discourse communities, and specific contextual-discipline literacies. Using mixed-methods, data was gathered on three major components of teacher read aloud practice: (1) time spent on read aloud, (2) purpose and text choice of read aloud, (3) and practices that focused on developing literary understanding through read aloud. Through these components, the knowledge and beliefs of teachers regarding teacher read aloud, literacy and literary development, and children's literature were examined. Data was gathered through an online survey, logbooks, and interviews. Statistical and deductive analysis of the data's quantitative components was conducted; and interview and open-survey responses were qualitatively analyzed.

Analysis of the data on purpose and text choice suggests children's literature is being read aloud in classrooms in ways that may conflate the literacy and literary development of students, and these ways may model particular types of values and behaviours when reading. Multiple purposes were identified for read alouds, with informative purposes being the most common. While the purpose of the read alouds was to inform, fiction texts were dominant with minimal non-fiction, or discipline-specific texts being used in the content areas. The use of fiction for informative purposes resulted in limited evidence that teacher read aloud was used to develop literary understandings. Teachers reported having limited resources for professional development and limited infrastructure to support effective read aloud.

Findings of this study can be used to inform us that teacher read aloud may be a common practice in terms of taking place in most classrooms; however, the time invested, both in

frequency and duration, is limited, giving children minimal opportunities to apprentice into a reading community. Findings from this study also provide evidence that traditional practices can continue to be effective, but these practices should be renewed to support better the current and evolving understandings of literacy and literary exposure. Professional development and opportunities to reflect on practice could ameliorate this renewal for in-service and pre-service teachers.

Table of Contents

Abstract	i
Table of Contents	iii
List of Tables	vi
List of Figures	vii
Acknowledgements	viii
Dedication	ix
Chapter One: Introduction	1
The Researcher	3
The Effective Read Aloud	5
Reading with Purpose	6
Manitoba context	10
Purpose of the Study	12
Research Questions and Data Sources	12
Theoretical Framework	13
Significance of the Study	17
Scope of the Study	17
Overview of the Following Chapters	18
Chapter Two: Literature Review	19
Reading Instruction	19
Current Understandings of Literacy	21
Reading instruction and current understandings	22
Read aloud as part of a cultural process	23
Modeling different types of reading	24
Reading a variety of texts for different purposes	25
Read aloud and disciplinary literacies	27
Becoming a literary reader	29
Taking pleasure in reading	31
Research Studies on Read aloud	34
Research on amount of time invested in read aloud	36
Research on the purposes of read aloud	38
Studies that focus on one aspect of reading	39
Studies that focus on multiple purposes for read aloud	40
Research on read aloud for literary reading	41
Research on teachers' beliefs, knowledge and practices	48
Children's Literature in Classrooms	52
Summary of the Literature Review	55
Chapter Three: Methodology	57
Research Design	58
Context	69
Procedure	61
Participants	64
Participants of the survey	64
Logbook participants	67
Data Sources	69

Survey	69
Logbooks.....	70
Interviews.....	71
Data Analysis.....	71
Survey data.....	72
Written survey responses	72
Logbook data	73
Interview data.....	74
Validity and Reliability.....	76
Summary of Methodology.....	77
Chapter Four: Results	78
To What Extent is Read Aloud Used in Classrooms?	79
Implications of extent of read aloud on the theoretical framework	80
Survey data on extent of read aloud.....	81
Logbook data on extent of read aloud.....	83
Survey open question response and interview data on extent.....	87
Read aloud in relation to other literacy elements.....	93
Summary of extent of read aloud.....	98
For What Purposes do Teachers Read Aloud?	99
Implications of purpose in consideration of the theoretical framework	100
Survey data on purpose of read aloud.....	101
Logbook data on the purpose of read aloud.....	105
Comparison of logbook and survey data	109
Open survey question response and interview data on purpose	112
Summary of the purposes for read aloud	116
What are Teachers Reading Aloud	119
Implications of text choice in consideration of the theoretical framework	119
Survey data on text choice	120
Logbook data on text choice	122
Interview data on text choice	123
Summary of text choice	125
Is Read Aloud Being Used to Develop Literary Understandings?	126
Literary understandings and the theoretical framework	127
Survey data on literary understandings.....	127
Logbook data on literary understandings.....	129
Style of author.....	130
Topic of the book.....	132
Repeated literary element	134
Interview data on literary understandings.....	138
Summary of literary understandings.....	141
What do Teachers Know About Read Aloud and How do They Learn?.....	141
Author knowledge.....	142
Professional development	143
Infrastructure.....	145
Summary of teacher knowledge.....	149
Summary of Results.....	149

Chapter Five: Discussion	152
Significance of the Study Findings in Relation to Pedagogical Practice.....	152
Reflect on practice	153
Increase the role of read aloud	154
Make better use of read aloud.....	155
Provide a wider variety of texts	156
Match text to purpose.....	158
Teach students to be engaged readers.....	160
Balance instruction and assessment.....	162
Provide more professional development.....	163
Professional development about reading	163
Professional development about children’s literature.....	164
Seek out experts	164
Theoretical and Research Implications	165
Implications for Future Research.....	169
What can be observed during read aloud?	169
Observing talk.....	170
Observing method.....	170
Why is non-fiction lacking during read aloud?.....	171
How can literature be used more effectively?.....	171
What is the impact of the teacher librarian?	172
How can teachers measure the effects of read aloud?	172
Limitations	173
Concluding Remarks.....	176
References.....	177
Children’s Literature Cited	191
Appendix A: Survey Questions	194
Appendix B: Logbook Recording Sheet.....	200
Appendix C: Interview Guiding Questions.....	201
Appendix D: Other Responses to ELA structures	202
Appendix E: Full List of Authors	204
Appendix F: Research Ethics Approval Certificate.....	206
Appendix G: Letters of Consent	207

List of Tables

1. Gender of Survey Participants	65
2. Location of Schools of Survey Participants	65
3. Grades of Students Taught by Survey Participants.....	66
4. Years of Teaching Experience of Survey Participants	67
5. Description of Logbook Participants	68
6. Time and Frequency of Read Aloud Sessions Reported in Logbooks	85
7. The Elements Indicated as Regular Parts of Literacy Programming by Survey Participants.....	94
8. Re-Categorization of “Other” Comments from the Survey Open Question Responses.....	102
9. Purpose of Last Read Aloud Reported by Survey Participants	103
10. Categorization of Teacher Comments in the Logbooks	108
11. Description of Professional Development Specifically about Children’s Literature.....	144
12. Resources that Survey Participants use to Find Children’s Literature	146
13. Staffing of School Libraries as Reported by Survey Participants.....	147

List of Figures

1. Survey Responses to Time Spent on Read Aloud.....	82
2. Time Spent on Reading Elements by Survey Participants.....	97
3. Logbook Reported Purposes	109
4. Comparison of Logbook and Survey Purposes.....	110
5. Survey Text Choice.....	121
6. Logbook Text Choice.....	122

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Dedication

To Dad

and

To Dane

Storyteller and Writer

Teacher Read Aloud: Exploring a Tradition Through a Social Practice Framework**Chapter One
Introduction**

One December morning I walked into our school library to find *The Polar Express* by Chris Van Allsburg (1985). Throughout the fall my grade three class and I had been considering the work of Van Allsburg and this title was a good fit on this frosty day. I browsed the collection to locate it, and, as I removed it from the shelves, one of the pages was left behind. I pushed the page back in and walked into the teacher librarian's office. "Do you think we could order a new copy of *The Polar Express*? Well-loved is one thing but this is falling apart." As good teacher librarians are apt to do, Barb put it on the *books to order* list. When my grade threes were settled on the carpet after recess I began to read. As I reached the middle of the book, I turned the page and the binding glue showered from the book. There was a collective gasp from the listeners and with her voice full of awe, one little girl said, "Mrs. Boyd, the book is snowing!" In that instant we were captured in the moment that Van Allsburg had created for us. We were in a place where we were more than willing to believe that the book, this book, could snow. And we were all there. I could not get to the library fast enough to cancel the new book order.

During that read aloud I was not concerned with whether my students could decode *believe* or *sleigh*. I did not want to talk about silent letters or blends. During that read aloud I did not ask if they remembered the sister's name or the way the hot chocolate was described. During that read aloud I did not expect my students to learn anything about trains or wolves. During that read aloud I wanted the students to be caught up in the text, to recognize that Van Allsburg had constructed a place that we could experience with our whole being.

Together we were “stepping into” (Langer, 1995) and “living through” the text (Rosenblatt, 1978). My hope and my belief are that moments like this, shared in a classroom, build an understanding of reading that goes beyond the mechanical to the idea of what it means to read for pleasure, how to recognize that feeling of pleasure and how to seek to replicate it in other times and places of life. However, although I am now able to state those beliefs in retrospect, I am not sure I was aware of them as I engaged in that particular event.

Moments from my teaching practice like the one that I have just described and the uncomfortable realization that I may have done many things without full awareness have brought me to this dissertation. I have wondered, read, thought, pondered, and studied the idea of reading. In my previous research for my Master’s degree (Boyd, 2008), I interviewed three generations of the same family to investigate the factors that led to their reading identities. The participants, in all three generations, articulated the importance of teacher read aloud in their own reading histories. By the term *teacher read aloud* in this study I am referring to a pedagogical practice in which the teacher mediates the printed word orally for a group of children. He or she is reading out loud to his or her students.

As I speak to teachers, parents, and students about my work, many share with me their stories of being read to or reading to others. It seems that this practice is, and has been, a staple in schools, homes, and classrooms. Manguel (1996) refers to the practice of read aloud taking place in monasteries circa 547. Leavitt (1830) referred to teacher read aloud as a way to teach fluent reading by saying, “It is a very useful practice, for the teacher to read over each sentence, before the scholar, giving it the proper pauses, inflections, and emphasis” (p. 6). Smith (1934/2002) noted the important social practice of read aloud in colonial America:

Oral reading also played an important role in the lives of these people. There was a great dearth of reading materials during the colonial period. The Bible, generally speaking, was the only book the home libraries contained, and many families did not have even a Bible. Furthermore, illiteracy was highly prevalent at that time; so it was customary for the uneducated members of the family or the community to gather in little groups in the evenings and on Sabbaths to listen to the oral reading of the Scriptures by one who had mastered the art of reading. Thus we see that oral reading met a real social need in our earliest period of reading instruction. (p. 32)

Continuing with this long-standing tradition, I read aloud everyday in my own classroom because that is what I knew that teachers did. I knew that I was choosing good quality books and that they were learning about story. Yet before reading aloud *The Polar Express*, I was not fully aware that my students and I were about to engage in a reading experience that had the potential to be a life-changing experience. I did not know that many students would fall in love with reading, get “lost in a book” (Nell, 1988), and potentially become life-long readers for pleasure. I had previously not used my reading aloud to its full potential. It is likely that other teachers are also not using read alouds to their full effectiveness. As such, in this dissertation I explored when and how often teachers are reading to their students, what they are choosing to read, and particularly, for what purposes teachers are reading aloud in Manitoba schools.

The Researcher

It seemed appropriate to start this dissertation with a personal story. This is a topic in which I am personally and professionally invested. Due to this investment, and the methodology that I have chosen for this study that included the interpretation of participant

interviews and open responses, it seems important that the reader has some background about me. This information is relevant as it provides the reader with an understanding of how I am positioned in relation to the study.

I am a 46-year-old female who was born and raised in Manitoba to immigrant parents. I have a strong connection to my Irish heritage, which may explain my love of storytelling. I learned to read early and was read to by my parents and older siblings long after I was able to read independently. My family modeled and valued reading. I have four children who are at various stages of their education: university, high school, middle school and early years. All are avid readers of different types of material. My oldest and youngest have fairly eclectic tastes, while my 17-year-old prefers fantasy and graphic novels and my 13-year-old reads non-fiction almost exclusively.

I have been a teacher since my early twenties. I trained as a senior years English teacher and majored in English literature in my undergraduate degree. I felt ill-prepared for my first teaching job as a grade three generalist. I had little background in teaching reading and relied heavily on my literature background in my literacy program. Through professional development opportunities, I became involved with a group of teachers who worked with Jon Stott's *Spiraled Story Curriculum* (1982), which was a structural literature curriculum that systematically taught the interconnectedness of literary texts.

I have had most of my public school teaching experience in inner city schools with students of diverse abilities. In the public system, I have been a grade three, five, and eight classroom teacher, a resource teacher, a teacher librarian, and a vice-principal. I left the public system to complete my Master's degree in language and literacy and then went on to begin my doctoral studies program. I am currently an instructor in a Bachelor of Education

program in which I teach courses in Early Years Language and Literacy, Children's Literature, Adolescent Literature, Language and Literacy Across the Content Areas, and educational philosophy and practice. I also have the opportunity to work as research assistant and a faculty advisor for teacher candidates.

I would suggest that readers keep this information in mind and remember that I am analyzing the data from this position. I acknowledge that while I seek to provide an informed interpretation, it is possible that others may interpret the same data differently because of different perspectives and experiences.

The Effective Read Aloud

The previous section provided information to assist the reader in understanding how I am positioned in relation to the study and how this may influence my interpretation of the results. In addition, it is important for the reader to understand that while read aloud can be a name for a very diverse set of pedagogical practices, I have a vision of an effective read aloud that influences the way in which I consider the data collected in this study. An effective read aloud would include the seven components identified by Fisher, Flood, Lapp, and Frey (2004) as common in good interactive read alouds. While I noted that I may not have been conscious of these elements at the time, several of these seven habits were visible in *The Polar Express* (Van Allsburg, 1985) read aloud described earlier in this chapter. Fisher et al. (2004) list the habits as follows: (1) Books were carefully chosen both to match students' interests and because of their high quality; (2) Books had been previewed and practiced before being read aloud; (3) Teachers established a clear purpose; (4) Teachers modeled fluent oral reading when they read the text; (5) Teachers were animated and used expression; (6) Teachers included the students in discussion and thinking aloud throughout

the read aloud that focused the students on the identified purpose; (7) Connections were made to independent reading and writing.

The Polar Express was specifically chosen for the read aloud that I described. As we had already been studying the work of Van Allsburg, this text provided another example of the way that he wrote and illustrated stories. Students were also engaged in the topic because of the particular time of the year. Van Allsburg's books are well-written and tell rich and complex stories that invite discussion. Throughout the read aloud students were invited to participate by asking questions, making predictions, sharing thoughts, and noticing particular elements that were common in other Van Allsburg texts. This text was very familiar to me and I had previewed and practiced it many times. I was able to be a fluent reading model, demonstrating animation and expression. Although no specific assignments were given for students in their independent reading and writing, I did notice that students chose other Van Allsburg texts to read during independent reading time and that some elements that were noticed in his work were used in students' writing and illustrating. Specifically, Van Allsburg's signature element of hiding Fritz, the dog, in all of his books was mimicked in students' illustrations of their stories. As I considered the data collected for this dissertation, the seven habits of effective interactive read aloud identified by Flood et al. (2004) influenced the way that I considered the practice of read aloud.

Reading with Purpose

When I began this research I wanted to know how conscious teachers were about the potential of life-altering literature experiences that students could have during read aloud. I was interested in the ways that teachers modeled and taught literary reading, that is to say, modeling the thinking that readers do when they engage with literature. This is essentially

what Rosenblatt (1978) described as the *poem*: a literary event where the reader is an active, engaged participant seeking a rewarding experience. Nodelman and Reimer (2003) suggest that a rewarding experience that is pleasurable—similar to Rosenblatt’s *aesthetic* reading—needs to be taught. A teacher read aloud can be an ideal forum for such instruction.

Within the read aloud experience, participants have the opportunity to model and support each other’s development as readers. Teachers and students can do such things as think aloud, ask questions, make predictions, and articulate various observations. With specific reference to literary reading, Fish (1980) refers to this experience as being in an *interpretive community*. This suggests that the reader is both influenced and bound by the collective understandings of the community in which he/she exists. This community can both enrich the reading experience but may also mean that the community limits the meanings that are acceptable. For example, a text could have different meanings to two different readers but only to the extent that the meanings are acceptable to the community as a whole. The interpretive community of the read aloud provides opportunities for readers to be supported by both the adult as the “knowledgeable other” and by peers with different backgrounds, experiences, and perspectives. With Vygotsky’s (1978) “zone of proximal development” in mind, readers of differing abilities can participate fully because they are scaffolded and supported (Wood, 1980; Wood, Bruner, & Ross, 1976) by the community. This is consistent with current understandings of literacy as a social practice in which all forms of literacy are influenced by, and influencing of, the community in which they exist (Barton & Hamilton, 2000; Lave & Wenger, 1991; Street, 1995).

What I did not anticipate before I began this study, and what has taken on more importance, is the way that teachers can use read aloud and interpretive communities to

position students in relation to a text in ways that seem incongruent with literary reading. At this point, I should clarify my use of two terms that are central to this study: (1) children's literature, (2) and literary reading. For the purposes of this study, I am defining children's literature similarly to the way that Rosenblatt (1938) categorizes literature. She refers to those works written by the novelist, the short story writer, the poet, the dramatist, and the biographer. While the term *literature* is often equated to a value or quality aspect of the text as in reading *good literature*, or used to describe any work, as in *children's literature* I am using the term *children's literature* to identify texts of creative work rather than informative or non-fiction work. While children's literature is often defined as any text that has an intended child audience, I am purposely suggesting that science texts written for children belong to the genre of science writing rather than literature. This differentiation becomes critical when I begin to refer to disciplinary literacy work in which researchers suggest that each discipline has its own set of rules and ways of thinking about text. The way that we think when we are reading literature is referred to in this study as literary reading. Work by others such as Rosenblatt (1978), who refers to an *aesthetic stance* that can be taken by the reader regardless of the type of text, or Langer (1995) who refers to the experience of reading literature as *envisionment building*, helps to illustrate that the field of literature, children's literature, and literary reading is complex and often is not clearly defined. For that reason, the reader should keep in mind that for this study literary reading refers to the understanding of the structures of texts that are primarily imaginative. The understanding of these structures and the ways in which these stories connect to other stories has an impact on the way that we read. In addition, emotion and personal connection plays a different role in literary reading than it would if I was reading, for example, a manual on how to fix my car

when faced with malfunctioning brakes. Understanding the text and the purpose of each reading is important to the meaning making. While the argument could be made that all reading *could* be pleasurable, and all reading *could* be informative, the primary purpose of the text continues to play an important role. I suggest that even those people who choose to read the car manual for pleasure are actually thinking through the process that would be undertaken if they were to actually fix their brakes, they are informing themselves. It is less likely that they are taking pleasure in the way the words are put together or the anticipation of what might happen at the end. The structure of the text and the purpose of the reading position the reader for particular types of meaning making.

In addition to the text structure and inherent purpose of some types of text, meaning making can be manipulated by the teacher's set purpose. When a teacher reads aloud to his or her students and directs them to think in a particular way, students are more apt to respond to the text with this set purpose. This can be problematic if the children transfer only this way of thinking to their independent reading of literary text. If, for instance, during a read aloud the teacher directs the students to think about ways that they can help the environment instead of considering the character motivation, the students are more likely to focus on this during the read aloud. When students read independently, they may continue to look for ways to help the environment. This purpose may not be relevant to the next text and, therefore, the student will not be able to replicate the approach successfully with subsequent texts. During reading instruction teachers can provide students with opportunities to experience a wide variety of texts for a wide variety of purposes. These experiences will broaden the repertoire of meaning making strategies that readers may have

as they move through the school system and encounter texts in different disciplines in the Manitoba curriculum.

Manitoba context. Being an early-years teacher in Manitoba is a complex and challenging job, so efficiency is a valid concern. Researchers are encouraging teachers to consider broadened notions of language and literacy far beyond reading and writing. The overview of the Manitoba curriculum outlines the province's position with regards to literacy development:

Within the last two decades, English language arts educators have expanded the understanding of English language arts instruction. At all grades, the focus is on acquiring language and literacy skills through listening, speaking, viewing, and representing, as well as reading and writing. In keeping with the literacy demands placed on them, students now learn to read and produce a wide range of texts, including media, transactional, and literary text. (Manitoba Education, <http://www.edu.gov.mb.ca/k12/cur/ela/mbcur.html>)

Literacy is no longer solely in the domain of the English Language Arts curriculum document. The Manitoba science document states that students should become “increasingly scientifically literate individuals” (Manitoba Education and Training, 1999, p. 1.2), while in mathematics the students are expected to become “mathematically literate” (Manitoba Education, Citizenship and Youth, 2008, p. 5). As well, language and communication is central to other curricula that deal with technology, sustainability, social studies, and the arts.

With this broadened view of literacy and repeated references to literacy in other curriculum documents, it seems that literacy is everything and everywhere. With ideas of

integration, theme teaching, concept development, inquiry, discovery, and play, teachers can take literacy learning opportunities across the disciplines and make the most of each learning experience. This multi-tasking of learning events impacts the use of children's literature in the classroom. Reading *Just a Dream* by Chris Van Allsburg (1990) becomes a great opportunity to reinforce ideas of sustainability. *The King's Chessboard* (Birch, 1993) is an effective way to introduce factorial multiplication, and informational read alouds provide facts to students who may not be able to access those texts independently. Unfortunately, this interconnected thinking can result in teachers having mixed or unclear purposes for read aloud. While the teacher and child may be engaged in mediated experiences with literature, the teacher is not necessarily apprenticing and supporting the child in *literary* thinking. Draper, Broomhead, Jensen, and Siebert (2010) suggest that these texts are not authentic to the disciplines of math and science. Therefore, a read aloud such as the ones described above neither meet the requirements of discipline specific reading nor teach the literary reading that would be considered authentic with texts such as *The King's Chessboard* and *Just a Dream*. As Nodelman and Reimer (2003) observe:

Knowing how to engage with a text in ways that make the process enjoyable is not a natural and inevitable aspect of human minds . . . it needs to be learned.

Unfortunately, many children do not learn it, and many children do not in fact take much pleasure in literature. They prefer watching TV or playing basketball.

There is nothing wrong with TV or basketball, and some children will continue to prefer them even after learning more about how to read literature. But, without knowing how, they are deprived of making the choice. (p. 31)

As a reader of literature, I know how texts have enriched my life. I do not insist that everyone has that same passion for reading as I do, but as an educator, I have the responsibility of teaching children what they need to know to make that choice. As a researcher, I wanted to know if children were getting that choice in Manitoba schools. I sought to explore and clarify the purposes of read aloud in literacy programs and articulate what Manitoba teachers report that they are doing to develop literary competence in students through the read aloud of children's literature.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study is to describe current practices of read aloud that take place in Manitoba schools. Specifically, within the data I hoped to uncover the ways in which literature is being introduced to students and how the teacher mediates thinking about literature. The research questions were designed in order to allow me to learn about the factors that contributed to teacher decision-making regarding text choice and purposes of read aloud in the classroom.

Research Questions and Data Sources

The research questions were designed to enable me to look broadly at teacher read aloud practices and then move to more specific teacher decisions around text choice and instructional purpose.

1. To what extent is read aloud used in Manitoba classrooms?
 - a. Are there identifiable trends across grade levels, teacher gender, years of experience?
 - b. Are there relationships between the extent of read aloud and other literacy instructional practices within classrooms?

2. What texts are used in read aloud and for what purposes?
 - a. Is there evidence of intertextual connections?
 - b. Are particular types of texts more prevalent in certain classrooms?
 - c. Are there any patterns identifiable?
3. What are teachers' understandings about read aloud and how do these understandings drive their instructional decision-making?
4. What is the evidence that teachers employ read aloud as a means of developing literary understanding?

The answers to the questions were obtained through multiple data sources. A large-scale survey on literacy programming provided data from across the province from 236 respondents, while nine teachers kept read aloud logbooks for 20 school days. For each question the survey data and the logbook data provided me with information to describe the particular practices. The open question responses on the survey and semi-structured interviews with logbook participants were used to further explore the data.

Theoretical Framework

Social constructivist theory suggests that meaning is constructed in the context of the social groups to which one belongs. Shared meanings create a culture that is developed through active participation with others. Vygotsky (1978), as a major social constructivist theorist, placed language and social contact central to all learning, suggesting that literacy and culture develop interdependently. Early uses of language in a social context allow young children to use “mediated tools” on a social level to lead to higher level thinking skills. He wrote:

Every function in the child's cultural development appears twice: first, on the social level and, later on, on the individual level; first, between people (interpsychological) and then inside the child (intrapsychological). (p. 57)

This initial function on the social plane apprentices the child into the language and literacy practices of his or her particular society. This apprenticeship begins with a child's initial utterances and occurs long before formal schooling of literacy begins. The child with a more experienced mentor is apprenticed into the particular language and literacy practices of his or her community through talk and modeled support. With this knowledgeable other, meaning regarding learning and language is co-constructed between the child and peers/adults. Influenced by the work of Vygotsky, other theorists build on the idea of apprenticeship as a way to support learning in children. Wertsch (1985) uses the term *intersubjectivity* to describe the interaction between adult and child. The children are able to function on a higher level because of the support of adults. Vygotsky (1978) suggested that this is working within this *zone of proximal development* or the space between a learner's current level of performance and his or her potential level of performance. This support, through scaffolding, allows inner functions to form within children. In this way internal cognitive processes are directly influenced by the social interactions of children. Children become members of their community because of these interactions, which assist children in developing competence that allows them to function in the increasingly complex discourses necessary for their lives.

When a teacher reads aloud to a group of students, the experience with the literature is supported by a more knowledgeable other. The teacher is interacting with the text and the students while the students are interacting with the teacher, the text, and their peers. Reading

literature in this environment is a cultural experience. Gee (2004) suggests, “children who learn to read successfully do so because, for them, learning to read is a cultural and not primarily an instructed process” (p. 13). He defines a cultural process as “things that are so important to a cultural group that the group ensures that everyone who needs to, learns them” (p. 12), and that this process involves:

Masters (adults, more masterful peers) creating an environment rich in support for learners. Learners observe masters at work. Masters model behaviour accompanied by talk that helps learners know what to pay attention to. Learners collaborate in their initial efforts with the masters, who do most of the work and scaffold the learners’ efforts. Texts or other artifacts that carry useful information, though usually of the sort supplied ‘on demand’ or ‘just in time’ when needed, are often made available. The proper tools are made available as well, many of which carry ‘knowledge’ learners need not store in their heads. Learners are given continual verbal and behavioral feedback for their efforts. And finally, learners are aware that masters have a certain socially significant identity that they wish to acquire as part and parcel of membership in a larger cultural group. (p. 12)

Young readers must apprentice with “master” readers not just to learn to read, but to *become* readers. This means that pedagogical practice must go far beyond the instruction of reading skills. In fact, Gee suggests, “children who must learn reading primarily as an instructed process in school are at an acute disadvantage. It would be like learning to cook or play video games via lectures or decontextualized skill-and-drill. Possible, maybe, but surely neither effective nor easy” (p. 13).

Routman (2003) refers to this support as the “optimal learning model” or “demonstration, shared demonstration, guided practice, and independent practice” (p. 44).

She explains:

With expert assistance and encouragement learners gradually move from dependence to independence. The degree and intensity of assistance the learner requires to be successful determines how we structure our teaching. Inherent in the model is the engagement of the learner, which becomes likely because of the appropriateness and probable success of the task and the admiration the learner has for the teacher. (p. 44)

Within the classroom, the teacher assumes the responsibility of modeling and supporting the development of readers. My study focuses specifically on the type of modeling and support that young children need to become literary readers. As Fish (1980) noted, meaning making with literature is a social endeavor, not a personal one in which all meanings are acceptable. Different communities could come to different understandings of texts dependent on their own experiences and larger repertoires of text. Within the read aloud, these experiences and repertoires are shared, allowing for more meanings to be negotiated within the community.

My study is grounded in Vygotsky’s (1978) social constructivist theory and Gee’s (2004) work on reading as a cultural practice. Both claim that meaning making must be supported and that young children must be apprenticed into a community of literary readers. Learning to read literature is not a passive process but requires mediation by a knowledgeable other. Support and apprenticeship are critical to the instruction of literary reading in the early years.

Significance of the Study

In a thorough search of the literature, I found no large-scale studies describing the current practices of read aloud and children's literature text choice in Manitoba. While studies that have investigated teachers' understandings and use of children's literature have been undertaken in Ontario (Pantaleo, 2002) and Alberta (Bainbridge, Carbonaro, & Green, 2005), these studies have not linked the text choice to the particular pedagogical practice of teacher read aloud. The data and analysis of this study contribute to findings from those studies but also enhance understandings of read aloud through the examination of the instructional practice component. The potential audiences for this study include researchers, early-years teachers, administrators, and also teachers of literature in the higher grades who may be informed by a deeper understanding of the previous literature experiences of their students.

Scope of the Study

Current study in the field suggests that literacy is contextualized within the social environment in which it exists (Gee, 2004; Street, 1995). This study will be specific to Manitoba schools, but the nature of both current practices of instruction and Canadian schooling will allow some generalizability across other environments, and other Canadian provinces, most specifically those provinces that use similar curricula as outlined in the Western Canadian and Northern Protocol.

This study only explores the self-reported factors of time spent on read aloud, purpose, and text choice. The data do not describe any of the interactions that may take place between the student and the teacher during those read aloud sessions.

Overview of the Following Chapters

In chapter two I review the research and professional literature relevant to this study. That material includes current theories of literacy, particularly as they pertain to social constructivist and situated notions of literacy. I then present the research on the topic of read aloud, including particular focus on those studies that explore time spent of read aloud, read aloud purposes, and read aloud text choices. I also review the work on using children's literature in the classroom and the development of literary readers.

In chapter three I describe and explain the research methodology for the study. I describe the data sources, the procedures, and the participants. In the chapter I also describe the data analysis used in this study.

In chapter four I present and discuss the findings of the study in relation to the theoretical framework and the research questions. The presentation of these data is in narrative, tables, and charts.

In chapter five I review the findings and discuss the implications for practice, research, and theory. Finally, I identify the limitations of the study and identify possibilities for future research.

Chapter Two

Literature Review

In this chapter I first provide an overview of the debate over reading instruction in schools. I then situate that debate with our current understandings of literacy and literacy learning from multiple theoretical perspectives, particularly social constructivist and situated literacies. Based on these theories, I suggest that learning to read should involve specific instruction in a variety of types of reading. Readers who are successful with a range of reading behaviours will be able to increase the pleasure taken from the process, which should then help them become more successful readers. I then focus on research on teacher read aloud as a pedagogical process that promotes these positive reading behaviours.

Reading Instruction

Early reading instruction is the subject of much discussion and debate. Considerable pressure is placed on early years teachers to focus on reading achievement. Learning to read is often delegated to these early years in school as a watershed to more complex literacy practices that children must engage in to be successful school learners. This discussion of learning to read often considers reading as a discrete task that can be completed, mastered, and transferred. Street (1984) refers to this as an “autonomous” model of reading. In this model people would learn to read and then, for the rest of their lives, read. Instead, we can view reading as ongoing and spiraled learning, or a revisiting of similar concepts with increasing sophistication and complexity. Readers are always in the process of learning to read as they develop through different experiences within diverse disciplines. The work on disciplinary literacy, which explores the variety of ways that people must learn to read, is discussed later in this chapter. However, it is worth exploring ideas of traditional reading instruction as they continue to be common practice in the educational system.

Much of the research that focuses on learning to read was designed to determine successful ways of teaching beginning reading (e.g. Bond & Dykstra, 1967). Proponents of code-based approaches suggest that the focus of instruction needs to be on the alphabetic systems and decoding skills (Chall, 1983; Snow et al., 1996; Sweet, 1998). Often referred to as *Phonics First*, in the alphabetic approach reading is viewed as a centrally instructed process. Flesch (1981) made this comparison, “Learning to read is like learning to drive a car. You take lessons and learn the mechanics and the rules of the road. After a few weeks you have learned how to drive” (p. 3). On the other side of the debate, proponents of a meaning-based approach consider learning to read as a more natural process that occurs similarly to the way that oral language develops (Goodman, 1996).

If we extend Flesch’s driving metaphor into the natural process, Goodman might say that one would pick up the mechanics as one was driving. As with most things in education, there is almost always another way, or multiple ways, to consider the issue. Gee (2004) suggests that neither an instructed approach nor a natural approach to reading instruction provides an accurate picture of the development of a reader. He advocates that we consider learning to read as a “cultural process” (p. 11). He argues that written language is too recent in our history to “have become wired into our human genetic structure” (p. 11) in the same way that as oral language is. He also points out that considering reading and writing as natural processes would conclude that the majority of people in our society would be able to read successfully devoid of instruction. Similarly, reading instruction devoid of values, behaviours, and attitudes would be an equally ineffective way to develop readers.

Continuing with Flesch’s metaphor, in our society 16-year-olds begin the formal process of learning to drive. They learn the formal rules of the road and the mechanics of

moving the car, and then are given opportunities to practice. Before this instruction occurs, most 16 year-olds have decided that learning to drive is a valuable and worthwhile endeavor. They are highly motivated to learn to drive as they see driving as an initiation into adulthood, a passage to freedom. Very few of these 16-year-olds begin their first lesson without a fairly accurate knowledge of how driving a car works, even though they may never have done it themselves. They know where the key goes, what the mirrors are for, and general directions to most of the places they need to go. Teenagers without any of these experiences begin the formal instruction at a clear disadvantage. The fact that so many teenagers sit through dry outside-of-school instruction in driving is testament to the role that motivation to belong to the *driving club* plays in their learning. This can be considered in the context of reading instruction. While direct reading instruction in the mechanics of reading is desirable, students also benefit from opportunities to both see the vocabulary, behaviours, and ways of thinking of more expert readers through structures such as read aloud, and explore and practice the behaviours of readers through classroom structures such as independent reading. In a cultural model of reading instruction the teacher is not just the instructor of reading nor just the facilitator of reading experiences but is the model of reading behaviours and values. Gee's "cultural process" approach is supported with much of the research on current understandings of literacy.

Current Understandings of Literacy

Research indicates that the quality of student-teacher interactions has a significant impact on the academic achievement of students in the classroom (Hamre & Planta, 2007; Mashburn et al., 2008). In light of this research, the theories that I have considered for this study highlight the social nature of literacy. The overriding perspective of this research is

that literacy needs to be considered as social practice (Barton & Hamilton, 2000; Street, 1995) and learning as socio-cultural (Gee, 2004; Lave & Wenger, 1991; Moje, 2000). This premise that learning and literacy practices are deeply connected to the social contexts in which they take place requires an understanding of the ways in which newcomers are initiated into these practices.

Within the idea of reading as social practice, the theoretical framework for this study is based on work that explores notions of apprenticeship including reading as a cultural process and the work on disciplinary reading. I will explore the idea that literary reading could be considered as a disciplinary specific way of thinking about texts.

Reading instruction and current understandings. Becoming a reader requires an apprenticeship into the behaviours, attitudes, discourses, and beliefs of more experienced readers. As noted in chapter one, Gee (2004) suggests that reading is a cultural process that involves more than instruction in the mechanics of reading but also more than an exposure approach. Considering reading as a cultural process requires children to apprentice by observing while more knowledgeable others model the behaviours, attitudes, and values that are necessary to independently read. Using the gradual release of responsibility (Pearson & Gallagher, 1983) or an *I do, we do, you do* apprenticeship model, young readers are provided with the tools and the motivation to learn to read.

When schools focus on reading as an instructional process, it is in contrast to other aspects of children's lives. Often, when students are engaged in literacy communities outside of school, such as video gaming or social media, they are apprenticed into those communities in highly social and contextualized situations. Gee explains this contrast:

As schools turn reading into an instructed process, today's children see more and more powerful instances of cultural learning in their everyday lives in things like Pokémon and video games. Modern high tech society—thanks to media, technology, and creative capitalists—get better and better at creating powerful cultural learning processes. Schools do not. (p. 13)

It could be debated that what Gee really means is that schools are not creating *positive* powerful cultural learning processes. Students are, in fact, engaged in observing the ways in which teachers value and position reading in their own lives and this becomes the cultural model into which students place themselves—in either positive or negative ways. What we choose to instruct, how much time we invest in certain types of instruction, and the ways in which we instruct communicates messages to the novice regarding what is valued and important to learn. In order to teach students that reading is something that is “so important” to our “cultural group” that our group will ensure that everyone will learn how to do it, teachers need to teach the variety of ways that we use reading and also learn to take pleasure from reading. While there are many pedagogical practices that provide teachers an opportunity to teach reading as a cultural process, I believe that teacher read aloud is a good fit with an apprenticeship model of reading.

Read aloud as part of a cultural process. A read aloud event in the classroom provides the opportunity for children to function within the literacy practices of the school community on the social plane, with the next step being that the children take this experience with them when they independently read and think about reading.

The use of read aloud in the classroom gives students the opportunity to see that reading is valued and provides a structure for students to hear the language, vocabulary, and

ways of thinking of readers while at the same time giving them a forum to try out some of those behaviours themselves. The use of read aloud in the classroom is a long-documented practice, yet the fundamental aspects to read aloud connect to our new and current thinking on literacy, particularly that of a participatory culture. Jenkins, Clinton, Purushotma, Robison, and Weigel (2006) define a participatory culture as:

A culture with relatively low barriers to artistic expression and civic engagement, strong support for creating and sharing one's creations, and some type of informal mentorship whereby what is known by the most experienced is passed along to novices. A participatory culture is also one in which members believe their contributions matter, and feel some degree of social connection with one another (at the least they care what other people think about what they have created). (p. 3)

Ideally, during a read aloud, students are able to think aloud their response to text and also hear responses from both the teacher and peers. Students will be at differing levels of comfort and ability as they engage with these texts. The read aloud can provide opportunities for different levels of participation with little risk to the participants. Those students who can participate more fully could have the opportunity to share their thoughts and have them validated or challenged in a supportive environment. Students who are not able to participate as fully are able to listen to both the discussion and the feedback to the comments. They are able to work to their full potential as literary readers with this support.

Modeling different types of reading. In addition to considering how reading is instructed, it is important to consider what is being taught and learned. Learning to read and wanting to read are cyclically connected. I read because I am good at it, and I am good at it because I read. Children must be taught to take pleasure in reading in order for them to view

the activity as valued. Without this valuing it will not become part of their identity. Leland, Lewison, and Harste (2013) note that “reading aloud supports a ‘readerly identity’” (p. 21) and that part of this identity development involves seeing reading for pleasure modeled.

They note:

Enjoyment of a text being read aloud leads to people beginning to see themselves as individuals who are interested in reading and this, in turn, encourages them to read more often and to put more energy into their reading lives. (p. 21)

Teaching pleasure must include a mastery of skills and an effective apprenticeship with other readers. I have similar worries as Janks (2010) who asks, “How I wonder do parents and teachers who are not readers and writers themselves convince their children and their students that literacy matters both in and out of school?” (p. xiii). If teachers cannot convince children that reading matters, there is less chance that they will become readers. As a reader and a researcher I also recognize that I am proficient with many different types of reading. The way that I approach a novel is different to the way that I approach a scholarly text, and certainly different from the way that I approach a recipe. Knowing that these types of reading require different approaches has allowed me to be successful in different contexts. As a teacher, I can apprentice children into various discourses by making my different thinking processes explicit and transparent. One of the ways that I can do this is through a read aloud event.

Reading a variety of texts for different purposes. The idea of multiple literacies opens up the possibility that people will have varying degrees of literacy in many areas. A person would not be literate or illiterate but may have a high degree of literacy in physics and a much more limited degree of literacy when it comes to video games. Reading and

writing, in this view, cannot be considered as monolithic activities but as specific literacies that change depending on the particular literacy requirements of the context. It becomes not just learning to read but learning to read something for some reason. Different teachers may have strengths in different literacies and therefore would apprentice students into different ways of reading. This is particularly evident in high schools, where each discipline has a particular literacy. However, schools have often ignored these differences and instead tried to teach a *generic* type of literacy. Draper et al. (2010) write,

Generally, descriptions of content-area literacy either have focused narrowly on traditional print texts (which may be only tangentially related to the discipline) or have suggested interaction with particular disciplinary texts that is not consistent with the way in which disciplinary experts would read or write the texts. (p. 3-4)

The *generic* view of literacy also conflicts with the varied literacy practices that children and adolescents engage in outside of the classroom as they interact with varieties of texts and discourses (Moje, Overby, Tysvaer, & Morris, 2008). This contrast is problematic as schools struggle to engage children in school-based practices that seem disconnected to the ways in which they view text and meaning making outside of the school.

As noted, in schools, previous work in content area literacy focused on generic literacy activities and the idea that all teachers are teachers of reading (Artley, 1944). More current work encourages content area teachers to instruct students to read like, for example, a scientist, a historian, or a mathematician with each discipline making text choices, ways of thinking, and purposes explicit to students. This requires that teachers consider how we make explicit the different texts and different ways of thinking that are consistent with both academic disciplines and out of school literacy communities at all levels. The intent of this

explicit teaching is twofold: (1) to provide students with flexibility in the way that they view literacy; and (2) to provide the opportunity for students to be active critical participants in literacy communities rather than consumers or observers.

Shanahan and Shanahan (2008) refer to disciplinary literacy as an “emphasis on the knowledge and abilities possessed by those who create, communicate, and use knowledge within the discipline” (p. 2). The focus on active participation within the discipline is also stated by Draper et al, who warn that, “without these specialized literacies, students may be relegated to the position of reading and writing about what others are doing, rather than participating in the activities of creation, inquiry, expression, and problems solving” (p. 2). Both Shanahan and Shanahan and Draper et al. shift the thinking of literacy from *learning about* to *doing*. In the case of reading, students cannot just learn to read but must become active participants in a wide range of reading communities by understanding the particular texts that are authentic to the discipline and the particular ways of thinking and communicating within the discipline.

Read aloud and disciplinary literacies. Understanding that the eventual reading success of students is often dependent on having a broad range of literacies makes it important that students get the opportunity to consider various ways of reading by having them modeled through events like the teacher read aloud. In light of work in disciplinary literacies, these read aloud events can “engage and support” students in learning important things about a variety of “specialized texts.” When teachers read aloud an informative text on explorers, they can model their use of the table of contents and also think aloud their use of “healthy skepticism” (Nokes, 2010, p. 57) that often accompanies the reading of historical text. This read aloud looks and sounds different to the reading of a traditional fairy tale in

which teachers may model how they make connections to other texts in their repertoire and use those texts to predict what may happen in the story.

The read aloud event in a classroom becomes a central pedagogical practice that apprentices children into different communities of readers. The teacher's choice of text, setting or purpose, and method of read aloud can have a powerful influence on how children consider reading and themselves as readers.

While the use of read aloud in classrooms, particularly early years classrooms, often focuses on generic comprehension as a way to comprehend the meaning of the text, or focuses on a specific visible reading behaviour to observe, theories of disciplinary literacy suggest that it is the way of thinking specific to the discipline or the transaction between the reader and the text that should be modeled during these read alouds. For example, in *Encounter*, Jane Yolen (1996) tells the story from the point of view of a young Taino boy during first contact with Christopher Columbus. Approaching this text from a historical literacy perspective requires the reader to question the source of the information, to seek corroborating evidence, and to contextualize the story. Nokes (2011) refers to these as the “three heuristics—sourcing, corroboration, and contextualization” which are “used universally by historians and form the foundation of historical literacy” (p. 58). This is a different way of approaching the text than the way in which readers of literature may position themselves. A reader of literature may appreciate the use of repeated line, make connections to similar characters, and experience evoked emotion. The type of thinking that a teacher models during the read aloud exposes students to how they should approach that text and similar texts that they may read for similar purposes.

Becoming a literary reader. As students become familiar with different types of reading, they are more likely to feel connected to those particular literacy communities. As with all the other disciplines, becoming an effective and engaged literary reader requires experience with the particular texts, ways of thinking, and specific purposes of that discipline. These purposes may be different from other disciplines that children are exposed to. Sumara (2002) writes:

Because schools support intergenerational relationships developed explicitly around representing, imagining, and interpreting knowledge, they continue to function as important sites for creating insights into human experience. By creating pedagogical structures that include shared interpretations of literary engagements, I believe that schools can continue to push the boundaries of what is considered true about the world. (preface)

While many types of reading and writing can engage students with interpreting and making sense of the world, both Sumara (2002) and Langer (1995) describe the reading, writing, and interpreting of literature as a human endeavour that provides a particular way of thinking that is, not better or worse but, different than other types of communication.

Langer writes:

Through literature, students learn to explore possibilities and consider options for themselves and humankind. They come to find themselves, imagine others, value difference, and search for justice. They gain connectedness and seek vision. They become the literate thinkers we need to shape the decisions of tomorrow. (p. 1)

The teaching of literature becomes a vehicle not only to develop the attitudes and behaviours of readers but also to provide opportunities for children to critically approach texts and understand and challenge the cultural values that may be inherent in those texts. Without this instruction many theorists believe that children may be less prepared to be active critical participants in an ever-changing society (Gee, 2004; Langer, 1995; Sumara, 2002). Reading and talking about literature involves different negotiated meaning making and specific ways of thinking than other types of reading literacies. These processes of reading cannot be after-thoughts in literature instruction but central to the purposes identified by the teacher.

There has been considerable work that suggests that the particular ways of thinking that are developed as students engage with literature broadens the ways that they can interpret, analyze, and make meaning from text. Straw and Bogdan (1990) note that teachers must take into account the ways that meanings reside with the reader and within particular social contexts. Langer (1995) suggests that we need to consider the thinking that students may be doing when they read literature. Langer uses the term *envisionment* to describe that particular type of thinking. Her view supports and is supported by other theories of reader response in which the reader is viewed as an active influential part of the reading process (Rosenblatt, 1938; Sumara, 2002). The teacher's role is to help them "think about ideas, consider alternative views, modify and defend the more salient ones, clarify and distinguish their responses from others, and build interpretations—in other words, to become a more thoughtful reader" (Langer, 1995, p. 20).

These researchers suggest that reading literature is not the same as reading other types of texts. Therefore, the study of literature is not necessarily a focus on a text or a

particular set of texts but rather it is a focus on different ways of thinking about reading. Langer argues that literature classes are the one place “where such thinking can be systematically nurtured and developed throughout the school years” (p. 7). These differences must be explicitly taught to students. If all reading experiences are taught as being the same, students will have less opportunity to become skilled and flexible readers in their own independent reading lives.

Taking pleasure in reading. As noted in the previous section, readers can be taught to be active participants when reading. When readers are active participants in the reading process they are more likely to take pleasure from reading. When readers view the activity as pleasurable, they are more apt to repeat it and therefore become even more skilled. As Nodelman and Reimer (2003) observe:

Knowing how to engage with a text in ways that make the process enjoyable is not a natural and inevitable aspect of human mind . . . it needs to be learned. Unfortunately, many children do not learn it, and many children do not in fact take much pleasure in literature. They prefer watching TV or playing basketball. There is nothing wrong with TV or basketball, and some children will continue to prefer them even after learning more about how to read literature. But, without knowing how, they are deprived of making the choice. (p. 31)

As noted earlier, I have considered the term “children’s literature” as those fictional texts written with story structure. Other work on children’s literature defines it much more broadly as any works written with an implied child audience (e.g., Tunnell, Jacobs, Young, & Bryan, 2011). While Nodelman and Reimer refer to taking pleasure in literature, I suggest that the taking of pleasure is a fundamental aspect of many types of reading that adults do in

their daily life. As Nodelman and Reimer make clear, this specific purpose of pleasure needs to be learned and those particular behaviours need to be supported. Nodelman and Reimer (2003) write about the “pleasures of literature” and suggest that it is a “longstanding cliché of literary criticism that literature accomplishes two things for readers. It teaches and it pleases” (p. 22). This cliché suggests that pleasure is separate from any cognitive process that occurs during reading or “that the pleasure texts offer is just the spoonful of sugar that makes the medicine go down” (p. 23).

To suggest that pleasure happens when the reader is not learning or being helped to learn negates the understanding that doing something well and within the context of a structure involves both knowledge and response in order to be pleasurable. Consider the pleasure that one may take from either riding a roller coaster or downhill skiing. The thrill seeking may be similar in many ways as both involve a hint of fear that comes with considerable height and speed. The pleasure is different. The roller coaster rider is unable to influence or control his or her experience. A roller coaster rider can sit and have the experience imposed on him or her with very little control of either the ride or the ending. The downhill skier, on the other hand, can take pleasure in the mastery of skills that allow the skier to alter the course of the experience and to make each subsequent experience better by building on past runs. A child in a classroom can be exposed to literature as either a roller coaster rider or a downhill skier. A teacher could read a lovely story to a class, and they could enjoy it, but without mediation, the event will have minimal influence on subsequent stories and children are limited in their opportunities to become skillful readers of literature for pleasure.

Nodelman and Reimer (2003) list the pleasures of literature, which describe the activities that readers engage in while reading literature. Some of the activities may sound like the roller coaster version of pleasure such as, “the pleasure of experiencing sounds and images in and for themselves—as pure sensory activity outside and beyond the realm of shared meanings and patterns” (p. 25). Others far more closely resemble the pleasures of the downhill skier. For example, “The pleasure of recognizing gaps in repertoire and learning the information or the strategy needed to fill them, thereby developing further mastery” (p. 25) is clearly an active pleasure. Nodelman and Reimer’s definition of pleasure suggests that it is not a passive process but an informed and critical engagement with text transactions. Learning, talking about, and understanding text structurally, cognitively, psychologically, socially, and experientially (Beach, 1993) is likely to increase confidence and interaction with text. Confident, skillful readers are more likely to develop a habit of reading, regardless of the type of text or the discipline. These readers will also know that pleasure may take different forms depending on the text and the purpose. For example, when reading literature the reader can be compared to the downhill skier who enjoys the journey down the hill. While reading, the reader enjoys the journey through the text. The skier does not ski just to get to the bottom of the hill, nor does the reader read just to get to the end of the book. In another type of reading the purpose is not the journey but the final destination. Reading a manual that will help you fix your brakes is not likely to be a pleasurable, invigorating journey. However, the final product of that reading may be satisfying in a different way.

The teacher read aloud can be an effective pedagogical practice to develop confident, skillful readers who have observed that reading for a variety of purposes is a valued and valuable activity and replicate the observed behaviours in their own lives. In the following

section, I review research conducted on teacher read aloud. In this section I outline the ways that read aloud can be viewed in light of our current understandings of literacy and literacy learning.

Research Studies on Read Aloud

Read aloud has been described as “the single most important activity for building the knowledge for eventual success in reading” (Anderson, Hiebert, Scott, & Wilkinson, 1985, p. 23). This is unusually high praise in a field that rarely commits to any specific practice. This quote by Anderson et al. has appeared in almost all academic writing regarding read aloud for the past two decades contributing to the perception that read aloud is a common and pedagogically effective practice in schools.

Both within scholarly communities and through the advocacy of policy makers (Bredekamp, 1997) and political celebrities such as first ladies Barbara Bush and Hillary Clinton (Teale, 2003), read aloud has received considerable public and professional attention. Jim Trelease is probably the best-known advocate for parent read aloud. His book *The Read Aloud Handbook* has been reprinted six times and translated into many languages. Fox (2001) suggests that read aloud is “magic” and could be the solution to all reading difficulties that children may encounter.

In contrast, a study by Meyer, Wardrop, Stahl, and Linn (1994) suggests that read aloud is not sufficient in and of itself to show positive growth. They conducted a longitudinal study that followed approximately 650 students from entrance into kindergarten to the completion of grade six. Data were collected on home backgrounds, performance on tests of reading comprehension, and on classroom instruction. The data were collected through observations for several days each school year. The researchers examined the

relationships between the classroom activities and the performance of the students. The researchers found a “negative relationship between the amount of time adults spend reading to children in kindergarten and their reading achievement” (p. 80). This conclusion may be explained by considering the conclusions of Gambrell, Morrow, and Pennington (2000) who note, “it is the quality of the interaction that occurs during reading that results in positive effects, rather than just the storybook reading itself” (para. 22). They report that teacher read aloud sessions in classrooms are often not of sufficient quality to engage students fully and to maximize literacy growth. The quality of the read aloud event is impacted by the attitudes promoted and the interaction between the teacher and the student. The attitudes and interaction build on previously stated ideas of apprenticeship. When a teacher is modeling these attitudes or privileging certain types of reading, either consciously or unconsciously, the student is learning something about reading. Teale (2003) writes:

We should never believe that the children in our early childhood classrooms will learn to read merely by being read to—no matter how high the quality of the books or how engaging the reading. There is much more to teaching children to read than simply reading to them. But reading to children does help them develop the knowledge, strategies, and dispositions that are fundamental aspects of becoming literate. Read alouds can easily become filler activities, which are done automatically and to not much effect. Like anything we do in our efforts to read to children, it is not the procedures of an instructional activity that make a difference; it is the principal way in which the activity is woven into the fabric of the classroom and addressed to the needs of the children that makes it significant. (p. 135-136)

The oft quoted statement Anderson et al. regarding read aloud being the “single most important activity” in light of the findings by Meyer et al., Gambrell et al., and Teale may suggest that the activity of read aloud can be important in both promoting positive reading attitudes or it could be an important activity that sends very different messages to students about reading. The *way* that the read aloud is woven into the fabric of the classroom has the power to impart particular values to the students in these classrooms.

Research on amount of time invested in read aloud. Teachers may choose to schedule read aloud into their timetable or engage in read aloud at non-scheduled times. These non-scheduled times may include integrating read aloud into another content area or choosing to do read aloud based on the time available. Decisions regarding when read aloud is employed also include the frequency and length of read aloud events.

Dickinson, McCabe, and Anastaspoulos (2003) conducted a longitudinal study examining the read aloud practices in which teachers were engaged. They made observations of 99 classrooms to determine how much time was spent on adult to child reading. While a considerable amount of time was invested in two classrooms where a teacher read for 45 minutes and another read 8 books in one day, no read aloud was observed in 66 classes. In the classrooms where read aloud did occur the average amount of time spent reading books was 9.56 minutes per week. They also reported that 45% of teachers planned to spend 1.5% or less of their weekly class time reading aloud. They concluded that:

Group book reading often occurs only on selected days of the week, and is often used as a transitional activity—a means to “hold” children while another activity is being prepared—with the content of the reading being determined by the vagaries of the

moment. Book reading may even be dropped from the school day if the children are too energetic or the weather too inviting. (p. 105)

Other studies that considered the extent to which read aloud occurred in classrooms have conflicting and varied results. LaPointe (1986) reported that only half of grade four teachers engaged in read aloud regularly. Similar findings were reported by Hall (1971) who found that fewer than half of teachers studied read to children daily and by Morrow (1982) who concluded that the teachers in a pre-kindergarten and kindergarten study read only 12 stories on average over a four week period. Morrow and Brittain (2003) surveyed 300 pre-kindergarten to grade five teachers regarding their read aloud practices. With the exception of 8% of grade four and five teachers, all reported reading to their students, often four or five times per week. However, they also found that the frequency of read aloud declined as the grade increased. Jacobs, Morrison, and Swinyard (2000) surveyed 1874 elementary teachers and asked them to report on the read aloud that they had done in the last 10 days of teaching. They found that teachers read for at least 10 minutes two days per week. They also found that the time for read aloud declined as the grade level increased and the text choice for read aloud changed depending on the grade.

It is revealing to note that research reveals that read aloud is being done to varying degrees in classrooms, challenging assumptions that this practice is a common and regular occurrence in classrooms at any level. In light of an apprenticeship model of reading instruction, this research suggests that students are having varied opportunities to observe teachers read and model reading within the classroom. While Meyer et al. note that it is the quality of these interactions rather than the extent that is important, Gee (2004) would suggest that time is necessary in order for the critical stages of apprenticeship in which

“learners observe masters at work. Masters model behaviour accompanied by talk that helps learners know what to pay attention to” (p. 12).

Research on the purposes of read aloud. Not only is it important to consider what the learner may be paying attention to during the read aloud, but also it is critical to note how the teacher views the read aloud and the effect that it may have on apprenticing readers. The text becomes a vehicle to support a varied number of purposes. As Nodelman and Reimer (2003) write:

Although stories and poems play a prominent role in the education of children, literature itself is rarely the subject of teaching—at least not in North America. Young children reading *Charlotte’s Web* might be asked to develop their language skills by inserting vocabulary words into webs made of twine and hung in the classroom, or to expand their creativity by exploring what it feels like to try looking radiant, or to build their knowledge by developing an interest in the habits of spiders. But in American and Canadian classrooms, they’re seldom asked, as they are more often in Britain, Australia, and elsewhere, to consider a text as a text—to explore the ways in which it provides the pleasure of literature. (p. 30)

In many cases, as Nodelman and Reimer (2003) note, the piece of literature is used for learning that is not focused on a literary understanding of the text. Many research studies on read aloud attempt to measure the effect of read aloud on some of these other learning objectives. While many of the findings suggest that reading stories to children does have a positive impact on particular aspects of reading behaviours, those cases often isolate one aspect.

Studies that focus on one aspect of reading. In many reports and studies, the benefits of read aloud are specific to visible reading behaviours. *The National Research Council Report* (Snow, Burns, & Griffin, 1998) concludes that read aloud promotes the development of comprehension skills. Other studies focus on specific instructional strengths of read aloud such as developing vocabulary. Wasik, Bond, and Hindman (2006) conducted a nine-month study in two high poverty areas with three- and four-year olds. Using a control group (six teachers and 68 students) and an intervention group (10 teachers and 139 students) in which the focus was on teacher training, pre- and post-tests were conducted. While both groups used similar texts, the intervention group teachers were being trained in reading and oral language strategies and encouraged to use repeated readings of read aloud texts. Quantitative results found that the intervention group had a larger expressive vocabulary ($d=0.44$) and a larger receptive vocabulary ($d=0.73$) than the control group. Wasik and Bond (2001) conducted a similar study to Wasik, Bond, and Hindman. They collected data from 121 four-year-olds from low-income families. Two teachers and 61 students were in the intervention group and two teachers and 60 students in the control group. The intervention lasted for 15 weeks and included training teachers in interactive read aloud techniques. Students were assessed pre- and post-intervention using the Peabody Picture Vocabulary Test. Students in the intervention group scored significantly better on the test than those in the control group.

Other studies have shown similar positive results when using read aloud to teach particular skills. These skills range from teaching about expository text structures (Smolkin & Donovan, 2003) to the general language development of preschool children (Duke, 2000; Whitehurst & Lonigan, 1998).

While these studies do report positive results from using read aloud in the classroom, the isolation of particular aspects of reading is somewhat problematic when considering literacy as social practice. Using literature to develop vocabulary or to develop oral language supports Nodelman and Reimer's assertion that the text is not considered as text or being used to teach the pleasures of reading literature but is used as a tool to teach other reading behaviours. While other reading activities may address the literary aspects of texts, it is worth considering the values and behaviours that students are having modeled to them through these very focused interventions.

Studies that focus on multiple purposes for read aloud. A study by Morrow and Brittain (2003) looked at both frequency and purpose of read aloud. They distributed 500 surveys to teachers from pre-kindergarten to grade eight regarding read aloud. They found, "Teachers of younger grades reported that they read to their students in order to instill in them a joy of reading, to motivate them to read, and to connect literacy to content areas" (p. 146). They also found that teachers used read aloud to scaffold independent reading strategies and that they used read aloud for a variety of overlapping purposes.

Additional research supports read aloud as a valuable opportunity for developing early literacy skills that contribute to success as children move into independent reading (Bus, vanIjzendoorn, & Pellegrini, 1995; Yaden, Rowe, & McGillivray, 2000). Bus et al. (1995) conducted a quantitative meta-analysis of studies related to parent pre-schooler reading. The studies included in the meta-analysis focused on frequency of read aloud to preschoolers. The researchers were looking for evidence that frequency of book reading to young children made a difference with reading/language development. They concluded,

“Our analysis provides a clear and affirmative answer to the question of whether or not storybook reading is one of the most important activities for developing the knowledge required for eventual success in reading” (p. 150).

Sulzby and Teale (1991) conducted a three-year longitudinal study of emergent book reading and parent-child interaction across income and cultural groups. Eight families were followed in Texas. Read aloud sessions were tape recorded and analyzed. Findings included that reading aloud to students helps to internalize stories and that children spontaneously engage in dramatic retellings of those stories. Children also made connections between oral and written language that impacted their overall literacy development.

Research on read aloud for literary reading. In several studies, researchers have considered the effect of read aloud on the development of effective and engaged literary readers. Closely connected to the research questions of this study is one conducted by Stevens, VanMeter, and Warcholak (2010). They studied kindergarten and first grade students in three elementary schools and measured the effect of read aloud on the understanding of story elements. Using an experimental design, both the control group and the intervention group used the same texts and participated in read aloud daily throughout the school year. Pre-and post-tests were given on the Metropolitan Achievement Test focusing on story structure, recall, and comprehension. Children in the intervention group scored approximately half a standard deviation higher on free recall measures of literary elements. They concluded that the focus of instruction during read aloud is often on decoding and fluency rather than instruction that would close the gap between students with literary competence and those without. Their conclusions support the notion that instruction is necessary for literary development. They write:

This is particularly important when it comes to the teaching of story structure because some may believe that knowledge of story structure develops naturally through exposure to literature. Our findings, however, show that exposure alone is not sufficient to develop this strategic knowledge to the degree possible. Teachers in both SSI [story structure intervention] and comparison classrooms read the same stories, and read alouds occurred with the same frequency across classrooms throughout the school year. If exposure alone were sufficient, no differences would have been detected on the posttest performances of the two groups. (p. 186)

They also concluded “unfortunately, many teachers lack knowledge of how to maximize the learning potential of storybook read alouds with young children” (p. 162). As part of a reading program, read aloud can be of benefit but only if it engages students directly and explicitly with text. In the studies that focused on particular interventions, the researchers saw growth in those areas because the focus of the read aloud was clear and explicit. Their study indicates that most read alouds happening naturally in classrooms are not done well enough, or with clear enough instructional focus, to encourage literacy growth.

Other studies also found that teachers ignored the literary merit of the texts that they shared with their students (Allen, Freeman, Lehman, & Scharer, 1995; Baker, Scher, & Mackler, 1997; Cain, 1996; Lehman, Freeman, & Allen, 1994; Williams, 2000). Galda et al. (2000) concluded in their meta-analysis that “literature is present, but often treated as invisible” (p. 374). The variety of approaches and purposes of read aloud in the classroom disallows, as Meyer et al. stated, the assumption that read aloud in and of itself is an effective instructional activity for literacy and literary growth. It is the type of interaction

that influences the effectiveness more than the event itself (Bus, 2003; Dickinson & Caswell, 2007; Dickinson & Smith, 1994).

Some researchers focus on the ways that literary development is demonstrated by young children during read alouds. Sipe (2007) identified five categories of literary understanding— analytical, intertextual, personal, transparent, and performative. Children respond *analytically* when they rely on cues in the text and illustrations to make meaning about the story. *Intertextual* responses demonstrate a young reader’s ability to connect to other stories or cultural artifacts that they have experienced. When children use experiences from their own lives to connect to plot or characters in stories, Sipe refers to these as *personal* responses. *Transparent* responses are described by Sipe similarly to what Rosenblatt refers to as the aesthetic experience, when children are living through the text. Finally, *performative* responses include a children’s manipulation of the text to extend their own imagination. Sipe suggests that children’s ability to respond to read aloud text is connected to their developing literary understandings. Adomat (2010) used Sipe’s five categories of literary understanding to analyze the responses of eight children in a diverse second grade classroom in which the students all required literacy support. The qualitative, descriptive, and naturalistic study included weekly small group read alouds by the classroom teacher over a six-month period. The data were analyzed by categorizing the oral responses using Sipe's five categories. Results showed that the students used a variety of responses. Analytical responses and performative responses were used most often—with each being recorded 33% of the time; personal responses were noted in 26%; intertextual connections were made in 6% of the responses; and transparent responses were noted in only 2% of the comments. Adomat concluded that teachers need to be open to a variety of responses by

students and that “a dialogic approach to read-aloud discussions is important in that it creates a collaborative environment for struggling readers that builds on the strength of the students in the group” (p. 219). During the teacher read aloud, students have the opportunity to participate with peers who are able to demonstrate a variety of levels of literary understandings. This collaboration among students enriches the experience and provides models of responses for those students who require additional support.

Several studies have concluded that when read aloud has a clear purpose and an effective presentation, it can result in effective literary learning. Pantaleo (2007) builds on Mercer’s concept of “interthinking” which she explains as “using talk to think collectively, to engage with others’ ideas through oral language” (p. 439). Pantaleo engaged in a nine-week study with 20 grade one children. During the study, the children listened to the researcher read eight picture books. Each picture book was first read to small groups and then re-read to the class as a whole. Pantaleo found that during discussions, children used their oral language for “scaffolding interpretations, extending understandings, exploring significances, and constructing storylines” (p. 445). She concluded “teachers need to select materials and design thoughtful and engaging activities that provide opportunities for children to use language for multiple purposes” (p. 445).

Hadjioannou and Loizou (2011) conducted a qualitative study of one-to-one booktalks between kindergarten and grade one students and preservice teachers. Two groups of preservice teachers shared a book with a student, with one group of preservice teachers receiving “more thorough instruction on book selection and on book talk strategies” (p. 58). The researchers categorized the book talks based on the type of talk that the pairs engaged in: (1) recitation booktalks which followed an initiation-response–evaluation pattern; (2)

‘true’ booktalks which, “match the descriptions of effective literary discussions depicted in the literature” (p. 73), and (3) awkward booktalks with preservice teachers dominating the conversation. The analysis found that those preservice teachers who had received further instruction did slightly more true book talks and fewer recitation and awkward book talks.

An interesting finding from the study related to the types of books that were chosen:

Though poorly reviewed books were present across all booktalk categories, their frequency was considerably higher in recitation booktalks. Possibly because of their singular focus on the moral of stories and their treatment of books as tools for skills instruction, the prospective teachers who led recitation booktalks were often compelled to select certain kinds of books, and not books recognized for their literary quality. (p. 71)

Similarly, often the books that are chosen to use for reading instruction do not provide students with the kind of *literary quality* that engages, motivates, and provides models for good literary reading. The repetitive and simple structure of controlled vocabulary texts may support alphabetic knowledge, but they do not encourage the type of deep thinking necessary to build reading behaviours. As noted earlier it is often children who struggle to learn these decoding skills who are left with simple, boring texts while others move on to richer stories. In her work on rewritten Beatrix Potter tales, Mackey (1998) explains that what is implicit in this watering down of text is:

The idea that first you learn about reading from a text which fills in the gaps for you, then you progress to the more sophisticated text where there is room for you to make your own inferences. This assumption would appear to work on the same principle as an exclusively bottom-up phonics-based approach to early

reading: first you acquire a repertoire of bits and pieces, then you learn about assembling them. This kind of approach degrades the importance of how readers make meaning. (p. 50)

Rather than supporting reading, this divide may in fact discourage developing readers. Very few young children would continue to be interested in soccer if they were forced to master all the skills before they were given the opportunity to play an actual game. Similarly, learning to read without meaning making makes it difficult for children to maintain motivation.

Applegate and Applegate (2010) worked with a sample of 443 children in grades two to six and studied two groups of readers: (1) those who could recall what they read and who demonstrated the inclination to think deeply about it; and (2) those who could recall what they read but who did not demonstrate the inclination to respond thoughtfully to the text (p. 227). They administered the Motivation to Read Profile (Gambrell, Palmer, Codling, & Maszzoni, 1996) and the Critical Reading Inventory (Applegate, Quinn, & Applegate, 2008). While the results suggested that the inclination to respond thoughtfully to text affects the reading motivation, they also concluded that “a disturbingly large number of elementary school children have little use for reading and a limited inclination to think deeply about what they read” (p. 231). They also found that ability to read and motivation to read were not as closely linked as may have been thought, as they concluded, “We were both surprised and dismayed by the number of children in our study who viewed themselves as ‘good readers’ but who harboured such palpable disdain for reading itself and for the role that it might play in their lives” (p. 231). Finally, their findings suggest that “it is just as likely that the level of intellectual challenge and the raising of expectations for deep thinking

are the factors that can turn the tide and raise the motivation of readers of both genders” (p. 231).

The research on literary response suggests that not only are young readers capable of deep thinking about text, but such deep thinking must be taught and encouraged as a way of creating a cultural experience that children take pleasure in and with. Access to these texts can be provided through thoughtful and purposeful teacher read aloud. Suggesting, as Fox (2001) does, that the practice is magic negates the extensive research reported in this dissertation that highlights the need for effective pedagogical decision-making. Teacher knowledge and intent influences the effectiveness and is a major factor in the time efficiency of reading to children. In order to ensure effective read alouds, teachers must make purposeful, thoughtful, and informed decisions regarding how, what, and why they will read aloud to students. Copenhaver (2001) notes that in many schools prescribed literary programs are reducing the time that teachers can engage effectively with teacher read aloud. These “rushed read alouds” become an exercise in Initiation/Response/Evaluation (Cazden, 1988), in which the teacher highly controls the read aloud and limited time is given for thoughtful questions or discussion.

What becomes apparent in this review of the literature is that, in order to have effective interactions about text, teachers need to be knowledgeable and reflective in the decisions that they make regarding read aloud. Effectiveness is linked to thoughtful establishment of purpose, method, and text choice.

Research on teachers’ beliefs, knowledge, and practices. Studies indicate that the multiple uses of children’s literature in the classroom can lead to a dilution of the literary elements or focus on texts. These studies also support the findings in the reviews that

teachers' understanding and instructional practices are foundational in the way that literature is used in the classroom. O'Sullivan and McGonigle (2010) presented the findings of a national project in England called *The Power of Reading*. This project involved 41 separate projects running over five years that provided professional development to increase teachers' knowledge of children's literature and ways that children's literature can be used in classrooms. The project was driven by findings that "teachers attending courses and conferences seemed to be unfamiliar with a wide range of children's literature," and that "it seemed that only a minority of teachers had the motivation or time to read children's literature and that there was little explicit encouragement at that time in professional development to use whole texts as the basis for literacy teaching" (p. 1). The *Power of Reading* project involved 900 schools, 1350 teachers and over 33000 students. The project provided a yearlong professional development as well as online and print resources. As a mixed methods study, data were collected through questionnaires, semi structured interviews, reading histories, data sheets, video, photographs, and sound recordings. The study concluded that increasing teachers' knowledge about children's literature resulted in increased students' reading achievement and improved attitudes towards reading. Teachers were asked to consider the attitude and achievement of students in relation to reading. The four categories were: (1) can and do read; (2) can but don't read; (3) can't but try to read; or (4) can't and don't read. Movement between the categories was tracked and the percentage of 'can and do' readers changed from 50% to nearly 80% during the project year. In addition, over 67% of children made two or more levels of reading progress as measured by the National Curriculum. The researchers concluded that "children's engagement with books and reading for their achievement as readers" is impacted by "professional

development which extends teachers' knowledge of both children's books and creative pedagogies" (p. 59).

Another British study also looked at the relationship between use of children's literature in the classroom and teacher knowledge. Cremin, Mottram, Bearne, and Goodwin (2008) explored "teachers' reading habits and preferences, investigating their knowledge of children's literature, and documented their reported use of texts" (p. 449). As they noted, research into new texts and technologies and their uses in literacy instruction has increased in the last few years while "much less attention had been paid to more traditional forms of children's literature" (p. 450), and this study attempted to address this imbalance. The researchers collected quantitative and qualitative questionnaire responses from 1200 British primary teachers. The researchers concluded that teachers relied on a very narrow range of authors and texts. When asked to name six "good" children's authors, only 48% of respondents could complete the task with 10% naming only two, one, or no authors. The authors who were named were a narrow range of well-known authors such as Roald Dahl, J.K.Rowling, and Michael Morpurgo. Surprisingly, the study found that primary teachers' knowledge was poorest in the area of picture books as 62% of respondents could name only two or fewer picture book authors or illustrators. Cremin et al (2008) suggest:

It is questionable whether they [teachers] know a sufficiently diverse range of writers to enable them to foster reader development and make informed recommendations to emerging readers with different needs and interests. The lack of professional knowledge and assurance with children's literature, which this research reveals, and the minimal knowledge of global literature indicated has potentially serious consequences for all learners. (p. 458)

Two broad surveys of the use of children's literature in Canadian classrooms have been conducted. The first, by Pantaleo (2002), investigated the use of children's literature in elementary schools. This large-scale survey of Ontario elementary teachers resulted in 1010 responses. The participants were asked to respond to questions on the use of genres, informational text, traditional literature, and Canadian texts. The quantitative data were analyzed statistically while open-ended questions were analyzed for patterns. Pantaleo found inconsistency between respondents' beliefs about the importance of using Canadian literature and the actual use of it. She concluded that while:

Nearly all respondents indicated that they believed it important to use Canadian literature in their teaching and provided a variety of reasons to support their opinions; data from the survey questions presented in this article and elsewhere indicated minimal use of Canadian literature by many teachers and teacher-librarians. (p. 224)

She noted that knowledge of literature may be a limitation to choice and that the decline of the teacher librarian in schools "may have influenced the availability and use of children's literature in schools" (p. 224). These findings suggest that teachers need support in choosing and using children's literature in classrooms and that the teacher librarian may have an important role in providing this support.

Bainbridge, Carbonaro, and Green (2005) developed a similar survey instrument that was sent to elementary schools in Alberta. Each principal of the 275 schools who volunteered to participate invited one teacher teaching grades K-6 to complete the survey. The data of the 170 completed surveys were analyzed descriptively. Teachers were asked to respond to questions about what literature is used in classrooms, what Canadian literature

teachers are familiar with, what Alberta literature teachers are familiar with and what were their beliefs on the importance of using Canadian literature. With similar results to Pantaleo (2002), the researchers concluded that although teachers believed that it is important to use Canadian literature, they do not appear to use it extensively in their classrooms nor are they knowledgeable about Canadian literature. When it was used, it was selected based on the content or topic that it could teach to the students rather than based on the literary merit. The researchers end with a series of questions for further study:

Could it be that teachers are so pressured for time that they focus only on how books can be used to teach—not on the aesthetic experience of reading, or on the big ideas literature contains and that challenge us to think in new ways? Do teachers read novels written for students in the upper elementary grades? Do they read novels aloud to their students? We need to know if teacher education programs in Canada adequately prepare teachers to make informed book selections on behalf of their students and whether there is a focus on Canadian materials. (p. 324)

The research on children's literature in the classroom indicates that literature texts are used for a variety of purposes. This variety results in a dilution or exclusion of the use of literature as literary text and therefore limits the development of literary competence in young readers. The research also indicates that teachers have limited training and knowledge in the field on children's literature which results in limited exposure of their students to a variety of texts.

Children's literature in classrooms. The following section reviews the studies that researchers have undertaken to consider the uses of children's literature in the classroom.

For the purposes of this study, I am interested in the use of children's literature in the classroom as "a text" and the ways that teachers use that text to provide instruction about literature. Two decades ago, Walmsley and Walp (1989) investigated how elementary teachers were using literature in the classroom. With 74 participants, they attempted to discover the philosophies and practices that underlie the use of literature in the elementary classroom. They concluded that, while children's literature was used for a variety of purposes and teachers expressed a strong belief in the use of literature, a variety of different philosophies guided them when putting these beliefs into practice. Walmsley and Walp categorized these philosophies as: (1) *academic*—focusing on the classical nature of literature; (2) *literacy skills*—focusing on the mastery of reading skills by practicing with literature; (3) *romantic*—focusing on children choosing and directing their own reading; (4) *cognitive-developmental*—focusing on literary problem solving; and (5) *emancipatory*—focusing on the use of literature for social and political change (p. 6). Walmsley and Walp saw little evidence of academic or emancipatory philosophy and heard the most examples of romantic philosophy and literacy skills philosophy. The teachers stated that their main purpose of read aloud was to increase "pleasure and enjoyment" (p. 9) and that the other purpose was to teach the visible behaviours of reading independently. These two types of philosophies parallel the instructional paradigm processes identified earlier in this chapter. Reading is either seen as an instructed process or a natural process. Walmsley and Walp also found that teachers identified the use of word of mouth or childhood favourites as the main influences on their book selection (p. 8).

A decade after Walmsley and Walp, a review by Galda, Ash, and Cullinan (2000) attempted to address the “multidisciplinary nature of children’s literature, present a definition, and suggest an organizing principle for research” (p. 361). They noted that the study of children’s literature in university may be offered in English departments, in schools of library science, or in education faculties. This range of scholarship provides a broad base of research but also dilutes the focus of children’s literature use in the classroom. As Galda et al. (2000) note, “research on children’s literature also overlaps with research in other areas, such as research on emergent literacy, literature based instruction, reading comprehension, reading motivation and attitudes, and response to literature” (p. 362). In their review of the literature, they selected studies “that focus on the texts of children’s literature or on children’s literary understandings” (p. 362) similar to the focus of this study.

A particular section of Galda et al.’s (2000) literature review focuses on research that deals with teachers’ beliefs and practices in regards to children’s literature. Several studies that they cite suggest that while teachers believed in the value of children’s literature in the classroom, they failed to recognize or value the literary merit of the texts for instructional purposes. Studies also found that there is a lack of critical examination of texts that are used in classrooms resulting in an under-representation of “ethnic minorities, the elderly, women, and the physically challenged” (p. 374). While being exposed to a text children may be asked to consider the word families and recall the main events in the story from a literal perspective but not be asked to infer, predict, connect, or be critical of text.

Galda et al. (2000) concluded by noting the increasing field of study around children’s literature that includes “a diverse set of methodologies and theoretical

perspectives” and that it has become enmeshed in “the greater body of reading research” (p. 374). As they note:

Literature is present in many studies of literature-based classrooms or of reading comprehension but often not attended to as a literary text for study.

Comprehension is of text rather than particular text, and literature-based instruction is seen as a set of generic strategies rather than related to particular readers and particular texts. Literature is present, but often treated as invisible.

(p. 374)

In another review, Galda and Laing (2003) considered the uses of children’s literature in social studies and language arts. Reviewing articles and books that provide instructional suggestions for teachers in the use of literature they found that while most resources published in the last 20 years supported a transactional approach to literary texts, the methods used in schools were not consistent with such an approach. They conclude that, “significant problems arise when teachers attempt to use one piece of literature to simultaneously serve multiple purposes of both strategy instruction and response oriented goals” (p. 272). Similarly, in social studies classrooms, teachers used literature as a way to teach concepts and contents while ignoring the aesthetic responses of the students towards particular texts. Galda and Laing conclude “a lack of consideration of stance and of a distinction between literature that invites an aesthetic stance and literature that invites an efferent stance works against the goal of engaging readers” (p. 274).

Summary of the Literature Review

This chapter has provided an overview of the debate over reading instruction in the schools. I have situated this debate within current understandings of literacy as social practice and situated within particular contexts. I have suggested that teachers need to apprentice young readers into a diverse set of reading communities. In order to belong in these communities, readers need to recognize the particular texts, ways of thinking, and purposes of reading that guide those who are experts in these disciplines. I have also connected the research on reading motivation with pleasure and suggested that readers who feel successful will take pleasure in reading and that they will feel successful with effective instruction in a variety of reading behaviours.

Teacher read aloud in the context of learning as a social activity suggests that the pedagogical act of teacher read aloud is an effective learning environment for children to learn about reading and texts. It also suggests that teachers are making these pedagogical decisions within a social environment that influences decision-making regarding the time that they spend on read aloud, the purpose that they identify, and the texts that they choose for read aloud.

Within the classroom setting, teachers control several factors that influence the literary development of students. The first is the choice of text. The research suggests that most teachers are not confident in their knowledge of children's literature or that the knowledge is not always based on literary quality of text. Texts are often chosen for a variety of overlapping purposes and do not necessarily relate to aesthetic reading or to literary instruction. Secondly, teachers control the instructional setting in which children are exposed to literary texts. The decisions that they make regarding time, place, format, and

purpose have an impact on the literary development of children. The following chapter describes the method that will be used to investigate these factors in Manitoba schools.

Chapter Three

Methodology

In this chapter I present the research design of the study that I employed to investigate the following research questions:

1. To what extent is read aloud used in Manitoba classrooms?
 - a. Are there identifiable trends across grade levels, teacher gender, years of experience?
 - b. Are there relationships between the extent of read aloud and other literacy instructional practices within classrooms?
2. What texts are used in read aloud and for what purposes?
 - a. Is there evidence of intertextual connections?
 - b. Are particular types of texts more prevalent in certain classrooms?
 - c. Are there any patterns identifiable?
3. What are teachers' understandings about read aloud and how do these understandings drive their instructional decision-making?
4. What is the evidence that teachers employ read aloud as a means of developing literary understanding?

As stated in chapter one, the purpose of this study was to describe current practices of read aloud that take place in Manitoba schools. This chapter includes a description of the context, the study procedures, the participants, the data sources, and the data analysis.

Research Design

With my experience as a classroom teacher, support teacher, teacher librarian, administrator, and teacher educator, I entered the study aware of the complex factors that would have an impact on my data collection. Teachers are under pressure to add to their already busy days, and time must be used efficiently and effectively. They must also navigate the competing paradigms in education. The *reading wars* and accompanying debates between *phonics first* and *whole language* discussed in chapter two had an impact on my own practice as a reading specialist. A classroom teacher usually employs aspects of multiple paradigms in order to best meet the needs of diverse groups of students.

While in research it is sometimes possible and even desirable for a researcher to investigate from one position or another, being aware of the reality of classroom teaching, in this study I chose to employ aspects from more than one research paradigm. Traditionally, educational researchers have aligned themselves with one of the major research paradigms, quantitative or qualitative (Guba & Lincoln, 1994). For this study, I chose a mixed-methods approach. Mixed methods research is a relatively new and developing field (Bergman, 2008; Creswell, 2003; Johnson & Owuegbuzie, 2004). Bergman (2008) acknowledges that mixed methods are experiencing increased popularity in social, behavioural, and related sciences. Creswell and Plano Clark (2007) suggest that the actual history of mixed methods began in the 1950s. The philosophical stance and methods used in mixed methods research formed and gained interest throughout the 1960s and into the 1980s. While purists of both quantitative and qualitative stances challenged the assumption that the paradigms could be combined (Guba & Lincoln, 2005), the 1980s saw the beginning of formalizing the methods and procedures of mixed methods research that has led to the current increase in use and

interest. While some critics suggest that this current popularity is a result of mixed methods being a research fad or trend (Bergman, 2008), the proponents of mixed methods suggest that this third paradigm is actually a stronger and more useful approach as it highlights the strengths of both purist stances while addressing the weaknesses. While each teacher makes individual decisions for the students in the classroom, these decisions are influenced by the larger contexts in which the classroom is situated. Schools, communities, school divisions, and the provincial government all have spheres of influence on the practices in a classroom. In light of the theoretical framework of literacy as social practice, it was necessary to look for connections and consistency among these influences to develop a more complete picture of students' experiences within this provincial context. Greene and Caracelli (1997) suggest that this combination of the research paradigms can generate "more complex, more insightful, even transformed evaluative understandings" (p. 1).

The quantitative data provided me with a broad picture of practice within Manitoba, and the qualitative data further illuminated this picture by providing some of the details of which that broad picture is comprised. The large scale survey and the logbook were embedded data sources as they were collected simultaneously. The interview was used as an explanatory data source following the survey and the logbook.

Context

Teachers in Manitoba are under increasing pressures in terms of literacy instruction. In North America, as Snow et al. (1998) note, no other area has received the amount of attention from policy makers, researchers, and the public as learning to read. While the traditional forms of literacy—reading and writing—remain in the forefront of public interest, other forms of literacies are being recognized and valued in the fields of literacy

research (e.g., Gee, 2004). Work in new and multiple literacies (Barton & Hamilton, 2000; Street, 1995) and issues of power and privilege (Janks, 2010) suggests that the instruction and assessment of young children in the school system should involve broader thinking about literacy than just a focus on learning to read.

In addition, Manitoba teachers are continuing to work with a dated English Language Arts curriculum document (Manitoba Department of Education, 1996) that no longer reflects current thinking about literacy development and acquisition. In its 17th year of implementation, anecdotal evidence suggests that it has become largely ignored in the realm of Manitoba professional development in light of other more current curriculum reforms such as Science, Math, Social Studies, and Physical Education/Health, and Information/communication/technology (ICT) (<http://www.edu.gov.mb.ca/k12/cur/>).

The recent Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA) results reported that Manitoba students performed poorly (Knighton, Brochu, & Gluszynski, 2010) in comparison to other Canadian provinces. The Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) PISA reading results suggest Manitoba students are falling behind their national counterparts. Fewer than 10% of fifteen-year-old readers were considered “top performers” who achieved a reading level of five or above, which describes reading as including those tasks that “require the reader to make multiple inferences, comparisons and contrasts that are both detailed and precise” (Knighton et al., 2010, p. 19).

While often influenced and in some cases dominated by its American neighbours, the Canadian educational system differs significantly in structure, philosophy, and results. Research conducted in a Canadian context contributes specifically to a Canadian understanding of education but also could inform the research in other countries. This study

connects to some work done in other provinces in the field on children's literature (Bainbridge, Carbonaro, & Green, 2005; Pantaleo, 2002). Both Pantaleo's (2002) Ontario survey and Bainbridge, Carbonaro, and Green's (2005) Alberta survey looked specifically at teachers' use and knowledge of Canadian children's literature; the results of my study augment their findings with a Manitoba focus. Informed by research on situated literacy (Gee, 2004; Street, 1995), this Manitoba-based survey gives some insight into those practices that are specific to this province's schools and classrooms and may be different from other English-speaking countries.

This study will also contribute to research in reading in Manitoba by defining reading broadly and considering meaning making separate from decoding. This broader view of reading integrates current views of literacy as socially constructed, culturally influenced, and multifaceted.

Procedure

Using the research questions as the guide, a survey was developed to provide information on teachers' use of read aloud in the classroom as well as situate that practice within classroom literacy programs. In February 2012 the survey was trialed and piloted. Gillham (2008) suggests that "there are two try-out stages: trialing the questions and, after revision, piloting the questionnaire" (p. 53). This two-stage try-out provides detailed information on the usability of the survey in both a face-to-face situation, and then in a separate more distant but still controlled environment. The two stages addressed issues of clarity, length, and sequencing. First, the survey was trialed with a single practicing teacher. As the teacher worked through each question, I was there to provide clarity where needed. I noted areas of uncertainty and used this feedback to revise the survey questions.

Following this trialing, I obtained permission from one school division to approach a school and to pilot the survey with the staff. During the school's February, 2012 staff meeting, I conducted a short presentation about the study and the survey. Each teacher was provided with a consent form and a hard copy of the survey to work through and provide feedback. This feedback was given in writing on the survey form. Staff noted if they had questions regarding wording or intent and also noted the time it took to complete the survey.

Following the piloting, the survey instrument was revised and finalized. An amendment to the ethics protocol was submitted and approved. The survey was then transferred to an online context using a web-based tool called *Fluid Surveys*. This particular survey platform was chosen for its flexibility in data collection, its security systems, and its Canadian development.

Once the survey was ready to be published live, two types of recruitment took place simultaneously—the survey recruitment and the logbook recruitment. The logbook as a data source will be discussed later in this chapter. Manitoba has 38 public school divisions. The invitation to participate was sent to 36 of the divisions as these divisions worked with the targeted age group and used English as one of the instructional languages in most of the schools. Each central administration office was contacted initially by phone to confirm the divisional procedures to obtain permission. Following this contact, an explanatory e-mail was sent to the superintendent, or in some cases, a superintendent designate. This e-mail included letters of consent and a link to the online survey. Divisions distributed this e-mail to the teachers in their divisions who were involved with students in kindergarten to grade eight. Due to the anonymous responses, I am unaware of which divisions followed through with the distribution. Two suburban divisions within Winnipeg informed me that they had

declined the invitation to participate because they believed that the study did not fit with the research policies that of the division. The online survey was launched live on March 1, 2012. It remained open for six weeks until April 12, 2012.

Simultaneously, three divisions were approached to provide participants for the logbook data collection. The divisions were chosen to provide diversity in geographical location, size, and different local contexts. Invitations were distributed through the principals in the three divisions. Nine teachers in a variety of contexts agreed to participate. I met with the teachers and provided them with both a hard copy and an electronic option for data collection. We reviewed the logbook structure and requirements. Teachers began data collection immediately. Teachers were asked to collect data for one month but most continued to record data until I collected the logbooks. For data analysis purposes, I used 20 school days of data for any analysis that involved the extent of read aloud. Analysis that dealt with purpose of or text choice for read aloud included all data. This decision was made to ensure consistency when considering analysis on extent. The first 20 school days recorded in the logbook were used for any of this analysis. However, when considering text choice or purposes, each event was considered separately and therefore the placement of each event, either within the 20 days or, for example on day 25, did not have an impact on the results but did provide more events with which to consider the research questions.

Three teachers agreed to participate in an interview following the logbook collection. For these interviews I used a set of semi-structured guiding questions but also referenced the specific data included in the logbooks to gain a more complete picture of the context of the data and the teachers' thinking behind their decision-making. These interviews were

audiotaped and transcribed before being returned to the teachers for member checks. All three teachers agreed with the content of the transcriptions in the member checks.

Participants

The following section will describe the participants of the study. First it will discuss the participants of the survey, followed by the logbook participants. Three of the logbook participants agreed to be interviewed and they will be described in greater depth.

Participants of the survey. *The Schools in Manitoba 2011-2012* report lists the total enrolment of students in Manitoba schools as 181 329. The numbers for the grade range applicable to this study were as follows: Kindergarten 13 781; Early years (grades 1–4), 55 461; Middle years (grades 5–8), 58 053. Considering an estimated class size of approximately 25–30 students, this suggests an early years, middle years, and kindergarten classroom teacher population of approximately 4 500 in Manitoba. There were 236 responses to the survey with a completion rate of 76.63%, or approximately 5.3% of the population of kindergarten, early, and middle years classroom teachers in Manitoba.

The teachers who responded to the survey were predominately female. The numbers of male and female respondents can be seen in table 1. These results are similar to the actual teaching population in Manitoba, which has a majority of female teachers. The report, *A Statistical Profile Of Education in Manitoba September 2003 to June 2008*, reports 9 467 female teachers compared to 4 305 male teachers, a ratio of 69% to 31%. With a larger percentage of male teachers being employed in high schools, the ratio of female teachers in the surveyed group of kindergarten to grade eight teachers would be expected to be higher than that of the entire population.

Table 1

Gender of survey participants

Response	Percentage	Count
Female	88%	207
Male	12%	29
Total Responses	100%	236

Each participant was asked to describe the location of the school in which he or she taught. As can be seen in Table 2, few teachers responded as having a suburban location, and over half reported an urban location. Considering the number of suburban school divisions compared to urban school divisions, these responses suggest that teachers who taught within the city of Winnipeg, even if in one of the suburbs, reported an urban location.

Table 2

Location of schools of survey participants.

Response	Percentage	Count
Urban	56%	131
Rural	33%	79
Suburban	11%	26
Total Responses	100%	236

As previously stated 236 surveys were returned. Of these, 232 respondents identified the grade or grades that they teach. Teachers were able to indicate the teaching of multiple grades and thus, as can be seen in table 3, the total number of responses to grades taught was 523. Table 3 also shows the number of respondents who identified themselves as teaching

students from each specific grade. For instance it can see that 59 teachers reported teaching students in grade three, or 25% of the 523 grades that respondents indicated teaching.

Table 3

Grades of students taught by survey participants

Response	Percentage	Count
K	6%	14
1	31%	71
2	27%	62
3	25%	59
4	27%	62
5	28%	66
6	27%	62
7	27%	62
8	28%	65
Totals ^a	226%	523
Total Responses		232

^a Because respondents could identify more than one grade level of students, the percentage exceeds 100% and the total exceeds the total number of survey respondents.

The sample represented a wide range in teaching experience. As can be seen in table 4, the largest groups were of teachers with little experience or highly experienced teachers.

Table 4
Years of teaching experience of survey participants

Response	Percentage ^a	Count
<1-5	24%	58
6-10	19%	46
11-15	18%	42
16 or more	38%	91
Total Responses	99%*	236

^a Percentages have been rounded to the nearest percent; therefore the total percentage is less than 100%.

Further discussion of the demographic data and its relationship to the study results is included in chapter four. As noted previously, 236 people responded to the survey. Not all participants answered every question. For those questions that had a different number of responses, the number is noted and all percentage calculations are done for the responses for that question.

Logbook Participants. Nine female teachers from three different school divisions volunteered to participate in the logbook portion of the study. They had varied experience from five to 20 years of teaching. One teacher was responsible for two half-day kindergarten classes and kept a separate logbook for the morning and afternoon classes. This teacher is considered one participant but the data has been analyzed as two different logbooks for a total of 10 sets of logbook data. Table 5 provides an overview of the logbook study participants. As with the names of all participants in this study, their names were replaced with pseudonyms.

Table 5

Description of logbook participants

Teacher	Grade	Years Teaching	School Context
Jill ¹	K	5	Suburban K-5 English, French Immersion, Multiage
Laura ²	K	7	Suburban K-5 Peer, multiage
Elizabeth ³	K	10	Suburban K-5 English, French Immersion, Multiage
Jane	1	4	Suburban K-5
Katelyn	1/2/3	+15	Suburban K-5 English, French Immersion, Multiage
Kathy	1/2/3	+15	Suburban K-5 English, French Immersion, Multiage
Gerry	4	+15	Suburban K-5
Sheila	4/5	+15	Suburban K-5
Bev	5	5	Rural 5-8

¹ This participant collected data in two different logbooks for two ½ day kindergarten classes

² This participant collected data for one full day kindergarten class

³ This participant collected data for one ½ day kindergarten class

Following the logbook collection, the teachers were approached to participate in a follow-up interview based on the logbook data. Jill, Katelyn, and Bev agreed to be interviewed.

Data Sources

Three data sources were used in the study to examine the practice of read aloud in classrooms:

Survey. I designed the online survey to collect information about read aloud in multiple settings across the province. All schools, while diverse in their local contexts, are functioning under a government department of education and are held accountable to teach from the same curriculum documents. With the survey, I attempted to create a picture of the similarities and differences in literacy programs across geographical locations and grades and then to situate read aloud and the accompanying decisions of extent, purpose, and text choice within those contexts. The full text of the survey is found in Appendix A.

The first set of questions was designed to collect background information about the teacher and the classroom including gender, grades taught, geographical locations, and years of teaching experience. I also asked the teachers to respond to questions about items that I had identified as factors that might possibly have influenced the read aloud decision making. These questions focused on professional development opportunities and infrastructural resources for literature. For example, one of the questions was, “Does your school have a library?” In addition, teachers were asked to identify authors with whose work they are familiar, ways in which they find literature to read in the classroom, and their current personal reading. I also asked teachers to describe the literacy program in the classroom by

identifying central elements, time spent on each element, and ways those elements are presented to students.

In the next section of the survey, teachers were asked specifically about read aloud. They were asked to reflect on the last read aloud that was completed in the classroom. While this one read aloud event might not be representative of all read alouds done in the classroom, focusing on the most recent provided consistency and eliminated teachers choosing a particular read aloud. For instance, requiring the teachers to report just on the last read aloud removed the possible tendency for them to otherwise select to discuss only their favourite or most successful read aloud experience. When all the most recent read aloud events were considered together, they provided a detailed picture of the variety of those read aloud events.

Logbooks. The participants who provided data through the logbook part of the study were asked to record the date, start and end times, title, author, and an identified purpose for each of the read aloud events in the classroom over a 20 school day period. A sample of the logbook recording sheet is found in Appendix B. As the participants were in different schools and different divisions and had different start times, for consistency and comparability when considering extent, I considered the data as 20 school days from the first entry. The logbooks documented 229 read aloud events with 202 of those events falling within the scope of 20 school days. Some of the teachers continued to record entries in their logbooks beyond the 20 days. This brought the total of recorded events to 229. These entries were not considered in determining the extent of read aloud. They were included when analyzing purpose and text choice.

Interviews. Following the collection of the logbook data, the participants were asked to take part in a follow-up interview. Three participants agreed. The purpose of the interview was to provide further information about the decisions that were documented in the logbook. The interviews took place in the schools of the participants with the logbook content central to the discussion. The interviews were recorded and then transcribed for analysis. The teachers were asked to reflect on the process of keeping the logbook. They were also asked to comment on the texts that they identified as using for read aloud during the logbook completion phase and their identified purposes for read aloud. Teachers were also asked to reflect upon their goals for their students' literary and literacy development. Throughout the interviews, teachers told stories of incidents that occurred in their practice and with students. These stories allowed me to learn more about the intent behind decisions that were made and documented in the logbooks. For instance one teacher told me that she often used read aloud to calm the students after lunch; however, the documented purpose for these particular read alouds was to introduce a MYRCA (Manitoba Young Readers' Choice Award) book. The guiding questions that directed the semi-structured interview can be found in Appendix C. After the interviews, audio tapes were transcribed and were then sent to the participants for member checking.

Data analysis

With the three different data sources, different types of data analysis were required. The ways that the data sources informed each other required analysis to be revisited when new information was brought forward in another source. For example, during the interviews, the notion of using read aloud for classroom management was mentioned. I went back to the open question responses and analyzed those responses for evidence of this purpose. As

another example, the survey question on purpose generated a number of responses where participants indicated multiple purposes. This drew my attention to the fact that none of the logbook participants chose to do this, and I considered the possible causes of this observation. In this way, the data analyses were recursive.

Survey data. The survey data were analyzed both quantitatively and qualitatively. The independent variables of gender of teacher, years of experience of teacher, and grade of students taught and the dependent variable of time spent on read aloud were analyzed using non-parametric tests of independent samples (Kruskal Wallis, Mann Whitney *U*). This is to say that I was interested in exploring, for example, whether teachers who identified as male or female spent more time reading to their students. The statistical tests were chosen because the variable of time was an ordinal variable and the others were categorical. In the analysis of teacher librarian and time on read aloud, planned contrasts were conducted to compare neither with each of teacher librarian and librarian technician.

Written Survey Responses. Many of the survey questions provided participants with an option to record a response to an open question. These questions either provided an opportunity to more fully explain the response to a closed question or simply the opportunity to respond to an open-ended question. Responses were used as an explanatory piece to the quantitative data for specific survey questions. Responses were also sorted and categorized based on the larger research questions. In some cases, the written responses provided another way for me to consider the data in the logbooks and the interviews. For instance, if in an interview a teacher made specific reference to a particular purpose, I went back to see if it had been mentioned by others in the open written responses. Similarly, the open written

responses for one question often further informed the consideration of open written responses to another question.

For ease of readability, I have changed non-conventional spelling and grammar to conventional in those few instances where the respondents in the open question responses wrote out an answer that is difficult to read. In these instances, I did not change the meaning or any emphasis that did not exist before the changes. For example, one respondent wrote, “Often, they are interactive. Students are invited to ask questions, or they'll be asked to try define a *work* (picking apart the suffix/prefix etc.)” If this response was used in the data reporting I would have changed *work* to *word*. This clarifies the meaning but does not change it.

Logbook data. Logbooks were analyzed both quantitatively and qualitatively. Quantitative data were collected based on the time and frequency that teachers engage in teacher read aloud in the classrooms. I considered these data based on grade and years of experience. I also looked at the average of the whole group and considered this as a particular piece of data.

With regard to the purpose of read aloud, I looked for patterns that could be identified both with specific teachers and then as the logbook group as a whole. The language that teachers used to self-report the purposes for their read aloud was sorted into the same categories as the survey: fun; filling time; connected to a content being studied; reading instruction; literary instruction; other.

In terms of text choice, I looked for patterns with regard to authors and genres. While participants provided me with the title and author, I read the texts to determine whether they were fiction or non-fiction.

Teachers recorded the titles and authors of the books read. Intertextuality, or connections between the texts, was considered based on the sequencing of texts and the types of texts chosen. I collected the books and read them in the sequence that they had been read aloud to the students. While reading, I made notes on author, content, genre, style, and literary elements. These notes were used to identify patterns of literature to which students were exposed. These patterns may or may not have been explicitly noted by the teacher. However, in sequence, students may have recognized the patterns.

Interview data. Once the interviews were transcribed, I sent them to the participants for member checks. Participants were asked to consider the transcripts and comment on whether they accurately depicted our conversation and if there was any additional context required to more accurately represent the comments made. All three of the participants approved the transcripts with no revision. After member check approval, the interviews were analyzed qualitatively for themes. Denzin and Lincoln (2000) suggest:

Themes are abstract (and often fuzzy) constructs that investigators identify before, during, and after data collection. Literature reviews are rich sources for themes, as are investigators' own experiences with subject matter. More often than not, however, researchers induce themes from the text itself. (p. 780)

I identified potential themes and subthemes by “pulling together real examples from the text” (Glaser & Strauss, 1967, p. 783). These themes were connected to the theoretical frameworks that I described in chapters 1 and 2. With consideration of the research questions, I coded the interviews based on meaningful segments that connected to the research questions. For example, Katelyn explained, “you can’t always *find the text* that you

need so you *substitute in other texts* for different reasons.” The italicized in the preceding example segments from the interview were coded as *text choice factors*.

As I had already analyzed the survey data and the logbooks, I was thinking about the types of decisions that the teachers were making as they either reflected on the previous read aloud or recorded the ongoing read alouds in the classroom. Both the survey and the logbook had focused the teachers on the factors of extent, purpose, and text choice. As I worked through the coding of the interviews, these same codes repeated themselves. I then explored the possibility that my analysis of the other two data sources had biased my coding of the interviews. A second coder who was familiar with my study analyzed the transcripts. The second coder was a PhD student in a Language and Literacy program who was also conducting mixed methods research in literacy education with interview data. Following her analysis, we met to compare the categories of data. The three large categories of extent, purpose, and intent remained the same while there was some difference in the labels that the second coder gave to some sub-categories. To explore this further, I then took extracts from each of the interviews that fell into the sub-categories from both coders. These extracts were analyzed for patterns and relationships between coding categories. These relationships were noted and some categories were renamed to better represent the intent behind the labels that each coder attached to the various sub-categories. For example, when Bev spoke of using read aloud to settle down the students, I coded this as *purpose: classroom management*, while the second coder noted this piece as *student energy level*. With discussion, we noted that in other places, codes were identified as purpose by both of us, and student energy level was only used for the same segments that I had coded as *classroom management*. Therefore it became apparent that what I was calling classroom management,

she was calling student energy level, or the same analysis with different labels for the category. I kept this category as *purpose: classroom management* once I had reviewed the data to ensure that no segments were excluded by this renaming.

In another case, I had coded several segments as *time on task* while the second coder had used categories of *extent-frequency* and *extent-duration* as the codes. These segments were renamed using the broader category of extent and then separated into sub-categories of frequency and duration. In so doing it was discovered that all of the previous elements of the time on task category did not fit into the two sub categories therefore, another extent category with the sub category of scheduling was added.

The interviews helped to further explain some of the information that was reported in the surveys and the logbooks. In chapter four, the excerpts from the interviews are reported in ways in which they further explain or, in some cases, contradict the findings from the two quantitative pieces. As discussed previously, the transcripts were also used to extend some of the ideas expressed in the open question responses of the survey.

Validity, Reliability, and Trustworthiness

The research questions for this study focused on exploring both the practice and the understandings of Manitoba teachers. All sources involved self-reporting by the teachers and, therefore, could be considered a weakness of the study. However, what teachers believe that they are doing and their explanations about why they are doing it are critical to both answering the research questions and to understanding practice. In addition, both the way the survey was presented and the limited rhetoric around read aloud that is currently in professional development meant that there was little social pressure to respond in a

perceived *expected* way. Therefore, the self-reporting was probably not biased by an assumed *correct* answer.

I chose to collect self-reported data as observing read aloud events in classrooms could have been potentially intrusive and could have altered natural practices. The self-reporting data sources allowed for a much larger sample of read aloud across a variety of geographic sites. In addition, the self-reporting made it necessary for the participants to decide on the purpose. For this reason self-reporting was not only desired but also essential. For example, a subjective observation of a read aloud may not always accurately identify the teacher's purpose and in this case it is as, if not more, important to know what the teacher thought they were doing as what was actually done.

In order to increase the validity and reliability of the study, several measures were put into place. First, the mixed methods design of the study provides several different data sources to explore and expand information. Second, the survey was two-stage trialed to ensure that all respondents would be interpreting the questions in the same way (Morrell & Carroll, 2010) and to negate issues of bias and misconception before the survey reached the participants. In addition, the interviews provided an opportunity to further explain some of the data collected in the logbooks. This study also attempted to address issues of external validity by surveying a large population with varying demographic variables.

Summary of the Methodology

This chapter has described the mixed methods research paradigm employed for this study and the specific methodology used for the collection of the data. This included a description of the design, context, participants, data sources, data analysis, and validity and reliability of the data collection methods.

Chapter Four

Results

The purpose of this study was to describe current practices of read aloud that take place in Manitoba schools. Specifically, from the analysis of the data I hoped to uncover the ways in which literature was being introduced to students and how and if the teacher mediated thinking about literature. The research questions were designed in order to allow me to learn about the factors that contributed to teacher decision-making regarding text choice and read aloud in the classroom. This chapter will present the results from the three data sources: 1) online survey; 2) read aloud logbooks and the information gathered from the data recorded in those logbooks; and 3) and the open question responses from the survey and interviews.

The previous chapter described the participants of the three data sources. The variables of gender, grade taught, and years of experience were analyzed with the dependent variable of time spent on read aloud. As will be reported later in this chapter, no statistical significance was found; however, the gender of the participants may be considered as a way of discussing the findings regarding text choice. These suggestions are based on information from the literature reviews on the topic. In addition, I will discuss the demographics with the results in those instances where I conclude that there is the possibility that the lack of statistical significance may be due to some other factor.

The results will be presented in response to the four research questions: 1) To what extent is read aloud used in Manitoba classrooms? 2) What texts are used in read aloud and for what purposes? 3) What are teachers' understandings about read aloud and how do these

understanding drive their instructional decision-making? 4) What is the evidence that teachers employ read aloud as a means of developing literary understanding? For each question I will connect the data analysis to the theoretical framework. The theoretical framework of this study positions literacy learning as situated in particular social contexts and an assumption that it is what the expert other says and does in that social context that informs the novice about what is important and worth learning. Therefore, the ways that literature and other texts are used in the classroom by the teacher for particular purposes influence what the student learns about reading and about literature.

In each section I will present the survey data, followed by the data from the logbooks. The data from the open survey question responses and the interviews will be used to further explore the survey and logbook data. Finally, in each section I will briefly discuss the findings.

Following the presentation of the data in response to the four research questions, other information relevant to the topic but not directly related to the research questions will be presented. This will include such things as responses regarding professional learning and resources that are available to teachers. This additional information is reported as it may illuminate some of the factors that led to the responses regarding read aloud practices.

To What Extent is Read Aloud Used in Classrooms?

The first research question was, “To what extent is read aloud used in Manitoba?” Extent refers to the time, both duration and frequency, and scheduling factors related to the use of read aloud in the classroom. The extent to which read aloud was reported to be used is also considered in relation to the other elements of literacy programs that take place in classrooms.

Particularly in the early years classroom, where students may have physical access to children's literature but may be unable to have a full range of independent experience with the text, read aloud becomes the vehicle with which students can have opportunities to experience a range of texts and reading behaviours. These experiences require enough time to make these experiences valuable.

This section will first discuss the implications of time and scheduling in light of the theoretical framework. The quantitative survey data will be discussed, followed by the quantitative data from the logbooks. Data from the open-ended survey questions and the interviews will be discussed to further explain the quantitative data. Next, I will discuss the data considering time spent on read aloud in relation to other literacy program elements. Finally, I will discuss the overall data related to time.

Implications of extent of read aloud on the theoretical framework. Work in social practice has identified the importance of modeling by a knowledgeable other to the novice. Bandura (1997) noted four important considerations for effective modeling: (1) attention; (2) retention; (3) reproduction; and (4) motivation. During the process of modeling, the novice chooses what to focus on (attention), commits those behaviours to memory (retention), begins to participate (reproduction), and finds reasons to imitate those behaviours (motivation). More recent research in participatory cultures (Jenkins et al., 2010) has highlighted the need for entry to participation with low barriers and low risk with the opportunity to “lurk” within the discourse before active participation. These opportunities for observation and low risk participation can be possible during effective read alouds.

Teacher read aloud provides an opportunity for novice readers to observe both the more visible behaviours of decoding and fluency used by the teacher while mediating the

text, but also could provide the opportunity to observe the often invisible behaviours that both the teacher and the other members of the community do while thinking aloud their responses to the text. This type of interactive read aloud takes time.

In addition, the way that time is allocated for read aloud communicates particular values about the event to the students. Students must have the time to observe, participate, and assess the behaviours and attitudes. If no time is given in class, or insufficient time is given, students are likely to conclude through observation that reading, thinking about reading, and talking about reading are not important behaviours.

Survey data on extent of read aloud. Almost all participants in the survey reported that read aloud was a regular part of their literacy program. Of the 220 respondents to the question, 213 (97%) indicated that read aloud was considered part of the regular literacy program.

While Morrow and Britain (2003) found that the frequency of read aloud declined as the grade increased, this study found that the number of teachers who reported reading aloud remained consistent from grade one to grade eight. The range varied only from a high of 98% of teachers of grade one and grade six students reporting a regular use of read aloud, followed by kindergarten and grade two (97%), grades three and seven (96%) and grades four, five, and eight (95%).

There was greater range when respondents were asked to indicate the amount of time that they engaged in read aloud over the past week, of which 83% indicated that these responses would be typical of other weeks in the classroom. The following chart describes the range of time spent on read over the week previous to responding to the survey.

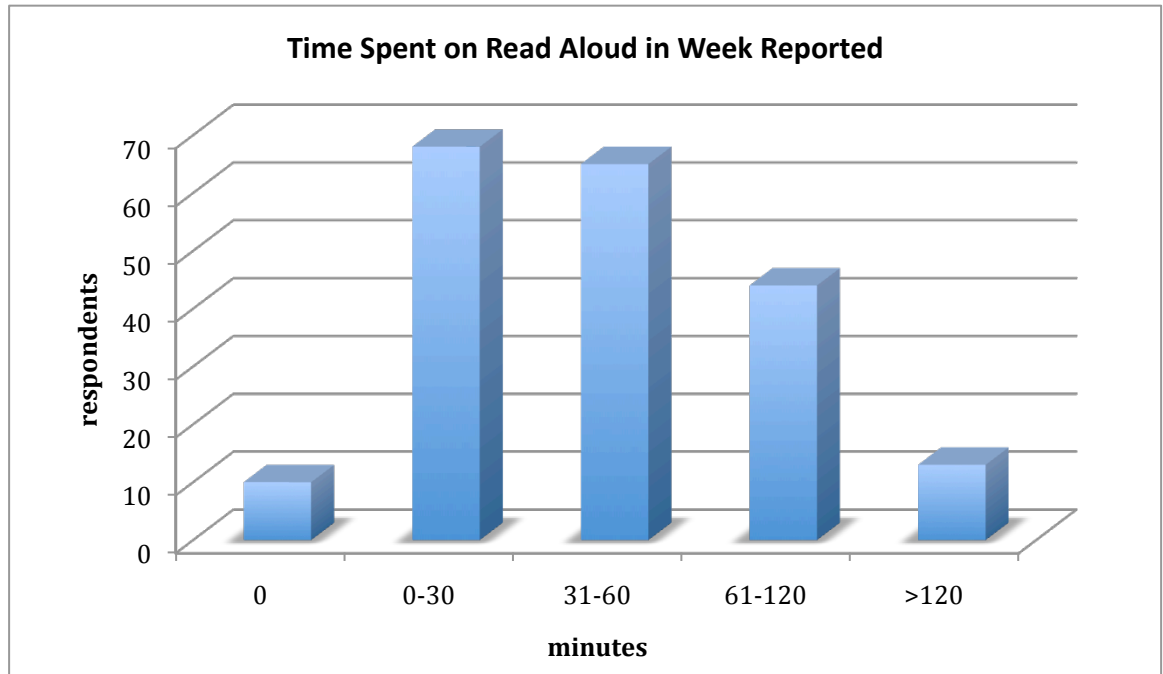


Figure 1. Survey participants' responses reporting the time spent on read aloud in the week previous to completing the survey.

Of all the 205 respondents to the question on extent, 10 (5%) indicated that they did no read aloud in their classrooms the previous week. It is interesting to note that while they said that read aloud was a regular part of their literacy program, no read aloud occurred in the previous week and two of those 10 teachers said that they did not use read aloud in their literacy program. This is despite the fact that they had noted that read aloud was a regular part of their literacy program. An additional 5 (2%) claimed that they were unable to measure the extent to which read aloud was used as they considered it fully integrated into their program.

As Figure 1 shows, the most frequently occurring response indicates that some read aloud occurred in 68 of the 205 classrooms, but less than thirty minutes each week. If these had been equal sessions, students would have been engaged in read aloud for less than six

minutes each day. Thirteen teachers (5%) responded that in the previous week they would have spent over two hours reading aloud to their students. At this highest range, students may have been engaged in read aloud for over half an hour each day.

Statistical analysis was conducted on the variables of gender of teacher, years of experience of teacher, and grades taught with the variable of time spent on read aloud. A Mann-Whitney U test was performed to find the effect of teacher gender on amount of time spent reading aloud. No significance was found: $U=1580.500$, $p = .098$, (ns). There was also no significance found when considering the effect of teacher experience and time spent on read aloud: $X_{(3)}= 1.420$, $p> .05$ (ns).

Due to the large number of respondents that indicated teaching multiple grades, the results for grade level were aggregated for statistical analysis. Responses were grouped by Manitoba delineations of early years (K-4) and middle years (5-8). A Mann-Whitney U test was performed to determine the relationships between time spent on read aloud and grade level taught. No significance was found for this relationship: $U=3641.500$, $z=.011$ ($p>.05$ (ns)). I would interpret these data as suggesting that while there is considerable diversity in the time spent on read aloud in class, factors other than gender, years of experience, and the grade of the students taught contribute to this diversity.

Most teachers in this study, regardless of the grade, indicated that they used teacher read aloud as a regular part of their literacy program. However, teachers also indicated that in most classrooms they invested limited time each week on this pedagogical practice.

Logbook data on extent of read aloud. Nine teachers completed logbook data. The selection process for these participants was described in chapter three. While nine teachers completed data, one teacher taught two classes of kindergarten and recorded data in two

logbooks. For analysis purposes, the logbooks of this teacher are considered as two separate logbooks for a total of 10.

The data gathered from the logbooks reported the time that was invested in read aloud over the 20 school days that logbook participants recorded data. The participants recorded the date, and the start and end time, of each read aloud session in their classroom over those 20 days. For consistency, the logbooks were analyzed for time by using 20 school days from the first entry.

Table 6 describes the time and frequency of read aloud sessions reported in the logbooks.

Table 6

Time and Frequency of Read Aloud Sessions Reported in Logbooks

Participant	Grade	#of sessions/ 20 days	Total Minutes	Average min/ Session	Average min/Day	Average min/school week	% of School Week
Jill AM	K	21	280	13.3	14.0	70.0	9.3
Jill PM	K	20	280	14.0	14.0	70.0	9.3
Laura AM	K	35	395	11.3	19.8	99.0	13.2
Elizabeth full day	K	19	275	14.5	13.8	69.0	4.1
Jane	1	8	172	21.5	8.6	43.0	2.6
Kathy	1/2/3	24	555	23.1	27.8	139.0	8.4
Katelyn	1/2/3	27	310	11.5	15.5	77.5	4.6
Gerry	4	14	170	12.1	8.5	42.5	2.5
Sheila	4/5	15	309	20.6	15.5	77.5	4.6
Bev	5	19	253	13.3	12.7	63.5	3.8
Total		202	2999	14.8	14.9	74.5	5.0

Table 6 reveals the number of sessions of read aloud that each teacher reported during 20 school days. Using the start and end times of the sessions, the total number of minutes is reported. These two numbers were used to calculate the average minutes for each session, the average minutes for each day, and the average number of minutes each school week. The calculations described on the table were based on the regular school day in Manitoba of five and a half hours or 330 minutes/day (1650 minutes/week). The last column of the table records the percentage of the school week that was dedicated to teacher read aloud. When considering the half-day kindergarten classes, a total of 750 minutes was used to calculate the percentage of time used for read aloud in a school week. Four of the nine teachers reported more read aloud sessions than the 20 days of school resulting in some days having more than one read aloud session. The other teachers reported fewer than 20 sessions with one teacher reporting only eight read aloud sessions in 20 school days.

Laura, the kindergarten teacher who reported the most number of read aloud sessions (35) in the 20 days also recorded 395 read aloud minutes. The average session lasted 11.3 minutes with 13.2% of the school week dedicated to teacher read aloud. In comparison, Jane, a grade one teacher, reported only eight read aloud sessions in 20 days. These sessions were longer, lasting an average of 21.5 minutes. Jane spent 2.6% of the school week reading aloud to her students. For consistency, I have used the data to calculate averages, however, these two examples suggest that in actual practice there is a difference in how read aloud is practiced. Teachers such as Laura chose to do frequent short sessions while others, such as Jane, chose to do fewer of longer duration. These decisions regarding use of time provide students with different experiences of read aloud and illustrated that when teachers report

that they include read aloud as a “regular” part of their literacy program, the actual practice could look very different from classroom to classroom.

Teachers reported in the logbooks that they invested more time in read aloud than the teachers who participated in the study by Dickinson, McCabe, and Anastaspoulos (2003) who reported that time dedicated to teacher read aloud was limited with the average time reported being 10 minutes per day whereas my logbook results show nearly 15 minutes. However, my survey’s most frequent response indicated less than six minutes each day. Dickinson et al. reported that 45% of teachers planned to spend 1.5% or less of their weekly class time on book reading. A higher percentage of time was spent on read aloud by the teachers in Manitoba, but there was still considerable range in terms of the percentage dedicated to read aloud.

Survey open question response and interview data on extent. The quantitative data on read aloud both from the survey and the logbooks suggest that while teachers are including read aloud in their literacy programs, many of the sessions were either of short duration or infrequent. As Dickinson et al. (2003) observed, there might be many factors that contribute to the scheduling of teacher read aloud:

Group book reading often occurs only on selected days of the week and is often used as a transitional activity—a means to “hold” children while another activity is being prepared—with the content of the reading being determined by the vagaries of the moment. Book reading may even be dropped from the school day if the children are too energetic or the weather too inviting. (p. 105)

One question asked teachers to indicate how English Language Arts appears on the timetable. Of the 223 respondents to this question, 100 (45%) responded that they use the

general term ELA. Sixty-two (28%) indicate specific events or activities. Of those respondents, only seven (3%) listed read aloud as one of the specific events that was recorded on the timetable. This lack of explicit scheduling of read aloud could account for the limited time and the variations in time that was spent on read aloud each week. Similarly, in the open question responses to the description of read aloud, the read aloud event was often referred to as occurring by chance or “built into a lesson,” or “at a variety of times for a variety of reasons,” or “when it fits.” This type of scheduling, or lack of scheduling, suggests that read aloud is an activity that is used as a vehicle to engage students in a lesson about something else rather than an event planned to focus on the learning in the read aloud. This idea of read aloud as a vehicle comes up later in the chapter when I discuss purpose and text choice.

To explore this further, an additional question on the survey provided participants an opportunity to give more information by asking teachers to describe read aloud in the classroom. The responses to the open questions were analyzed for comments that referred to time and frequency. These answers give some insight into the decisions that were made as to when read aloud was done in the classroom. One participant wrote that she included read aloud, “usually at the end of the day or if there is a short amount of time before transition.” Another explained, “I read aloud many times throughout the day. Usually between all transition times (like changes between math and spelling).” Similarly, one responded, “I usually use it at the end of a class or the day because I move from class to class and it’s a good way to fill a couple of minutes.” This idea of read aloud as a transitional activity was also reflected in the comment section of the logbook as Jill referred to certain read alouds as “transitional,” or as she explained, “during our afternoons we tend to have times in our

schedule when we have a 5-7 minute gap between recess ending and gym/music beginning. I have a treasury of *George and Martha* stories that are short and sweet and much loved by the class.” These comments suggest that time spent on read aloud may be influenced by the time structures imposed by the school day or, as one respondent noted, “when it fits.” As one respondent to the survey noted, “read aloud is very rare in my classroom. It would be used either as a filler, during social studies or if we are reading a class novel. Other than that we do a lot of silent reading and guided reading.”

The teacher read aloud was highly controlled by the teacher, and therefore, if there were a few minutes to fill, teacher read aloud allowed the teacher to fill that time quickly and easily with little need for student movement, decision-making, or supplies. In addition, there was not necessarily a real expectation for students to engage. They might have sat quietly and either listened to the story or thought about something else. In most cases, read aloud did not lead to a product or something to be completed and depending on how the conversation is led, not all students are required to participate. Jill noted, “Or after recess and before gym we have a little window of time there that we can’t really start snack because we won’t all finish but we do have time for that [read aloud]. There just seemed to be more transitional interruptions in the afternoon than in the morning. There seemed to be more going on.” It is an interesting observation to note that snack is something that everyone would have to finish, but read aloud doesn’t suggest the same type of pressure for completion.

In contrast to the “transitional” moments that were filled with teacher read aloud, other teachers exercised the control by scheduling it in. It is interesting that even when read aloud was scheduled, it was often done so by fitting it in with other scheduled events. One

teacher noted that read aloud occurs, “at 9:15 a.m., 10:45 a.m. and 1:30 p.m.” or, “it consistently occurs in the morning after a quiet writing time.” Jill also reflected on some of the scheduling factors:

The way our day works we have recess from 10:15-10:30 and then the kids go home at 11:00. So especially in the winter when we are dealing with our winter gear coming in from recess and having half an hour and getting ready can shave 10 minutes off of that so that becomes a good time for a really focused story time. I would say in the morning there is that consistent time of day when we would all sit down for a story together. That’s not also to say that we would not have a story first thing in the morning but guaranteed that last half hour of the morning was a chunk of time that we spent reading.

When teaching early years in Manitoba, this type of scheduling can be referred to as the *Ski Pants Factor*. The instructional time is often reduced in the winter by the repeated times that ski pants need to be put on and taken off. Jill saw read aloud as a flexible way to adapt to that reduction in instructional time.

In addition to the numerical data and open comments in both the survey and the logbook, I analyzed the interview transcriptions for comments regarding time and frequency. Two of the three participants noted that the process of recording read aloud in the logbooks made them more aware of the time they had spent on read aloud. Bev observed, “I felt before I did this that I read a lot more than I seem to be reading. I don’t know. I thought I read a lot more in science and social studies. I don’t know if it was the time period we were in or if I really am not reading as much.” Katelyn noted, “I read at a regular time” but also noted that, although she would have known this “in the back of my mind I would have been

aware at the moment but I never noticed the pattern until I wrote it down. So that to me was good that we do read a lot during our day.”

All three interview participants spoke positively about the role of read aloud in the classroom, however the logbooks suggested that Bev and Jill did not spend as much time on this process as they may have thought they did. As reported in Table 7, Bev recorded an average of 12.7 minutes per day, while Jill recorded 14 minutes per day for both the morning and afternoon classes, although she felt that she spent more time on read aloud in the afternoon. Katelyn recorded an average of 15.5 minutes per day on read aloud over 27 different sessions in the 20 days recorded. The comments suggest that self-reporting may overestimate the amount of time.

Several comments in the interviews related to factors that impacted the duration and scheduling of read aloud in the classroom. Bev explained that read aloud was regularly scheduled to meet teacher, curricular, and student needs, “I knew that I read everyday to show them different techniques. And then I read a Manitoba Young Readers Choice Award (MYRCA) Nominee book everyday too.” She explains that the MYRCA book time is used “to calm them down basically when they come in from recess because my class is really crazy so we do that for about fifteen minutes everyday.” These comments would suggest that read aloud occurred in Bev’s class at least two consistent sessions each day. This observation is interesting because as reported earlier, Bev only documented an average of 12.7 minutes of read aloud each day and only 19 sessions of read aloud over the 20 school days. While the time is scheduled for read aloud, it may be, as Dickinson et al. (2003) noted, that these scheduled times are dropped when other events or activities take precedence. When students see that a time is set aside for read aloud on the schedule, yet it is dropped

for something else, an important message is sent. They may be learning that reading is disposable and not as important as those other things that come up.

Jill observed that it was often external factors that influenced the time for read aloud. “I noticed in my afternoon class schedule that there seemed to be a lot more little moments where we had just five minutes to fill or seven minutes to fill and we did a lot more poems and short stories reading in my afternoon than I did in my morning just because of the way our gym and music falls.” According to the logbook, Jill’s morning class actually participated in one more read aloud session than her afternoon class and both morning and afternoon had 280 minutes of read aloud over the 20 days.

These external factors around scheduling of read aloud suggest that it was an activity that was included when there is seemingly not enough time to do something else, but also an activity that could be discarded if these moments did not occur in the day. Read aloud can be a filler but in order for that to occur it requires moments that are needing to be filled. If these moments do not occur then read aloud will not occur. I question the messages that this practice is sending to novice readers. On one hand, they could be observing that reading for pleasure is a portable activity that can be “fit in” when the opportunity presents itself. For example, one respondent noted a positive message that was sent by “fitting in” read aloud, “I try to read novels to my class. I tried to read for at least 20 minutes once a day but if we are really enjoying the novel we will add additional shorter sessions where we can squeeze them in.” In this case, reading was modeled as something that is given more time because it was so enjoyable. Students may transfer this into their own practice by always having something to read for those moments when they are waiting for a bus or standing in line. On the other hand, it could be promoting the idea that it is a disposable event that really doesn’t have

enough status to be validated on the schedule with large blocks of time, and when it is scheduled, it can be easily discarded. The potential damage from this message is so strong that those sending it need to be aware of who is receiving that message. Leaving these possible messages to the interpretation of the student provides the opportunity for students to be getting different messages. It is more likely that these messages would be reinforced by messages that they might receive in other places. Therefore, students who are seeing positive messages about reading at home may interpret this school practice as positive, whereas students who are not receiving positive messages at home may interpret this differently. The gap between those with positive reading identities and those with more negative reading identities would increase with these messages.

Read aloud in relation to other literacy elements. While the extent of read aloud was important for this study, participants in the survey were also asked several questions that allowed them to describe their literacy programs as a whole. These questions were designed to provide a literacy program context in which read aloud was one part. How does the amount of time that teachers are spending on read aloud compare to time spent on other elements?

I noted in the previous section that 220 respondents answered the question that asked them to indicate the regular elements of the literacy program. I designed the initial list of elements and then revised the list following the trialing of the survey. As noted, 213 (97%) of the respondents said that read aloud was a regular part of their literacy program. Table 7 provides a comparison to other elements that were considered regular.

*Table 7**The Elements Identified by Survey Participants as Regular Parts of Literacy Programming*

Response	Percentage ^a	Count ^b
Teacher Read aloud	97%	213
Individual or small group reading instruction	86%	190
Shared reading/buddy reading	77%	170
Silent/ Independent reading	92%	202
Silent writing (journal, etc.)	80%	176
Regular writing instruction	79%	173
Spelling program	66%	145
Printing/Handwriting	57%	125
Literature instruction/study	66%	146
Information Communication Technology instruction	59%	130
Literature circles or other social literature group	45%	98
Choice time for literacy activities	50%	111
Other ^c	14%	30
Total Responses		220

^a note: The percentages are rounded to the nearest whole number.

^b note: Respondents had the opportunity to respond to each line, therefore the count exceeds the number of responses.

^c A full list of the other responses can be found in Appendix D. While many of the responses could fit in the categories provided, they were not added as the respondent may have already responded positively to that category and was just adding additional information.

Notably the three elements that the highest numbers of teachers considered regular parts of their literacy program were focused on reading. Teacher read aloud, in which teachers maintain high control of the text and the mediation of that text, had the highest response rate of 97%, while independent reading which had the lowest teacher control of text and mediation was a close second with 92%. However, as observed by Bryan (2009) during independent reading, teachers often control behaviours by setting expectations of silence, movement, or parameters of reading material. In the descriptive comments, many teachers referred to this time as “read to self” referring to the language used in *The Daily Five* (Boushey & Moser, 2006), while others used terms such as D.E.A.R (Drop Everything And Read), S.Q.U.I.R.T. (Sustained, Quiet Uninterrupted, Reading Time), pleasure reading, U.S.S.R. (Uninterrupted, Sustained, Silent Reading), or quiet reading time. While read aloud and independent reading may look different in the classroom in terms of the role that the student and the teacher have, in fact both of these events share the same elements of an absence of a finished product, strict behavioural expectations, commonly understood routines, and potential for students to be non-engaged but still being behaviourally compliant. Also, in both of these events, while reading may appear to be central to the activity, it actually may or may not be actively occurring on the part of the student.

In the middle of this continuum of teacher control with reading was the element of reading instruction. Of the respondents, 86% indicate that reading instruction is a regular part of their literacy program. When respondents were asked to provide the name that they give to this element, 25 of the 43 respondents who provided a name said that they called their instruction “guided reading.” Guided reading is defined by Hornsby (2000) as providing:

An opportunity for teachers to support small groups of children within the same developmental reading stages to apply strategies they already know to texts they do not know. The texts are carefully matched to the children so that they can apply their strategies to overcome the challenges in the text and read independently with success. (p. 26)

In the case of guided reading, or reading instruction, the teacher maintains control of the text, the routines, the behavioural expectations, and the purpose. The focus of these guided reading sessions, as defined by Hornsby, suggests a focus on visible reading behaviours. Students are applying strategies to unknown text but there may or may not be a focus on meaning making beyond the literal level of the text.

Figure 2 illustrates the comparative time that teachers invested in the three reading elements of teacher read aloud, independent reading, and guided reading. These responses were based on the week previous to completing the survey. The differences in numbers between the question regarding the elements that were a regular part of the literacy program and the following figure that reports the time that respondents spent on each element in the previous week could be due to a teacher's definition of the term regular. For example, while only 190 respondents indicated that reading instruction was a regular part of the literacy program, 204 respondents indicated that they had used reading instruction in the previous week. Using the element in the previous week does not necessarily equate to considering that element a regular part of the literacy program.

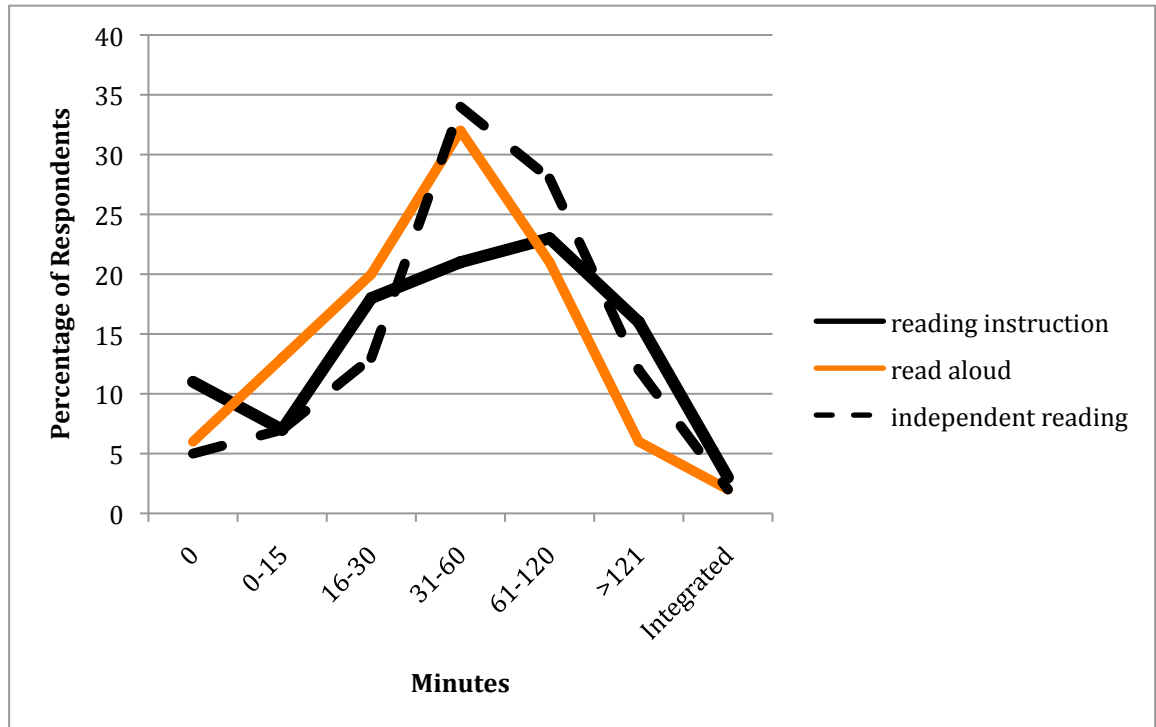


Figure 2. Time spent on reading elements by survey participants in the week previous to completing the survey.

The figure illustrates the variety that existed in classrooms with respect to the time invested in the different reading elements. There was a dramatic disparity in the reading experiences that students were receiving in their classrooms in terms of the time that they spent on various elements. Considering the data on silent or independent reading, in the first question, 8% of respondents noted that independent reading is not a regular part of their literacy program. When considering the previous week, 3% of classrooms provided no time for independent reading in the past week and an additional 2% reported that they do not use independent reading at all in their classrooms. Of those who did use independent reading, 7% had allocated less than 15 minutes over the previous week or an average of three or less minutes each day, and 12% invested over two hours in independent reading over the previous week.

Reading instruction had the largest number of teachers responding that they invested two or more hours of the previous week on this particular element (16%). Interestingly, reading instruction also had the largest number of respondents who did not use this element in the previous week (11%), and the largest percentage who felt that reading instruction was too fully integrated to be measured.

While this study is focused on the practice of teacher read aloud, this examination of the differences in time investment for other reading practices has implications for further study. A focus on reading instruction could be contributed to the different grade levels taught, with an assumption being made that early years teachers may spend more time on reading instruction than in the older grades. This assumption is problematic when noting that the Manitoba English Language Arts curriculum is based on a spiraled framework that uses the same 56 outcomes for all grades from kindergarten to grade 12. This spiraling results in increasingly complex use of texts, strategies, and skills that would require mentorship and direct instruction at all levels. The continuum of modeling, targeted instruction and guided practice, and independent practice is critical at all levels to support increased achievement and success. Therefore, it would be important to further investigate the factors that contribute to these variances in time.

Summary of extent of read aloud. The data collected on time suggests that perceptions of time spent on read aloud do not always match the data that were collected. While many open responses both in the survey and in the interviews suggested that read aloud was highly valued and a regular, scheduled occurrence in classrooms, the times that were noted in minutes did not reflect this regular occurrence. While the survey data only contained information on the previous week and, therefore, may not capture the bigger

picture, it was reinforced by the longer-term data that was collected in the logbooks. While the teachers in the interviews stated that read aloud was a regular occurrence, the recordings in their logbooks did not reflect this. This result supports the findings by Dickinson et al. (2003) that read aloud may often be dropped from the day if “the vagaries of the moment” lead the class activities in another direction.

Through a lens of apprenticeship, the idea of time has powerful implications. Thirty years ago Smith, Smith, and Mikulecky (1978) noted, “A student doesn’t have to be particularly bright to conclude that reading can’t be very important if so little time is made for it during the school day” (p. 83). Along the lines of the common cliché of “actions speak louder than word”, the way that teachers value reading and types of reading with invested time communicates to students what they should value and believe about reading. The positioning of reading as instruction, or as silent, or as social can teach students about the ways that they should position reading in their own lives. Similarly, the time that students are provided opportunity to see expert readers engaged in the practice and model the ways that they make meaning from text is central to the success of the novice.

For What Purposes do Teachers Read Aloud?

In addition to students learning important messages about the value of reading by the time invested in it, they also learn from the purposes that teachers set for reading in the classroom. In the previous section I noted the range of time teachers and students participate in read aloud in most classrooms. The time invested in a pedagogical practice however, does not provide a clear picture on the impact that this practice may have in the classroom. As Meyer et al. (1994), and Sipe (1998) make clear, unless read aloud is done effectively and for a clearly defined purpose, the time is better spent on other literacy activities.

The following section will report the data that dealt with teachers' self-identified purpose for teacher read aloud in the classroom. In this section I will discuss the implications of purpose in light of the theoretical framework. I will report the data gathered from the survey, followed by data that was analyzed from the logbooks. Next, I will further explore the idea of purpose with data from the interviews and the open question responses from the survey. Finally, I summarize the data that deals with purpose.

Implications of purpose in consideration of the theoretical framework. In work on disciplinary literacies, Draper et al. (2011), Gee (2001), and Shanahan and Shanahan (2000) make the point that each discipline has a particular way of thinking about a text. These ways of thinking can change the meaning making of that particular text. For example, if students are asked to read the following:

Jane and Tosh were walking home from school. On the way they met Alexa. Alexa walked half way with them before turning left at the grocery store. Jane and Tosh continued on their way for five more blocks, while Alexa only had to walk three more blocks before she arrived home to her apartment block.

If the student is reading this in geography, they may be asked to use this story to draw a map, in math class they may be asked to calculate the number of blocks that Alexa had to walk, while in English class they may be asked to either recall where Alexa turned or, hopefully, to predict what might happen when Alexa arrived home, or whether Jane and Tosh are siblings or friends. A reader may have read this paragraph with a particular way of thinking but when the various purposes are established, different parts of the reading become focused. Similarly, when a teacher establishes purpose for a read aloud, certain types of reading become focused for the students. It is possible to see other things in the text,

but the set purpose establishes the main focus. Pichert and Anderson (1977) concluded that readers perceive different elements of a story to be more or less important—and therefore, worthy of the focus of more or less attention—based upon the reader’s purpose. Adult readers are more likely to set these purposes for themselves, whereas in the classroom, it is often the teacher who sets these purposes for the read aloud and, therefore, for the community of readers who are listening to the reading. Similarly Vipond and Hunt (1984) contend that readers are more likely to make meaning from a story when they assume that the author intended particular points. If this is the case, then the purpose that a teacher sets for read aloud influences the meaning-making of the student and also suggests to students the implied motive of the author.

Survey data on purpose of read aloud. In order to report the purpose for read aloud, the participants in the survey were asked to consider the last read aloud that they did with their class and to indicate the purpose of that read aloud. The survey provided several options for identifying purpose: just for fun; filling time; connected to a content we are studying; instruction in decoding, comprehension, or vocabulary; literature instruction/study; or other.

Thirty-five respondents chose the “other” option as a response and specified that other purpose. These responses were analyzed and, in many cases, were able to be categorized into the six provided options. Two new categories were added to include the remaining comments. These categories were: Reading promotion, as I was unable to identify the purpose of this response in relation to my provided suggestions; and multiple purposes in which respondents chose “other” in order to record more than one of the options as the survey program was specifically set up to prevent the selection of more than one purpose as

a multiple choice option. In three cases, the response was left in the “other” category as it was particular to the individual context and would not have been transferable to a general purpose. Examples of the reorganization of the “other” category are found in table 8.

Table 8

Re-categorization of other comments from the survey open question responses

“Other” Response	Categorizations
We are talking about flowers and Mother's Day	Connected to a content
We also used it to study character development and comparison. It also connected to the Social Studies curriculum I want to check more than one item on your lists!!!	New Category: Multiple Purposes
Reading Promotion	New Category: Reading Promotion
The book is about family and friends having cancer. It was read by a child who lost her little brother to cancer. She read the book because we had just learned that 2 of the children in the class had a mother who was just diagnosed with cancer. My student read the book as a beacon of hope because she understood that most times cancer can be beaten.	Remained “other”
Author study	Literature Study

There were 200 responses to the question regarding purpose. With this re-categorization, Table 9 reports the purposes of the last read aloud in the participants' classes.

Table 9

Purpose of Last Read Aloud Reported by Survey Participants

Response	Percentage	Count
Just for fun	12.5%	25
Filling time	0.5%	1
Connected to a content we are studying	44.5%	89
Instruction in decoding/comprehension/ or vocabulary	10.5%	21
Literature instruction/study	21.0%	42
Reading promotion	1.0%	2
Multiple Purposes	8.5%	17
Other	1.5%	3
Total Responses	100%	200

Focusing on the last read aloud completed in class, 89 (44.5%) indicated that the read aloud connected to a content that was being studied in the class. This number increased to 103 (51.5%) if the respondents listed *connected to content* as one of the multiple purposes that they indicated. Another 21 respondents used their read aloud for instruction in decoding comprehension and/or vocabulary, in other words, for reading instruction. The text in these

cases became a vehicle to teach students to read. The focus in both these types of purposes is on the information that is taken away from the read aloud rather than the lived through experience. Considering these responses through Rosenblatt's (1938) efferent and aesthetic stance lens, 124 of the 200 read alouds (62%) positioned the reader to consider the text from an efferent stance. This finding is similar to the work of Sipe (2008) who reported, "Today the types of book experiences that result in aesthetic literary understanding are decidedly not among the 'school-valued practices' of many school districts, schools, and classrooms today" (p. 7).

I have noticed that while the data on time suggested that many teachers use read aloud to fill a few minutes in the day, only one of the respondents suggested that this was the purpose of the last read aloud done in the classroom. This will be further discussed during the analysis of the logbook purpose section.

Of the remaining read alouds, 42 (21%) had the set purpose of literature instruction or study and 25 (12.5%) just for fun. These purposes were noted in the description of read aloud. One respondent wrote, "I use it to introduce ideas and concepts, literary strategies, authors, illustrators." Other responses focus on the idea of enjoyment: "I read the novel aloud because I have students who cannot read well at all. I want them to enjoy the story. It is *The Grizzly* and the students love outdoor stories. Very exciting!"

Acknowledging that the survey provided only a snapshot of the last read aloud done in a variety of classrooms, I wondered if this bias towards efferent use of read aloud would also be present in the logbooks. The logbooks documented a similar number of read aloud events (survey=200, logbook=229). While the survey took snapshots in 200 different classrooms, the logbook created, in essence, photo albums in 10 classrooms.

Logbook data on the purpose of read aloud. The logbook provided a column for teachers to note the identified purpose for each read aloud. While both figures 3 and 4 provide the data gathered from the 10 logbooks together, each logbook's entries were analyzed for overall purpose or patterns that were identified over the course of the one-month of recording. The following summarizes the overall purposes that emerged from the analysis of the purpose comments in each of the logbooks.

Jill used read aloud for a variety of purposes in her two kindergarten classes. She used the term "stories of interest" to identify the purpose for some of her read alouds. These "stories of interest" book choices were generated by student interest, and therefore the identified purpose was often valuing those interests and choices. These "stories of interest" books were then used as independent and partner reading choices. In Jill's classrooms read alouds are also used as activating or acquiring events for units of study (e.g., colours, flowers/seeds, and wind). Other read alouds were used to instruct a variety of reading techniques (e.g., punctuation, picture cues, and genre).

Laura used read aloud for a variety of purposes in her kindergarten class. One of the main purposes of read aloud was to introduce a topic of study (e.g., colour, inukshuks, healthy living, or an event). These introductions were followed up by other texts whose purpose was to extend the learning and conversations connected to those content areas; in several instances the content was combined (e.g., colour/emotion, inukshuk/northern lights, colour/Canada). In these cases the read aloud purpose was to show connections between the various areas of study. In addition, rhyme time was identified throughout the logbook as a reading instruction purpose.

Almost all read aloud selections—15 of the 19 documented events in Elizabeth’s logbook for her kindergarten class—were connected to a unit of study (e.g., shadows, Easter, and art). Another identified purpose was as a model for writing. An interesting use of read aloud time in this classroom was the use of text talk around a variety of texts in the remaining three read alouds. During one session students brought their favourite book of the last five months and parts were read aloud. At another session, read aloud was connected to home reading selections. Another gave students the opportunity to bring a favourite book from home.

For Jane, grade one read aloud was most often connected to content area study. Read alouds supported learning in social studies, science, art, roots of empathy/friendship, and rules. Several read alouds also connected to the time of the year, which was St. Patrick’s Day. Two other texts were read aloud for pleasure. One was a teacher favourite and the other was a student request.

For the 20 documented days the most often recorded purpose of read aloud in Kathy’s 1/2/3 multiage classroom was mythology study. Often this had a sub-purpose such as preparation for research, connection to modern times, or preparation for drama. Additional read alouds were used for other studies such as plants or life cycles. Kathy used the term “for pure fun” for one of the read alouds; and, at two other times new books arrived that were shared with students through read aloud.

Katelyn also worked in a 1/2/3 multiage program and identified the purpose for many read alouds as literary device examples. The texts contained examples of specific author crafting that provided the focus for the read aloud. For example, a text could be

chosen and read aloud to provide a model of cause and effect or inspiring ideas. There were also several read alouds that connected to content areas such as seeds, plants, and trees.

Gerry made connections between read aloud and writing in her grade four class. In eight out of the 14 sessions, the read aloud was focused specifically on the idea of persuasive writing. The Tony Stead book *Should There be Zoos* (2000) is specifically written for that purpose with the subtitle, *a persuasive text*. Gerry also used read alouds to “teach responsible pet ownership” and for an “art lesson on tangrams.” One text was reportedly used for “entertainment.”

Sheila identified *Fantastic Mr. Fox* (Dahl, 1970) as “novel study” as the purpose for many of her read alouds while the other texts in her grade 4/5 class had a variety of purposes. Some connected to content (e.g., time, adverbs), others were used to “fill in a few minutes” or “for fun.” Two read alouds were used to transfer into students’ own writing. One was also used to draw a picture of the meaning, possibly to assist with comprehension.

Most of the identified purposes in Bev’s logbook relate to reading behaviours (e.g., visualization and inferring) for her grade 5 students. The Manitoba Young Readers’ Choice Awards (MYRCA) nominee read alouds were identified as “calming after recess.” Only two read aloud sessions were identified as content based, connected to the social studies curriculum.

The analysis of each logbook looking for patterns and themes of purpose illustrates the diversity of ways in which read aloud is used in the classrooms studied. Read aloud was often used as a pedagogical strategy to teach something and was influenced by other learning that was happening in the classroom and by the time that it occurred. For example,

Kathy's class was engaged in a mythology study and therefore the read alouds supported this learning.

For each read aloud event, the logbook participants completed a line on the recording sheet to identify the purpose of that read aloud. These responses were then coded based on the same six categories that were provided in the survey. Table 10 provides examples of the way that the categorization was done.

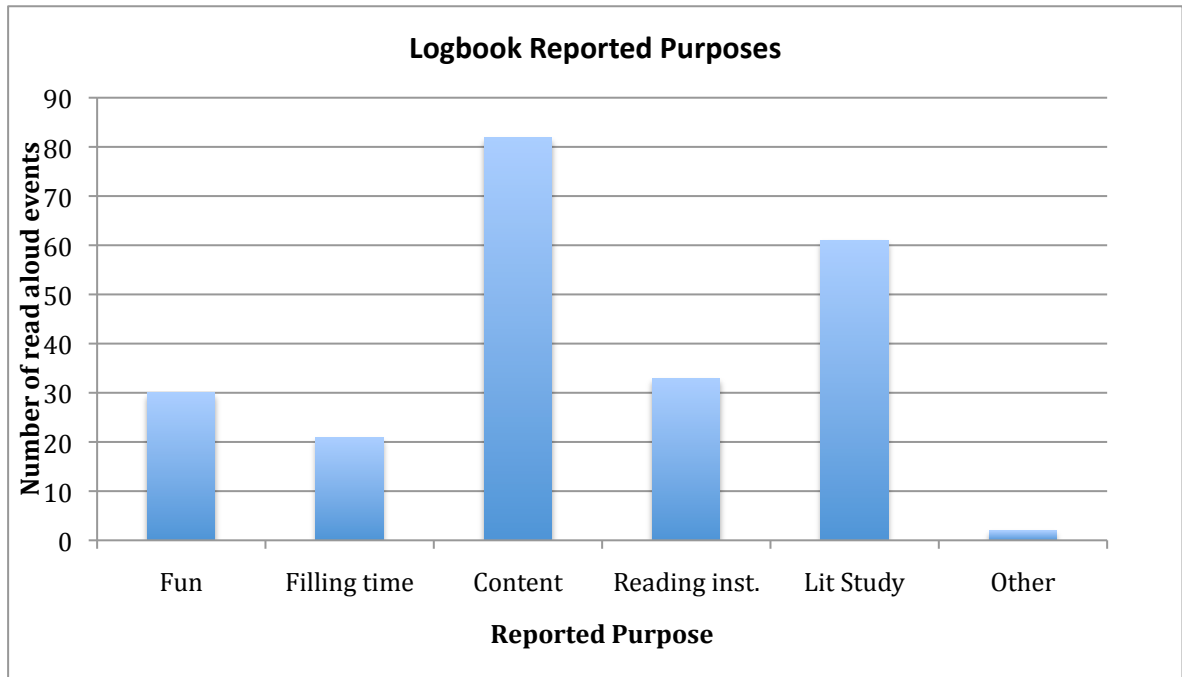
Table 10

Categorization of teacher comments in the logbooks.

Examples of Teacher description from Logbook	Categorization
Teaching visualization during reading	Reading instruction
Art lesson on tangrams	Content we are studying
Literary device	Literature study
Transition	Filling time
One of my favourite books	For fun
Class book	Other

Using this categorization, the logbook data is reported in Figure 3.

Figure 3. The reported purposes for read aloud by the logbook participants.



It is apparent from figure 3 that content was easily the most commonly reported purpose for read alouds in the logbooks. This is similar to the purpose results from the survey. The following section will compare the data on purpose from the two data sources.

Comparison of logbook and survey data. Figure 4 provides a comparison between purposes of read aloud reported in the survey and the logbook. There were similar numbers of events in both of the data sources (survey=200, logbook=229), and for clarity of comparison, the results from both data sources were converted to percentage of the overall reported read aloud events for each purpose.

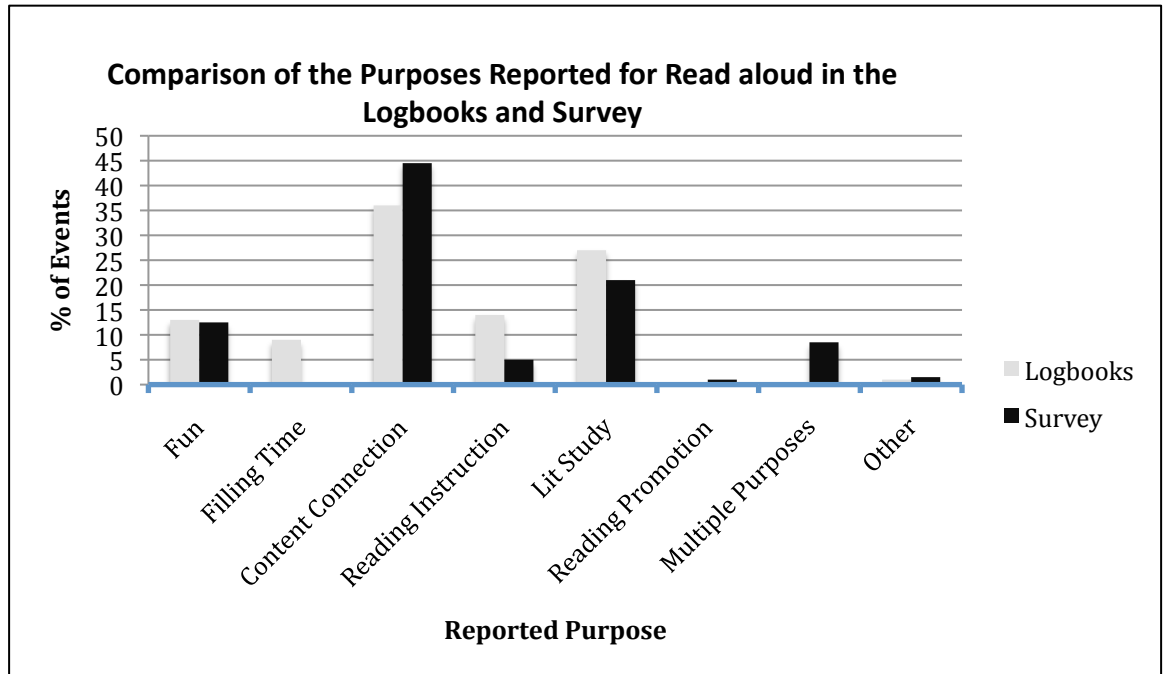


Figure 4. A comparison of reported purposes by respondents to the survey and logbook participants.

It is of note that there were several differences between the ways in which the participants could report purpose in the survey and the logbook. The survey documented a single read aloud event for each participant, whereas the logbook documented a series of read alouds for each participant. The survey respondents were provided with six choices for purpose with the additional option of choosing and naming another purpose. The logbook participants were provided with an open space in which to record the purpose. While the paper copy of the logbook provided a limited space (see Appendix B), the electronic copy space could be expanded for extended text. One final difference existed in the two data source reporting procedures. In the survey teachers were asked to reflect on a previous read aloud event, while in the logbook the teachers were asked to record the purpose on the same day as the read aloud. Several of the logbook participants noted that they kept the logbook

beside the chair that they used for read aloud and recorded at the time of the event, while others transferred data from their day plan into the logbook at the end of each day.

In spite of these differences in data collection, the results are remarkably similar. Read aloud events were done most often to connect to a content area, usually science, social studies, math or art, with survey respondents reporting this purpose for 44.5% of read alouds, and logbook respondents reporting a content connection in 36% of read alouds.

When teachers were reflecting back on their read aloud purposes, 8.5% indicated multiple purposes while none of the logbook participants recorded multiple purposes for their read alouds. This is possibly a result of suggestion. When the survey participants were given a list of purposes to choose from, they may have been able to connect the read aloud to those suggestions. During the actual read aloud, these purposes may not have been the central focus but could be considered incidental outcomes. In the logbooks, teachers had to articulate the purpose in their own words; this seemed to provide more focus on the central purpose of each read aloud.

The survey listed “filling time” as a possible option for respondents to choose in identifying the purpose. Only one respondent to the survey chose this option, even though the logbook participants recorded 21 events as having purposes such as “fill in a few minutes.” The one response to the multiple choice answer is also in contrast to many of the open question responses in which respondents described the use of read aloud as something like “a good way to fill a couple of minutes.” These contrasts and the results shown on the comparison chart (Figure 4) illustrate the potential power of language. It is possible that there was perceived pressure to record a curricular-based purpose for read aloud upon reflection that may not have been the actual purpose in the moment. Logbook participants

also had the freedom to use more palatable language such as “transition” as a way to describe the use of read aloud to fill time, whereas the survey respondents seemed to resist the term “filling time” with one respondent even going so far as to say “all of the above . . . except filling time.”

Teachers chose an efferent stance during read aloud in over half of the read aloud events in both the logbooks and the survey. When using a read aloud to connect to content being studied, it appeared that the teacher was trying to either activate a lesson on a particular subject or continue conversations on a topic that was being studied.

Open survey question response and interview data on purpose. In the survey, participants were asked to describe read aloud in the classroom. There were 192 responses to this question. The responses were categorized based on the information that they provided in relation to the research questions. The following responses related to the purpose provided for read aloud. When asked to describe read aloud in their classroom several participants noted the connection between the read aloud and other curriculum content being studied. For example, one respondent said that read aloud was used for “Teaching in all subject areas— health, social responsibility etc. etc. etc..” Another referred to a specific title that connected to the social studies curriculum, “I have several books that align with Social Studies curriculum. For example, right now, I’m reading *Charlie Wilcox* (WW1) to my kids.” Similar to the logbooks, the time of the year was often reflected in the read aloud choices, as one explained, “Often read books related to curriculum areas we are studying or special days.” The variety of purposes for read aloud was noted in the following comment, “Daily during snack time, weekly during library time, several times a week to illustrate

particular concepts (e.g., setting, character etc.), as an activating tool in the content areas such as science, and math, for enjoyment.”

The interview participants also made connections to content based topics as the focus for the read alouds. Katelyn commented, “Most of them were directly tied to curriculum so that was helpful for me.” In Jill’s kindergarten class, a book may have been read aloud to begin studying a topic. For example she explained, “for math typically I’ll try to find...there is a series called *MathStart* that builds a pattern into a cute storyline that they enjoy so sometimes I’ll start with that before we have our new jobs for the week as a way of highlighting that.”

The curriculum content is central to these statements. The texts were chosen because of what the book was about or the topic. Respondents spoke of using read aloud for “illustrating”, or “aligning” with the curriculum. These types of comments seem to suggest that the learning happens either before or after the read aloud and is either introduced or reinforced through the sharing of the text.

In other statements, teachers articulated the use of read aloud to connect to some of the visible reading behaviours that can be modeled, such as fluency or decoding unfamiliar words. Teachers addressed their role as model in comments such as, “Used because students need to be read to fluently to assist their own reading”, and “We use read aloud to talk about reading strategies”, or “I read aloud to the students to model for them how to read fluently, use the period, question mark, exclamation mark, and how to stop and figure out if something sounds confusing.” Read aloud is also used to connect reading and writing, as one respondent explains, “I try to connect my read alouds to our writing or reading topics or to the CAFÉ [a reference to the Boushey & Moser (2009) book that is used in many

Manitoba classrooms. The acronym CAFÉ refers to Comprehension, Accuracy, Fluency, and Expanding vocabulary] strategies—modeling a particular strategy and having the children do guided practice afterwards.”

Through modeling, the goal is to move students to independence in their own reading. However, in these cases, the teacher became the model of appropriate visible reading behaviours such as fluency or decoding, rather than modeling the more invisible behaviours of transacting and making meaning from the text, things that are also important in students’ independent reading.

Katelyn’s logbook was the only one in which the language of *literary device* was an identified purpose for her read alouds. Katelyn articulated the connection between reading and writing alluding to the concept of disciplinary literacy. She said, “So we needed to connect reading and writing. And so it’s like reading like a writer and writing like a reader so you need the language of writers and you need the language of readers.” She noted that the language from the read aloud transfers into conversations about writing:

Well we are doing some writing right now around fairy tales and we were very specific about why we were doing fairy tales. We did talk about plot, we did talk about word choice, we did talk about characters, like a cause and effect sort of thing. We did talk about that. And less in the whole class and more in our conferences about individual stories. Now we have a shared language. And so we use that shared language. And now I can use that shared language because we learnt it together.

This use of a shared language allows the students to discuss literature with each other, to become part of a community with a shared discourse. Katelyn notes the importance of this discourse:

My hope is that my kids are flexible, strong thinkers when they read and write. And my job is to help them with the strategies to figure that out, to think while they read. And that's really hard because a lot of kids are able to decode the text and they are able to consume all those kinds of things. But (the important part) it's slowing them down to be able to think for themselves and listen to that voice and to be able to have conversations with other kids about different types of texts.

Katelyn uses the read aloud time as a place where those conversations are learned and practiced in a safe and supportive environment.

Bev's description of purpose focuses very much on comprehension strategies. She explained some of the reasons that she uses read aloud by saying, "Enjoyment, things that good readers do. We've been doing, we just started summarizing. Before that we were doing visualizing the story in your head. Making inferences, those types of things." These are similar to those described by Buehl (2009) who suggests that there are seven comprehension processes of proficient readers: making connections; generating questions; creating mental images; making inferences; determining importance; synthesizing; and monitoring reading.

Another purpose that was noted in both the open question responses and the interviews was classroom management. One respondent noted, "I like to do read aloud when they are doing Art. Keeps them quiet and allows me to tend to their needs." Others observed, "I use it as a calming thing", or "I use it to settle them after recess." As Grant (1994) reported that this is often a purpose for read aloud in middle years classrooms, it is noteworthy that Bev, the grade five teacher, also discussed this in the interview when explaining why she read a MYRCA book:

That's just to calm them down basically when they come in from recess because my class is really crazy so we do that for about 15 minutes everyday... Some of them draw; some of them put their head down. Some just sit and look around. Just so long as they are not making noise they can do what they want.”

When I asked about the novels that were read after recess in the afternoon, Bev explained, “that time is really just to get them to settle down, that's why I do it then, to get their attention. After lunch I always do a teaching technique with them and I usually use a picture book at that time. And again to get them to calm down.”

The particular phenomenon of read aloud for classroom management should be explored in more depth. Similar to the decisions made regarding time, the decisions regarding purpose as classroom management could be made either because it is highly engaging or because it is highly teacher controlled. If the first is true, then this could be a way to support the development of engaged readers, if the latter is true, then readers may see reading modeled as something done by “others” with no real active role for the listener except to stay quiet. Another way to interpret the use of read aloud as a classroom management strategy is to consider the aesthetic experience with literature as an introspective and quiet activity, suggesting almost an anesthetic rather than aesthetic experience. Again, the messages that could be given to students are mixed regarding the purposes for reading.

Summary of the purposes for read aloud. The data reported on the purposes of read aloud illustrates that read aloud as a pedagogical event is difficult to define. While the act of the teacher reading aloud to students may look similar across the events, the purpose

that the teacher chooses to focus on during that event shifts the learning and the way that reading is being modeled for students.

Complicating those purposes are the responses that suggested that one read aloud event was being used for multiple purposes. When meaning making is considered a transaction between the reader and the text, how does a novice reader sift out the meaning when multiple purposes are being presented during the read aloud? While this may seem like an effective and efficient use of time and activity, it may limit the learning that the student is able to do.

In the previous chapter I discussed the need for different ways of thinking in different disciplines. Lamarque (2009) compares the way of thinking about literature to a chess game. What makes it chess is not the chess pieces but the rules that the players must follow. When considering the teaching of literature, Loyd (2011) explains that teachers may consider what they are doing during read aloud as literature study because it involves a piece of literature. In fact, Loyd suggests:

Not all transactions with books in the elementary classroom count as doing literature. Not all read-alouds count as literature curriculum. Some read-alouds are math curriculum. Some read-alouds are literacy lessons. Some read-alouds are social studies curriculum. Lamarque posits that there are rules or practices to doing literature. When readers or listeners begin to do other things with books that “break” the rules of doing literature, they are no longer doing literature. Just as novice chess players may think they are playing chess just because they are playing with chess game-pieces, some teachers may not know when they have shifted away from doing literature and have started using books for other purposes.” (p. 17)

Similar to the findings on extent of read aloud, the findings about the purposes of read aloud suggest that read aloud seems to be an almost organic event that just happens in classrooms. There seems to be little attention to the impact that it may have on the apprenticeship of readers by the messages that are demonstrated through the purposes for which it is used. Teacher read aloud may become a vehicle to transmit knowledge about the content of the text but not a vehicle to acquire experience of how a reader may interact and think about text in a systematic and purposeful way.

What is apparent in the discussion of purpose is that teachers often choose to use read aloud as a pedagogical strategy that served another purpose other than an engagement in the text. It was a way of communicating or demonstrating information that children may not have had access to independently or as a way to engage students in another topic. The read aloud is not a learning event in itself, but a springboard to other learning that may take place in the classroom. As Loyd noted, “The books teachers select for the read-aloud often have hidden curricular implications, i.e., children’s books are often used for some other curriculum than literature.”(p. 23). What is acknowledged in this study is that, as a researcher, I am not privy to the conversations and interactions that went on during that read aloud. Teachers may respond and support other purposes throughout an interactive read aloud that are not specifically connected to the identified purpose. However, research by Fisher et al. (2004), indicates that the identified purpose of the teacher positions the reader, particularly a struggling reader, in relation to the text. This, in conjunction with the limited time spent on teacher read aloud in classrooms makes me skeptical that multiple purposes are being adequately met within a read aloud session.

In addition to and connected with the purpose is the choice of what a teacher chooses to read to meet that purpose. The following section on text choice has further implications to the purpose of read aloud.

What Are Teachers Reading Aloud?

The following section will report the data that dealt with texts that teachers chose for teacher read aloud in the classroom. This section will discuss the implications of text choice in light of the theoretical framework. I will report the data gathered from the survey, followed by data that was analyzed from the logbooks. Next, I will further explore the significance of text choice with data from the interviews and the open question responses from the survey. Finally, I will summarize the data on text choice.

Implications of text choice in consideration of the theoretical framework. The previous section analyzing the purposes self-reported for teacher read aloud identified that over 50% of the read alouds were being done for an efferent purpose, either to learn something about content or to learn something about reading. Work on disciplinary literacy suggests that instruction in different literacies needs to be focused on the particular ways of thinking and the particular texts of the discipline being studied. Early exposure to these particular texts, text structures, and ways of thinking can apprentice young readers into those communities of discourse.

Since 40% of teacher read alouds were being identified as being read to teach a content being studied, (science, social studies, math, or art) one may make the assumption that the texts being used are congruent with those particular disciplines. The texts used in social studies may include primary historical documents, maps, graphs, journals, or artifacts. Science texts such as experiments, observations, descriptions, or visuals can be found in

many excellent non-fiction texts written for children. Texts in math or art could be visual or symbolic in nature with a particular code that allows the reader to make sense of these texts.

While I had hoped to learn about literary development from this study, the respondents' focus on learning content through read aloud led me to expect that many of the texts that would be listed as matching these purposes would be non-fiction. If this had been the case, this practice would support current research encouraging an increase in informative text exposure in the early years

Survey data on text choice. Respondents to the survey were asked the question, "What did you last read aloud to your students?" This question was designed as an open response rather than a multiple choice in order to generate a list of titles and genres that were read in classes. Of the 191 written responses to this question, 57 misread the question and answered "when" rather than "what" to the question. The remaining responses were sorted into fiction and non-fiction titles or other titles. Five of these responses (4%) were student writing or charts that could not be identified as either fiction or non-fiction. The figure below indicates the overwhelming use of fiction in teacher read aloud. Even if all 57 of the misread responses had indicated a non-fiction title (which is highly unlikely in light of the responses to both the survey and the logbook), the data would still be unbalanced towards

fiction texts. Figure 5 illustrates the text choices for the survey.

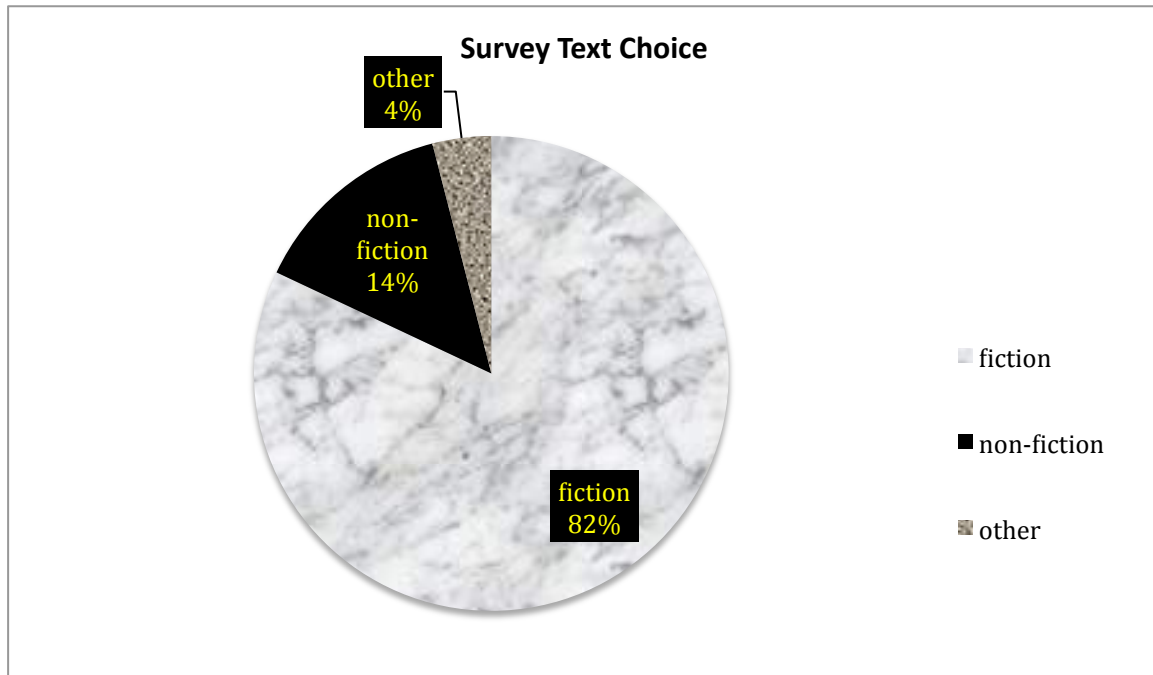


Figure 5. Text choices reported by the respondents to the survey.

The results indicated that there was limited use of informative or non-fiction text being read aloud to students. While 40% of the read alouds were used for content-based purposes, only 14% of the titles were non-fiction texts. Loyd (2011) suggests this is problematic for several reasons:

The lessons, messages, and points that become the educational objectives of the read-aloud might or might not align with the author's intent. Selecting books to teach a specific lesson or share a specific message ignores or minimalizes the transactional nature of reading because it assumes every listener will take away the same message or lesson from the read-aloud experience. The content of the book becomes the reason the specific book is selected. (p. 110)

As the survey only provided information on the last read aloud done in the participants' classrooms, I considered the longer-term data of the logbooks.

Logbook data on text choice. As with the surveys, fictional texts dominated the logbooks read alouds as illustrated with figure 6.

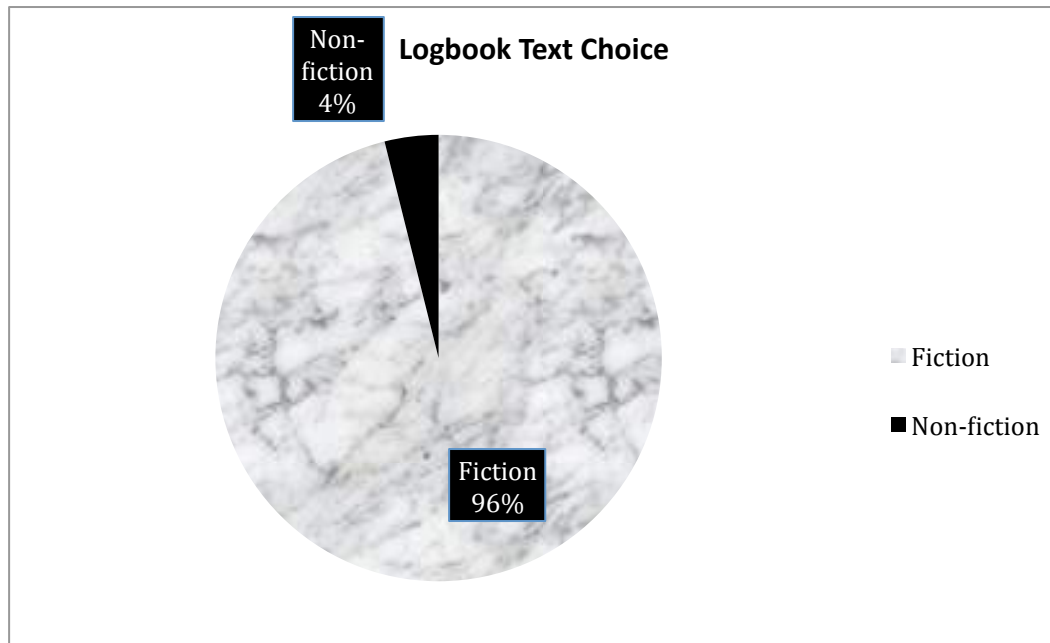


Figure 6. Text choices indicated by the logbook participants.

The dominance of fiction in both the survey and the logbook in conjunction with the content-based purpose was an unexpected result, which raises important questions regarding text choice: Are students learning to view literature as a vehicle to gain information? Are students learning to turn to literature to inform them? If so, we need to consider how this might impact the development of adult readers of both fiction and non-fiction. It is possible that they will not develop the ability to read fiction from a literary perspective. It is also possible that they will not develop the ability to derive information from non-fiction texts.

Teachers seem to rely almost exclusively on fiction to engage students in topics that may be better addressed through the use of non-fiction or informative texts. In light of the demographics of the respondents this may not be surprising. Females are generally drawn to the use of fiction in their own reading and therefore may see themselves as apprenticing students into similar reading behaviours (e.g., Tepper, 2000). Consider the reading experiences of children as they move into school: As very young children without independent access to text, children are engaged with a wide range of story structures. They may be read to, watch movies or TV, or have stories told to them. By the time that they reach school and are asked to independently access these structures they have a large repertoire to access to help support new texts. When they reach middle grades they are now asked to independently access non-fiction texts with little of the support of hearing those structures read to them. Chall (1983) refers to this as the fourth grade slump; students are often discouraged by these new difficulties that arise when these reading expectations are placed on them. It seems that an increase of early experiences in schools of hearing and discussing the various structures of non-fiction would likely support more successful independent reading of these texts later in school years. In conversation with the three interview participants, I explored the reasons behind text choice.

Interview data on text choice. During the interviews I asked the participants to explain how they chose the texts that they would use. Katelyn's response was:

I did not preplan all the texts that we would be reading. It was usually based on the conversation that we had about one text and it led to another text. It also was an idea of access. Sometimes when you are talking about emergent curriculum, which is part of things, you can't always find the text that you need so you substitute in other texts

for different reasons. For example the plant study that we are doing we had some texts here and we also went to the library to get texts and used those, but usually they are connected in some way.

This idea of access or using texts that are available comes up again in the conversation with Bev who explains that books that are accessible within the school are often used:

We actually have a teacher at our school who does half time grade five and half time literacy. And so she has made lists of books for all types of reading techniques and stuff. So I just look at my list and go to the library.

Jill explains the selection process that she uses when considering which books to bring into her classroom:

One of the things I started doing this year was just getting the kids' feedback on the kind of books that they are interested in. It sort of started with one student in the library noticing a model of the Titanic up in the library. And he asked about that. And he wanted to take books about the Titanic out of the library and that interest sort of spread to the other kids in the room so I got the afternoon class one week to give me a list of things they would be interested in looking at books on a particular theme. I went to the public library and got a whole whack of books on three or four different themes and then we kept those for two weeks in the classroom and then the following week the morning class generated the list.

This focus on student-generated book choice is a change from Jill's previous practice:

I was choosing read alouds before based on things that we had been talking about in class, seasonal changes, things like that. But when I started pulling them out of the student interest bins they were way, way more [very animated] interested learning about that.

When Jill began using the student generated interest bins as her resource for read alouds, she thought that she was evenly representing non-fiction choices as the bins had a variety of texts and students were very engaged in the non-fiction titles.

I analyzed the 49 titles that Jill read aloud in her two kindergarten classes. Of those 49, 40 were fiction and only nine were non-fiction. When I asked Jill whether she thought her logbook had more fiction or non-fiction, she responded, “You know I think it would be pretty balanced . . . We read a lot. There probably is a little more fiction than non fiction.”

Jill conceded that there may be a little more fiction than non-fiction because one of the interest bins that month was an author study by Mo Willems and that those books may have shifted the balance. What is interesting about this comment is that the Mo Willems study was teacher chosen, so while the students were very excited about the non-fiction texts, it was often the *Elephant and Piggy* or *George and Martha* texts that were chosen when Jill read aloud to fill a few minutes. The teacher control of text choice may be more representative of the teacher’s interests and preferences rather than the students’.

Summary of text choice. Fiction dominated the text choices for all of the participants in this study. Considering that I had hoped to learn about literary reading, this investment in fictional text should have been a positive finding for me. Instead I found that the fiction texts were being used for a variety of purposes that actually position students to view literature from a decidedly non-literary stance. This incongruence between text choice

and purpose has become for me the most intriguing finding of this study and will be discussed to a greater extent in chapter five.

Is Read Aloud Being Used to Develop Literary Understandings?

With the final research questions I wanted to explore teachers' understandings of read aloud and the development of literary understandings. The results from both the logbook and the survey to this point suggest the accuracy of Nodelman and Reimer's (2003) observations that students are being asked to use literature to "develop their language skills" or "expand their creativity", or "build their knowledge" rather than the text "being considered as a text." The data seem to indicate that literary understandings are not of central focus during teacher read aloud.

Some additional information can be gathered from all data sources regarding teachers' perceptions of literary understandings. While no survey questions asked directly about literary understandings, the open question responses asking participants to describe read aloud in the classroom were analyzed for comments that suggested evidence of a literary focus. The logbooks were also analyzed for evidence of intertextuality, or ways in which the sequence of texts might support a reader in understanding story as discussed in chapter two, and also for specific references to a literary purpose identified in the logbooks by teachers. The interviews were considered for themes that indicated a focus on literary development.

First, I will discuss the idea of developing literary understandings in consideration of the theoretical framework. Next, I will report the findings from the survey that relates to literary understandings, followed by the logbook data, specifically the sequences of texts

read aloud and recorded. Finally, in this section I will report the interview data that addresses literary understandings.

Literary understanding and the theoretical framework. In order for students to become literate in a variety of disciplines, teachers must be explicit about the particular ways of thinking, purposes, and choices of texts that would be specific to each discipline. Therefore, these data are considered in the ways that read aloud apprentices students into the particular ways of thinking of a literary reader. As Langer (1995) explains, this requires the reader to step into and through the text in ways that are not necessary when taking an efferent stance. In the previous section I noted that fictional texts are the most common choice for teacher read aloud in the classroom. However as I noted in the purpose section, students are not always being positioned to consider the text aesthetically or asked to consider the literary crafting of the text.

Survey data on literary understandings. While no questions on the survey provided quantitative data on the development of literary understandings, the open question responses were analyzed for evidence of literary development. Several teachers noted their use of read aloud as a way to make stories accessible to children. This accessibility allowed children to experience more complex literary structures than they may have been capable of doing independently. The first texts that children learn to read independently are usually controlled vocabulary texts. While children may take considerable joy in decoding these texts themselves, the text does not always lend itself to the type of thinking about narrative that children are capable of with mediation. As one respondent wrote, “I read books to them that they want to hear but are too hard for most of them to read.” Another explained, “I read the novel aloud because I have students who cannot read well at all.”

The idea of using read aloud because teachers “want them to love reading!” is also a repeated theme in the open responses. Within the 192 written responses, the word “enjoyment” was used 15 times, the word “fun” was used 7 times, and the word “pleasure” was used 3 times. This focus on the read aloud as increasing fun is an important aspect when considering long-term goals for reading that cannot be achieved through the simple texts that can be used for reading instruction.

In chapter two, I discussed the learning that should occur in order for readers to take richer, more complex pleasure in reading. Read aloud events that allow students access to complex texts provide opportunities for students to learn about taking pleasure in literary reading, particularly if these read aloud events include discussion regarding the crafting of the texts. One respondent wrote, “Every morning, I read from a novel I have chosen. I use it to discuss different genres, explore writing techniques, to expose children to a book they would not pick up but most importantly to enjoy and become immersed in well written story.” Another respondent focuses on the style of an author: “I have an ‘author of the month’, whose books we read on a daily basis and we discuss how the author writes/illustrates his/her books.” Discussion as a way to build independence with literature is also suggested in the comment by one respondent who wrote, “I use it as a way of sharing literature with the class, as a way to expose the students to MYRCA novels, as a way to initiate discussion and as a way to model future literature studies.”

While the open question responses did not provide details on the types of discussions that occurred during those read alouds, some comments suggest that the dialogue followed an Initiation-Response-Evaluation (IRE) pattern (Mehan, 1979) in which the teacher poses the question, the student provides the answer, and the teacher evaluates the quality or

appropriateness of that answer. For example, one respondent explained, “We are doing a novel study right now, so it happens every day we have ELA. It happens in the classroom, I sit on my desk or a table and read to the students. We frequently stop and I ask them ‘What does this word mean?’ ‘How could we find the meaning?’ etc.” While another wrote, that he/she “Try to do it for 15-20 minutes most days (not always able to though). I read to the class and they listen and answer verbal questions that I pose to them about what I’ve read.” Again, these comments illustrate the diversity of read aloud experiences that students may be receiving in Manitoba classrooms. In this section I have included explicitly stated literary learning through read aloud. In the section following I considered these explicit statements in the logbooks and also possible incidental literary learning that may have occurred.

Logbook data on literary understandings. As discussed in chapter two, there is considerable evidence that helping students to build a repertoire of literature that supports intertextual connections can develop literary reading abilities in children (Fisher et al., 2004; Sipe, 2000). While making connections between texts supports comprehension, usually those readers with large repertoires of literary experiences are more successful and effective at making those connections. As with most effective instruction, explicitly demonstrating these connections to students is an important step when modeling behaviours; however, there is the possibility that students may observe and learn from behaviours that are not explicitly stated, particularly when learning is repeated and connected. For this reason I analyzed the titles that were provided in the logbooks.

I collected and read the series of texts that were reported in each logbook in the sequence in which they were read to the students. As I was reading, I made note of intertextual connections that students who had listened to the texts could have made,

regardless of whether these connections were made explicit and planned by the teacher. Either way, they would have been added to the repertoire of the students.

Three criteria were considered: (1) style of the author; (2) topic of the book; or (3) repeated literary element. For example, if a teacher read several books by Robert Munsch, students may have recognized that the stories usually included a child protagonist who had a problem. The problem was solved by the end, and in many cases, a second problem was suggested in the final pages. If they read several of these texts, students might be able to better predict the final pages of Robert Munsch's stories. Similarly, if a teacher read several stories in which trees were an important focus, students may view those stories as being about trees and focus on that content of those stories. As another example, if a teacher read the following books: *Mufaro's Beautiful Daughters* (Steptoe, 1987); *The Talking Eggs* (San Souci, 1989); and *The Warrior and the Wiseman* (Wisniewski, 1989), students might recognize that in many stories sibling characters take on opposite characteristics that cause them to approach problems in different ways. The knowledge of this literary element could help them to understand other stories with sibling characters or to include this element when writing their own stories. While stories with connections may not be immediately sequenced one after another, the 20-day collection period would suggest that stories were read in close enough proximity for students to possibly make those connections.

Style of the author. When students are exposed to the work of an author through multiple works, there is the possibility that they will be able to recognize a particular style. Authors often use similar devices or make similar crafting decisions throughout different works. I analyzed the teachers' 10 logbooks to find evidence of any authors that students were exposed to through multiple texts.

Jill indicated that she had put together a Mo Willems basket of books that was made available to students for independent reading and sharing. Jill recorded the use of seven Willems' books with her morning kindergarten class and six with her afternoon class. Willems' books often use text size and position, symbols, and colour to suggest emotion. As Jill noted in the interview:

What I love about him and what I discovered by accident with the pigeon books [e.g. *Don't let the Pigeon Drive the Bus*] a few years ago is the punctuation and the use of even, just in the drawings, is the expression. The little tornado scribble above his head and the way we can tell how he's feeling by looking at him. The drawings are simple and they are easy for kids to recreate if they want to. So we talked a lot about emotion and what we could tell from the drawings and then it became more the punctuation and the size of the letters and what do you think that means for how we should read it and so when I'm reading those books I tend to get them to help me [Recreates conversation between student and teacher] "Would I read it like this?" "No, its got an exclamation mark" "what does that mean?" "You need to sound excited" "OK, look at his face. Do I need to sound excited in a happy way or excited in an angry way?" so it's a lot of getting that expression.

Jill also used two works by Antoinette Portis: *Not a Box* (2007) and *Not a Stick* (2008). Portis' work also uses simple drawings and minimal text which allows students to infer their own meanings and predict the ongoing story.

In Laura's class the students were exposed to multiple texts by Dr. Seuss and Robert Munsch. Both of these authors have distinctive styles, both in text and illustration. In Laura's class, these texts were read aloud because of their connection to other events rather

than a purposeful author study such as Jill described. For example, *Stephanie's Ponytail* (Munsch, 1996) and *Aaron's Hair* (Munsch, 2000) were both chosen for their connection to "Crazy Hair" day, a special school event. While one of the Seuss books was part of an ABC centre, the other was read as part of a colour study.

Two other logbook participants recorded two texts by the same author. Katelyn read two books by Laura Numeroff. Both of these texts, *If you Give a Mouse a Cookie* (1985) and *If you Give a Pig a Pancake* (1998), repeat a similar circular pattern of requests and consequences, and Katelyn identified the purpose of these read alouds as "literary device: Cause and effect."

Gerry read two of Kevin Henke's books to her class, *Lily's Purple Purse* (1996) and *Lily's Big Day* (2006). Henkes writes about the same protagonist in both of these books. One was chosen as a book recommendation for *I Love to Read Month* with the next book being identified as a follow-up text to the first story. There was no indication as to the purpose of this second read aloud other than a follow-up.

In several cases, teachers either re-read the same text by an author or read one author's text in multiple sittings. For example, Laura records *Moose* (2011) by Robert Munsch as being read twice. Cathy used an anthology type text, *Usborne's Book of Greek Myths* (Amery & Edwards, 1999) for 18 read aloud sessions. Students, in this case, heard multiple stories by the same author on the same topic. Both Bev and Katelyn dedicated several read aloud sessions to an ongoing reading of a novel. Students had longer exposure to an author's style with these repeated readings.

Topic of the book. I also considered the logbook entries for repetition of the same topic. As noted in the section about purpose, teachers often chose a book to read aloud

because of the topic or subject of the book. In many cases in the logbooks, teachers chose multiple books about the same topic. In Jill's classroom, her recorded read alouds often related to a connected theme. She had identified *The Titanic* as an area of interest for the students. Over the course of the 20 days, Jill read aloud a non-fiction text about the Titanic and also read another more general book about boats from the *Things that go* (Two Lions) series called *Boats: Speeding, Sailing, Cruising* (2009). In addition, Jill read aloud books that were connected to boats in a more general way. These books were on the theme of the sea, including a book that used a story to tell facts, or so-called "faction", about the life of a starfish, *Star of the Sea* (Halfmann, 2011). Two other fiction books: *I'm a Shark* (Shea, 2011) and the wordless picture book *Wave* (Lee, 2008) told stories with a sea connection. It is of note that *I'm a Shark* is not about real sharks but a story told between a father and son about fears using a shark as the character.

Similarly, Laura recorded nine titles that were about colours. Some titles focused on naming items by their colour in particular settings: *The Deep Blue Sea* (Wood, 2005); and *Rainforest Colors* (Canizares, 1997) while others dealt with colours more abstractly, like *My Many Colored Days* (1996). Laura also read books that were about the North or the Northern Lights. In one instance she read a book that was about the colours of the Northern Lights.

Elizabeth read three books on the topic of shadows and two books that were introductory texts to art lessons. Elizabeth also read three books that were about Easter. One was *Happy Easter Biscuit!* (Capucilli, 2000), the story of a dog named Biscuit finding his Easter basket. The others were *The Easter Bunny is Missing* (Metzgar, 2007), and a pop-up book called *Easter Bugs* (Carter, 2001). Jane also read books that connected to the time of

the year by including three books about St. Patrick's Day. One of those texts, *It's St. Patrick's Day* (Gomez, 2004) was a *Scholastic Level One* rhyming text while the other two were stories about St. Patrick's Day. Katelyn's class heard nine books about seeds, plants, and trees over the 20 days of logbook recording. The books were diverse in terms of genre and style. For example, *The Tiny Seed* by Eric Carle (1987) tells the story of a seed's journey to find a safe place to grow. While the text has some factually accurate information, it is a stylistic mix of fiction and non-fiction, another "faction." The description on *Amazon.com* also notes that readers will "long remember the heartening message of the tiny seed's steadfast perseverance in the face of many hazards and obstacles until its final joyful success." While another book, *Living Sunlight: How Plants Bring the Earth to Life* (Bang, 2009) describes the process of photosynthesis.

It is evident in this section that the overwhelming majority of read alouds were fictional text. In those relatively rare occasions where an informative text was selected the text was often times a mix of fiction and fact. The only thing that the texts on a topic had in common was the topic. This is a tenuous link that may become over-exaggerated when presented to students in a sequenced way with the connections being overtly made by the teachers' links to other learning that is happening in the classroom.

Repeated literary element. When considering each of the 10 logbooks, I looked for literary elements or stylistic decisions that were repeatedly presented to students during the read aloud period. As would be expected, the majority of the fictional stories had the basic elements of character, setting, and plot (problem, solution). For the purposes of the analysis, however, I only noted those basic elements if more than one read aloud dealt with a specific type of character, setting or plot. These may include, for example, the use of the forest as a

setting; an underdog character; or a circular story. I also noted elements that went beyond those basic elements, for example the use of a particular device such as irony, or a metafictional element.

While I recognize that I may have missed other subtle literary elements within the entries of the logbook, I also note that the audiences of these read alouds were students in kindergarten to grade five. If the connections were so subtle that I have missed them, and the teacher did not note that she was explicitly teaching these connections, I feel confident that the majority of the students would not be aware of those connections. I noted that the connections that I am referring to in this section are literary connections. Personal connections may have been made by certain students but these would have been student specific and may not have contributed to the literary learning of the class. In fact, these personal connections may not have been mentioned or acknowledged during the read alouds particularly in light of the limited time that was dedicated to these events.

Jill included multiple books by two authors, Mo Willems and Antoinette Portis. The works of these two authors are complementary, in that they enhance one another through their use of simple illustrations and humour that requires the reader to infer much of the action. In addition, these two authors use dialogue with an invisible audience to move the story along.

Laura's class had repeated exposure to rhyming texts throughout the 20 days of logbook recording. Laura had a scheduled "rhyme time" to present these types of texts to students. While she noted that the purpose was "rhyme time", it is unclear whether this was a focus on the author's use of rhyme to enhance pleasure of hearing the story in rhyme, or if this was more of a focus on developing the students' phonemic awareness. It is possible that

this distinction was not consciously made but again, may suggest a particular importance of the language to the students. In addition, Laura used two different ABC books over the course of the 20 days.

The texts that Elizabeth, Jane, and Bev used were diverse. I was not able to identify a repeating literary element in these logbooks. For example, Elizabeth read one book from *The Octonauts* series (Meomi, 2011). As she presented it, students saw this as a book about shadows. Had she, for example, included other books with the same characters, this may have helped students to learn more about the relationships between those characters. One of Jane's read alouds was *The Three Little Pigs* (Marshall, 1989). Jane read the book to connect to her science unit on the design process. In addition, Jane could have read other texts with wolf characters such as *Red Riding Hood* (Marshall, 1987), which would have also connected to the author, or *Lon Po Po* (Young, 1989) to expose students to the use of the "big, bad wolf" or the sinister "other" character. While the use of *The Three Little Pigs* to introduce the design process is a good idea, it is often at the expense of literary connections being made due to the over reliance of fiction to connect to or introduce content areas. While the use of literature to connect to content areas is not a "bad" idea if used in balance, the concentration of fiction for a content purpose almost all the time presents a repeated message to students regarding the purposes of both fiction and non-fiction texts.

Kathy read multiple stories from the *Usborne's Book of Greek Myths* (1999). Over the course of the 20 days students had extensive exposure to the structure, style, and content of myths. While Kathy often specified purpose for the read aloud such as "preparing for research" or "preparing for drama", the genre of myth would still have been reinforced.

Katelyn read several stories that highlighted cause and effect. These included the Numeroff books, *If you Give a Pig a Pancake* and *If you Give a Mouse a Cookie*, and also *That's Good, That's Bad* (Cuyler, 1991). As a positive note, Katelyn was the only logbook participant who indicated a literary purpose to any read alouds. Katelyn recorded "literary device" as purpose in many of the entries. The sub entry following literary device was different: main idea was mentioned twice; plot (once); cause and effect (twice), word choice (once); inspiring ideas (once); point of view (once). These diverse literary device exposures do not suggest any depth of study or even enough exposure for a firm introduction. The use of the term "literary device" for these particular purposes also suggests a particular understanding or use of the term literary.

Gerry focused many of her read alouds on the idea of persuasive writing. These read alouds were used to instruct that particular writing technique for students to use in their independent writing. For that reason, seven of the titles provided students with good examples of that particular style. However, it is unknown whether this style was overtly discussed or if it may have been "picked up" by some students.

While many of the titles recorded for read alouds are excellent examples of good writing, the diversity of the texts that students were exposed to in a short period of time make it difficult to ensure an in-depth understanding of these literary elements. It would be interesting to consider a similar exposure model in another subject, math for example. On Monday, students could have some exposure to addition, on Tuesday they could touch on fractions, Wednesday could be graphing, and Thursday could be division. On Friday, if they were lucky, they could return to do a little more addition and fractions. I would think that while all of the instruction could be of high quality in each of those sessions, the mastery

and ability to replicate any of that learning in an independent setting would be minimal. Additionally, the learning would be even less if the teacher chose not to tell the students that they were learning addition or told them they were learning something else.

Interview data on literary understandings. During the interviews I asked questions to explore the ways in which texts were chosen for the read alouds. I was attempting to see if teachers noted specific reasons that a text was chosen, particularly if it was chosen because of its literary qualities. Throughout the interviews, all three participants referenced particular titles and authors that they used in the classroom. Jill spoke about Mo Willems and Marshall's *George and Martha Treasury* (Marshall, 1997). Both of these authors were referred to as student favourites. Bev referenced specific MYRCA titles and books suggested by the literacy support person. These external recommendations of titles seemed to assist Bev with her selection of texts. Katelyn mentioned *Charlie and the Chocolate Factory* (Dahl, 1964), *Captain Underpants* (Pilkey, 1997), and *Phineas and Ferb* (Mawhinney, 2011). Katelyn noted specific reasons that these texts assisted with discussion and students' independence with reading. All three teachers seemed to have their own repertoire of texts that they used in the classroom.

The ways in which the texts are chosen for a class are very different. Jill used student interest to collect a variety of books connected by either topic or author. Bev preplanned texts based on either a specific reading instructional purpose or by working through the current MYRCA list of nominees, and Katelyn's approach seemed to be a combination—student interest and pre-planning. Katelyn explains:

I did not preplan *all* the texts that we would be reading. It was usually based on the conversations that we had about one text and it led to another text. It also was an idea

of access. Sometimes when you are talking about emergent curriculum, which is part of things, you can't always find the text that you need so you substitute in other texts for different reasons.

When the interview participants were asked to indicate their own literary goals for the students, each teacher articulated the goals differently. For the purposes of this study I have included the full quote that was given as the answer to the question on literary goals. The full quote provides some information on the thinking process of the participant. For Jill's kindergarten students it was about confidence:

I feel really strongly that I better make sure that they love looking at books. That they feel comfortable with books, and that they feel confident having a moment independently with a book and be able to sustain interest. Because I know that some of them when they leave kindergarten will be confident. I had some girls this morning that all took turns reading their home reading books to the class so that was... I know that that was huge and important and special for them. And it's important that they can do that.

For Katelyn's students in grades one, two, and three, ideas of critical reading, independence, and metacognition were evident in her response:

In my classroom I encourage kids to be reading, if they are interested, in *Captain Underpants*, *Phineas and Ferb*. Then we can enter into a dialogue about, is this the kind of book, does this book capture what you want it to? Because you like *Phineas and Ferb*, is this book a good example of that? And if you do like humorous books does *Captain Underpants*, are you OK with that kind of humour? Do you understand what type of humour that is? So we really use what kids have and talk

about the literacy processes according to that text. Basically, not anything goes, I think the only thing is, my hope is that my kids are flexible, strong thinkers when they read and write. And my job is to help them with the strategies to figure that out, to think while they read. And that's really hard because a lot of kids are able to decode the text and they are able to consume all those kinds of things. But [the important part] it's slowing them down to be able to think for themselves and listen to that voice and to be able to have conversations with other kids about different types of texts.

For Bev and her grade five students there was a sense of urgency that students needed to be learning to be independent readers. Her answer to the question, "What are some of the things that you hope, in grade five, kids know about literature or things about literature that you feel you are responsible to teach them," illustrates that urgency:

Well, one of the things we have been working on all year is choosing a book that you can read, and recognizing when a book is too hard or too easy and it's time to move on. In the library, specifically, in grade five they have access to all the books in the library which they haven't had before and so for the first four, maybe even five months of school I had students who would not go to the new shelves. I've really needed to say to them that we go to the library for an hour and you really need to spend time looking through those books that you've never had a chance to look at before and find things that are interesting to you, even though they are thicker and maybe a little more intimidating. We can't read books about cats skipping for the next six years, we need to move on. So that's been a big thing for me. It was funny they were all just congregated in one place. I was like, "what are you doing? Go

look!” And then I guess, some of them feel almost the opposite. They are like “oh I’m almost in grade six. I need to be picking things that make me look more grown up.” And they don’t have a clue what they are reading. Oh, if you like that topic let’s find something more appropriate.

While the interview question specifically asked participants to explain their literary goals for students, the responses moved away from a *literary* focus and back to a more general *literacy* focus. What was apparent in all the responses was the focus on independence. All three teachers wanted students to have the option to go on to be readers in their own lives.

Summary of literary understandings. There was limited evidence in the data that suggested that students’ literary development was central to the purpose of teacher read aloud in classrooms. Texts did not seem chosen in a way that built on literary knowledge through intertextual connections. Purposes for read aloud were not clearly identified as focusing on “text as text” and more often as a vehicle for other content.

What Do Teachers Know About Read Aloud and How do they Learn?

While not directly related to the research questions, information gathered during the survey assists in providing additional information about the respondents. This information may suggest factors that influence the decision-making that was described in the previous sections on extent, purpose, and text choice. As children’s literature is a primary resource in classrooms, it seemed important to understand what teachers know about this resource and how they develop further knowledge about it in their own practice. Cremin et al. (2008) questioned whether teachers knew “a sufficiently diverse range of writers” to effectively influence the reading habits of novice readers. They were concerned that this lack of

knowledge could have “serious consequences for all learners” (p. 458). Referring back to Galda et al (2000) quote on the “visibility” of children’s literature in the classroom, I hoped to discover that children’s literature was also visible in the professional learning of teachers.

The questions on my survey were designed to allow me to explore similar ideas of teachers’ knowledge of authors, teachers’ professional development opportunities, and school infrastructure. In the following section I will report and discuss the data from the survey on author knowledge, on professional development, and finally, on infrastructure.

Author knowledge. Similar to the large survey on teacher knowledge and children’s literature conducted in the United Kingdom by Cremin et al. (2008), in this study I asked the respondents to list three children’s literature authors with which they are familiar. Each of the 190 respondents could list up to three authors giving a possible 570 listings. In total, 147 different children’s authors were listed with Robert Munsch being listed the most often with 86 responses. The next two most popular responses were Roald Dahl with 26 responses, and Dr. Seuss with 21 responses (see appendix E for full list of authors and the number of times that they were specified). While it is encouraging that the most recognized author is Canadian, he shares a top 10 spot with only one other Canadian (Ellis). The remaining eight in the top 10 are comprised of six American authors and two British authors.

These findings support the findings by Cremin et al (2008) who found that when teachers were asked to name six “good” children’s authors, only 48% of respondents could complete the task with 10% naming only two or fewer authors. The authors that were named were generally a narrow range of well-known authors such as Roald Dahl, J.K. Rowling, and Michael Morpurgo.

In my study, 14 authors were named more than 10 times. With the exception of Rowling (first published 1997) and Willems (first published 2003), the other 12 rounding out these 14 all published their first books over 20 years ago. One might assume that familiarity to these authors may have occurred during the participants' childhoods rather than during their teaching experience. Continuing with this assumption, it seems that teachers do not have opportunities to stay current with new children's literature and therefore continue to use the same books repeatedly.

Professional development. Participants were asked to indicate if they had received any inservice professional development in literacy instruction over the last year. 48 % (112) said "yes" while 52% (119) indicated that they had not received any professional development in literacy instruction.

Of the 112 positive responses, 99 provided a description of the professional development. Those responses were categorized. Forty-three percent described the professional development by jurisdiction provider: division based (18%); school based (12%); provincial (11%); university (2%). Other descriptors referred to a specific program or focus of the professional development: Daily 5 or CAFE (11%), Regie Routman (11%), Words their Way (7%), Reading Recovery (6%). Writing as a general descriptor was used in 12 responses. The remaining responses were varied and categorized as other (28%). None of the responses to this general literacy professional development question specifically referenced children's literature or literature study. Those who did indicate the jurisdiction provider rather than the topic of the professional development could have received information on children's literature, however the follow-up question on professional development makes that unlikely.

The second question regarding professional development asked specifically about professional development focused on children’s literature, “Have you ever taken any course or professional development specifically about children’s literature?” No timeline regarding this professional development was requested. For this question, a small majority of the 230 respondents (57%) indicated that they had taken children’s literature professional development compared to the rest (43%) who had never received this type of education. Those who responded positively to this question were asked to describe the type of professional development or course that was taken. The following table categorizes the responses that described the professional development.

Table 11

Description of professional development specifically about children’s literature.

Response	Percentages ^a	Count
Graduate work	4	5
Inservice PD	11	14
Pre service university	55	65
Reading instruction	27	32
Yes but unknown	1	2
Total		118

^apercentages have been rounded to the nearest whole percent.

Of the 118 descriptors, 65 (55%) described their experience as being preservice university courses with one respondent noting that this was in the 1970s. While this can

certainly be described as learning about children's literature, as it took place before the participants began their careers, the effectiveness and impact that it may be having in the classroom could be questioned. In addition, 32 (27%) of participants responded positively to this question, but their description of the professional development indicates that the content of the course was on reading instruction in general, not on children's literature.

The limited focus on inservice professional development around children's literature is a possible factor in the inconsistent use of literature during read aloud events. It also could address the practice of choosing literature that relates to other curricular areas based on topic of the book rather than the crafting of the literature from a literary focus.

Infrastructure. On the survey, I also asked respondents to comment on the ways that some of the resources in the schools support their access to children's literature and also asked respondents to note how they usually find children's literature to use in the classroom. Table 12 describes the ways in which teachers find literature.

Table 12

Resources that survey participants use to find children's literature

Response	Percentage ^a	Count
Recommendation	87%	173
Previous experience	87%	173
Browsing the library	66%	131
Reviews/articles	40%	79
Other	20%	40
Responses		596
Total Respondents		199

^aDue to respondents being able to indicate all that applied, the total percentages are equal to greater than 100%

Respondents could indicate all that applied. While the majority of respondents noted a reliance on recommendation and previous experience, the respondents also used a variety of resources to find books. The 40 participants who indicated other resources than listed provided varied responses with the most popular being *Scholastic* book orders (n=10), going to the bookstore (n=9), browsing the Internet (n=9), and gathering theme-based books (n=4). In addition to the 66% who browsed the library, three respondents in the “other” section noted that they sought help from a public librarian, a library co-coordinator, or school library staff. Two other respondents used books listed in teacher guides or other resources and three relied on students to provide literature.

I was interested in exploring the infrastructure in schools that provides immediate access to children's literature and information on children's literature. I asked respondents to

indicate if they had a library in the school and who staffs the library. Of the 235 responses, 234 indicated that the school that they work in had a library. There are a variety of ways that those libraries were staffed as indicated in table 13.

Table 13

Staffing of school libraries as reported by survey participants

Response	Percentage ^a	Count
Teacher librarian	28%	65
Library technician	74%	175
No library staff	7%	17
Other	10%	24
Total Responses		235

^aDue to respondents being able to indicate all that applied, the total percentages are equal to/ greater than 100%

Library technicians staffed the majority of the libraries with only 28% having a teacher librarian in the school. Of the 24 who chose to indicate another option, most indicated that the library was staffed by educational assistants, with some being staffed by volunteers, secretaries, or clerks. Within the “other” responses, some respondents indicated that while they had a teacher librarian it was only on a part-time basis.

The variable of having a teacher librarian in the school was analyzed to investigate a relationship between having one and the extent that teachers read aloud. Planned contrasts using a Mann Whitney *U* test were conducted. The first compared having a teacher librarian with neither a teacher librarian nor a library technician. The second compared having a library technician with having neither a teacher librarian nor a librarian technician. While I

have previously reported that there was no significance found between the extent of read aloud and teacher gender, years of experience, or grades taught, there was significance found in this planned comparison on library staff. In the planned comparison between having a teacher librarian and neither a teacher librarian nor a librarian technician there is statistical significance, ($U=407.500$, $p=.028^*$, $p<.05$). This suggests that in regards to teacher read aloud practices not only does it seem to be important to have staff in the library; it is important to have a qualified teacher librarian. With the previously reported lack of professional development available to teachers with regard to children's literature, this finding may suggest that teachers do need a qualified person with experience in children's literature to support the use of literature in the classrooms.

It is widely known, and supported by the results of this survey, that there are fewer teacher librarians in schools than in the past. This may have an impact on teachers' knowledge and resources and has been noted in other studies. As the *Boys Reading Commission in the UK* observes:

Libraries have a vital role to play in addressing this knowledge gap around books and reading materials. This function has traditionally been fulfilled by schools' library services but evidence heard by the Commission highlighted how many of these have closed in the last 10 to 15 years . . . Where schools' library services no longer exist, public libraries and school libraries need to be supported in taking on this role. As Professor Cremin explained: "If she [a teacher] does not have a librarian to support her, what does she do? Go to Waterstones [a book seller]? Turn to a publisher perhaps. We are dealing with a problem there." (p. 13)

While much of the research focuses on the pedagogical practices of teachers in

classrooms, the data in my study suggest that resources and supports may be important factors in teacher knowledge and beliefs around children's literature, particularly text choice.

Summary of teacher knowledge. Teachers reported having limited access to continued professional development about children's literature. When choosing literature to use in the classroom, they relied heavily on recommendations and previous experience. An apprenticeship model of learning requires a knowledgeable other to support a novice while they learn. It seems that teachers with limited knowledge, or novices, are supporting other novices with few knowledgeable others contributing and extending the limited repertoire. The information is re-circulated without development. They seem to be informed with no new knowledge. In addition, resources such as the Internet and book orders are used as resources, but in order to be effective, teachers would need knowledge to use this resource effectively. The most effective resource would be a qualified teacher librarian in the schools, but this seems to be unavailable to many of the teachers in Manitoba.

Summary of Results

Throughout this chapter I have reported the data that was collected with the three tools in this study: (1) the online survey; (2) the logbooks; and (3) the interviews. These data have been analyzed in relation to my research questions while considering the theoretical frameworks that underpin this study. I used the quantitative data from the survey and the logbooks to describe the self-reported practices of the participants. The qualitative data from the interviews and the open responses in the survey were used to further explain the quantitative data and posit some potential implications of the findings. The research questions have been answered as follows:

I have reported that most teachers who participated in the study indicate that read aloud is a practice that they use in their classrooms. The time reported by participants was varied, with many teachers investing less than 60 minutes each week to reading aloud to their students. The extent of read aloud did not seem to be impacted by the gender of the teacher, the grade of the students taught, or the years of experience of the teacher. Literacy programming that focused on reading—reading aloud, silent reading, and reading instruction—were noted to be most commonly used by teachers in the survey. Literacy programs seemed to include a number of “regular” practices.

Participants in both the survey and the logbook reported that they relied heavily on fictional texts in their read aloud programs. These fictional texts were used often to meet instructional purposes of teaching content or teaching observable reading behaviours such as decoding, vocabulary, or comprehension. These purposes were central in the sequencing and choosing of the texts. There was little evidence of texts that supported learning of intertextual connections or literary crafting.

The use of read aloud for a variety of purposes suggests that teachers’ understandings about read aloud are also varied. There was little evidence that developing literary understanding was a focus during decision-making regarding read aloud.

The general findings from this chapter can be summarized as follows:

- Teacher read aloud in Manitoba is a common practice in classrooms.
- While it is a common practice, the time invested in teacher read aloud, both in frequency and duration, is limited.
- Teacher read aloud is used for multiple purposes, with efferent purposes being more commonly used.

- Fiction texts are the most popular choice for teacher read aloud, regardless of the identified purpose.
- There is limited evidence that teacher read aloud is used to develop literary understandings.
- Teachers have limited resources for professional development and infrastructure to support teacher read aloud.

Chapter Five

Discussion

In this chapter I consider the findings of my study in relation to my social practice framework and discuss the implications for practice, research, and theory. The findings of the study suggested ways in which the children of Manitoba are apprenticing as readers, and also highlights the opportunities to use teacher read aloud as a cultural model to engage and motivate young readers. I also identify possibilities for future research and note the limitations of the study.

Significance of the Study Findings in Relation to Pedagogical Practice

Along with an apple on a desk and an alphabet hung across the top of a chalkboard, the image of a teacher reading to a class of children is an educational trope. The practice seems to have been around as long or longer than formal education. This is quite a feat in a field that seems to embrace and discard practices on a regular basis. However, we need to consider the purpose of this practice beyond tradition. As we discover more about how people learn, the practice of read aloud needs to be re-examined in light of this new knowledge. In this study I considered the ways that teacher read aloud can be positioned in light of research on literacy as social practice. Barton & Hamilton (2000) define a literacy event as “an activity in which literacy has a role” (p. 8). The observable behaviours of the teacher, the class, the book, and the oral reading of the text define teacher read aloud as a literacy event. Thinking about teacher read aloud as a literacy practice — “what people do with literacy” (Barton & Hamilton, 2000, p. 8) including the values, attitudes, behaviours, and social relationships of those practices — requires a new look at the traditional practice by considering what values and attitudes teachers are promoting through the use of teacher

read aloud. In addition to re-examining the practice of read aloud, teachers, schools, policy makers, and researchers need to act on what can be learned from a close look at teacher read aloud. I will identify some areas in which the practice of teacher read aloud could be re-envisioned in light of the findings of this study.

Reflect on practice. It is possible teachers may think that they are engaging in particular practices, but without reflection, they may not have an accurate picture of what that practice can and does accomplish. A common strategy that is suggested when one begins dieting is to record everything that is eaten. This is often a revealing process, as many times the recording does not match what the person may have reported before the process. Bev, an interview participant, expressed this idea, “I felt before I did this that I read aloud a lot more than I seem to be reading.” While the recording may make practice more visible, it is still not enough.

Although the recording worked for Bev in this general instance, it was not enough to encourage change. Even after the recording of the logbooks, interview participants did not accurately match their perceived use of read aloud with the actual recording of the events in the classroom. For example, Jill expressed that she used a balance of fiction and non-fiction even though the recorded evidence suggested that this was not the case. I suggest that effective reflection needs to be an active process that involves both documentation and analysis.

Before any changes can be made, teachers should know what needs to be changed by reflecting on what is being done and for what purposes. In the busy life of the school, it is easy to spend time “doing school” without really considering the practices that best support

student learning. While, in this case, I am addressing the need to reflect carefully on read aloud practices, this can also be extended to other traditional school practices.

Increase the role of read aloud. As commonly assumed, teacher read aloud proved to be a regular part of classrooms of the participants of this study as teachers in both the surveys and logbooks noted that the pedagogical practice is part of their classroom activities. Teachers, regardless of their gender, the grade they teach, or the years of experience, indicated that they read aloud in their classrooms.

As a result of this study, I conclude that while read aloud is widely used, it does not take up considerable amount of time, in either duration or frequency, in most classrooms. The definition of “regular” seems to vary amongst teachers. For example, teachers who responded that they considered read aloud a regular part of their literacy program invested a range of time in the practice from less than 15 minutes a week to over two hours a week. In most classrooms read aloud is being done minimally, and any positive benefits that may be attributed to read aloud would be difficult to accomplish in these short periods of time.

Read aloud needs to be valued so that enough time is allotted to allow students the opportunity to see the thinking process modeled and to participate with others in making meaning with a shared text. Social practices model to students both values and attitudes. Limited time for read aloud, either because of external scheduling factors or because of the way that read aloud is often left to chance, has the possibility of teaching important lessons to students about reading and the way the reading should be viewed in adult lives. These important lessons may have a further impact when students become parents and have not learned to appreciate the value of reading aloud. Of course, some students may see this modeled in their homes, but this could increase the disparity of literacy experiences between

students. It seems somewhat counter productive for schools to be sending messages about reading that suggest that it does not need to be validated with time. It would seem that in a school one of the messages should be that reading is so important that it would be a non-negotiable item on timetables. Although the structure of read aloud enables it to be fit in when there are small periods of time in a school day, this may suggest to students that either reading is a portable activity that can be taken anywhere, which could be a positive message, or it may suggest that reading is not valued enough to be provided adequate time.

Make better use of read aloud. Teacher read aloud cannot be left to chance. Most survey participants considered read aloud to be a regular part of their literacy program. Yet, in many cases, this regular part seemed to be in response to external factors such as transition times or need in a particular lesson rather than a systematic plan, or curriculum, for read aloud. Often read aloud in the classroom seemed to be a way to fill some time between other activities or it was done at the same time as other activities such as snack or art.

In my own experience having undergraduate teacher candidates develop a literacy plan, several indicated on their “ideal” timetable a block of time labeled “snory.” When asked to clarify this event, it was described as a combination of *Snack* and *Story*. A multi-tasking approach to read aloud is worrying, particularly for those students who may struggle to read independently. Without focused listening of the story, these students may miss an opportunity to hear a fluent model of reading and to add stories to their own repertoire to use in independent reading.

Students need to see excellent reading modeled to them. This excellent model needs to focus not only on the decoding and fluency aspects of reading but also on the thinking

processes that an expert reader uses to make meaning from a variety of texts. Effective readers may be getting these opportunities elsewhere but struggling readers need the support of an “interpretive community” (Fish, 1980) to develop those thinking skills. As reading expectations rise for students, these thinking processes need to be modeled in more complex ways. This should not be left to chance.

As indicated in the survey only seven noted that read aloud was a named and scheduled event. To avoid leaving it to chance, teachers should schedule read aloud. And once it is scheduled, plan for it to be a successful modeling event. While reading aloud can be an effective pedagogical activity to help students to understand content, this should not be its only role in the classroom. The curriculum for read aloud needs to be systematic and planned for long-term, cumulative learning about reading, text, and ways of thinking.

Provide a wider variety of texts. In this study I found that the majority of texts that were read aloud in classrooms were fictional. As Bryan (2009) contends, where a classroom contains only a marginal representation of certain types of text, those types of texts are marginalized. This sends a message about what is valued. It suggests to students that there is a correct type of reading material. Students have the opportunity to hear the structure and language of fiction far more often than any non-fiction texts. Considering the use of read aloud as a way of apprenticing students into the various academic discourses, this limited choice of text for read aloud means that students do not have the full range of text structures and ways of thinking modeled for them. This becomes problematic when students need to function independently with a variety of text structures as they move through the school system.

There has been considerable work on disciplinary literacy in middle and high school settings (Draper et al., 2011; Shanahan & Shanahan, 2003). The work seems to be at these levels because of the separation of the disciplines and the struggles that many students have when moving from generalist early years programs to specialist programs in the higher grades. While there has been some movement to include more non-fiction and informative texts in the early years, my findings from this study suggest that non-fiction text was not presented to children in a supported and modeled read aloud environment. Duke (2000) concluded that early grades were only experiencing non-fiction for 3.6 minutes each day, and even less in schools with a lower socio-economic status. This could be a question of access as many teachers may be unsure of the characteristics of high quality non-fiction and, therefore, be reluctant to include these texts in their classrooms. I found in this study that the teacher librarian is a significant factor in increasing read aloud time, and Aronsen (2012) noted that an increase in non-fiction in schools will not happen without teacher librarians. It is not enough to say that teachers must include more diversity of texts in their classrooms. The system must provide supports, possibly in the form of the teacher librarian, to assist with teacher learning in this area.

In addition, because early years teachers work in generalist environments, there is a tendency to integrate curriculum with the intent to allow students to go deeper into subjects and make connections between different disciplines. However, Manitoba Education defines two types of curricular integration between subject areas: (1) Multi/Pluridisciplinary, in which “implicit topic linkages between subject areas” are made by student,” and (2) Interdisciplinary, in which “Explicit linkages between subject areas” are made for the student (Manitoba Education and Literacy,

<http://www.edu.gov.mb.ca/k12/docs/support/currconn/types.html>). Both of these types of curricular integration require the teacher to maintain the integrity of the discipline suggesting that different text types should be used for different purposes. The use of fiction in all disciplines does not maintain the integrity of the particular texts that are central to each of those disciplines.

Match text to purpose. The data collected and analyzed on read aloud purpose and text choices were very surprising to me. I had anticipated that read aloud would be done as story time for pleasure, and, if that had been the case, I may have suggested that this literature time could be more effectively used to develop literary understandings by developing informed and active literary readers. I did not anticipate that teachers would employ fictional text rather than more discipline-appropriate texts for content-based learning to the extent that the data revealed. While speaking to a presenter at a conference who was working on the use of children's literature to teach math, I was interested in her as-yet-unpublished findings that although using fiction did not seem to enhance the mathematical learning, it did not seem to do any harm to it either. We discussed whether she had considered that, although it may not harm the mathematical learning, it might be harming the literary learning as it would position students to view the text as math rather than literature. She responded that she thought about it as hiding the peas in the mashed potatoes, just an easy way to make the math palatable (Personal communication, Literacy Researchers Association Conference, November 2012). My initial concern was for the "mashed potatoes." I wondered if it is necessary to ruin the literature to get the math done? Now I am also worried about the "peas." Do we think that math is so unpalatable that it needs to be

hidden to secretly get students to learn it? Either of these assumptions seem to give students problematic lessons about the value of both literature and math.

Another problematic finding is the use of multi-purposes for one read aloud. Within one read aloud, teachers indicated that they might try to teach content, teach fluency, fill a few minutes, have fun, and teach about an author. This seems — I have no other word— *impossible*. While many of these things may be touched on during the read aloud, it seems that a focused purpose is more achievable and easier to make clear to students than a potpourri of possibilities.

The multi-purpose approach also makes assessment and learning problematic. If teachers are not clear on what they are teaching during a read aloud, then students are probably equally unclear about what they should be learning from that read aloud. Therefore when the teacher attempts to assess the learning of a particular purpose, only those students who perceived that particular purpose will be able to demonstrate that learning. Those students who focused on a different purpose could be harshly assessed for making different meaning.

The dominant use of fiction in teacher read aloud may suggest that students are engaging in conversations that develop literary understandings that may come with those types of text. Given that so much fiction is being read, one would think that students are developing strong understandings about story structure. In this study I found this was not the case. I found that teachers were positioning students to regard literature as a way of seeking and finding particular information, or from an efferent stance. Teachers are choosing texts based on the content rather than for literary purposes. When students find this information they are encouraged to use it in a content area study. In other cases, teachers focus students

on the mechanical skills and strategies of reading any text, disregarding the particular requirements of the text that is being read.

The longer-term data that were collected through the logbooks illustrated that sequenced read alouds built on this content knowledge rather than systematically building on the intertextual connections needed to develop a literary repertoire that would allow students to engage in more complex literary conversations. Readers may view fictive text as a place to seek information rather than to read for pleasure or for literary merit. As we look at readers, particularly adolescent readers who move into *aliteracy*—or the phenomena of being able to read, but choosing not to— we need to consider whether these students have been trained to see reading as an information-seeking activity and, therefore, do not see the value in reading for pleasure.

On the other hand, readers will not know how to negotiate informative text to seek information. The structures and ways of thinking that are necessary to efficiently negotiate informative texts have not been provided with enough instruction. Students struggle to read these informative texts because they have not been provided with the opportunity or the instruction to do this. Duke (2000) recognized that students struggle with informative text, not because they are more difficult, but because they do not have enough practice engaging with these types of text.

Teach students to be engaged readers. As Nodelman and Reimer (2003) note, the capacity to take pleasure from reading requires informed and active participation by the reader. While some students may acquire this at home or on their own, it can be effectively taught in a classroom. Teachers can use read aloud to model their thinking, choices, strategy use, and social interaction. Teachers can model the ways in which they engage in reading

(Gambrell, 1996). They can invite students to become part of the conversation that is informed reading.

While readers can take pleasure in many forms of text, and pleasure itself is not a monolithic concept, adult pleasure reading often involves an engagement with literary text. There is very little evidence in this study that teachers used read aloud to systematically build understanding about literary texts and ways of thinking that are specific to literary texts. While fictional texts dominated in classrooms at all grades, the texts were often used as a vehicle to the content rather than to develop literary understandings, or the habits of literary reading. For example, the text *The Lorax* by Dr. Seuss (1971) could be used to teach about the topic of the environment and then could be connected to other texts about the environment rather than being connected to other texts that use an external conscience character to move the story and the character development along.

The idea of matching text to purpose was discussed in the previous section with the suggestion that discipline specific texts should be used to engage students in discipline-specific thinking. In terms of literary reading, teachers need to plan connected, sequenced read aloud experiences that build students' repertoire of story understanding and support them in making meaning when they read stories independently.

In addition, the read aloud can be used to model a passion and excitement for reading that demonstrates for students that reading for pleasure is a valued activity in our society. Teachers must be careful not to deliver the message to students that all reading must "accomplish" something other than the experience of reading or the joy of participating in the reading community.

Balance instruction and assessment. The teacher read aloud does not create a *product* per se. Once the read aloud is done, there is usually no immediate visible evidence of the learning that occurred. This lack of visible evidence may impact teachers' decisions to include or exclude read aloud in the classroom as Shanahan (2003) observes that literature study often conflicts with messages regarding evidence based practices and data-driven programming. An over-reliance on pedagogical practices that generate immediate data on students' achievement negate experiences that may not, in themselves, indicate growth but could transfer into students' independent reading over a long term. The benefits that may be acquired include a student's belief that he/she belongs to a reading community, a development of a reading identity, and the ability to replicate some of the behaviours that they see modeled by the teacher and their peers. While there may not be a direct link to an effective read aloud, the learning that occurs when a student is read to has been documented in the research (e.g., Dickinson et al, 2003, Sipe, 2008). If, in fact, teachers are feeling more pressure to engage only in instructional activities that provide immediate data on students' learning, they may be missing opportunities to improve learning and develop habits of aesthetic readers. The assessment adage that reminds us that "weighing the pig does not make it get fatter" seems to fit here. Good teaching of literature may not get done because it does not produce immediate documented evidence of reading.

If teachers need to teach pleasure, they need to relax and take pleasure without worrying about "accomplishing" something other than pleasure. The somewhat non-assessable quality of joy requires equal time as other more documented reading skills. As Leland et al. (2013) remind us, "We shouldn't worry that we're not doing our jobs as

educators if our kids are having fun in school. Actually it's the exact opposite: Bringing joy into the classroom and helping students have fun are major parts of our job" (p. 25).

Provide more professional development. Children's literature is potentially one of the main resources in classrooms, and yet the findings in this study suggest that teachers have little opportunity to learn about the resource. In contrast to the extensive professional development and supports for new technology, children's literature knowledge is left to chance. In Manitoba, at the University of Manitoba, teacher candidates come into the Bachelor of Education program with two subjects that they have studied in an undergraduate program with some depth. While English may be one of those subjects it is not necessary, in contrast to those senior years teachers who are training to be English teachers and enter the faculty with extensive coursework in literature. That being the case, many teacher candidates graduate with one compulsory English course in the first year of their undergraduate program and one-credit hour or less of children's literature in their after-degree program. Expecting these teachers to apprentice literary readers when they may not be ones themselves seems unfair and illogical.

Professional development about reading. The Manitoba English Language Arts curriculum was published in 1996. While it was a progressive document in terms of its language and literacy philosophy, in many ways it no longer reflects current thinking about language development. I was interested to note that in the survey, many teachers referred to professional trade books as a basis for their literacy program. *The Daily Five* and *CAFE* (Boushey & Moser, 2006; 2009) were mentioned frequently as were other resources such as *Words their Way* (1996), Scholastic book orders, and unnamed teacher guides. A reliance on these other texts without a consistent guiding philosophy across the province may lead to an

overly diverse range of reading experiences. Teachers need professional development that allows them to explore the complexity and extent of reading behaviours, particularly in a framework of new and multiple literacies and literacy as social practice. While a reliance on each other through professional learning communities provides some support, there seems to be a lack of leadership that drives teachers to seek some sense of cohesion without the professional development to make informed decisions regarding literacy programming.

Professional development about children's literature. As I found in my study, Short (2011) also found that “unlike secondary schools in which literature is a field of study, children's literature in elementary schools has primarily been viewed as reading material that is used to teach something else, typically either skills or facts” (p. 204). It is difficult to teach something with depth if a teacher's own understanding is minimal. Teachers need opportunities to learn about children's literature, in both preservice and inservice settings. As noted, teachers relied on dated knowledge regarding authors and titles even if they had some professional development. They appear to be behind and falling farther and farther behind. As this is a field in which the resources increase continually, this professional development requires sustainable implementation. Similarly to the way that read aloud needs to be valued with time, professional development about children's literature also needs to be viewed as valued in the same way that teacher learning about other literacy initiatives or content areas such as math are valued with time. While teachers may be engaged in the learning, it is the larger system that needs to value and encourage this learning.

Seek out experts. School infrastructures need to be well established to provide teachers with both human and physical resource support. Teachers need to have access to

both the resource of a quality collection of children's literature and a qualified person who is able to update that collection and provide support to use the collection in appropriate and effective ways. Without this support, teachers rely on each other or external supports that may or may not be philosophically or pedagogically sound. Teachers themselves conceded, in this study, that they were poorly prepared in this area, yet they relied on each other for recommendations creating a shallow pool of information that was continually re-circulated. As the presence of a teacher librarian proved to have a statistically significant effect on the amount of read aloud in the classroom, this is an issue that schools need to consider when they are thinking about staffing and space management.

Theoretical and Research Implications

I have noted throughout this dissertation that teacher read aloud is a traditional practice that not only occurs in most classrooms but is also an activity *expected* to occur in classrooms. This assumption is made both by educators and by people who may no longer be in the school system but have memories of participating in teacher read aloud in their own reading histories. The potential of read aloud as a way to develop effective readers is reflected in current research that is being conducted both on learning in general and reading and literacy specifically. The longevity of teacher read aloud as a classroom practice suggests that either consciously or subconsciously, teachers already recognize the potential of this practice. The findings of this study suggest that the practice of read aloud may not yet match current understandings of reading and literacy development. If teachers could conduct their read aloud in ways that are more in line with social practice—with give and take with the students—the benefits of teacher read aloud could be increased. Time would be spent learning rather than filling time.

In this study I have explored the traditional practice of teacher read aloud through a literacy-as-social-practice framework. Central to this framework is the apprenticing of novices into a discourse community in which they recognize, value, and are able to replicate behaviours that mentors demonstrate. For example, Gee (2001) writes that one “acquires a discourse by enculturation (apprenticeship) into social practices through supported interaction with people who have already mastered the discourse” (p. 527). When teachers and students commit time in the day to read, think, and talk about a text there is the potential for students to begin to value reading as one of those “things that are so important to a cultural group that the group ensures that everyone who needs to, learns them” (Gee, 2004, p. 12). Research on literacy as social practice suggests that these opportunities to work with mentors are essential to becoming functioning members of a reading community.

The pedagogical implications suggested in the previous section emphasize the impact of this novice/mentor relationship on the development of engaged, lifelong learners. Janks (2010) notes that we should be concerned about the effectiveness of this mentorship by teachers who may not be engaged, lifelong readers themselves. Applegate and Applegate (2004) noted that teachers who are engaged aesthetic readers are better at engaging and motivating student readers than those who read from a more efferent stance. This research suggests that before we expect students to be apprentices, we should ensure that teachers are prepared to be mentors. We cannot guarantee that every teacher is passionate about reading but we can teach him or her the importance of modeling these behaviours to students. Schools should also look for ways to promote personal reading amongst teachers.

I have noted several studies throughout this dissertation that lead to the conclusion that teachers are not well prepared to use the resource of children’s literature (Bainbridge et

al, 2005; Cremin et al, 2008; Galda et al, 2003; Sipe, 2001). Similarly, in this study, teachers acknowledged their own lack of professional development opportunities to increase their knowledge regarding children's literature. In addition, when teachers did have professional development opportunities, there was a lack of leadership guiding those opportunities. It seems that teachers are also lacking mentors. Within interviews and open responses, teachers in this study referred to a reliance on publishers to support their practice. While publishers can certainly provide good resources, their main motivation is to make money. This is fraught with danger. Publishers should not be driving our practice; however, in the absence of a better resource, teachers will turn to packaged leveled books and series that are in some cases promoted school- or division-wide. While this dissertation has suggested the importance of informed mentorship for students, there is a need for the same kind of informed mentorship for teachers within a social constructivist philosophy.

Teachers who are readers themselves need to recognize that this reading identity should to be tempered when attempting to apprentice diverse groups of students into the reading community. Even within the larger community of readers, there are smaller sub-communities that engage in specific practices regarding choosing texts and setting purposes for reading. Research indicates that males and females belong to different reading communities and could be masters of different types of reading. For example, work by Tepper (2000) and Barton and Hamilton (1998) found that females prefer novels and fiction texts to a greater extent than male readers. These preferences, which work for teachers in their own personal lives, may limit them within their professional capacity to address student needs. My results may support the notion of feminization of in-school reading, where predominately female teachers are perpetuating gender specific reading patterns.

Although unintentional, in this study the majority of participants were female, and those participants chose to read fiction aloud to students far more frequently than they chose to read non-fiction. When reflecting on the data of this study, particularly that on text choice, the text choices of the overwhelming number of females in this survey are consistent with the existing research. Cremin et al. (2008) concluded that the teacher's gender influences the types of books and other reading material and that these influences are not always non-biased towards one gender.

While I was teaching a course on content area literacy during the time of my doctoral studies, I questioned the practice that is prevalent in early years classrooms of using literature to introduce content-based learning. A practicing early years teacher commented that she chose a story rather than informative text because "non-fiction is boring." I wondered if that observation reflected the teacher's preferences rather than the students.

The terms *new literacies* or *multiple literacies* and their use of literacy as a plural purposely indicate that we can no longer think of literacy as a single commodity that a person has or does not have. People have varying levels of literacy depending on the connection of those literacies to purposeful use in their lives. Effective use of specific texts, knowledge, and ways of thinking identify someone as being part of the literacy community or an outsider. The results of this study support findings by Draper et al. (2010), and Shanahan (2003) who suggest that teachers continue to teach generic literacy strategies rather than identifying and teaching the discipline specific literacies that would allow students to be active members of a variety of academic communities. Teachers privilege fictional texts by choosing to read them aloud and by suggesting that they are the texts of

choice for a variety of purposes. In this way students do not have the opportunity to become participants in discipline specific communities.

On the other hand, while literature is used in the majority of read alouds, literary thinking is seldom modeled or valued. Work by Sipe (2008) and Galda et al. (2003) note that literature is often co-opted for other purposes. In my opinion, and that of others that I have referenced throughout this dissertation, the study of literature needs to have a place in schools and although the research noted that these types of aesthetic reading experiences are not valued in a data-driven culture, the use of literature to learn about “our collective human knowledge base, including beliefs, self-perceptions, philosophies, assumptions and interactions with the world at large” (Leland et al., 2013, p. 91) should have a valued place in schools.

Implications for Future Research

Through this study I have been able to answer some of the questions that I had about teacher read aloud in Manitoba and have contributed some further knowledge to the field both for practice and research. It has also led to more questions that require further exploration and research.

These areas of future research include observing with more detail the actual practices of read aloud in classrooms, the use of non-fiction and literature, the role of the teacher librarian, and the long-term benefits of read aloud practices.

What can be observed during read aloud? The intent of this study was to develop a picture of current practices of teacher read aloud in Manitoba. The survey and the logbook relied on self-reporting of practices that are occurring in classrooms. Given that in this study, all three data sources required the teachers to describe their own practices, future

research should include observations of those practices in classrooms to document the ways in which teachers are engaging with students and with texts during read aloud.

These observations should consider the type of talk that occurs during read aloud sessions and the methods that teachers use to conduct read aloud in the classroom.

Observing talk. As the interaction between the teacher and the student is critical to the effectiveness of teacher read aloud, research should document the types of talk that are occurring. It would be enlightening to see the role that talk plays in both modeling reading behaviours for students and also how talk is being used to assist meaning making with text.

Talk in read aloud could either reinforce power positions between students and teachers by using an initiate, response, evaluate model, or it could build community with both teachers and students having a role in contributing to meaning making. Research that analyzes the discourses being used in read aloud in Manitoba would provide a more complete picture of its effectiveness.

Observing method. For this study, the questions and responses focused on teacher read aloud to the whole class. However, some studies refer to different structures for read aloud and how the structure may impact the effectiveness of the event. Some studies (e.g. Klesius & Griffin, 1996; Morrow, 1990) found that small group settings for read aloud provided optimal conditions for learning. It would also be informative to consider whether the practice of students sitting at desks, gathered in a meeting area, or some other arrangement has an impact on effectiveness.

Additional research on the behaviour of students during read aloud could be significant. This study suggested that teachers have a diverse set of behavioural expectations for students during a read aloud; some allow students to draw or eat, others require

particular types of body positions and particular discourse patterns. Some teachers require silence during read aloud, while others engage in Initiation, Response, Evaluation type questioning, and others participate with students in active meaning making. In addition, some teachers require follow up assignments or responses while others see read aloud as either an event on its own or as a springboard to another part of a lesson. These factors need further exploration to see how they are used in natural practices in classrooms. Future research could explore the variety of methods of read aloud practices and investigate the impact that these different structures may have on reading development.

Why is non-fiction lacking during read aloud? The lack of non-fiction as a selection for read aloud in this study was startling. This could be an area for further research. It would be interesting to explore whether this avoidance of non-fiction texts is an issue of access, knowledge, or preference. There is also a need for further research on the impact of increasing students' exposure to non-fiction texts.

Related to research focused on increasing non-fiction text for read aloud could be a study on the ways that students engage in discipline-specific texts. As most of the work on disciplinary literacies is being done in high school settings, I suggest that my study shows a need for more work in this area in early and middle years classrooms. The assumption that students must be provided with fictional text in order to engage with content area studies could be challenged with such research.

How can literature be used more effectively? While there is considerable research on the use of children's literature to connect to content and the way in which this connection could impact the learning in the content area, I suggest that additional research needs to be done regarding the long-term impact on other reading behaviours and meaning-making from

this use of literature. I have suggested previously that this practice of using literature for content area learning may influence the ways in which readers set purpose for reading literature as they move into adult reading. A longitudinal study that considers those adult readers with considerable content-based literature experiences could be informative. It might find that adult readers are unable effectively to use sources other than literature to seek information or that they read literature only to seek information.

What is the impact of the teacher librarian? The presence of qualified library staff proved to be a statistically significant variable that had an impact on time spent on read aloud. It would be interesting to explore the reasons why having a teacher librarian increases the use of a particular pedagogical practice. This could be related to a culture in the school that values reading and, therefore, chooses to have a teacher librarian, or it could be that teachers are better informed by the teacher librarian and, therefore, are able confidently to choose and use text to use in their classroom.

This is a critical issue in schools in Manitoba as the teacher librarian is, as reported by participants, available in only 28% of schools and not always on a fulltime basis. In addition to exploring the reasons that more read aloud is done in schools with teacher librarians, further study could explore the effect that the teacher librarian has on other literacy practices that take place in schools.

How can teachers measure the effect of teacher read aloud? Throughout this dissertation I have suggested that more time is needed for teacher read aloud. I have also suggested that teachers may be discarding this practice for more data-producing activities. While teacher read aloud does not produce immediate evaluation data, it is possible to use it as an intervention with a pre- and post-test to determine the effects that it has on other

reading behaviours that can be quantitatively measured. For example, a pre-test could be given to measure students' ability to respond in writing to texts that they read independently. A post-test could measure the impact of read aloud compared to the absence of read aloud on the quality of responses. In addition, if some of the changes suggested in the section on pedagogical implications are made, additional research is required to observe the impact that these changes may have on student reading.

Limitations

While I have attempted to ensure that this study was conducted in ways that increased its reliability and validity, decisions regarding method and data analysis suggest some limitations. In the following section I describe ways that I attempted to decrease the effect that limitations had on the results.

The participants in this study volunteered and were aware of their participation. There is the possibility that feelings and attitudes were altered due to the fact that they were part of the study. This reactive arrangement may have resulted in particular responses that would not have been given if not asked in the context of the study. I also recognize that the participant sample may not be representative of the teachers in the province.

Current study in literacy suggests that it is contextualized within the environment in which it exists (Gee, 2004; Street, 1995). This study is specific to Manitoba schools, but the nature of both early and middle years instruction and Canadian schooling will allow some generalizability across other environments and other Canadian provinces, most specifically those provinces that use similar curricula as outlined in the Western Canadian and Northern Protocol.

The survey was voluntary and everyone who volunteered to participate was included within the study. Had I randomly selected participants I may have obtained a different set of study participants and therefore had different study results.

While the title of the study could have alerted teachers to the focus on read aloud, they were also asked questions about literacy programs in general. For this reason, I may or may not have attracted teachers with a specific interest in read aloud. Regardless of this specific interest, the ways in which teacher read aloud is practiced seems to be disconnected from the current research on reading and literacy that forms the basis for this study, therefore, teachers did not seem to feel social pressure to respond in a particular way to the questions that would have influenced the results.

For this study, I used three data sources. These different data sources resulted in different sets of participants. While it is possible that the logbook participants did take part in the survey, it was not necessarily so. If they did participate in the survey, due to the anonymity of the survey responses, I am unable to match the information to a logbook participant. For example, a response to the open questions and in the interviews both included references to classroom management. I cannot be sure that these two responses were not from the same participant as his or her responses on the survey were anonymous, and I did not ask my logbook and interview participants if they had completed the survey to protect that anonymity. However, as over 200 participants responded to the survey, the overlap would probably be minimal and would only effect certain questions that were reported in the open question response sections.

The three data sources all required self-reporting by the participants. I did not observe the practice of read aloud and instead collected data on what teachers said was

happening in their classrooms. While this does not provide observable data, teacher self-reporting provides information on what teachers say they are doing. As was noted previously in this dissertation, there is often a disconnect between what teachers say they are doing and what they are actually doing.

As my intention was for this study to be the beginning of a larger body of work on teacher read aloud in classrooms, in order to engage effectively in further work, it seemed necessary to construct an accurate picture of current practice. The survey focused on the last read aloud done in the classroom rather than read aloud in general. While the choice to focus on the last read aloud prevented participants from choosing a memorable but non-representative event to report on, it also gave a limited picture of practice. The logbooks addressed these limitations in some ways because the two data sources provided similar results suggesting that a broader description of the practice may have yielded the same results.

Due to the qualitative nature of some of the data analysis, the issue of subjective interpretation must be considered. Another researcher could have achieved different results, placing greater emphasis or value on particular aspects. To minimize the impact of this limitation, I was open with these biases in chapter one, had a second coder with intercoder agreement, and grounded my interpretation in research that has been done in the area of read aloud and social practice. This influenced the coding and categorizing of the data but was confirmed with a second coder

This study is descriptive in nature. While it may be possible to draw some conclusions from the data regarding factors that influence decision making, the main purpose was descriptive rather than inferential.

Concluding Remarks

If I were asked to summarize the findings of my study in one sentence, I would say that I discovered that teacher read aloud is the pedagogical equivalent to wallpaper. If I asked you to consider the wallpaper in a particular room in your house, you would be fairly sure that you have wallpaper in that house. You may or may not be clear on why that particular wallpaper is there or even recall when it was put up. You may be able to tell me the colour or possibly part of the pattern, but even on these details you may be surprised to go home to check and find that your recollections were not as accurate as you had thought. Teacher read aloud is something that everyone knows is there, but many teachers have not taken a good look at it for a long time. It is a traditional practice that occurs without much focused thought or strategic planning. As Meyer et al. (1994) concluded, it is not enough to read aloud. It must be done well in order to be of any effectiveness, and, if it is not being done well, it may as well not be done at all as that time could be better spent on effective practices. The challenge is how to make read aloud an effective literacy and literary learning activity.

It is important to teachers that students are learning to read. Many teachers are seeking new ways to achieve this goal. Instead, teachers could reimagine traditional practices like read aloud. Reimagining could involve reflection on the purposes that are best served through time spent sharing text in a community of readers.

All teachers and students deserve a *Polar Express* moment, like the one I described at the beginning of this dissertation. All teachers and students deserve many read aloud moments where adult and child, teacher and student, are immersed in a text building both literacy and community.

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Gomez, R. (2004). *It's St. Patrick's Day!* New York: Scholastic.

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- Munsch, R. N. (2000). *Aaron's hair*. New York: Scholastic.
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- Portis, A. (2007). *Not a box*. New York: Harper Collins.

San Souci, R.D. (1989). *The talking eggs: A folktale from the American South*. New York: Dial Books.

Shea, B. (2011). *I'm a shark!* New York: Balzer & Bray.

Stead, T. (2000). *Should there be zoos?: a persuasive text*. New York: Mondo.

Step toe, J. (1987). *Mufaro's beautiful daughters: an African tale*. New York: Lothrop, Lee & Shepard Books.

Van Allsburg, C. (1990). *Just a dream*. New York, NY: Houghton Mifflin.

Willems, M. (2010). *Can I play too: and elephant and piggie book*. New York: Hyperion.

Wisniewski, D. (1989). *The warrior and the wise man*. New York: Lothrop, Lee & Shepard Books.

Wood, A. (2005). *The deep blue sea: A book of colors*. New York: Blue Sky Press.

Yolen, J. (1992). *Encounter*. New York: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich.

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Appendix A
Survey Questions

1. Please indicate gender.
 - a. Female
 - b. Male
2. Which best describes the location of your school?
 - a. Urban
 - b. Rural
 - c. Suburban
3. What grade do you teach? (If you teach a combined class, please indicate all grades.)
 - a. K
 - b. 1
 - c. 2
 - d. 3
 - e. 4
 - f. 5
 - g. 6
 - h. 7
 - i. 8
4. How many years have you been teaching?
 - a. <1-5
 - b. 6-10
 - c. 11-15
 - d. 16 or more
5. Does your school have a library?
 - a. Yes
 - b. No
6. Does your school have a (indicate all that apply):
 - a. Teacher librarian
 - b. Library technician
 - c. No library staff
 - d. Other (please indicate)
7. Have you taken part in any inservice professional development in literacy instruction over the last year?
 - a. Yes
 - b. NoIf yes, please describe
8. Have you ever taken any course or professional development specifically about children's literature?
 - a. Yes
 - b. NoIf yes, please describe:

9. How does English language arts instruction (ELA) appear on your classroom timetable?
 - a. ELA
 - b. Specific events (reading, writing, spelling)
 - c. Please indicate
 - d. Integrated into other subjects
 - e. Other (please describe)
10. Which of the following do you consider part of your regular literacy program? (Check all that apply. Please indicate if you refer to this event with a particular name)
 - a. Individual or small group reading instruction Shared reading/buddy reading
 - b. Read aloud (teacher reading to children)
 - c. Silent/independent reading
 - d. Silent writing (journal, etc)
 - e. Regular writing instruction
 - f. Spelling program
 - g. Printing/handwriting
 - h. Literature instruction/study
 - i. Information Communication Technology instruction
 - j. Literature circles or other social literature group
 - k. Choice time for literacy activities
 - l. Other (please indicate)

For the following set of questions please respond using the last full week of teaching.

11. Thinking back over your last week, approximately how much time was allocated for your students to spend on the following?
 - i. Individual or small group reading instruction
 - ii. 0/ may occur in other weeks
 - iii. 1-15 minutes
 - iv. 16-30 minutes
 - v. 31-60 minutes
 - vi. 61-120 minutes
 - vii. More than two hours
 - viii. Not applicable/ I do not employ guided reading
 - ix. Unable to measure/ fully integrated
 - x. Other (please comment)

- b. Shared reading/buddy reading
 - i. 0/ may occur in other weeks
 - ii. 1-15 minutes
 - iii. 16-30 minutes
 - iv. 31-60 minutes
 - v. 61-120 minutes
 - vi. More than two hours
 - vii. Not applicable/ I do not employ
 - viii. Unable to measure/ fully integrated
 - ix. Other (please comment)

- c. Read aloud (teacher reading to children)
 - i. 0/ may occur in other weeks
 - ii. 1-15 minutes
 - iii. 16-30 minutes
 - iv. 31-60 minutes
 - v. 61-120 minutes
 - vi. More than two hours
 - vii. Not applicable/I do not employ
 - viii. Unable to measure/ fully integrated
 - ix. Other (please comment)

- d. Silent/independent reading
 - i. 0/ may occur in other weeks
 - ii. 1-15 minutes
 - iii. 16-30 minutes
 - iv. 31-60 minutes
 - v. 61-120 minutes
 - vi. More than two hours
 - vii. Not applicable/ I do not employ
 - viii. Unable to measure/ fully integrated
 - ix. Other (please comment)

- e. Silent writing (journal, etc)
 - i. 0/ may occur in other weeks
 - ii. 1-15 minutes
 - iii. 16-30 minutes
 - iv. 31-60 minutes
 - v. 61-120 minutes
 - vi. More than two hours
 - vii. Not applicable/ I do not employ
 - viii. Unable to measure/ fully integrated
 - ix. Other (please comment)

- f. Regular writing instruction
 - i. 0/ may occur in other weeks
 - ii. 1-15 minutes
 - iii. 16-30 minutes
 - iv. 31-60 minutes
 - v. 61-120 minutes
 - vi. More than two hours
 - vii. Not applicable/do not employ
 - viii. Unable to measure/ fully integrated
 - ix. Other (please comment)

- g. Spelling program
 - i. 0/may occur in other weeks
 - ii. 1-15 minutes
 - iii. 16-30 minutes
 - iv. 31-60 minutes
 - v. 61-120 minutes
 - vi. More than two hours
 - vii. Not applicable/do not employ
 - viii. Unable to measure/ fully integrated
 - ix. Other (please comment)

- h. Printing/handwriting
 - i. 0/may occur in other weeks
 - ii. 1-15 minutes
 - iii. 16-30 minutes
 - iv. 31-60 minutes
 - v. 61-120 minutes
 - vi. More than two hours
 - vii. Not applicable/do not employ
 - viii. Unable to measure/ fully integrated
 - ix. Other (please comment)

- i. Literature instruction/study
 - i. 0/ may occur in other weeks
 - ii. 1-15 minutes
 - iii. 16-30 minutes
 - iv. 31-60 minutes
 - v. 61-120 minutes
 - vi. More than two hours
 - vii. Not applicable/ do not employ
 - viii. Unable to measure/ fully integrated
 - ix. Other (please comment)

- j. Information Communication Technology instruction
 - i. 0/may occur in other weeks
 - ii. 1-15 minutes
 - iii. 16-30 minutes
 - iv. 31-60 minutes
 - v. 61-120 minutes
 - vi. More than two hours
 - vii. Not applicable/do not employ
 - viii. Unable to measure/ fully integrated
 - ix. Other (please comment)

- k. Literature circles or other social literature groups
 - i. 0/may occur in other weeks
 - ii. 1-15 minutes
 - iii. 16-30 minutes
 - iv. 31-60 minutes
 - v. 61-120 minutes
 - vi. More than two hours
 - vii. Not applicable/do not employ
 - viii. Unable to measure/ fully integrated
 - ix. Other (please comment)

- l. Choice time for literacy activities
 - i. 0/ may occur in other weeks
 - ii. 1-15 minutes
 - iii. 16-30 minutes
 - iv. 31-60 minutes
 - v. 61-120 minutes
 - vi. More than two hours
 - vii. Not applicable/do not employ
 - viii. Unable to measure/ fully integrated
 - ix. Other (please comment)

- m. Other (please indicate)
12. Would you consider your answer for question 10 typical of your usual practice?
(Would most weeks look similar to this or would there be significant differences)
- a. Yes, most weeks would look like this
 - b. No, this week is not consistent with my usual practice (please comment)
13. How would you describe read aloud in your classroom? (When does it happen, where does it happen, why do you usually use it)
14. What did you last read aloud to your students?
15. What was your purpose when you did your last read aloud?
- a. Just for fun
 - b. Filling time
 - c. Connected to a content we are studying
 - d. Instruction in decoding/comprehension/or vocabulary
 - e. Literature instruction/ study
 - f. Other (please indicate)
16. Name three children's authors or illustrators who come to mind.
17. How do you usually find literature to use in your classroom?
- a. Recommendation
 - b. Previous experience
 - c. Browsing the library
 - d. Other (please indicate)
18. What did you last read for yourself and indicate the purpose or purposes (pleasure/work/etc)?

Appendix B
Logbook Recording Sheet

Date	Start Time/End Time	Title/Author	Teacher Identified Purpose	Comments

Appendix C
Interview Guiding Questions

1. Tell me about read aloud in your classroom.
2. Talk about some of the books that you like to read in your classroom.
3. Talk a little bit about the process of keeping the logbook.
4. What would you say you noticed about your practice from the data in the logbook?
5. Other questions would focus on specific texts, times, and purposes in the logbook:
 - a. Why did you choose this text?
 - b. Do you find that this time works best for read aloud, why?
 - c. What made you choose this text for this purpose?
 - d. Do you remember what you talked about during this read aloud?
 - e. How did the students respond to this text?
6. What do you think students really need to know about literature at this grade level?
7. How would you describe yourself as a reader?

Appendix D

Other Responses to English Language Arts Structure

Which of the following to do consider part of your regular literacy program? (Other, please specify:)

#	Response
1.	Reading Intervention
2.	Write Traits and Stepping Up Literacy Program
3.	phoenemic Awareness activities
4.	Listening to Reading, Shared writing
5.	Daily 5, individual reading/writing conferences
6.	Grammar is a huge part as well
7.	literacy centres
8.	interactive/shared writing. Embedded word work
9.	TUSC
10.	buddy or shared writing/editing
11.	Reader's workshop e.g. discuss thought processes
12.	Close activity for Morning message
13.	School wide initiative with literacy blocks of time (addressing specific needs in the school)
14.	Newspaper articles-discuss random acts of kindness.
15.	genre studies
16.	Daily 5
17.	Reading Recovery
18.	viewing and discussion of appropriate video/DVD material
19.	buddy writing
20.	Totally Unbelievable Speaker's Club, Inquiry Projects, etc.
21.	differentiated reading/writing assignments dependent upon the child's development
22.	research and inquiry projects where students have the opportunity to choose their own topic and in charge of their own learning
23.	Daily 5

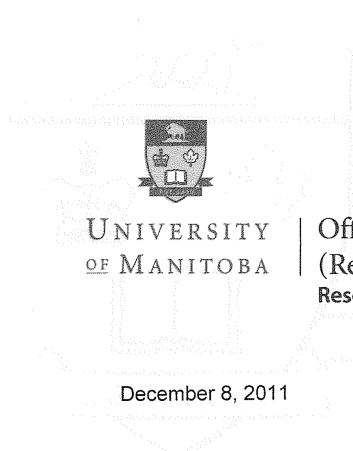
24. Blogging
25. Small and/or large group discussion/sharing circles/storytelling
26. words their way
27. I am a music teacher
28. These are all components of the Reading Recovery program so I'm not sure if they apply to your study.
29. Centers
30. daily 5

Appendix E
Full List of Authors

Munsch	86	Lionni	4	Cumming	2
Dahl	26	Lowry	4	Hinton	2
Seuss	21	Osborne	4	VanAllsburg	2
Brett	21	Boynton	4	Randall	2
Carle	18	Gay	4	Matas	2
Reid	15	Avi	3	Yolen	2
Willems	14	Park	3	Child	2
Ellis	14	Clements	3	McLellan	1
Silverstein	12	Cleary	3	Peet	1
Rowling	12	Kellogg	3	Kinney	1
Collins	11	Bunting	3	Shea	1
Blume	11	Riordan	3	Byers	1
Korman	10	Pilkey	2	Smucker	1
Watt	10	Rylant	2	Du Brau	1
Polacco	7	Keats	2	Viorst	1
Henkes	7	Schachner	2	Walsch	1
Paulson	7	Rosenthal	2	Brown	1
Spinelli	7	Berenstein	2	Carroll	1
White	7	Elhert	2	Creech	1
Mayer	6	diCamillo	2	Mortenson	1
Lewis	6	dePaola	2	Asher	1
Sendak	6	Cormier	2	London	1
Walters	5	Arnold	2	Bayrock	1
Oppel	5	Bouchard	2	Philbrick	1
Fox	5	McLauchlan	2	Horowitz	1
Bourgeois	5	Mikaelsen	2	Lobel	1
Smith	5	Little	2	Beaumont	1
Sachar	4	Shannon	2	Nelson	1

Milne	1	Gaiman	1	Burnett	1
Gosciny	1	Martin	1	Major	1
Parker	1	Binkow	1	Alexie	1
Smucker	1	Penn	1	Meyer	1
Clifford	1	Munsinger	1	Wiseman	1
Wilson	1	Nadeau	1	Howe	1
Trease	1	Prelutsky	1	Peacock	1
Browne	1	Wilson	1	McClintock	1
Gagnon	1	Coville	1	Taylor	1
Roy	1	Paterson	1	Clark	1
Muloin	1	Parr	1	Snickett	1
Wallace	1	Mowatt	1	Cumming	2
Gilmore	1	Shields	1		
Cronin	1	Campbell	1	Kropp	1
Fanelli	1	Teaque	1	Lawrence	1
Marshall	1	Stevenson	1	Ahlberg	1
Chima	1	Brouwer	1		
Hopkins	1	Eggleton	1		
Lawson	1	Haddox	1		
Wheeler	1	Suzuki	1		
Lucado	1	Kjelgaard	1		
Gilman	1	Giles	1		
Cowley	1	Selfors	1		
Jeffers	1	Wood	1		
Ingalls-Wilder	1	Stein	1		
Dasher	1	Lee	1		
Hiassen	1	Kinley	1		
Erdrich	1	Base	1		

Appendix F Research Ethics Approval Certificate and Amendment



UNIVERSITY
OF MANITOBA

Office of the Vice-President
(Research and International)
Research Ethics and Compliance

Human Ethics
208 - 194 Dafoe Road
Winnipeg, MB
Canada R3T 2N2
Fax 204-269-7173

APPROVAL CERTIFICATE

December 8, 2011

TO: Karen Boyd (Advisor S. Straw)
Principal Investigator

FROM: Judy Inglis, Acting Chair
Education/Nursing Research Ethics Board (ENREB)

Re: Protocol #E2011:106
"An Exploration of Teacher Read Aloud Practices in Manitoba: Is Literature Visible?"

Please be advised that your above-referenced protocol has received human ethics approval by the **Education/Nursing Research Ethics Board**, which is organized and operates according to the Tri-Council Policy Statement (2). This approval is valid for one year only.

Any significant changes of the protocol and/or informed consent form should be reported to the Human Ethics Secretariat in advance of implementation of such changes.

Please note:

- If you have funds pending human ethics approval, the auditor requires that you submit a copy of this Approval Certificate to the Office of Research Services, fax 261-0325 - please include the name of the funding agency and your UM Project number. This must be faxed before your account can be accessed.
- if you have received multi-year funding for this research, responsibility lies with you to apply for and obtain Renewal Approval at the expiry of the initial one-year approval; otherwise the account will be locked.

The Research Quality Management Office may request to review research documentation from this project to demonstrate compliance with this approved protocol and the University of Manitoba Ethics of Research Involving Humans.

The Research Ethics Board requests a final report for your study (available at: http://umanitoba.ca/research/ors/ethics/ors_ethics_human_REB_forms_guidelines.html) in order to be in compliance with Tri-Council Guidelines.

Appendix G
Letters of Consent

Invitation to Participate in Survey



UNIVERSITY
OF MANITOBA | Faculty of Education

February 27, 2012

My name is Karen Boyd, and I am a doctoral candidate in the Faculty of Education at the University of Manitoba. I am requesting approval from your division to distribute an invitation to Kindergarten to grade eight classroom teachers in your division to participate in an online survey that will collect data for my research on read aloud practices and how they are situated with literacy programs in Manitoba.

Specifically, I am requesting that your administrative staff distribute the attached survey to all Kindergarten to Grade Eight classroom teachers. I am inviting all divisions in Manitoba to participate in this survey.

Study Title: *An exploration of teacher read aloud practices in Manitoba: Is literature visible?*

Principal Investigator: Karen Boyd, Doctoral Candidate University of Manitoba,
boydk@cc.umanitoba.ca, 474-8714

Research Supervisor: Dr. Stan Straw, University of Manitoba, stan_straw@umanitoba.ca, 474-9074

This document should give you the basic idea of what the research is about and what your participation will involve. If you would like more detail about something mentioned here, or information not included here, you should feel free to ask. Please take the time to read this carefully.

Project Description:

This study examines current practices of read aloud that take place in Manitoba schools and how those practices are situated within classroom literacy programs. Specifically, within the data I

Letter of Consent for logbook and interview



UNIVERSITY
OF MANITOBA | Faculty of Education

January 10, 2012

My name is Karen Boyd and I am a doctoral candidate at the University of Manitoba. I am collecting data for my dissertation that focuses on the use of read aloud in classrooms and the way that it is situated in literacy programs in Manitoba schools. This letter is requesting your participation in one part of the research.

Study Title: *An exploration of teacher read aloud practices in Manitoba: Is literature visible?*

Principal Investigator: Karen Boyd, Doctoral Candidate University of
Manitoba, boydk@cc.umanitoba.ca, 474-8714

Research Supervisor: Dr. Stan Straw, University of Manitoba, stan_straw@umanitoba.ca, 474-9074

This consent form, a copy of which I will leave with you for your records and reference, is only part of the process of informed consent. It should give you the basic idea of what the research is about and what your participation will involve. If you would like more detail about something mentioned here, or information not included here, you should feel free to ask. Please take the time to read this carefully.

Project Description:

This study examines current practices of read aloud that take place in Manitoba schools and how those practices are situated within classroom literacy programs. Specifically, within the data I hope to uncover the ways in which literature is being introduced to students and how the teacher mediates thinking about literature. As teacher read aloud is generally teacher directed, the teacher decision making process can highlight the emphasis on teacher read aloud and literature mediation. The research questions also seek to illuminate the factors that contribute to teacher

Letter of consent for Divisional Participation: Logbook and Interview



UNIVERSITY
OF MANITOBA | Faculty of Education

My name is Karen Boyd, and I am a doctoral candidate in the Faculty of Education at the University of Manitoba. I am requesting your division approval to approach Kindergarten to Grade two teachers in your division to participate in my study that will collect data for my research on read aloud practices and how they are situated with literacy programs in Manitoba. Specifically, I am requesting that you give permission for 6-8 teachers to maintain a logbook of their read aloud practices for one month. Teachers from three divisions in Manitoba will be participating in this part of the study. In addition, teachers who participate in the logbook will be asked if they would be interested in participating in a follow up interview, which will take approximately one hour to complete. Once you have given permission I will follow your suggestion for recruitment of the teachers.

Study Title: *An exploration of teacher read aloud practices in Manitoba: Is literature visible?*

Principal Investigator: Karen Boyd, Doctoral Candidate, University of Manitoba,
boydk@cc.umanitoba.ca, 474-8714

Research Supervisor: Dr. Stan Straw, University of Manitoba, stan_straw@umanitoba.ca, 474-9074

This consent form, a copy of which I will leave with you for your records and reference, is only part of the process of informed consent. It should give you the basic idea of what the research is about and what your participation will involve. If you would like more detail about something mentioned here, or information not included here, you should feel free to ask. Please take the time to read this carefully.

Project Description:

This study examines current practices of read aloud that take place in Manitoba schools and how those practices are situated with classroom literacy programs. Specifically, within the data I

Letter to Divisions for Pilot Survey Permission



UNIVERSITY
OF MANITOBA | Faculty of Education

My name is Karen Boyd, and I am a doctoral candidate in the Faculty of Education at the University of Manitoba. I am requesting approval from your division to distribute an invitation to staffs in your division to participate in an pilot survey that will collect data for my research on read aloud practices and how they are situated with literacy programs in Manitoba.

The purpose of this pilot study is to test the survey instrument that I plan to distribute by e-mail to Kindergarten to Grade 8 teachers in Manitoba. I require a staff of approximately twenty teachers who will attempt to complete the survey and provide me with feedback on ways that I can make the survey clearer or more usable for the participants.

The survey should take about 15 to 20 minutes to complete. The responses that I collect from this pilot study will not be included in the reported data of the project; they will only be used to test the survey instrument.

Study Title: *An exploration of teacher read aloud practices in Manitoba: Is literature visible?*

Principal Investigator: Karen Boyd, Doctoral Candidate, University of Manitoba,
boydk@cc.umanitoba.ca, 474-8714

Research Supervisor: Dr. Stan Straw, University of Manitoba, stan_straw@umanitoba.ca, 474-9074

This document should give you the basic idea of what the research is about and what your participation will involve. If you would like more detail about something mentioned here, or information not included here, you should feel free to ask. Please take the time to read this carefully.

Project Description:

This study examines current practices of read aloud that take place in Manitoba schools and how those practices are situated within classroom literacy programs. Specifically, within the data I

Invitation to Participate in Survey



UNIVERSITY
OF MANITOBA | Faculty of Education

February 27, 2012

My name is Karen Boyd, and I am a doctoral candidate in the Faculty of Education at the University of Manitoba. Thank you in advance for participating in this survey for my doctoral research on read aloud and literary instruction in literacy programs.

I am interested in collecting data from Manitoba classroom teachers who are involved with students from Kindergarten to Grade 8.

The survey should take about 15 to 20 minutes of your time. Data you provide will be anonymous and your computer IP address unknown to the researchers. You may opt out of the survey at any point, simply by exiting the survey. Should you wish to re-enter the unfinished survey, you have the option of doing so until March 23, 2012.

Results from this research will be presented in my dissertation and may be submitted for publication to conferences and/or professional journals.

If you wish to access the survey results, a link to a two-page summary will be available at <http://readaloud.weebly.com>. Results will be posted by May, 2012.

By completing this survey, you are offering consent for your anonymous responses to be used for this research study. This study has been approved by the University of Manitoba's Education and Nursing Research Ethics Board (ENREB). If you have questions or concerns, please contact the Human Ethics Coordinator at margaret_bowman@umanitoba.ca. You may also contact me, Karen Boyd, at boydk@cc.umanitoba.ca or my advisor, Dr Stan Straw, Curriculum, Teaching & Learning, University of Manitoba, stan_straw@umanitoba.ca

