

CHAPTER 4

A research background to reading

4.1 INTRODUCTION

The overall aim of the study, which is to achieve growth in the realisation of the human potential of learners through reading, should continuously be kept in mind. Before a programme can be presented to achieve the aim, it will be necessary to devote some time to review recent educational theories that are significant for planning interventions to assist learners with reading. For this purpose the following sub-research questions have been identified, that will be focused on during this chapter:

- What educational theory about teaching/learning in general can be applied when teaching reading in English?
- What theory about the teaching of English as a second language is important when attempting to assist learners?
- How can the concept of reading be clarified?
- What main approaches to the teaching of reading can be identified?
- What is the relation between the different approaches to teach reading and maximising human potential in inclusive education settings?
- What effective method can be used to assist struggling readers?

In the next section the first question will be focused on.

4.2 EDUCATIONAL THEORY ABOUT TEACHING/LEARNING IN GENERAL THAT CAN BE APPLIED WHEN TEACHING READING IN ENGLISH

Within the previous chapter, the concept of maximising human potential was dealt with in detail. When planning interventions to assist learners with reading, it should be kept in mind that the potential or intelligences of learners differ. By recognising the diversity of learners in this regard, teachers should adapt their teaching to target as many of the different forms of intelligence as possible.

4.2.1 Teaching in an intelligence-friendly classroom

Fogarty (1998:665) defines the environment where the intelligences of learners are maximised as the *intelligence-friendly classroom*, which is further explained as follows:

An intelligence-friendly classroom is a classroom in which the teaching/learning process is governed by what is known about developing the intellectual potential of human beings. Literally, intelligence-friendly means 'friendly to intelligence', which can be translated into friendly to the growth patterns of human intellect and friendly to the learner in fostering intelligent behavior for problem solving, decision making, and creative thinking.

In order to make suggestions about how to teach in an intelligence-friendly classroom, Fogarty (1998:656) mentions that the various theories of intelligence of the most prominent figures in the field should be used as a basis for teaching in an intelligence-friendly classroom.

These theories are very briefly reviewed within the next paragraphs. It should be realised that these theories of intelligence specifically relate to teaching in an intelligence-friendly classroom. These theories are the following (Fogarty, 1998:656):

a Theories of intelligence related to teaching in an intelligence-friendly classroom

▪ *The traditional theory of general intelligence:*

Intelligence is believed to be inherited and unchanging.

▪ *Piaget's theory of developmental psychology:*

The learner developmentally constructs intelligence in the mind and understanding involves different stages that move from the concrete to the abstract.

▪ *Vygotsky's theory of social mediation:*

Intelligence is viewed as a function of activity. The activity is mediated through

material tools, psychological tools, and other human beings.

▪ *Feuerstein's theory of structural cognitive modifiability:*

Intelligence, which is a function of experience, can be changed through guided mediation.

▪ *Gardner's theory of multiple intelligences:*

Intelligence is constituted by eight realms of knowing (verbal, visual, mathematical, musical, bodily, interpersonal, intrapersonal and naturalistic) to solve problems and create products that are valued in a culture.

▪ *Sternberg's theory of successful intelligence:*

Intelligence has a triarchic nature. It has analytic, creative and practical components that must be balanced.

▪ *Perkins' theory of learnable intelligence:*

The neural, experiential and reflective components that intelligence is made up of help us knowing our way around the good use of our minds.

▪ *Costa's theory of intelligence behaviours:*

Intelligence is made up of acquired habits or states of mind. It is evident in behaviours such as persistence, flexibility, decreased impulsiveness, enjoyment of thinking and reflectiveness.

▪ *Goleman's theory of emotional intelligence:*

Intelligence is viewed as cognitive and emotional. The emotional (self-awareness, self-regulation, motivation, empathy and social skill) rules over the cognitive.

▪ *Coles' theory of moral intelligence:*

Intelligence is made up of cognitive, psychological or emotional, and moral realms.

With different theories of intelligence as a basis, Fogarty (1998:656-657) provides the following guidelines for teaching in an intelligence-friendly classroom, the guidelines serving as a bridge between theory and practice:

b Guidelines for teaching in an intelligence-friendly classroom

Set a safe emotional climate

The intelligence-friendly classroom should be a safe and caring place for all learners. A climate for thinking and taking risks is set and learners understand that learning involves making mistakes but also experiencing success. Strategies such as the establishment of classroom rules, an awareness of the verbal and non-verbal teaching behaviours, organising diverse small groups who feel safe, tapping into emotional and moral intelligences, organising the classroom to facilitate learner-to-learner interactions, as well as learner-to-teacher interactions, and incorporating learner-centred structures, such as multi-age groupings, which enhance the creation of intelligence-friendly learning communities, can be used.

Create a rich learning environment

Creating a rich learning environment involves the physical aspects of the intelligence-friendly classroom. Learners should be invited to interact with the learning environment. Print-rich materials are also important (especially as far as encouraging reading is concerned).

Teach the mind-tools and skills of life

These skills involve mind and body “tools”. The skills range from communication and social skills to the micro skills of thinking and reflecting, to technological skills that are needed for the Information Age. In a more specific way the skills might include the following:

- *Critical thinking skills (for example: prioritising, comparing and judging).
- *Creative thinking skills (for example: inferring, predicting and generalising).
- *Social skills (for example: communicating, team building, leading and resolving conflicts).
- *Technological skills (for example: keyboarding and taking virtual field trips).

- *Visual skills (for example: painting, sculpting and drawing).
- *Skills in the performing arts (for example: dancing, acting and playing a musical instrument).
- *Skills of the elite athlete (for example: diving, skiing and swimming).

Skilfulness is achieved through mediation, practice, coaching and rehearsal. Skills can be developed in the following ways:

- *Through formal teaching/learning structures, such as direct instruction models that demonstrate the skill to learners.
- *Through independent readings and research and through the dialogue, discussion and articulation of peer coaching, mentoring or internships.
- *Through experiences in which the skill is embedded in application.

Challenge through the experience of doing

Learning is a function of experience. Internal processes that construct ideas in the mind and external processes of social interaction shape learning. In the intelligence-friendly classroom the learner has to be actively involved in the process of teaching/learning.

Strategies that can be used in the intelligence-friendly classroom include the following:

- *Hands-on learning with a lot of manipulation and lab-like situations.
- *Small-group, cooperative tasks.
- *The frequent use and unique application of graphic organisers, for example concept maps.
- *Authentic experimental curriculum models, for example problem-based learning, case studies, project and service learning, performance tasks, and the use of relevant overarching themes.

Target multiple dimensions of intelligence

The theory of multiple intelligences (MI) is concerned with stimulating the unique profile of intelligences of each learner:

MI approaches to curriculum instruction and assessment target a full spectrum of teaching/learning strategies that encompass the many ways of knowing and of expressing what we know (Fogarty, 1998:657).

The eight intelligences are given enough time in the curriculum to be developed through authentic, relevant opportunities. Learning should be structured naturally and in integrated ways where various intelligences are touched. The following example serves as a practical explanation: Learners who have to create a school newspaper also interview (interpersonal intelligence), write (verbal), design and layout (visual), and critique (logical) during the process.

Transfer learning through reflection

An important pillar in the intelligence-friendly classroom is the reflective use of learning, which encourages personal application and the transfer of learning. The fact that learning becomes personal, purposeful, meaningful and relevant, and that the brain has reason to pay attention, understand and remember, are positive aspects, which are associated with learning through reflection. Collaborations and discussions in class should include reflection, introspection and mindfulness because when reflection takes place, learning is internalised. The following strategies enhance reflection:

- *The use of reading-response journals in which the learner writes a personal, immediate response to what has been read.
- *Comments and questions prior to, or following a learning experience.
- *Lab reports, personal diaries, sketchbooks, writers' notebooks, portfolios, partner dialogues and conversations with a mentor.
- *Mediation interventions.
- *Metacognitive strategies of planning, monitoring and evaluating through self-regulation.

Sternberg, Torff and Grigorenko (1998:667) point out that intervention based on the theory of successful intelligence improves school achievement, especially the analytical, creative and practical dimensions. They maintain:

... when material is taught in a variety of pedagogically sound ways - in this case, for memory as well as analytically, creatively, and practically - students have more opportunities to learn and understand the material being taught.

The theory of successful intelligence can, in terms of instruction and assessment, easily be applied in a classroom situation.

Bellanca (1998:659) agrees with the fact that the teacher's teaching should match the needs of learners and that teaching should aim at teaching for intelligence. In order to change old teaching practices and develop new ones which target the learners' intelligences the following basic assumptions have to be considered:

- c Basic assumptions about teaching practices aimed at teaching for intelligence

The traditional method is not wrong.

This aspect can best be explained in the words of Bellanca (1998:659) himself:

There are many high-achieving students who thrive with the traditional approach to teaching. However, the traditional method is inadequate for many students who are less achievement-driven. If all students are to learn the curriculum, then all need the opportunity to be taught in ways that enrich their learning. This means that the teacher, when faced with less-motivated students, needs to develop a greater repertoire of methods...

The importance of using a variety of teaching methods to fit the needs of a variety of learners is highlighted by the above statement.

Teaching is a strategic act of engagement.

The idea of learners being actively involved in the process of learning is emphasised once again. The active engagement of learners' minds is considered to be a prerequisite to learning by the new theories about

intelligence. Teachers have to plan activities where all learners will be engaged. A repertoire of proven engagement strategies and the skill to integrate these strategies with the content will be necessary from the teacher.

Learning to change one's teaching style is as difficult as learning to change one's learning style

Change in classroom practice can be brought about by a multitude of individual approaches. All components of the intelligence-rich change models should be included to ascertain that each learner's basic learning style is catered for. It is possible that the more traditional information-centred model of instruction has been dominating many teachers' lives ever since they themselves were at school. This model can be changed to incorporate models about teaching for intelligence. The experiences of teachers in learning how to teach for intelligence need to balance the what, how and why of the new models. The "what" refers to descriptions of best practices, followed by live or video demonstrations that show how these best practices can be used in grade-specific contexts. Investigations of supporting research are covered under "why". The "how" includes the following: the provision of mediated role-playing sessions with enough time for solving problems, reflecting on application opportunities, collaborative planning for use, a structured assignment for implementing the plan, and a collegial assessment of the results of the application.

Bellanca (1998:660) summarises his ideas about the importance of teaching for intelligence as follows:

As new research provides us with new insights into how human minds work, we are assured that teaching for intelligence is a never-ending challenge as well as an infinite opportunity to help all children become active, engaged and successful learners. As schools take advantage of the best practices in professional development, the change process ensures more success for

teachers who seek to expand their repertoires with the best practices in teaching for intelligence.

Teaching to accommodate different intelligences also implies that the teacher has insight into the different learning styles and strategies that learners use. This topic is discussed next.

4.2.2 Accommodating Learning styles and learning strategies

One important aspect that the teacher has to take into consideration when teaching reading in English as a second or foreign language is the fact that learners have different styles through which they learn. The term “learning style” is interpreted in the following way by Kyriacou, Benmansour and Low (1996:22):

A pupil's learning style refers to their general approach towards using particular types of learning activities. It is evidenced in

- i the pupil's **attitudes** towards and **preferences** for particular learning activities,*
- ii the particular **choice** of activities they use for learning when they are given some degree of control over the method they may employ, and*
- iii the way in which they **approach** the use of particular types of learning tasks demanded of them.*

To the extent that a pupil adopts a fairly consistent approach to learning activities that incorporates those three elements, we can refer to that pupil as adopting a particular learning style.

The teacher should constantly be aware that learning styles differ and that teaching should make provision for this. Thomas (1996:204) agrees with this statement.

Kyriacou, Benmansour and Low (1996:23) make the following very important comments in this regard while viewing learning styles in the context of foreign language teaching:

- As learners differ in their learning styles, teachers should ensure that learners who have specific preferred learning styles are not constantly exposed to learning in an approach which is not preferred. The teacher should provide a variety of learning activities, which will ensure that all

learners will be able to learn through their preferred learning styles for at least part of the time.

- On the other hand, learners also need to expand their ways of learning. They should learn through a number of activities and not only through those that are preferred. For example,

... solitary learners need to be able to learn successfully from social tasks, and vice versa. Teachers are not doing pupils any favours by consistently giving them tasks which match their preferences. Again, use of a variety activities by the teacher coupled with appropriate support, can help develop pupils' versatility for learning (Kyriacou, Benmansour and Low, 1996:23).

From the above statements it is clear that learners need to be supported to develop their repertoire of effective approaches to learning (Kyriacou, Benmansour and Low, 1996:23).

Six major and influential descriptions of learning style, which have stood the test of research scrutiny, have been identified by Kyriacou, Benmansour and Low (1996:22-23). These descriptions play an important role when the characteristics of the approach of learners to learning are analysed. These different learning styles are discussed below:

a Six different learning styles

- *Deep Approach, Surface Approach and Strategic Approach (Marton and Entwistle, 1987)*

The learner who adopts a deep approach is trying to understand the specific topic. Adopting a surface approach implies that the learner tries to pick up bits and pieces or elements of the topic that are sufficient to meet the set tasks. The adopter of a strategic approach concentrates on those features of performance

which will gain the highest marks and his/her work is organised in a manner that will ensure the highest grades.

□ *Holist/Serialist (Pask, 1976)*

The holist learner tries to get an overall conceptual understanding of the topic area. He/she focuses on the topic's general features and ideas and how they inter-relate. Links are often made in an intuitive and personalised manner. The serialist, on the other hand, prefers to focus on details and on building up understanding through step-by-step sequencing and logical order.

□ *Converger/Diverger (Hudson, 1966)*

Learners who are convergers tend to think logically and in an orderly manner. They conceive problems in terms of one right answer and in order to find that answer they follow procedures which are well rehearsed and well understood. Divergers are open-ended learners who think creatively and enjoy coming up with imaginative ideas.

□ *Concrete/Abstract (Piaget and Inhelder, 1969)*

Concrete learners prefer concrete, real-life examples to illustrate specific ideas. They also show a preference for dealing with particular instances. Abstract learners would rather think in terms of generalities and abstract principles. They also look for overall patterns and integrating principles. Piaget's theory of cognitive development has made a distinction between concrete and abstract thinking forms and pointed out that concrete reasoning is part of the early stages of cognitive development, usually covering the primary school years.

□ *Reflective/Active*

Reflective learners tend to meditate on the topic in order to have more knowledge and a clear understanding. Sources of information that these

learners use, are watching, listening and reading. The preferred repertoire of active learners includes exploring and experimenting by making use of problem solving tasks, practical work and discovery methods.

□ *Solitary/Social*

Solitary learners prefer to work on their own, while social learners would rather work collaboratively in a social context.

b Links between styles

Kyriacou, Benmansour and Low (1996:23) explain that the above descriptions (except for the first one which is described as a typology) are often presented as bi-polar dimensions. Characteristics of both ends of each dimension are displayed by learners and the characteristics can move from one extreme to the other. It will however depend on the topic, its context and the specific demands made on the learner. For many tasks it is required that the learner makes use of both ends of each dimension, but some learners find it very difficult to change their preferences, and completing a task by using the characteristics at the other end of the dimension can be almost paralysing. Such learners need to be assisted in this regard.

c Learning strategies and English second/foreign language learning

Grenfell and Harris (1998:23-24) discuss the importance of being aware of learner strategies as far as foreign language learning is concerned. They point out that finding a definition for “learning strategies” can be problematic and that the terms “learner” and “learning” strategy are used synonymously in the literature. A distinction is made between learning strategies and communication strategies. Learning strategies refer to the habits and practices learners adopt to help them learn a language, while communication strategies arise within discourse itself. Communication strategies also involve discursive techniques that are used to understand a conversation and to keep it going, as well as a number of social-psychological attitudes present in speech.

The connection between reading in a second language and learning strategies is discussed next.

d Learning strategies in the context of reading a second language

Grenfell and Harris (1998:23) stress the importance of developing learner autonomy and point out that learners seem to lack the strategies they need to be able to work independently, such as strategies ranging from basic study skills like the use of a dictionary, to more complex strategies involved in making sense of a reading text.

O'Malley and Chamot (1985) in Grenfell and Harris (1998:24) stress the significance of making provision for cognitive theories in language learning and applying them to learning strategy research. They distinguish between cognitive and metacognitive strategies in the following way:

Metacognitive strategies involve thinking about the learning process, planning for learning, monitoring of comprehension or production while it is taking place, and self-evaluation of learning after the language activity is completed.

Cognitive strategies are more directly related to individual learning tasks and entail direct manipulation or transformation of the learning materials.

Grenfell and Harris (1998:27) list the following concluding remarks about learning strategies and second language/foreign language learning.

- Learning strategies are developmental (Chesterfield and Chesterfield, 1985).
- Early learning strategies are mainly receptive and self-contained. Later learning strategies are more interactive and allow more reflection.
- A learner sometimes uses later learning strategies such as monitoring, inferencing and elaborating, while still using earlier strategies such as 'wild card guessing'. The beginner reader will not monitor as much as the skilled

reader, as stringing two words together takes a lot of effort, resulting in less space to focus on error correction.

- Strategy use does not only depend on the stage of learning, but also on individual differences between learners. Learners who prefer main ideas to details characteristically dislike grammatical details and avoid careful analysis.
- As the learner gains more proficiency in a specific strategy area, the learner becomes less conscious of what he/she is doing.

The importance of exposing learners to different learning strategies, as far as teaching reading to second- or foreign language learners are concerned, has the following implications for developing a reading programme. The reading programme will have to meet specific requirements.

- e Requirements for a reading programme, as far as exposing learners to different learning strategies is concerned
 - A reading programme should make provision for enhancing both declarative and procedural knowledge (Anderson, 1983, 1985). Declarative knowledge refers to knowledge of or about things. Grenfell and Harris (1998:24) explain it as follows:

Declarative knowledge is close to conscious, analytic knowledge, can be 'declared' explicitly, is held in short-term memory until it is 'known' when it passes to long-term memory where it is stored in propositional patterning. Procedural knowledge is temporal and productive in response to demands. These demands offer 'problems' to be solved. How they are solved may be explicitly declarable but mostly come from routine and practice.

Declarative knowledge implies that the teacher and learners should know what reading is (19 essential elements).

Procedural knowledge implies that the reader will know how to read by using different strategies. Opportunities should be provided where learners can practise reading.

- A reading programme should include a repertoire of different strategies that the learners can use to reconstruct meaning and understand the text.
- A reading programme should include strategies from both bottom-up and top-down models about reading and should reflect recent literature on the effective teaching of reading.
- The programme should be sensitive to the needs of learners, as Thomas (1996:201) mentions:

The needs of the learners are at the centre of our teaching, as the learner is the centre of everything.

A teacher who aims at achieving growth in the realisation of the human potential of learners should not only accommodate learners with different potentials and ways of learning, but a close monitoring of the teaching- learning process is necessary. Without continuous monitoring, valuable lessons learnt by the teacher and learners about ways of teaching that complement learning will be forgotten. Action research is an excellent way in which the teacher can continuously monitor the teaching- learning process in the classroom. The teacher who conducts action research in the classroom, not only improves his/her teaching practise on a daily basis, but also becomes sensitive to meet the needs of each individual. An overview of how the teacher can use action research to meet the needs of the learners in the classroom is discussed next.

4.2.3 Action Research as a means of enabling teachers to meet the needs of learners

It is important that teachers reflect on their teaching in order to determine if the needs of learners are being met. This is specifically true when English is taught as a second or foreign language. Thorne and Qiang (1996:254) point out that action research has a voluntary nature. Teachers voluntarily conduct action research in

response to their own specific problems and concerns in their classrooms. The following definition of action research in terms of teaching English as a second or foreign language is chosen by Thorne and Qiang (1996:255):

... trying out ideas in practice as a means of improvement and as a means of increasing knowledge about the curriculum, teaching and learning (Kemmis and Mc Taggart, 1982).

Thorne and Qiang (1996:261) have found that in research their trainee teachers, who did action research, undertook, became more aware of the teaching and learning processes and were more capable of improving their own practice. They were also more confident in their future professional development. Thorne and Qiang (1996:260) refer to an example where action research inspired student teachers to improve their teaching, in order to follow an integrated approach where all four language skills are covered, (as the widely accepted communicative approach to English second or foreign language teaching requires). It is interesting to find that the learners enjoyed these improved teaching practices more, leading to an improvement in their learning of English

Gnoinska (1998:12-15) searched for practical ways of making classes livelier and of helping learners acquire English vocabulary. They decided on using different colours to teach vocabulary, as colours can influence human health and the psyche.

Colour was used in the following activities to teach vocabulary (Gnoinska, 1998:14-15):

- a To practise spelling and pronunciation
 - Underline or colour difficult letter or sound clusters, such as double consonants in the word: accommodation or th sounds in thought
 - Mark stressed syllables in longer words, for example luxurious.
 - Underline words in a passage that look nice or ugly.
 - Draw a picture representing a word you cannot remember.
 - Decorate the initial or final sounds/letters that made it difficult.

b To remember the word's grammar

For example, mark different parts of speech (nouns, verbs, adjectives, adverbs, prepositions) with different colours.

c To teach semantic categories and word differences

- Underline all words in a text that are associated with a specific topic, for example health, food, travelling, etc. with a coloured pencil.
- Make colourful charts, semantic maps or idea sketches to practise vocabulary.

d To practise morphology

- Colour all prefixes and suffixes in a passage. Try to find out what they usually mean.
- Underline the stem of given words to see that they are related, for example: satisfaction, insatiable, unsatisfactory.
- Use different colours to make prefixes, stems, and suffixes of words on a list of derivations, for example:
 - long, prolong, prolonged, prolongation, longitude, longish, longing etc.

e To draw learners' attention to words and to stimulate discussion

- The opinions and preferences of learners can be expressed creatively.
- Words that have happy/sad or pleasant/unpleasant associations can be underlined with different colours.
- Words that are easy or difficult can be marked.
- All attractive/boring or useful/uncommon words can be underlined in the passage.
- Certain lexical or grammatical categories can be associated with specific colours.

To conclude, Gnoinska (1998:15) points out that when learners use colour to study, they become much more creative. They feel they are in control and that they are responsible for their own learning. Learners also experience that studying can be enjoyable.

Any English second/foreign language teacher would feel quite happy if the learners have developed these attitudes and feelings about learning vocabulary. As the use of colour to teach vocabulary is one way to enhance these qualities, it will be worthwhile to try some of a multitude of easy ideas to bring about a more successful match between teaching and the ways in which learners prefer to learn.

It has briefly been mentioned that action research is a continuous process of monitoring. In order to monitor the success of teaching and learning, assessment is necessary. In the next section ideas are given for the assessment of reading in an inclusive classroom.

4.2.4 Ideas for assessing reading in an inclusive classroom

Assessment in an inclusive classroom where English is learnt as a second or foreign language is part of every action that is performed in the classroom. The true nature of assessment should be both motivating and supportive. The motivating purpose of assessment involves drawing the teacher and learners towards the direction that should be followed. The outcomes, which should be achieved at certain intervals during the learning process, are highlighted and the teacher's and learners' progress in terms thereof is stipulated. Through assessment the participants (teacher and learners) are motivated to achieve the next outcome, if they are ready, or to spend more time to perform the previous outcome successfully. During this process it will be necessary to determine the needs of the teacher and learners. As learners do not all learn in the same way and at the same pace, certain adjustments will be needed from time to time to make sure that each individual is showing progress.

In this regard Smith, Stevenson and Li (1998:215) point out that concerning assessment certain accommodations should be made for "disabled" learners and

learners with limited proficiency in English. They explain the statement as follows:

For disabled students, accommodations should include those specified in individualized education programs (IEPs): extended time, multiple testing sessions, one-on-one testing, small group sessions, available scribes, the use of computers, and large-print or braille versions. For students with limited proficiency in English, accommodations should include frequent breaks, the use of bilingual dictionaries, items read aloud in English, extended time, one-on-one testing, and small group sessions.

The importance of catering for the needs of each individual thus seems to be very important when thinking about assessment.

In order to provide an example of how reading can be assessed in an inclusive classroom, the following points will be discussed:

- Observing progress in literacy.
- Observing and assessing reading aloud.
- Recording reading strategies.
- Formal assessment of reading skills.
- Using checklists to determine the learner's position on the reading scale.

The first aspect that will be discussed, is observing progress in literacy. Thereafter the other aspects that have been listed above will be dealt with.

a *Observing progress in literacy*

Wylie, Roberts and Botha (1999:75) offer the following suggestions about observing progress in literacy:

- *A simple record should be kept of what is observed. Through observation the teacher gets to know the learners.
- *An observation diary can be used to record observations. One page of an exercise book can be allocated for each learner.
- *A quarter of the class can be observed each week during language lessons.
- *At the end of each day, think about each learner and jot down particular observations about reading specifically.
- *At the end of each term, use the observation diary to update the Language Literacy and Communication Assessment Record sheet of each learner.

b *Observing and assessing reading aloud* (Wylie, Roberts and Botha, 1999:76-7)

The teacher can listen to learners' reading while they are reading in a group. A few questions can be asked to determine a learner's understanding.

The following points can be written in the observation diary:

- The type of book, for example: storybook, non-fiction or a traditional tale.
- The teacher's overall impression, for example: fluency, confidence, expression and pronunciation.

The learner's response to the story:

- An understanding of the main points of the story.
- Identifying important details.
- Understanding the theme or moral of the story.

c *Recording reading strategies*

The following are some common reading strategies that can be observed (Wylie, Roberts and Botha, 1999:77-78):

- One-to-one correspondence*

The learner checks that the number of words that he reads is the same as the words on the page. He can run his finger under each line. In this way he will make sure that no words are left out or are repeated.

❑ *Self-correction*

The learner corrects him/herself when that which has been read does not make sense. In this event self-correction can indicate that the learner is reading for understanding.

❑ *Dealing with unknown words using phonics*

The initial part of the main sound in the unknown word is sounded out. This is a useful strategy when reading new material.

❑ *Dealing with unknown words using semantics*

When looking at the picture, learners use their knowledge of the story and prior knowledge to guess a specific word. This skill shows that learners read for meaning. If the word that has been guessed is incorrect, but the meaning is close, such an attempt should be praised.

❑ *Dealing with unknown words using syntax*

Knowledge of the sentence structure and the language is used to guess a word. If this strategy is successful it shows that learners understand the structure of the language.

d Formal assessment of reading skills (Wylie, Roberts and Botha, 1999:79-80)

The teacher needs to observe and listen to the learner's competence at his/her level of learning. The following aspects can be considered:

- ❑ Reading-for-meaning skills: These skills can be assessed if the teacher asks questions about the text.
- ❑ Using reading strategies such as re-reading a sentence when something does not make sense.
- ❑ Using phonic reading cues such as sounding out unknown words.

- Using semantic reading cues: the learner continuously has to check whether what was read, makes sense. If it does not, re-reading must take place.
- The use of syntactic reading cues: the learner who knows the language well enough should be able to guess specific words.
- Fluent reading with few hesitations.
- Observing and pausing at punctuation marks.
- Understandable pronunciation.
- Reading with appropriate expression.
- Being able to tell what has been read.

e *Using checklists to determine the learner's position on the reading scale*

Wylie, Roberts and Botha (1999:82) recommend that checklists should be based on the following reading scale:

TABLE 4.1 The Reading Scale on which all checklists are based

Stage A: Beginner reader	The beginner reader cannot read independently. She is still learning about print and the sounds that letters make.
Stage B: Early reader	The early reader can recognise familiar words, read simple repetitive books and knows most letters and sounds.
Stage C: Developing reader	The developing reader reads a wider range of books. She attempts new words and has a wide phonic knowledge. She looks for meaning in text and can answer straightforward questions about a book.
Stage D: Fluent reader	The fluent reader is a capable reader who approaches familiar text with confidence. She still needs support with unfamiliar texts but uses reading cues to work out unknown words. She can answer a range of questions about a book.
Stage E: Independent reader	The independent reader reads fluently and easily. She obtains information and draws conclusions from books. She can work independently.
Stage F: Effective reader	The effective reader is very experienced. She reads a variety of texts with ease and contrasts and compares books. Deeper meaning is appreciated. She gets information without difficulty and transfers this successfully in a variety of ways.

Information that is obtained from observations and formal assessment of reading skills can successfully be documented on a checklist. For an example of how a checklist that combines reading with mega and cooperative life skills can be used in practice, the reader is referred to Chapter six, where the research findings are discussed. The observations that had been documented by a specific teacher serve as an example. It should be pointed out that an observational checklist for assessing reading skills need not be complicated, where an expert in linguistics or phonetics has to come and render assistance each time that assessment takes place. An observational checklist to assess reading should be understandable to any person who might be interested in reading it, especially because the outcomes of assessment should be shared with a vast spectrum of individuals such as the principal, other teachers, parents, the learner, NGO's and others. The reader is referred to Appendix A: A98 and A99 for examples of other checklists to assess reading.

It is however of paramount importance that any person who embarks on the process of assessing the learners' reading should be knowledgeable of what reading is, how one learns to read, and which skills are involved in the process. It will also be important in this regard to have an understanding of how English should be taught as a second language as many second language learners struggle with reading in English. This aspect is discussed in the next section.

4.3 THEORY ABOUT THE TEACHING OF ENGLISH AS A SECOND LANGUAGE

With an overview of broad educational theory that can be applied when teaching reading in English, it will at this stage be necessary to focus more specifically on theory about English Second Language teaching. Any teacher who attempts to assist with reading in English should know how English should be taught as a second language, as suggested by recent literature. The communicative approach to the teaching of English as a second language, for example, argues that the four language skills (listening, speaking, reading and writing) should not be taught in isolation. This view has definite implications for the teaching of reading and is in agreement with the view that reading should be taught through the use of top-down and bottom-up strategies (these are discussed later in the chapter), for reading to become a meaningful activity. The 19 essential elements that describe the concept of reading also support this view. The communicative approach to the teaching of English as a second language is discussed in the next paragraphs.

4.3.1 The Communicative approach to English Second Language teaching

Communicative language teaching is an approach that has developed extremely rapidly during the past fifteen years or so. It is accepted by many applied linguists and teachers as the approach that is the most effective in comparison to other approaches that are in general use. This approach is also regarded as the dominant theoretical model in English language teaching and is well established (Thompson, 1996:9).

Buyts and van der Walt (1996:84) refer to communicative language teaching as “natural” learning through communication.

Hirvela (1996:127) points out that the communicative movement became popular in the 1980's. Teachers were faced with the challenge of creating conditions which would represent real life situations in which learners could use the target language to communicate.

Thompson (1996:10-14) explains communicative language teaching (CLT) by clarifying some misconceptions. The following main points have been derived from Thompson's explanations.

Misconceptions about communicative language teaching

- CLT does not only focus on the functional while neglecting the structural elements. Structural aspects, such as grammar, should also feature and may not be left out. (The effectiveness of formal grammar teaching within a communicative approach has been proven by the research of Buys and van der Walt (1996:83-90) as both successful and necessary.)
- CLT does not only focus on speaking but includes all forms of communication, therefore also including the four basic language skills, namely, listening, speaking, reading and writing, which are taught in an integrated manner. Kasanga (1998:113) agrees with the significance of this statement.
- CLT does not only mean pair work and role-play. Teachers have to create real life opportunities in which learners can learn to use the language. Pair work and role-play are only means to establish this goal. One of the advantages of group work in this case is that learners can help each other. Ideas can be tried out in a relatively "safe" environment before they are launched in public. Learners develop more confidence and better ideas in the process. Their communication also becomes more effective. In groups, learners can come up with knowledge and skills that complement those of their partners. The possibilities of pair work are endless and effective pair work can indeed be very rewarding.
- The fourth misconception about CLT is that it expects too much from the teacher. Lessons will be less predictable and the teacher has to interact with learners as naturally as possible. A wider range of management skills is also necessary than in the traditional classroom where the teacher gives all the information to learners. What is true about CLT is that it challenges the teacher to reflect on his/her beliefs and practices and to develop his/her

skills. Teachers are encouraged to enjoy themselves when they teach and to avoid monotonous repetition (Thompson, 1996:14).

In spite of the above misconceptions and worries of some teachers, the communicative approach should be credited for the following positive aspects that are built into the approach.

b Positive aspects of CLT

- Learners learn the language by using it (communicating) within real life context by using real life materials.
- In general, learners enjoy this approach because it is lively and the materials are interesting.
- Fear to speak the language is minimised by increased opportunities to speak the language and a lessened focus on correctness.
- The pronunciation of learners can improve tremendously if the teacher sets the right example.
- The initiative of both teacher and learners is stimulated.
- Learners are actively involved in the learning process and they experience the dynamics of group work in a practical way. Kasanga (1998:109) points out that the two important principles of CLT are learner participation and their taking responsibility for their own learning.
- The choice of materials is unlimited as long as learners can relate to the material and it is not too difficult or uninteresting.
- As the teacher interacts with groups each day, opportunities for continuous assessment are numerous. Opportunities for improvement are also numerous, as feedback is given continuously.
- The integrated use of listening, speaking, reading and writing ensures that not one of those skills, which are necessary for effective language learning, is neglected.

In short, CLT can be described as a breath of fresh air in the language classroom.

Another aspect, which is closely linked to CLT, is literacy. One of the aims of CLT is to produce learners who are literate in English. These learners should be equipped to communicate in English (through speaking and listening to information, reading and writing) in the world outside the classroom. The concept of literacy, with important related issues is discussed in the paragraphs that follow.

4.3.2 Literacy as related to communicative language teaching

Literacy can be interpreted in many ways. It does not only imply that a person is able to read and write. Literacy involves a much wider spectrum, as Lankshear and O'Connor (1999:30-31) indicate:

Literacy consists of abilities, containing skill and content components in reading, writing and math that relate to contexts of human activity (notably, work) ... besides a focus on fluent acquisition of basic skills involved in more complex tasks, literacy learning activities should contain elements of a knowledge base required by particular subject areas (e.g. work, consumer practice, health and recreation, etc.) and focus on strategies for understanding and producing text types associated with different spheres of activity.

From this statement it is clear that literacy cannot be approached in a decontextualised manner that does not relate to the world of the learner. Literacy skills should be practised within real-life contexts. The communicative approach to the teaching of English as a second language does indeed show promise when embarking on the teaching of literacy.

a Important aspects related to literacy

The following important aspects about literacy have been pointed out by Lankshear and O'Connor (1999:32-36) and have been listed below:

- The individual who wants to become literate must be motivated. There should be incentives for the learner.

- Literacy programmes should address the needs of the learners across the spectrum of their social roles and identities.
- Becoming literate implies practice: Learning activities and instructional settings should be derived from real life situations.
- As Gardner (1995:200-209) distinguishes intelligences from each other, so do Lankshear and O'Connor (1999:33) show that there are many literacies which are embedded in concrete practices, for example, literacy practices in civic, domestic and social settings, as well as in the work place.

Wylie, Roberts and Botha (1999:2) distinguish between the following types of literacies:

- Language literacy: In the Foundation Phase, for example, it covers all the language skills and provides a framework for language development in the Foundation Phase.
- Communication literacy: The development of the learner's listening, speaking, reading and writing skills is the focus.
- Cultural literacy: It involves an awareness of the cultural, social and ideological values that influence the reading of texts.
- Critical literacy. The ability to respond to the messages in the text in a critical and thoughtful way.
- Visual literacy: The learner is able to interpret signs, pictures and non-verbal messages.
- Media literacy: An understanding of how messages are carried by different media like TV and films.

Computer literacy: Learners should be able to access and use information from computers.

- Literacies should be acquired within the specific settings in which they are embedded.

- Lankshear and O'Connor (1999:33) explain the significance of three dimensions of literacy that have been identified by Green (1998), Lankshear, Bigum et al (1997). These dimensions are:
- The operational dimension.
- The cultural dimension.
- The critical dimension.

They are highly significant when thinking about strategies and materials selected for improving literacy. The three dimensions of literacy are best described in the words of Lankshear and O'Connor (1999:33) themselves:

*The **operational** dimension involves being able to read and write within a range of contexts in an adequate and appropriate manner employing print and electronic media. The **cultural** dimension involves understanding texts and information in relation to the contexts - real-life practices - in which they are produced, received and used. Without the cultural dimension, language users are unable to understand what makes particular ways of reading and writing appropriate or inappropriate, adequate or inadequate in a given situation or setting. The **critical** dimension involves being able to innovate, transform, improve, and add value to social practices and the literacies associated with them. It marks the difference between merely being **socialized** into sets of skills, values, beliefs and procedures and being able to make **judgments** about them from a perspective that identifies them for what they are (and are not) and recognizes alternative possibilities.*

Literacy education should at least lead to a better critical understanding of the economic (and social), present and future.

- Classroom practices should not “teach about” but should incorporate “doing.” Being actively involved in situations related to real life, in which listening, speaking, reading and writing are introduced in an integrated manner, is relevant in this regard.
- Lankshear and O'Connor (1999:33) continue by pointing out that:

... literacy training programmes should not lead to experiences of adjudged failure, anxiety and a sense of remoteness from what is familiar, interesting or satisfying (Billet, 1993, Shuttleworth, Somerton and Vulliamy, 1994).

- Literacy education should educate in different contexts.

The above paragraphs provide a clearer picture of how learners can become literate, but it is disheartening to find that illiteracy is a big problem, which has become a global concern. In the next few paragraphs the problem is investigated.

b *Illiteracy in America*

Wagner and Venezky (1999:21) report that in America illiteracy is a big problem, which does not seem to be improving. They explain the situation as follows:

In 1993, the first report from the federally funded National Adult Literacy Survey (NALS), the most comprehensive study of this kind, was released. The good news was that nearly 95% of adult Americans could read at a fourth-grade level or better, showing that illiteracy in its most basic form was relatively low, but the bad news was that nearly half of all adult Americans scored in the lowest two levels of literacy, levels that the National Educational Goals Panel (1994) has stated are well below what American workers need to be competitive in an increasingly global economy.

c *Illiteracy in Australia and other countries*

Lankshear and O'Connor (1999:30) claim that it is not only America that has to deal with the problem of illiteracy. They refer to the Australian Bureau of Statistics (1997a, 1997b), which stated that recent surveys in the USA, Britain, Australia and other OECD nations revealed unacceptably high levels of illiteracy.

The problem with illiteracy, according to Wagner and Venezky (1999:21), is that its effects can clearly be seen when considering the economic well being of many people and the economy as a whole.

The South African situation is not much different and needs to be looked at.

d *Illiteracy in English and the need to provide training for English second language learners*

In the United States, South Africa and all over the world many learners and adults struggle with limited English proficiency. Literacy in English is necessary when preparing for and entering the world of work. Education Minister Kader Asmal describes the high rate of illiteracy in South Africa as causing “shame and concern”. The number of functionally illiterate persons in South Africa is estimated at about 12 million (Sapa: 2 000:2). Kasanga (1998:105) has pointed out that many university students experience difficulties with their studies, because they do not have the necessary skills required for their academic work, which is mainly conducted through the medium of English. The need for improving these skills of students was realised by the researcher and led to interventions that were necessary to support the students in this regard.

In South Africa the reality of our multi-lingual society cannot be overlooked. This situation has caused the number of English second language learners in our country to explode. Even the number of adults who are embarking on becoming literate in English is already considerable and it is still rising. The challenge that education has to face is to develop literacy programmes for these learners to meet their diverse needs in order to produce a generation which will not be categorised as illiterate.

When the problem of Limited English Proficiency is addressed, or in a situation where English as a second or foreign language is taught with the emphasis on reading, such as in an inclusive education classroom, it is important that the

teacher is knowledgeable about the needs of such learners. This aspect is discussed next.

4.3.3 The needs of learners in inclusive education settings as far as learning English is concerned

Learners in inclusive education settings have different needs, especially as far as becoming literate in English is concerned. Learners in inclusive education settings vary from learners with limited English proficiency to learners who are quite proficient in English as a second language. In a class situation where half of the learners speak limited English, each individual's needs have to be met and the progress of all readers has to be monitored (Charp, 1998:41) Teaching methods will therefore have to be varied as much as possible to meet the needs of all learners. Kasanga (1997:23) says in this regard:

... subject tutors should be sensitized to the language problems of their students by revising teaching methods and curricula ...

Sternberg, Torff and Grigorenko (1998:668) agree with this statement. They say:

When material is taught in a variety of pedagogically sound ways, students have more opportunities to learn and understand the material. If they do not comprehend the material when it is taught in one way, they might comprehend it when it is taught in another. Thus their achievement is likely to improve...

Thomas (1996:260) highlights the significance of the above statement for teaching English, by saying that the “strategy” of teaching should centre on the learner and the needs of the learners. The method and content that are chosen should also be interesting and stimulating. Even the level of instruction in English should be adapted to the learner's level of English (Baker, 1998:202).

Meeting the individual needs of English second- or foreign language learners has certain implications that are discussed below.

4.3.4 Implications of meeting the individual needs of English second or foreign language readers

As learners learn through multiple ways the teacher should have a repertoire of various teaching methods. If one method does not work, other methods can then be used. It is however necessary that the teaching of reading should always take place within a specific context. Individual words may be taken from the context to focus on a specific aspect of the word, but it should always be returned to its particular place in the context. Another aspect, which should be kept in mind, is the fact that both bottom-up and top-down approaches should be used to teach reading as they cannot lead to reading success when used in isolation.

The eight intelligences of Gardner can very easily be involved, as the materials used in the teaching of English are so wide. Materials and activities can be varied to incorporate each intelligence.

The teacher should realise that all learners do not learn at the same pace and that some will find reading more difficult than others. Gasken (1982) and Mercer (1987) point out in this regard that learners with learning disabilities *often experience difficulty with one or more of the skills involved in the reading process* (Rabren, Darch and Eaves, 1999:36).

Fink (1993:5) agrees with this statement, especially as far as learning to read is concerned and says:

... different children learn to read in different ways ... the ways successful dyslexics learned to read emphasize the importance of differences in learning pathways. We need to use knowledge of these differences to help children learn. Too often, we teachers give only lip service to the notions of individual differences and diversity. Too often, we mistakenly assume that a child who has not mastered word recognition is not 'ready' for higher-level reading/thinking materials.

A reading programme should make provision for the explicit teaching of the use of critical reading strategies, especially if they are reading texts with more complex structures (Rabren, Darch and Eaves, 1999:36).

Baker (1998:204) says in this regard:

... direct instruction is particularly interesting since it works well with both monolingual at-risk students and with LEP students.

Learners with limited English proficiency should not be discriminated against or stigmatised as having some kind of incurable illness when they are identified, but a reading programme should include this particular group of learners and their specific needs. What is important is that they need help with English - in this case English reading. Baker (1998:203) agrees with this statement and says:

The only valid information known about LEP students is that they need help with English. Therefore, teaching and helping them in English is indisputably correct ... Linguists and professors of second language learning and bilingual education overdramatize the difficulty that LEP students face in learning English. Humans are remarkably good at language learning.

Sparks, Ganschow, Artzer & Patton (1997:97) point out that when learning English as a foreign language, language learning occurs along *a continuum from very good to very poor* and that it is not wise to classify these learners as being “disabled”. Sparks Ganschow, Artzer & Patton (1997:97) express it as follows:

... a discrete entry such as 'foreign language learning disability' does not exist ...

The programme should not be teacher-centred, but should be learner-centred where learners have opportunities to work together collaboratively while learning. Kasanga (1998:109) has found that this approach also works better with older learners. Such an approach is also in line with the communicative approach to language teaching where learners learn by using the language. Kasanga

(1998:107) says in this regard that the principles of communicative language teaching (CLT) approach have inspired their ways of teaching. The principles are described as follows:

The principles ... as reflected in features such as: emphasis on learner participation and responsibility for his/her own learning, and 'co-operative learning' classroom practices, through the use of both task-based approaches and peer learning or collaborative learning principles.

Teaching methods should be innovative (Morgan, 1998:33). The materials that are used, especially regarding reading instruction, should allow innovative teaching methods.

Teachers should be dedicated and enthusiastic about what they do (Morgan, 1998:35). They should therefore also be enthusiastic about, and dedicated to teaching and improving learners' reading.

With an understanding of important theoretical aspects about the teaching of English as a second language, the focus in the next section shifts to a discussion of theory about the teaching of reading specifically. The concept of reading will be clarified first, before discussing different approaches to teach reading.

4.4 THE CONCEPT OF READING CLARIFIED

Kriegler (1990:63-64) Points out that a simple definition for reading does not exist. She describes the reading process in terms of 19 essential elements. Various strategies that readers need to acquire are described under each of the 19 essential elements. In some cases young learners are referred to, but it also involves older learners who are beginning to read.

The connection between these essential elements of reading and maximising human potential should constantly be kept in mind. As it has already been pointed out, maximising human potential requires that metalearning takes place.

Metalearning involves a continuous process of planning, execution, monitoring and evaluation. Some of these elements clearly reflect this process. The 19 essential elements of reading are also highly significant when teaching in inclusive settings where learners read on different levels. One of the essential elements, which states that reading is interesting and enjoyable, should be experienced by all readers especially struggling ones, whose experience of reading is probably just the opposite of enjoyment, owing to many years of experiencing failure. The 19 elements form the basis of the Cooperative Paired Reading Programme. As far as possible these elements should be present in any reading programme, either explicitly or implicitly, as it constitutes the whole reading process.

In short, persons who are interested in assisting learners with reading should have a thorough understanding of what reading entails. The following 19 essential elements give a thorough description of what reading involves.

4.4.1 THE 19 ESSENTIAL ELEMENTS OF READING

Kriegler (1990:64-93) lists the following 19 essential elements of reading:

- An intentional act
- An act in totality
- A language act
- The reconstruction of meaning
- Language awareness and knowledge
- To think
- To know what reading is
- Anticipation
- Remembering
- Flexible strategy use
- Self-monitoring
- Self-evaluation
- Practice
- Enjoyable and interesting
- Comprehension

- Appreciation
- Self-confirmation in conversation with reality
- Multi-sensory integration
- Paying attention

Each element will be discussed in the next paragraphs and the views of modern researchers who support each element will be described. Comments will not be made about the connection between each element and maximising human potential, as the introductory paragraph has already indicated the connection in general.

4.4.1.1 Reading is an intentional act

According to Turner (1998:9) there is general consensus about the fact that reading is an active process. Readers use previous knowledge to help them construct meaning from the words they are reading on the page. Hirvela (1996:128) calls the reader an “active participant” in the reading process.

Kriegler (1990:64-67) points out that when only bottom-up approaches to the teaching of reading are used, such as phonics approaches that lean heavily on visual aspects, the learner becomes a passive receiver of knowledge that comes from the outside. Top-down models for teaching reading are “conceptually driven”, which implies that the learner is busy with the reconstruction of meaning, using his/her experience and knowledge of the world.

4.4.1.2 Reading is an act in totality

According to Kriegler (1990:67) reading is more than the sum of the parts thereof. Because reading is a complex process with its components woven together and linked with the learner’s emotional, cognitive and language development, which also connect with the quality of the learner’s education, it is impossible to isolate one function as the culprit of a reading problem.

In this regard Townsend (1998:129) comments:

When it comes to reading, the nature of the individual, teaching style and the materials used are all key players... So many influences are at work interacting and contributing to children's reading problems. Whilst home background and early experiences are very important, an overemphasis on individual causes is not necessarily helpful in enabling teachers to "switch on" readers.

As we deal with complete human individuals, the best way of teaching reading will be by reading and treating the individual as someone special, while exploring the wonder of the world of written language.

Townsend (1998:132) cautions against traditional teaching where teachers imposed reading materials upon rows of obedient, submissive teenagers. He admits that teachers have often been insensitive to poor individuals by *injecting the wrong dose, getting the mix not quite right.*

4.4.1.3 Reading is a language act

Listening, speaking, reading and writing are all components of language and complement each other. Rivas (1999:13) argues that reading should be integrated with the other language skills:

This is of the utmost importance, for reading cannot be dealt with in isolation. The ultimate goal of teaching English ... is to enable learners to communicate effectively ... Reading is the use of language, hence the need for its integration with other language skills.

Turner (1998:12) says in this regard:

Moreover, reading does not stand in isolation from other skills. Reading is multi-purpose: it is a skill in its own right, it is an essential support skill for listening and speaking and a feeder skill for speaking and writing. It is also a rich source of input and practice.

Communicative language teaching is an approach, which is widely used in the teaching of English as a second language. The communicative approach assumes that all four language skills, listening, speaking, reading and writing, should be taught in an integrated way, as they are all part of language and all contribute to the language learning process. It therefore makes sense to deal with reading together with the other three skills. (The communicative approach towards the teaching of English as a second language is discussed in more detail elsewhere.).

4.4.1.4 Reading is the reconstruction of meaning

According to Hirvela (1996:129) a reader who reads a text interprets it in a specific way. The reader's interpretation does not describe the text itself, but how the reader recreated the text while reading.

Kriegler (1990:70-71) indicates that it is the surface structure of writing that functions as clues, which provide an entrance to the world of meaning of language. Reading implies that uncertainties about meaning are progressively eliminated.

Yeomans (1999:33) comments that readers use a variety of clues to reconstruct meaning. They predict meaning by using their knowledge of grammar and syntax:

For example, in the sentence 'I... to the shop', knowledge of grammar will enable a child to supply a verb for the missing word and therefore make sense of the sentence. A young child may not, of course, know that the word is a verb, but will simply supply an appropriate type of word based on his or her knowledge of language structures.

One problem readers have, is the fact that the English language has many inconsistencies (Hall, 1995:29) and that sounds and letters do not correspond on a one-to-one basis as Fuller (1993:3) explains:

Students are taught 'code approximation.' They are told the truth, that is, in the English language there is not a one-to-one correspondence between letters and sounds. Instead, the letters represent a sloppy code. And, the

only way to be sure of a letter sound is to see if it makes a word that makes sense in the sentence.

When the reader does not grasp the fact that reading implies a process of reconstructing meaning, the reader often thinks that reading is a passive activity in which some automatically succeed and others not. Moore and Wade (1998:22) point out in this regard that:

Restriction to reading materials that confine children to one strategy, such as 'look and say' or phonics, prevents children from accessing the meaning of text that is essential to reading development.

Readers with such views often think that one only has to pass one's eyes over the text and then one has finished (Metzger, 1998:240). These readers have to be guided towards a full understanding of reading as the reconstruction of meaning and how to achieve it. Flanagan (1999:2) agrees with the importance of realising that reading implies gaining meaning. This skill should form part of a learner's knowledge by the end of grade 1 and should be monitored.

4.4.1.5 Reading means language awareness and knowledge

Kriegler (1990:71) points out that in order to gain access via the surface structure of writing to the deep structure (meaning) of language, the reader has to bring along different important components, for example, motivation, comprehension, imagination and language awareness. Turner (1998:10) says in this regard that:

Reading is part of the language learning process, learners read because they are language learners.

Learning to read and write also involves the following aspects of language awareness experience and/or knowledge:

- Phonemic (phonological) awareness (Yeomans, 1999:35).
- Awareness of lexis (Turner, 1998:10).
- Syntactical awareness (Turner, 1998:10).

- Meta-language vocabulary.
- Knowledge of the conventions of written discourse.

Each of these components will be discussed in the paragraphs which follow.

a *Phonemic or phonological awareness*

According to Yeomans (1999:32) phonological skills imply that the reader understands that words are made up of individual sounds. He refers to Goswami (1995) who identified two skill levels: detection and manipulation. The ability to hear sounds can be seen as detection skills. An example of detection skills is where a child has to identify which of the following words have the same sound at the beginning: 'cat', 'cot', 'fin'. The sounds in the middle or at the end of words (Yopp, 1992) can also be detected by using similar skills. Van der Merwe (1999:2) suggests an activity where learners have to identify 3-letter words which are hidden inside other words for example, visitor.

Manipulation of sounds is described by Yeomans (1999:32) as follows:

Manipulation of sounds involves skills such as blending or syllable splitting (Adams, 1990), or substitution (Layton and Upton, 1992). An example of such skills might be where a child is asked to say a word with the first phoneme removed (for example, 'cat' without the c). A further development would be to substitute another phoneme (for example, substituting f for c would make the word 'fat').

Yeomans (1999:32) refers to the work of Bryant, Bradley, MacLaeane and Crossland (1989) who suggested that an increase in the knowledge of nursery rhymes leads to an increase in the success of phonological tasks and activities. Slamang (1999:2) supports the idea of focusing on words that rhyme. It is important to develop detection and manipulation skills as they provide a foundation for later reading development and progress. (Yeomans, 1999:32)

Yeomans (1999:34) also mentions that matching sounds and pictures is an activity, which might enhance phonemic or phonological awareness.

Brooks (1999:28) adds that poorly developed phonological skills have been thought to be one of the causes of reading difficulties. The Buckinghamshire Phonological Awareness Training Programme of Wilson (1993) has also made provision for commonly occurring rhymes to improve phonological skills in Great Britain.

Moss and Reason (1998:3) say in this regard that *Phonics refers to the phonological competencies involved in attending to sounds in words and developing word analysis skills* and that rhyme awareness can be used when practising phonological skills, referring to a Reading Recovery programme of Adams (1990) and Wasile and Slavin (1993).

b *An awareness of lexis*

Turner (1998:10) acknowledges the importance of knowledge about lexis amongst others skills when reading. He points out that:

To read fluently and accurately then, readers need to know the language, its lexis, its morphology, its syntax ... but reading is an excellent way of learning the language.

Kriegler (1990:74-76) claims that when a learner is exposed to a lot of written language, he/she will realise that words are put together in specific ways, for example, letter strings (such as “st” in last, blast and fast and “str” in stream, strip and strong) in words. When the learner can quickly identify different letter strings the letter strings can be perceived as whole parts which reduce the burden on the short term memory as the individual letters do not have to be taken in one by one.

c *An awareness of syntax*

Kriegler (1990:75) explains that reading implies that the reader will have to be aware (implicitly or explicitly) of the rules determining the actions and

combinations of words in sentences. The beginner reader who spends a lot of time on decoding words does not maximally utilise syntactic or semantic cues, especially when the reader has the perception that reading equals the decoding of letters. In such cases it is difficult to derive complete meaning from the text.

Zhenyu (1997:41) maintains that English foreign language teaching is an organic process which includes two transactions:

- Reading from words to sentences (reading at the syntactical level).
- Reading from sentences to whole texts (reading at the textual level).

Chinese learners of the English language, for example, seem to need a lot of assistance with syntactical awareness. The greatest difficulty between Chinese and English has been identified as being at the lexical and syntactical level rather than at the textual level. This problem poses the greatest difficulty for Chinese students of English. Zhenyu (1997:41) recommends the following:

Students need a course that will provide them with good and solid training in the basics of the language - its pronunciation, vocabulary, grammar, sentence structure, idiomatic usage, etc. Therefore, it is only proper and natural for the teacher to conduct IR (Intensive Reading) classes in a sentence centered approach and to focus on teaching the interrelationships between various sentence components.

This recommendation does not seem valuable only for teaching English for Chinese students but it can also be considered when other English second language learners are involved.

d *Meta-language vocabulary or knowledge of terminologies of language*

According to Kriegler (1990:77) to be able to read, it is necessary for the child to know what words such as the following mean: sentence, word, sound, letter, number, read, spell, write, page and line.

Children's understanding of the terminology of language is not always in agreement with what their teachers mean when they use these words. The

following example (Downing, 1984) is referred to by Kriegler (1990:77) to explain the problem:

...(This is how you write the word 'bite.' It is spelt with the letters bee, eye, tea, ee. The last letter is the silent ee. When you have a silent ee at the end of a word the eye says eye, not i like it does in the word 'bit')

Such misunderstandings cannot only be detrimental to the process of spelling but also to reading and the other two language skills, listening and speaking as they are closely linked to understanding. In fact, misunderstandings about the terminology of language will slow down the whole language learning process.

e *Knowledge of the conventions of written discourse*

Yeomans (1999:33) claims that when children start exploring books they soon realise that written language is not exactly the same as spoken language. The phrase “talking like a book” (Clay, 1985) describes children who will look at books telling the story in “book like” language. An example of the use of a written language convention which is rarely used as a spoken language convention is “once upon a time.”

Kriegler (1990:77-78) shows that two problems can be identified which are related to the fact that written and spoken language are not precisely comparable. The first problem is that if a child has had little exposure to written language in books, difficulties can be experienced in understanding the written language. Owing to the fact that ordinary library books will cover information which is much wider than the child’s daily experiences, a much wider and more differentiated knowledge base and vocabulary will be required than that which he/she possesses.

The second problem is that the complexity of different written texts require different and more complicated mental models to enable the reader to reach an understanding, especially when the text is an exposition of facts, or when the text refers to “they”, for example, which acts differently in spoken discourse. As the context is absent in written language, it is also much longer and more concentrated than spoken language, making it difficult for the reader who has had little exposure to written texts (Kriegler, 1990:77-78).

4.4.1.6 Reading is to think

Moore and Wade (1998:21) highlight the significance of solving problems when reading. When problems are being solved more than the recognition of a string of isolated words takes place. The semantic and syntactic relationship amongst words, phrases and sentences which construct a “coherent and meaningful representation of the text” has to be computed (Daneman, 1987).

In order to solve problems the reader continually has to ask questions concerning the text. The context will assist the reader in finding answers.

According to Kriegler (1990:89) the reader has to learn to read investigatively, creatively and thoughtfully, by posing questions, finding information, guessing and discussing implications. The learner, who, from an early age, has learnt to pose questions about thoughts, has already mastered an important study method.

Zhenyu (1997:42) shows that even before the reader starts reading, he/she can pose pre-reading questions about the text to be read:

Questions beginning with When, Where, Who and What prompt students to look for specific information from the reading material while those with Why and How help them to probe more deeply into the information they have gained from the text.

The fact that the reader has to think while reading is emphasised when Zhenyu (1997:42) continues discussing the process of how the reader finds answers to the questions. In order to answer the questions the reader has to “tackle the text as an organic whole, sorting out messages ...” Those messages which are thought to be most relevant and important to the questions which were posed, have to be selected and recognised. Reading is no longer a passive process of input, but becomes an active process of output.

According to Mabuza-Suttle (1999:1) there is a connection between reading and exercising the mind when she comments:

One way to sharpen the mind, I believe, is through reading. Knowledge is indeed power and only through reading do you retain information and become worldly Read in order to sharpen your mental capacity. Reading moves you beyond the mindset of powerlessness to one of power - from passive interaction to active involvement.

The important link between thought processes activated during reading and meta cognition, where the reader continuously monitors progress, such as understanding, cannot be overemphasised. Disorganised thoughts during the reading process, without self-monitoring, can be very destructive to successful reading. Therefore, young readers need training in the skills connected to reading as a process where thinking plays a major role. In this regard Hood (1996:18) encourages activities which will enhance the reader's thinking about the text, such as simple sequencing and problem solving.

Zhenyu (1997:41) emphasises the fact that reading has a specific purpose:

It is beyond any doubt that the ultimate objective of reading is to obtain information from what is being read.

Considering these positive aspects about reading, it is positive to think that the nation can become more intelligent by reading more.

4.4.1.7 Reading is to know what reading is

Moore and Wade (1998:21) caution that when the emphasis on teaching reading is on phonics out of context the reader can be distracted from reading the word as a single unit "which encourages a hesitant and stilted approach to the reading of text." Readers might think that reading involves only the decoding of individual sounds and altogether miss the purpose of reading which is the reconstruction of

meaning. Moore and Wade (1998:22) describe the process of deriving meaning from the text as follows:

Careful and systematic use of a number of cues, using, for example, context, phonological awareness, re-reading for checking and confirming, is more likely to enable readers to read for meaning and for accuracy.

Kriegler (1990:78) shows that Downing (1984) identified three phases in reading: cognitive, mastering and automatising. All three phases are continuously repeated as the reader reaches more advanced reading levels.

During the cognitive phase it is important that the child has a clear understanding of what is expected of him. The perceptions learners have about reading sometimes equal a description of a meaningless activity. In order to learn to read the learner has to understand that writing has a communicative function and that spoken language can be analysed logically in consecutive elements (phonemes), which can be represented by letters.

Paran (1996:29) comments that it is indeed at the phase of automaticity where second language readers struggle (Segalowitz, Poulsen and Komoda, 1991).

4.4.1.8 Reading is anticipation

In order to read the child has to learn to perceive as economically as possible (Kriegler, 1990:82-83). He/she has to search for the most important characteristics of the most prominent letters. He/she has to select the most meaningful letter combinations, syllables and words, and therefore has to take in whole phrases and sentences at once. Because the reader can anticipate what will follow on the basis of minimal clues, he/she is able to read faster with time, while chunks of information are kept in the memory. Anticipation, which takes place with the help of a meaningful context, is an important strategy used by the skilled reader. Koopman (1999:3) agrees with the importance of being able to predict what comes next in a story.

Paran (1996:26-27) refers to Doff (1988) who describes the importance of taking in whole sentences, supported by background text in the following way:

When we read for meaning, we do not need to read every letter or every word, nor even every word in each sentence. (...) To see how this happens at the level of individual words, try reading this sentence:

Am -- was walk ---- d - n the s----t, c-r—ing a gr—n -----.

Even though more than half the letters were missing, you could probably read the sentence without difficulty, and even guess the last word without the help of any letters. You may have noticed that as soon as you guessed the second word, it helped you to guess the whole part of the sentence.

Anticipation on the basis of using different cues, supported by meaningful context, is a strategy that can be much more valuable than learning sight words out of context. Turner (1998:10) says in this regard that poor readers take wild guesses, while educated guesses based on the knowledge of language are characteristics of good readers.

Merrett (1998:60) supports the ideas of Clay (1979) who pointed out that making mistakes plays an important role in the process of anticipation:

... in learning to read, children develop a number of quite complex strategies for predicting and working out unknown vocabulary. Learning to read is seen as a process of making mistakes (often referred to as reading errors or miscues) and gradually developing more efficient strategies using contextual cues, which relate to meaning and syntax, and graphical cues, which relate to the visual pattern of letters and words

Young readers should be encouraged to use a variety of cues to anticipate what will follow. Anticipation can be viewed as an important ingredient in the reading process, as compared to baking powder as an ingredient of a cake mixture. The cake can still be baked without baking powder, but its structure will be quite different from that of a cake which was baked with baking powder. In the same way reading without anticipation is limited to word recognition, which is limited

to individual words, or even worse to the sounding out of individual sounds out of context.

4.4.1.9 Reading is remembering

Kriegler (1990:83-84) explains that when the attention is focused on a particular activity, the memory is activated and the deep structure of thought, meaning and language becomes available for encoding and decoding. Experience of the perceptual-motor activities needed, is also stored in the memory. On a further level strategies needed for effective remembering and retrieval of information are stored. To be able to understand what is being read, the reader has to hold word or groups of words in the short-term memory for a few seconds. The information has to be transferred to the long-term memory to make its later retrieval possible.

Paran (1996:26) expands on this process by referring to the work of Nuttal (1982):

We know that a good reader makes fewer eye movements than a poor one; his eye takes in several words at a time. Moreover, they are not random sequences of words: one characteristic of an efficient reader is his ability to chunk a text into sense units, each consisting of several words, and each taken in by one fixation of the eyes.

*So a good reader may chunk: **The good old man/ raised his hand/ in blessing.** He would certainly not chunk: **The good/ old man/ raised his/ hand in / blessing.***

Nor would he read word by word. ... the larger the sense groups a reader can take in, the more easily he will turn them into coherent messages. If we could get our students to recognize sense groups and take in longer groups with each eye fixation, it would obviously help ...

In order to master the above skills learners need a lot of exposure to reading real texts (not only concentrating on words or sounds taken from context), as we all read by reading and improve our reading by reading.

4.4.1.10 Reading is flexible strategy use

Kriegler (1990:86-87) refers to the work of Downing (1984:39) where it is mentioned that different types of reading (for example, silent reading or reading aloud) and different aims of reading (for example, relaxation, evaluation or study) require different reading techniques. Flexible variation of strategy and style is the *gear-shift-system of reading skill*. Turner (1998:11) agrees with the above statement by saying that when a teacher introduces a particular text its purpose will determine the type of activities which will accompany it.

Turner (1998:10) also adds that according to the *common language proficiency theory* of Cummins and Swain (1980), which underlies all language work, a learner will be able to transfer different skills (skimming and scanning) and strategies (ways of coping with unknown words) learned from mother tongue reading, to foreign language reading if the texts match the learner's general level of competence.

Kriegler (1990:86) also shows that reading with understanding requires *the appropriate interweaving of top-down, conceptually driven processes and bottom-up, text driven processes*. (Ryan and Ledger, 1984).

Rabren, Darch and Eaves (1999:36) say that:

The skilful reader is able to orchestrate a complex system of skills and knowledge.

Moore and Wade (1998:22) seem to agree with Kriegler (1990:86) in this regard and stress the fact that learners should be taught to read by using different approaches. Hood (1996:18) also agrees with this statement. This will enable learners to use more than one strategy when reading.

It is clear that the reader needs a repertoire of different strategies to cope with the demands of reading, as already pointed out. What is, however, of the utmost importance is that the reader has to arrive at the ultimate goal of reading, which is

the reconstruction of meaning. Strategies having the highest probability of getting the learner to this place should be used therefore - also depending on the individual's learning styles. (Learning styles and strategies are discussed in more detail elsewhere.)

4.4.1.11 Reading is self-monitoring

Kriegler (1990:84-85) maintains that in order to continue reading the reader has to get continuous feedback about the correctness of his/her guesses. Feedback on thought and memory provides verification or denial of the effectiveness of the strategies being used.

Merrett (1998:60) shows in this regard the significance of self-correction of mistakes:

... making mistakes is very important and is to be expected in the learning process. Children, like the rest of us, learn through making mistakes. Those learning to read quickly and successfully do this by themselves, because they soon become aware when what they read does not make sense ...

Merrett (1998:60) also highlights the fact that the skilled use of self-correction strategies is a characteristic of good, fluent reading (Clay, 1979) and that when readers are allowed to correct themselves, instead of being corrected by a tutor, more self corrections were produced and reading accuracy improved (McNaughton and Glynn, 1981)

Meta-cognition plays an important role in the process of self-monitoring. One way of describing meta-cognition is the following explanation by Mulcahy and Hanson (1993:13) which focuses on self-reflection:

The metacognitive implications ... are essentially those of providing the stimuli to move students from a sensory to a more intuitive and self-reflective mode of thinking.

The concept of metacognition will not be discussed further at this stage as it is explained in more detail elsewhere.

As the four language skills - listening, speaking, reading and writing - complement each other as they develop, learners should monitor the use of all these skills. In writing, for example, it is most important that a learner should monitor the correctness of his/her writing and make the required corrections. The same applies to listening and speaking. Self-monitoring is a skill learners have to learn from an early age, as it is in fact part of our wider daily lives - for example, following a recipe or driving a car.

Other important metacognitive strategies (Valtin, 1984), which need to be highlighted with regard to reading, are the following (Kriegler, 1990:85):

- Clarifying the purpose of reading.
- Identifying the essential aspects.
- Directing attention.
- Monitoring understanding.
- Evaluating success.
- Self-correction of mistakes and recovering after interruptions.

The use of the above strategies is supported by recent researchers and will be discussed in the paragraphs that follow.

a *Clarifying the purpose of reading*

The reader should clarify the purpose of reading which is the reconstruction of meaning. Some readers view reading as a mechanical process of decoding words out of context, which does not make much sense, as Ervin (1998:226) explains:

As long as a child spends most of her time enunciating t's and d's and decoding only synthetic, denatured texts, she will never ... begin to think and read for herself.

The reader can, in fact, only realise the purpose of reading and what is required by searching for meaning, using a number of cues embedded in a meaningful context.

b *Identifying the essential aspects*

The reader has to be able to identify what is important and what is not. In this regard Gaffield-Vile (1996:110) highlights the importance of differentiating between relevant and irrelevant information. Dreyer (1998:28) suggests that reading strategies such as scanning, where the reader quickly finds information he/she is interested in, can be useful, as well as the ability to distinguish topic sentences from supporting sentences so as to help the readers find the main idea of the text. Gaffield-Vile (1996:112) agrees with this statement. The reader also has to be able to identify important cues in the text, such as meaningful parts of words, in order to make predictions.

c *Directing attention*

The reader has to learn to focus his/her attention on what is important. Yeomans (1999:34) mentions in this regard that print awareness is important:

... which ranges from knowing that the marks on the page carry meaning, to understanding that a specific message is carried in the print which can only be obtained by attention to the words on the page.

It will, in fact also be easier for the reader to direct his/her attention to the words and the most important parts of the words if they appear in a meaningful context as Hood (1996:18) suggests. As far as reading in a second language is concerned, Paran (1996:29) emphasises that at first a large amount of contextual support is necessary.

d *Monitoring understanding*

Moore and Wade (1998:24) point out that when rereading of a previous phrase or sentence occurs to check the sense and accuracy of what has been read, the use of this strategy indicates that the reader is using the monitoring of understanding to make sense of the text.

The reader continually needs to monitor his understanding of what has been read in order to ensure that the reading process can continue effectively.

e *Evaluating success*

The reader periodically has to go back and ask himself if he is succeeding in his aim with his reading (Kriegler, 1990:85). Strategies that the reader can use to check understanding of words, for example, are re-reading or phonics strategies, such as sounding out or syllabification (Moore and Wade, 1998:24).

f *Self-correction of mistakes and recovering after interruptions*

This strategy implies that the reader realises that an error had been made during reading. He could have discovered that a word which was read was inappropriate to the context (Moore and Wade, 1998:24). Such an error is then corrected. The context can assist a learner to correct the error. Kriegler (1990:85) points out that before the learner can continue he first has to “pick up all the threads” again.

4.4.1.12 Reading is self-evaluation

The focus is on evaluation by the self and not waiting for the teacher to indicate success or failure.

Kriegler (1990:85-86) agrees with Lancaster (1988) who has the perception that reading as self-evaluation implies that cognitive participation will lead to meta-cognitive participation. The young reader has to be made aware of his own reading strategies and the criteria according to which he can evaluate his progress and results. Hood (1996:16) also finds the understanding of reading skills by

learners to be important. In this way the locus of control can shift from external (the teacher) to internal (the learner).

4.4.1.13 Reading is practice

Merrett (1998:61) argues that reading is a skill which is learnt and that it can be compared to riding a bicycle. On the other hand the view is expressed that children learn to read by reading (Merrett, 1998:60). Therefore, it is obvious that in the case of learning to read and learning to ride a bicycle, more practice will lead to an improvement in both skills.

The research of Fink (1993:1-4) about how successful dyslexics can learn to read, is quite interesting in this regard.

A study was undertaken in which dyslexic professionals were interviewed. They had a few things in common:

- They were all college graduates and although as children they struggled with reading many have authored major textbooks and scholarly articles.
- The individuals included professors in Gynaecology, Physics and Biochemistry, amongst other professionals.
- They had all contributed to the canon of new knowledge in their fields and despite their severe dyslexia as children they are today highly skilled readers who love reading.
- Each individual had been identified as dyslexic during childhood or later in their lives because of the following “symptoms”:
 - ... *a gap or discrepancy between a person’s achievement in reading and his or her mental ability*...according to the classic definition of Public Law 94-142 in America
 - Severe, unexpected childhood difficulties in learning to read
 - Persistent adult symptoms of the dyslexia syndrome, such as phonetic spelling as well as letter and word reversals

The question which needed to be answered was: How did these successful dyslexics learn to read? Fink (1993:3-4) provides the answer in her own words:

After suffering painful failures and humiliations, these dyslexics finally learned to read, albeit later than their peers. They developed basic fluency, or smoothness in reading connected text, between the ages of 10 and 12. On average it took them three to four years longer than normal children to become fluent; nevertheless, they developed into sophisticated readers by standard measures.

The theme common to all of their stories was that, as a child, each had a single passionate personal interest, a burning desire to learn more about a favorite discipline that required reading ... Each dyslexic described avid, almost voracious reading, usually exclusively in one specific discipline ... Testimonies of interest-driven reading were echoed repeatedly by these dyslexics. Their passion-driven reading about a high interest topic was critical to their literacy development. They seem to have used the repetition inherent in narrow, discipline-specific reading to promote their skill development. The redundant text material itself may have provided the requisite drill and practice that enhanced their reading development at optimal levels. Furthermore, the high interest value of their reading materials seems to have increased the amount of reading they engaged in. The sheer volume of reading they did apparently provided greater practice of skills.

From these examples it is clear that practice plays an important part in the reading process. As the readers practised more their reading improved. The importance of being motivated to read because of interests cannot be stressed enough. It made the difference between being “dyslexic” and being highly successful readers.

4.4.1.14 Reading is enjoyable and interesting

Turner (1998:11) shows that generally readers read for information, for personal interest and for enjoyment. In the case of reading in a foreign language readers should also be encouraged to read for the same reasons. Foreign language learners can find a lot of enjoyment and satisfy their personal interests when the reading material is pitched at the right linguistic level. The level of the reading material is

closely linked to enjoyment. Although this refers to reading in a foreign language it is equally applicable to reading in English as a second language. One example which Turner (1998:11), has taken from Roots (1995) illustrated that third year learners of the German language found the enjoyment of a specific book closely connected to being able to understand it. When learners struggle to make sense of the text, it leads to a lot of frustration, which negatively affects motivation to read. When the language of the text is too difficult and the content does not fit the knowledge and experience of the learners, (Ur, 1996) readers will struggle to read independently (Turner, 1998:11). “Comprehensibility” is highlighted in this regard by Olivier (1998:58) saying that *...input must be at a level which the learner can understand*. On the other hand, learners who struggle with reading are often expected to read materials intended for much younger learners, which do not interest them at all. The importance of connecting what is read with real life contexts is pointed out by Zhenghua (1998:32). The level of interest in reading is often lowered by the approach used by many “remedial teachers” to “remediate” reading. Approaches where words are taken from context to practise sight words, distorts the whole process of reading as enjoyment and understanding (of the story, not of the individual words) go hand in hand. In this regard Townsend (1998:129) warns against the over-emphasis on highly structured phonics teaching, which will negatively influence enjoying books for their own sake. Very often the first step to help such a struggling reader will be to “remediate” the ineffective methods used by previous teachers and help the learner to understand the purpose of reading and what strategies are needed to reach it.

Townsend (1998:130) explains that finding appropriate reading material for slow readers can indeed be problematic. He continues by saying:

Ask any special education needs co-ordinator what is in short supply, and high on that list will surely be good reading material with adult themes presented in a simple but appealing style. Schonell (1942) said the same, as did Luzner and Gardner (1979) and Martin (1988), whose observation was that books which could be managed alone were either written for

young children (and looked like it) or were part of a remedial reading scheme where the language was so simplified to be dull and sterile.

Magazines are excellent material to help learners who struggle to read. The context and the people in the magazines represent society and the language is graded in different levels, from relatively easy, such as “Handy Hints” in the Drum magazine, to longer stories with pictures which will suit the language level of a more advanced reader. Drum magazine can successfully be used in assisting second and foreign language learners of English. An account of this is given elsewhere.

The importance of creating a love for, and an interest in reading is demonstrated by Tumi Ndaba, SABC 1 presenter, when he explains how he and his daughter, Nthato, read together:

After a day of high-energy fun and games, I find that reading to my daughter before she goes to sleep helps calm her active mind. The rhythm of the words soothes her as she drifts off into a world of dreams. Catch them young, catch them fresh - read to your children! (Mofokeng, 1999:1)

It is interesting to find that stories have a universal character. Throughout the world in many different cultures, communities and languages, the tradition of storytelling can still be found. The Zulu word which means to “Bring me a story” is “ZANENDABA” (Patenza and Stein, 1999:1) and is quite significant.

Many children and even adults can recall moments where the warmth of sharing stories around the campfire or at bedtime opened up whole new worlds and dimensions of their human existence. Stories have a lot of potential especially as far as creating enjoyment and interest is concerned as indicated by the following points:

- Stories can provide enjoyment and relaxation.
- Children’s concentration can develop through stories and it can calm them.

- Values, models, new concepts and ideas can be taught through stories.
- They can help learners to see experiences in the right perspective and realise that they are not alone while going through certain experiences.
- Worlds which are both familiar and unfamiliar to children are described by stories.
- Stories can help to broaden children's understanding of other people and situations, as well as other cultures and languages.
- Children's imagination and creativity are developed through stories (Patenza & Stein, 1999:1).

Because of the positive influence of stories on children they should play a much more important role in their lives.

4.4.1.15 Reading is comprehension

Without comprehension reading is a mechanical task of decoding or vice versa; if reading is a mechanical task of decoding it is without comprehension. Once again the reader has to be aware of the aim of reading, which is the reconstruction of meaning. In order to reconstruct meaning a number of sources of information have to be used which will help the reader to clarify the meaning or to comprehend.

In the words of Moore and Wade (1998:22) the relation between reading and comprehension can be described as follows:

Comprehending a text is rather like completing a jigsaw puzzle, where all the information must be used and put into place to make sense. The sifting and analysing of all available information is an active process where readers make decisions in the light of their accumulating knowledge and experience. Careful and systematic use of a number of cues, using, for example, context, phonological awareness, re-reading for checking and confirming, is more likely to enable readers to read for meaning and for accuracy.

In this regard Turner (1998:10) shows, for example, that *ignorance of structure is a barrier to comprehension*. Reading for meaning therefore also implies that the reader should comprehend what is being read, and comprehension on the other hand, implies that the reader should read for meaning. The interest of the reader and motivation to stay actively involved in the task play important roles in the process of understanding the message.

Sequero (1998:30) agrees with this statement and refers to Tobias (1994) who suggested that:

...motivation and interest seem to go hand in hand, leading readers to engage in deeper cognitive processing.

Hood (1996:18) says in this regard the ability to understand a larger amount of unknown material and more confidence are closely linked.

4.4.1.16 Reading is appreciation

Kriegler (1990:90) explains that the first step towards evaluative and appreciative reading is when the child becomes totally absorbed when being read to him/her. Townsend (1998:132) says in this regard:

It is important for students to develop an interest in stories if they are to appreciate how books work.

The young reader has to realise that the amount of commitment and attention with which he reads will determine what he will gain from it. It is also important that the text should not only address the reader's eyes but should also speak to the heart (Kriegler, 1990:90). This should also be kept in mind when assisting struggling readers.

Merrett (1998:59) points out that in the United Kingdom one of the problems of slow readers is the following:

...large numbers of pupils who start their secondary courses without being able to read well enough to profit from the text given them by their specialist teachers.

In such cases the teachers should still find material that will be appealing to each individual so that they are guided to appreciate reading materials.

4.4.1.17 Reading is self-confirmation in conversation with reality

Kriegler (1990:92-93) maintains that when the teaching of reading is successful the reader experiences that reading and writing open up a whole new world to him/her and confirms his/her state of being human. The self and the world are expanded simultaneously and clothed with new meaningful possibilities.

On the other hand, a child with a reading problem might experience reading as an unpleasant task which does not mean much. What is supposed to be an enjoyable activity where the borders of the world of fantasy and knowledge are extended, becomes an activity where reading is seen as a confirmation of the learner's own powerlessness and worthlessness in the eyes of his educators.

Foster and Leibowitz (1998:88) add in this regard that learners of linguistic or cultural minority groups might feel isolated and powerless when they struggle to understand the English language, resulting in their leaving the context. The continuous failures they experience in reading will obviously influence their experience and perceptions of that activity, leading to an avoidance of reading as it is associated with failure.

Tyelele (1999:1) emphasises the important link between living and reading by stating the following:

Reading prepares you for the most important role of all - life. It doesn't matter whether you prefer fiction or non-fiction, newspapers or magazines - as long as you read you learn, and as long as you learn you keep growing. Talent is not enough. Through reading you educate yourself

and through education you empower yourself to be whoever you want to be.

The importance of this statement is realised when it is considered that reading confirms a person's humanness and being in the world, and that reading encourages human growth.

4.4.1.18 Reading is multi-sensory integration

Kriegler (1990:81-82) describes reading as a process of multi-sensory integration. Learning to listen, read, write and spell implies that the learner learns to perceive information and to interpret and integrate it. Reading and writing include multi-sensory integration because the visual, auditory and kinaesthetic modalities are always involved in it to a varied extent. It is impossible, for example, to teach a child how to read by using only auditory perception, as the graphic symbols need to be perceived visually. Information is not necessarily processed in the modality in which it is presented. In the long-term memory information is neither processed visually nor in an auditory manner, but as meaning which is organised through mental schemes in a meaningful way. Fuller (1993:1) agrees with this view about reading by adding that the human brain:

...has the capacity to create context, to impose a structure on the myriad stimuli that surround us to organize information in unique or what we call descriptive ways, of understanding complex wholes.

4.4.1.19 Reading is paying attention

Kriegler (1990:80) refers to Pidgeon (1984) to stress the importance of directing the learner's attention. The way, in which the reader experiences and understands the reading process, plays an important role regarding the maintenance of attention. Attention plays the role of manager. On the basis of general knowledge of the language, the attention decides which sensoric information is important and which patterns need to be searched for. Olivier (1998:58) points out that interest

and attention are linked by saying that: *Interesting, relevant material will hold learners' attention.*

With a better understanding of what reading is, different approaches to teaching reading need to be explored in order to find an approach that will be most suitable to maximise the human potential of LSEN in inclusive education settings.

4.5 APPROACHES TO THE TEACHING OF READING

At this stage it is necessary to review the best known approaches to the teaching of reading, as they provide background knowledge necessary for the understanding of the cooperative paired reading programme that is presented later.

It should be pointed out that, although the “teaching” of reading is referred to, it also includes the facilitation of learning. “Teaching”, however, is the term used in the literature and, owing to the need for uniformity and consistency the terms “teaching” and “teacher” will be used when dealing with the reading programme and related aspects.

When one pursues the question of what works for slow readers, one will inevitably come across a debate, which has been going on for many years. The advocates of bottom-up models, such as the phonics approach for teaching reading, are in many circles still involved in arguments with the advocates of approaches to the teaching of reading where the emphasis is more on top-down models such as whole language models. The advocates of these two main approaches are involved in a continuous battle to prove “who is right.” There are many different approaches to the teaching of reading and they can be categorised under bottom-up or top-down models. Wylie, Roberts and Botha (1999:27-29) point out that the following approaches are the most common:

- ❑ The phonics-based approach.
- ❑ The look-and -say approach.
- ❑ The whole language or apprenticeship approach.

These approaches, as interpreted by Wylie, Roberts and Botha (1999:27-29), are discussed in the next paragraphs. Each approach will also be grouped either under bottom-up or top-down models for teaching of reading.

4.5.1 BOTTOM-UP APPROACHES TO TEACHING READING

4.5.1.1 The phonics-based approach

According to this approach learners are believed to learn to read by sounding out words. They have to be able to systematically learn the sounds of each individual letter or group of letters. Individual letters are taught first followed by blends of two and three letters. Thereafter combinations of letters which make new sounds are taught. Word families which have common groups of letters are also introduced and have to be learned.

The phonics approach implies the following:

- Learners rely to a great extent on the auditory and visual memory.
- Learners will be able to determine what new words say, but it does not imply that they will know the meaning of these words.
- If all the sounds are not in context learners will not be able to memorise them.
- The reading books based on phonics, concentrate more on words with particular sounds than on the story.
- The rules are more difficult to apply in languages where the sounds are varied.
- Learners who are learning to read in a foreign language might find it difficult to learn sounds which do not occur in the vernacular.

An example of how the phonics approach can be used to teach reading, is the following:

- Learners are shown three pictures of objects beginning with the same sound, e.g. train, teacup and tree.

- The pictures are identified together with the learners. Learners and the teacher say the words.
- The initial sound of each word is identified.
- The teacher demonstrates what the written sounds look like, for example “t”.
- Three pictures are drawn by the learners and the letter is copied under each picture. When vowels are introduced learners have to build the words, for example, at, fat, rat etc.
- Learners search in newspapers, magazines or books for other words which start with this specific letter.
- A phonics chart which contains lists of the words that have been taught is compiled and displayed in the classroom.

4.5.1.2 The look-and-say approach

This approach concentrates on a procedure where the learner looks at a word and says it aloud. The shape of the word is remembered by the learner and is associated with a sound. The learner’s ability to remember the word is partly influenced by the shape of the word and the frequency of seeing and saying it.

The following points are inherent characteristics of the look-and-say approach:

- The learner is able to quickly acquire a reading vocabulary.
- The learner’s memory and memorisation skills play an important role.
- The frequent reinforcement of individual words is required.
- The isolation of words from context is not meaningful.
- If learners come across many new words in books etc., without having strategies for finding out what words mean, they might become frustrated.

The look-and-say approach can feature in a lesson in the following way:

- Learners look at a simple reading book.
- A list of all the words in the book is made on the chalkboard. Flash cards are made with the words written on them.
- The words are copied by the learners and then illustrated.
- The words are learned by the learners at school and at home.

- The learners now read the book in groups, pairs (or all together, in the case of a big book).

4.5.2 TOP-DOWN APPROACHES TO TEACHING READING

4.5.2.1 The whole language or apprenticeship approach

“Whole language” implies that all the learning takes place in context, which is usually an interesting text or story. It is a top-down approach because the enjoyment and understanding of the text are the starting point, and individual words and sounds are looked at next.

“Apprenticeship” means that a model of how to read is provided by the teacher by reading *to* the learners and *with* the learners. The next step is where the learner reads in groups with other learners and on his/her own. (The whole language approach is also discussed by Zemelman, Daniels and Bizar, 1999:513-517).

The whole language or apprenticeship approach implies the following:

- From the beginning learners know that they should read for meaning.
- The learners learn reading strategies by example.
- They are motivated to read and pursue the purpose of reading.
- Meaningful incorporation of the look-and-say and phonics methods is possible.
- All four language skills namely listening, speaking, reading and writing are incorporated in the learning process.

In a learning situation the whole language or apprenticeship approach can unfold as follows:

- Preferably a big book should be used. Alternatively the text of a small book can be copied onto the chalkboard.
- The cover of the book is discussed with the learners.
- The knowledge that the learners already have, i.e. their prior knowledge, about the topic of the book, is then determined.

- The title as well as some of the pictures in the book is discussed. The learners have to predict what the story is about.
- The text is read aloud to the learners while the teacher moves a pointer underneath the words, from left to right as he/she says the words.
- The text is read, for a second time together with the learners. Enjoyment and understanding should be the focus.
- The learners re-tell the story in their own words. Simple questions are asked to evaluate the learners' understanding of the story.
- The learners are required to express their opinions and ideas about the story.
- The learners' attention is drawn to some of the words (look-and-say method).
- Flash cards are prepared for the learners or a word bank chart can be compiled.
- An initial sound, which is repeated in at least two words in the book, is found (the phonics method). The learners' attention is drawn to the letter and it is identified. Other words with the same letter or sound are found and a phonics list is drawn up.
- Some language items, such as the use of capital letters at the beginning of sentences and punctuation (for example speech marks and exclamation marks) are focused on.

The whole language approach is a popular approach, which is recommended to be followed when helping beginner readers (Sunday Times: Read Right, 1999:4)

Which approach is to be followed, is the question that needs to be answered at this stage. Wylie, Roberts and Botha (1999:30-36) suggest that an eclectic approach should be followed as all learners have different learning styles.

4.5.2.2 Eclectic approaches to teaching reading

An eclectic approach is a combination of all the approaches that were mentioned and implies the following:

- Learners will quickly increase their reading vocabulary when using the look-and-say approach.
- The phonics approach will help learners to sound out unfamiliar words.
- The whole language approach, through which learners are exposed to real books and stories, will ensure that their reading skills are developed in meaningful contexts. In this way reading for meaning is ensured.
- Looking at illustrations and deriving meaning from the pictures is practised by the learners.
- When learners read real stories in context, they are motivated and the immediate purpose of reading, the reconstruction of meaning, becomes clear to them.
- The apprenticeship approach where learners read together with other learners, ensures that learners learn to read from left to right and that the spaces between words, punctuation and the words themselves are noticed. In this way reading strategies can be modelled by teachers.

According to Wylie, Roberts and Botha (1999:36) the theory behind the approach that should be followed is the work of Vygotsky. They point out that learners have to be supported from where the teacher models reading and reads to them, to the next step where they read with the teacher during shared reading. In the phase following this, the reader tries to read with support in group, guided and paired reading. Independent reading is the last phase, where there is very little teacher support.

The strategies used to guide the learner towards independence are:

- Reading aloud to the learner.
- Shared reading.
- Group, guided and paired reading.
- Independent reading.

In the next paragraphs a few other well-known models for teaching reading are described.

4.5.2.3 The psycholinguistic model

According to Paran (1996:25) the psycholinguistic model, the most popular and powerful view of teaching reading in English, regards reading as a “psycholinguistic guessing game” (Goodman, 1967). The process of reading implies that the reader intentionally does the following:

- Samples the text and makes hypotheses of what comes next.
- Samples the text again in order to test the hypotheses.
- Confirms or rejects the hypotheses.
- Makes new hypotheses etc.
- Anticipation, attention, long- and short term memory play an important part during the process of selecting meaningful cues (Kriegler, 1990:67).

Paran (1996:25) continues by explaining that the above process takes place on cognitive levels, including an optical cycle. This enables the learner to reconstruct the text without having to decode every letter or word. Graphic cues that have been sampled as well as knowledge of the language and its redundancy rules make the reconstruction of the text possible. Kriegler (1990:67) points out that cues can be any meaningful parts of words.

Paran (1996:25) mentions that the theory also claims to be applicable to reading in all languages. The model “has been built through the study of English reading, but it must be applicable to reading in all languages and orthographies” as described by Goodman (1975/1988).

Kriegler (1990:65-67) supports the view that neither a bottom-up nor a top-down model of teaching reading is useful on its own. Top-down and bottom-up views of teaching reading should be integrated. She points out the necessity of knowing what reading is before attempting to support a slow reader effectively, and describes reading in terms of 19 essential elements (Kriegler 1990:64-93) which incorporate bottom-up and top-down views about reading.

4.5.2.4 Interactive reading models

According to interactive models of reading, (Rumelhart 1997), there is a constant interaction between the bottom-up (phonics) and top-down (psycholinguistic) models. (Turner, 1998:9 and Rivas, 1999:13 agree with this statement.)

Rivas (1999:12) describes the interactive models of reading as follows:

It refers not just to the interaction between reader and text, but also to the interaction between the information that the reader obtains by decoding (bottom-up processing), and the information obtained by interpretation (top-down processing).

From these views it is clear that the reading process cannot be complete if either bottom-up or top-down processes are functioning alone. It is also important to realise that reading does not only involve visual knowledge, as Turner (1998:9) points out when sharing his understanding of interactive models of reading:

By reference to schematic knowledge (what s/he knows about specific contexts and the world in general) and systemic knowledge (what s/he knows about his or her own language - vocabulary, structure, syntax) (Widdowson, 1990), a skilled reader will make hypotheses in advance of reading about likely ideas or events in a text and the sort of language through which they will be realised. Whilst reading the actual words on the page, s/he will draw upon the same sources of knowledge to bring meaning to what is being read. Interactive refers to the interaction between the two sources of information, the visual and the non-visual.

The context in which the words are found is highly significant, as the context assists the learner in the process of reconstructing meaning.

The issue of context will be discussed elsewhere in more detail.

Rivas (1999:12) claims that when learners are assisted with reading, language development (i.e. vocabulary, syntax and so on) and reading strategy practice

should be emphasised, owing to the close relationship between the various aspects of reading. Specifically with regard to learners of English as a foreign language a balanced approach is necessary, where the focus will sometimes be on language and sometimes on reading skills (Williams, 1984).

The interactive models of reading seem to be the most promising approach to assist learners with reading as they incorporate all the elements previously considered to be important in the process of learning to read. The teacher who has a wide repertoire of skills will be more successful in assisting struggling readers with different learning styles. At this stage it can be concluded that both bottom-up and top-down models of reading are required to teach reading and effectively assist struggling readers. Townsend (1998:130) agrees with this statement and believes in “balance” as far as the teaching of reading is concerned.

4.5.3 THE RELATION BETWEEN THE DIFFERENT APPROACHES TO TEACH READING AND MAXIMISING HUMAN POTENTIAL IN INCLUSIVE EDUCATION SETTINGS

When the different approaches to the teaching of reading are considered, their relation to maximising human potential and teaching reading in inclusive education settings should be determined. The bottom-up approaches such as the phonics-based approach, for example, do not have much potential to facilitate a process whereby metalearning can take place, the outcome of which is maximising human potential. The phases of planning, executing, monitoring and evaluation are not present as the emphasis is not on reading for meaning in context. A combination of bottom-up and top-down approaches has much more potential to guide learners to maximise their own potential. All the approaches emphasise different strategies required by skilful readers. These different strategies form part of the vast repertoire of the strategies of the reader. The whole language approach, which includes reading to the learner and shared and paired reading, which leads to independent reading, incorporates the phases of continuous planning, executing of reading strategies, monitoring and valuation. These phases should be present when the ultimate aim of reading is pursued, namely the reconstruction of meaning. In an inclusive education setting where readers are reading on different levels, it will also be wiser to use a combination of bottom-up and top-down

approaches to meet the different needs of the learners. A combination of such approaches, like paired reading, is recommended.

The next section focuses on paired reading as an intervention strategy. In the first place paired reading is discussed as an effective method to assist struggling readers. An explanation of variations of paired reading is given thereafter. Reasons are presented why the paired reading approach of Young and Tyre (1983:147-148) has been selected as the most suitable method to assist learners. In the last instance the question of whether paired reading is effective, is addressed.

4.6 PAIRED READING AS AN EFFECTIVE METHOD TO ASSIST STRUGGLING READERS

When struggling readers need to be assisted it is preferable that the strategy to be used should be cheap, easy to implement and materials which are used should be easily available. This strategy should also be in line with the latest theories about the teaching of reading - incorporating both bottom-up and top-down approaches. The strategy should also make room for cooperative learning and meta-learning to take place. The different phases of meta-learning (planning, execution, monitoring and evaluation) should have opportunities for implementation. As the reading process, which is facilitated when learners learn by reading, is a continuous process of planning (which strategy to use), execution (implementation of the strategy), monitoring (if what was read makes sense) and evaluation (if the information that was searched for was found), a strategy should be used that involves reading in context. Therefore, the strategy should not be focused on words out of context. In an inclusive education setting such a technique should be able to address the different needs of the readers on different levels. Paired reading is a strategy that complies with all these requirements.

In the literature a number of variations of paired reading can be found. The next paragraphs will endeavour to explain some of the variations.

4.6.1 VARIATIONS OF PAIRED READING

There are different variations of paired reading, which have developed through the years. Topping (1995:14) refers to Wisner (1988) and Topping (1990) where the following methods are listed:

“Reading-While-Listening”, the “Lap Method”, “Shadow Reading”, “Duet Reading”, “Assisted Reading”, “Prime-O-Tec”, “Talking Books” and the “Neurological Impress Method”.

(It should be realised that even though the term “paired” reading is used it can involve more than a pair of readers. For the sake of uniformity the concept “paired reading” is used in this thesis as it is terminology consistently used in the literature.)

4.6.1.1 Paired reading, of Young and Tyre (1983)

It is emphasised that the child who has experienced failure in reading for years should never feel anxious or be subjected to failure during assistance. The following steps are followed:

- The tutor firstly reads the passage and discusses it with the tutee. Illustration, relevant concepts and the tutee’s own experiences form part of the discussion.
- The tutor reads the passage in a natural way and with feeling, and points with his/her finger at the words while the tutee looks and listens. Leaf (1999:1) suggests that a finger or pencil can be used to move from left to right under each line.
- The tutor and tutee together read the passage out loud.
- The passage is read for the second time but the adult keeps quiet now and then, which gives the tutee the opportunity to read words and sentences alone. Parts of the passage are selected in such a way that it is ensured that the tutee will achieve success.

- Use the books that are read to play, for example, “search for a word that starts with ..., or ends with ...” to enhance selective attention to patterns of writing.
- The last step is where the tutee reads alone while the tutor helps him/her with parts where he/she hesitates.
- The tutee should continuously be encouraged and praised. He/she receives recognition for words or sentences which were read correctly, for participating, progress and for paying attention. Confrontation should be avoided at all costs.
- Enjoyment during the whole process is important. Assistance should be given before the tutee becomes anxious. A little bit, on a regular basis is more desirable than a lot once in a while.

The fact the tutee receives praise for an activity previously associated with failure can cause a dramatic change in the child’s perception of reading (Kriegler, 1990:144-145).

Kriegler (1990:145-148) points out that Gearheart et al. (1986) have suggested that variations of multi-sensory techniques can successfully be used during the phase of reading together. These techniques have been documented in Kriegler (1990:145-148) and are discussed below.

4.6.1.2 Enhancing awareness of phonemes (Bryant and Bradley, 1985)

It is suggested that an awareness of phonemes can be enhanced during the phase of reading together as a multi-sensory technique, by playing with plastic or cardboard letters. Words can be built and changed by adding, shifting or taking away letters, for example:

- Start with a word that the tutee has chosen, for example, “hat”.
- Replace the last letter to make other words, for example, “has, ham”.
- Replace the first letter to make other words, for example, “rat, cat, mat”.
- Change the middle letter, for example, “hit, hot, hut”.
- Scramble the letters to make new words.

- Play with letter combinations, for example, “sw”: “swing, swim, swallow”. (Kriegler, 1990:147)

4.6.1.3 Simultaneous oral spelling as a mutli-sensory technique (Bryant and Bradley, 1985)

This technique can be used where reading and spelling go hand in hand. The following steps are part of the process:

- The tutee selects a word.
- The tutor writes the word or forms it with plastic letters.
- The tutee says the word.
- The tutee writes the word and says the letter names while writing each letter.
- The tutee says the word again and verifies whether it has been spelled correctly by comparing his attempt with the example of the tutor.
- The steps are repeated.
- The tutee practises the word for a few days until he can write the word without looking at the example.
- Cardboard or plastic letters can be used to form similar words and to assure that has been learned will be generalised (Kriegler, 1990:147-148).

4.6.1.4 The Neurological-Impress method (Gearheart, 1986)

This method is a variant of reading together. Echo reading is aimed at fluent reading, and is recommended for the child who has already had a lot of help in reading but still does not read fluently. The method has the following steps:

- The tutee helps with the selection of reading material which he/she finds interesting and easy.
- The tutor and tutee sit together with the book in front of them. The method is explained to the tutee.
- The tutor and the tutee read together. The tutor reads a little louder and quicker than the tutee.

- The same passage is read again until a flowing rhythm and tempo are established. Repeats become fewer and fewer as the procedure continues.
- The tutor moves a finger under the lines as the words are being read. This task is later taken over by the tutee.
- Sometimes the tutor reads slower than the tutee. Where the tutee hesitates, the tutor reads faster and louder. The tutee gets a turn to be the “leader.”

As much material as possible should be covered. The emphasis is on fluent reading rather than on correctness. The value of the method lies in the fact that it is a model which promotes fluent reading, while many opportunities for practice are supplied (Kriegler, 1990:148-149).

4.6.1.5 Repeated Choral Reading (a combination of “Repeated Readings” of Samuels and “Assisted Reading” of Hoskisson in Gearheart et al., 1986)

- The tutee selects a book out of which the tutor selects a short passage (15 to 20 words). The tutor points at the words as they are read and the tutee looks and listens.
- The passage is read together, over and over, while the tutor points at the words until the tutee comfortably reads alone.
- The tutee reads the passage alone. The tutor gives assistance if the tutee gets stuck and asks the tutee to think of a word that would fit in the context. Difficult words are written down.
- The passage is discussed and is then linked to the tutee’s prior knowledge.
- The steps are repeated with the next passage in the book until the book has been read up to the end.
- Those words which the tutee still finds difficult are written on cards and their meanings are explained. The words are then searched for in the text again. These words can also be learnt according to cloze-technique, where the words that have been left out are filled in (Kriegler, 1990:149-150).

Kriegler (1990:151) points at the importance of the fact that any technique used should still focus on the purpose of reading which is the reconstruction of meaning. Techniques are selected and implemented in accordance with the

different needs of individual learners. The teacher who assists with reading will have to make sure that the tutee understands the text. The focus of reading together is to read a lot and across a broad spectrum. The most effective way in which reading achievement can be improved is exercise. Through exercise the child's sight vocabulary improves and he/she can pay more attention to the meaning of what is being read.

The following approaches also share some of the features of paired reading:

4.6.1.6 The Pause, Prompt and Praise procedure (Mcnaughton, Glynn and Robinson, 1985)

Merrett (1998:60-63) discusses a number of important aspects of the approach:

- The approach stresses that children learn to read by reading and not by learning a vast amount of separate words. These procedures are aimed at helping learners who have begun to read but who are not making any progress, or only slow progress.
- Tutoring needs to take place regularly on a daily basis. The rule is little and often.
- In peer tutoring the tutee as well as the tutor improve their reading skills.
- Making mistakes and developing more efficient reading strategies, such as using contextual cues, relating to meaning and syntax, as well as graphical cues, relating to the visual pattern of words are all part of the process of learning to read.
- The following three aspects are considered important:
 - *The reading level*
The reading material should be at the appropriate level. For the material to be at the appropriate level to allow reading pleasure, a learner should make fewer than four mistakes when reading a passage of fifty words.
 - *Monitoring progress*
The monitoring of the tutee's progress is important and any particular difficulties that the tutee has should be recorded. These

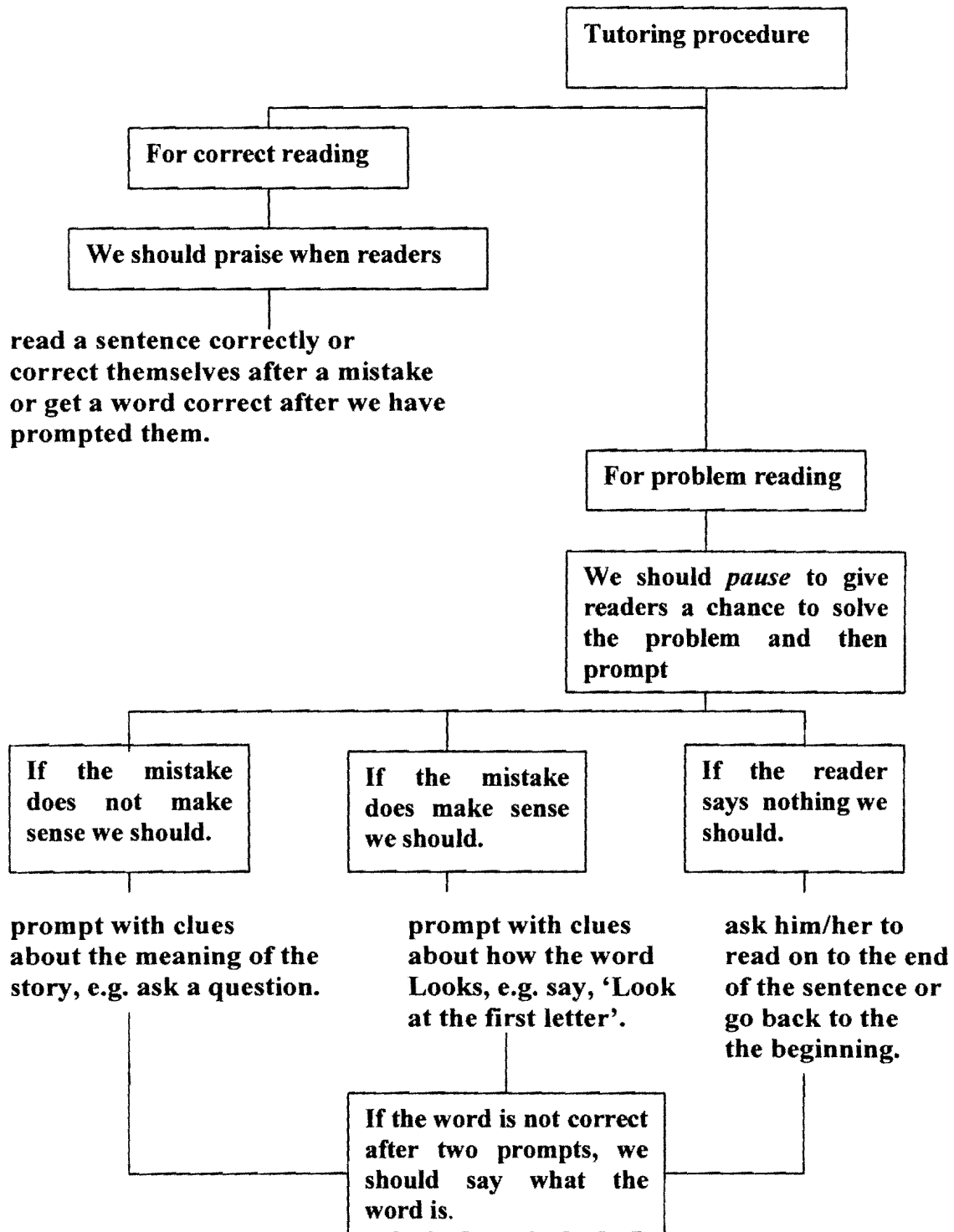
difficulties should be attended to and the specific strategies should be improved.

- *Giving feedback*

Appropriate feedback should be provided by tutors, stressing the fact that making mistakes should be seen in a positive way as errors are part of the process of learning.

The procedures for the Pause, Prompt and Praise approach (Merrett, 1994) are summarised in the following diagram (Merrett, 1998:6):

FIGURE 4.2 The Pause, Prompt and Praise procedures



Merrett (1998:61) recommends that the teacher and the tutee should sit side by side in a comfortable position, where both can see the text with ease. Before starting to read they should together look through the book. This will enable the tutor to identify any words which are especially long and difficult. Unusual or unfamiliar situations can be anticipated. If the tutor has a chance to see the book beforehand, this will be easier. The title and pictures can provide a lot of information about the content and they can be discussed together. A sheet of paper with the tutoring procedures written down can assist the tutor who has not had a lot of practice in this procedure.

Merrett (1998:62) suggests that a list of praise statements can be used if the tutor has run out of words. This idea is supported by Topping (1995:134-141) who advocates the idea of using a dictionary of praise containing lists of words related to praise.

4.6.1.7 The Reading Renaissance (TWI) procedure (Charp, 1998:41)

The TWI procedure refers to three stages:

- Reading **to** the learner (T);
- Reading **with** the learner (W) and
- Reading **independently** (I).

The Reading Renaissance programme is a comprehensive approach for improving comprehension through intensive reading practice. A variety of tools and techniques help teachers to motivate learners to read and monitor their own progress. Intervention takes place ensuring each learner's reading success. What is so interesting about this programme, is that it was devised to include assisting learners with Limited English Proficiency.

The principal of a school where it was used, Hector Giron, made the following significant comments about the programme:

The Spanish/English version of Accelerated Reader is helping our students - whose native language is Spanish - to become more fluent in English ... We have found that reading skills are transferable from language to language, and that improving reading ability in the native language means rapid growth of reading ability in a second language. (Charp, 1998:41).

Reading to, and with learners played a prominent role in the classroom but as they were progressing they were granted more independent reading time (Charp, 1998:41).

The above methods which reflect different elements of paired reading, are only a few of a multiplicity of reading methods or programmes, but what is important is that these methods can successfully be incorporated in a paradigm which includes both bottom-up and top-down processes of reading. It is significant that there are variations among paired reading approaches as learners and situations differ. It is, however, essential to motivate why the approach of Young and Tyre (1983) was selected for this project.

4.6.2 REASONS FOR SELECTING THE PAIRED READING APPROACH OF YOUNG AND TYRE (1983:147-148)

The paired reading approach that was thought to be the most successful to assist readers with Limited English Proficiency was the paired reading procedure of Young and Tyre (1983:147-148). Its selection was motivated by the following:

- The first phase where the tutor reads to the tutee (pre-reading) is highly significant. This phase is not present in all paired reading procedures, but as Topping (1995:14) points out:

Still greater improvements were found when the tutee commenced reading back at the start of the text, having had a 'preview' with adult modelling.

The “preview” which Topping (1995:14) refers to has many advantages:

- In the first place the tutees have an opportunity to hear how the words are pronounced in English, and they can later imitate the correct pronunciation. According to Wahba (1998:32) it can be very difficult for non-native speakers of English to learn the correct pronunciation. They need to be aware that:

English words have a stress pattern, that words can be pronounced in slightly different ways, and that the pitch of the voice can be used to convey meaning ...

The phase where the tutor reads to the tutee is an excellent opportunity to practise the correct pronunciation. It is however of the utmost importance that the pronunciation of the tutor should be free of mistakes because it will be imitated by the tutee.

- The second reason why a “preview” is so important can be traced back to the problems of the tutee who has experienced a lot of failure in reading. The tutee who first follows the part that is to be read, while the tutor reads it to him, also hears what it should sound like. He is immediately more relaxed when the tutor first models what is expected from him and anxiety about failing again is minimised. A tutor with a calm, relaxed attitude will have a far greater influence on the success of the reader, as too much stress can “paralyse” the learner.
 - The “preview” can also be an opportunity to motivate the tutee to read the rest of the passage or story. The tutor can convey the message that reading is interesting and enjoyable, while modelling it.
- The second reason why the paired reading procedure of Young and Tyre (1983:147-148) was chosen, is the fact that it does not interfere with the

way in which reading is taught in schools. In this connection Topping (1995:3) points out that their methods of paired reading *have been found to be entirely compatible with virtually every kind of professional teaching of literacy skills*. The most noticeable difference between the methods of Young and Tyre on the one hand and of Topping on the other hand, is that the phase where the tutor reads to the learner does not feature in Topping's methods. Therefore, it can be concluded that the procedure of Young and Tyre is not in opposition to the reading methods taught in schools.

- The paired reading procedure of Young and Tyre (1983) complements the communicative approach to teaching English as a second language, which is currently widely being used. The principles that the four language skills - listening, speaking, reading and writing - should be taught in an integrated manner and that the learner learns a second language by communicating, can be accommodated successfully within paired reading.
- Further motivating factors for the choice of paired reading of Young and Tyre (1983) arise from the advantages of paired reading in general (Topping, 1995:13):
 - Learners are more motivated to read when they can read material in which they are interested. Paired reading also provides enough support to read what has been chosen.
 - Learners have more control over the reading process. Magazines provide a variety of interesting material. They can choose where and what they want to read and after 10 to 15 minutes they can stop reading if they want to do.
 - The flexibility of paired reading is important. Learners can decide how much support they need. This decision will be influenced by the current level of interest, mood, degree of tiredness, amount of confidence, the difficulty of books, and so on.
 - The praise that the learner receives is positive and encouraging.

- The focus of paired reading on understanding is significant as the purpose of reading is to reconstruct meaning. The mechanical reading of words without understanding does not serve much of a purpose.
- Paired reading provides continuity - stopping to "break up" difficult words is kept to a minimum. Interruptions like these often cause learners to have forgotten the beginning of the sentence by the time they eventually reach the end. The use of contextual information, such as the meaning of surrounding words helps learners to make sensible guesses.
- Paired reading implies that the learners will get more attention on a one-to-one basis. Paying more attention to learners has been found to improve their reading.
- Paired reading ensures that learners get more reading practice. This implies that learners are exposed to more words, sentences, paragraphs and books. There is no doubt that more practice in reading leads to better reading, as it is a learned skill.

When having considered all the advantages of paired reading, the question which needs to be answered at this stage is: To what extent is paired reading successful? This aspect will be discussed in the next section.

4.6.3 THE EFFECTIVENESS OF PAIRED READING

A researcher in the United Kingdom, Brooks (1999:27-31) describes a project where he and other researchers wanted to determine which strategies worked best to improve the reading of slow readers. Strategies which work for slow readers, especially those with special educational needs, had to be found. A project by the National Foundation for Educational Research (NFER) had to come up with answers about the most effective strategies, as at that stage many children in the UK were struggling to read.

Brooks, Flanagan, Henkhuijzen and Hutchinson (1998) gathered information from local education authorities and from institutions for teacher education. They were looking for projects with different approaches of enhancing reading skills

among slow readers. The projects had been qualitatively evaluated in the UK in terms of two important measures, ratio gain and effect size:

- Ratio gain:
which is the average gain in reading age in months made by a group of children, divided by the number of months over which the gain was made and
- Effect size :
which is the average gain made by an experimental group less the average gain made by their control group, divided by the standard deviation of the control group's pretest scores. (Brooks, 1999:27)

Twenty studies were identified which met their criteria. As seven of the studies covered more than one approach, it was possible to make quantitative comparisons of thirty approaches in total. The best known of these was Reading Recovery, but the following approaches were also analysed:

- The 1984 version of DISTAR .
- An early (1994) version of THRASS.
- The Basic Skills Agency's Family Literacy Demonstration Programmes.
- The original Parental Involvement Project of Haringey.
- The Paired Reading approach in the version researched in the Kirklees district.
- The major conclusions of this project are listed in Topping (1995:45-49).
- Two Integrated Learning Systems initiatives (the Docklands Learning Acceleration Project) and the project funded by the National Council for Educational Technology (NCET), now the British Educational Communications Technology Association (BECTA)), plus a smaller computer-assisted project in Jersey. One of the seven schools in the NCET study was a special school.
- The Columbia/York Reading with Phonology Project

- The Buckinghamshire Phonological Awareness Training Scheme, plus several phonological approaches within larger projects
- Work on self-esteem and reading carried out in Somerset between 1970 and 1984
- Several other local authority initiatives (from Bradford, Dyfed, Leeds, Lewisham and Shropshire)
- An experimental study using inference training to improve comprehension
- The latest innovation for struggling readers in Year 3, Catch Up
- Just one study in which a school developed and researched its own approach; the school was St Lawrence School, Towcester, Northants
- ‘No treatment’ (normal schooling) control groups in about half the studies, containing about 1000 children

The largest study was the Kirklees Paired Reading study with 2372 children in experimental groups and 446 controls.

4.6.3.1 What works for slow readers?

After having analysed the result of the different approaches to assist slow readers, Brooks (1999:30-31) documented a number of findings. The outcomes of the different projects which were researched will not be discussed individually, as the general findings of Brooks (1999:30-31) are comprehensive enough and provide specific answers concerning what types of approaches work for slow readers and indicate approaches that should be avoided.

Overall, Brooks (1999:30-31) concluded that:

- Early intervention is very important as the process of normal schooling (no treatment) does not enable slow readers to catch up.
- Most approaches which strongly emphasised phonological aspects of reading made little impact. The fact that these approaches did not make much of a difference, is related to the lack of catering for comprehension which is the aim of reading. Brooks (1999:30) claims that phonological skills should be handled within a broad approach.
- If children’s comprehension is directly addressed it can be improved.

- Self-esteem and reading have to be worked on together. When only one aspect is concentrated on, by means of mainly phonological approaches it will not be very effective and, on the other hand, only working on self-esteem will not improve reading either.
- Approaches where computers are used should be specifically targeted to avoid a situation where the learner sits in front of the computer and has to find his own way through the computer packages.
- Partnership approaches such as paired reading can be very effective where reading partners are available and can be trained. It is required that partners be better readers than their tutees. Partners can be many different persons, such as children of the same age, or older ones, their parents or adult volunteers or their regular teachers. It is important that the partners have a clear model and approach which they will follow. The approach of paired reading was found to give structured guidance and to be effective.

Topping (1995:45-52) also points out that paired reading is indeed effective. Regarding the effectiveness of paired reading in a South African context Holmes (1993:63) used paired reading as an intervention strategy for black English second language learners and found a significant improvement in comprehension which prompted her to state that *there is ample evidence to justify Paired Reading as a form of intervention.*

At this stage it should be clear that paired reading as a strategy for improving reading makes provision for the inclusion of both bottom-up and top-down approaches towards the improvement of reading. It can however also be noted from the findings of the above research that bottom-up approaches, such as phonics approaches on their own are not very effective. The context is an important aspect of reading which cannot be ignored. Top-down approaches where the reader uses the context as an important source of information in the whole reading process should also be included in a strategy to improve reading. Paired reading has been found to meet these criteria and to be very effective.

4.7 CONCLUSION

In this chapter a contribution was made to educational research by generating theory from current research in the field of reading. In order to meet this aim, the sub-research questions that were stated at the beginning of the chapter were all addressed in much detail. The paragraphs below provide a summary of how the questions were addressed within the chapter.

The reader was introduced to educational theory about teaching/learning in general that can be applied when teaching reading in English. In this regard the importance of teaching in an intelligence-friendly classroom was highlighted and the significance of accommodating the learning styles and strategies of learners was pointed out. Action research was proposed as a means of enabling teachers to meet the diverse needs of learners. Assessment of reading in an inclusive classroom was discussed thereafter. Theory about the teaching of English as a second language was discussed in the section that followed. It was indicated that the communicative approach to the teaching of English as a second language is a very valuable approach, especially as it believes that the four language skills (listening, speaking, reading and writing) should not be taught in an isolated manner, but should be integrated. It was also shown that it is a very promising approach when it comes to the teaching of literacy

The concept of reading was clarified in terms of 19 essential elements. Various strategies that readers need to acquire were described under the 19 elements. An introduction to different approaches to teach reading was given thereafter. Approaches to the teaching of reading were grouped under bottom-up approaches, such as the phonics-based approach and look-and-say approach, and top-down approaches, where the context of the text is important, as opposed to the teaching of individual words. The whole language approach, eclectic approach, the psycholinguistic model and interactive reading models were identified under top-down approaches.

As far as the relation between the different approaches to teach reading and maximising human potential in inclusive settings is concerned, it was suggested that a combination of top-down and bottom-up approaches be used to cater for the needs of readers who read on different levels. When paired reading, for example makes provision for the phases of planning, executing, monitoring and evaluation, which are present during metalearning, the process of maximising human potential can take place.

A discussion of paired reading as an effective method to assist struggling readers followed. The reader was also briefed about different variations of paired reading. The chapter ended with a discussion of the effectiveness of paired reading.

A brief reflection on the last two chapters leads to the realisation of two very important points. Firstly, the reader has gained an understanding of how human potential can be maximised and in the second place, it has become clear that paired reading is an effective way of assisting struggling readers. The question that inevitably comes to mind at this stage, is how paired reading can be used to maximise human potential. This question is answered in the next chapter where a cooperative paired reading programme is presented.