CHAPTER V

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION
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5.1 CONTEXT, NEED AND IMPORTANCE OF THE STUDY
5.2 OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY
5.3 HYPOTHESES FOR VERIFICATION
5.4 METHODOLOGY
5.5 DESIGN AND PROCEDURE
5.6 SAMPLE FOR THE STUDY
5.7 TOOLS USED FOR THE STUDY
5.8 TECHNIQUES EMPLOYED FOR ANALYSIS OF THE DATA
5.9 MAJOR FINDINGS OF THE STUDY
5.10 EDUCATIONAL IMPLICATIONS
5.11 SUGGESTIONS FOR FURTHER RESEARCH
5.1 CONTEXT, NEED AND IMPORTANCE OF THE STUDY

Language is a code for conveying the thoughts and feelings of one individual to another which has been accepted and is mutually understood by both and may be oral grouping of words into statements- written or still may be gesticulated through body movement, when its oral it may be speaking involving listening which later on leads to writing, an effort to decode this written material is reading. Thus reading is an important skill behind language acquisition and provides for a language experience, which acts like the threshold for the knowledge amassment the ultimate goal of reading.

Reading is a decoding process. It is a very complex process involving many physical, intellectual and often emotional reactions. Moreover, it entails the ability to recognize graphic symbols and their corresponding sounds. It is impossible to learn to read without this ability, which extends to complex groups of sounds called words. In other words, there are three important components in the reading skill: these are the recognition of the graphic marks, the correlation of these with formal linguistic elements, and the correlation of these with meaning. Reading becomes meaningful only if we get the meaning associated with the graphic symbols though our ability to recognize the semantic content of the graphic symbols and the sounds they represent. This act of reading is of two kinds: the skill of reading aloud and silent reading which gives way to intensive reading from extensive reading. The advancing world is full of knowledge explosion and it should be continuously updated, it is for this;
one needs the reading skill – ‘The Arch of knowledge’. This can be qualitatively achieved through intensive reading. Understanding this utility of ‘Reading’, the teacher should make it pleasurable by teaching reading contextually - words and phrases, and testing their comprehension later, selection of suitable reading material, exposure to the library activities, teaching them to enjoy reading through play way methods are very much necessary for an effective reading program.

Reading, which requires interpretation of what is read, occurs only when the reader understands what he is reading. ‘Kapelski’ (1991) notes that reading is the reconstruction of the event behind the symbols and Klausmeier (1974) points out that reading should bear the same relationship to experiences or events that a map bears to the territory which it is supposed to represent. The very basis of decoding symbols based on their experiential perception leads to the thinking process, which provides a foundation for their Learning Readiness, leading onto Reading Readiness.

‘Learning takes place more efficiently when a person is ready to learn. Readiness comes about through the combination of at least three processes. They are 1) Growth 2) Prior experience 3) Desire to learn. This ‘desire to learn’ or ‘learning readiness’, as defined by Lefrancois (2000) is being ‘ready for a specific type of learning’ and depends on the on physical maturation, development of intellectual skills, acquisition of important background information and perhaps motivation. Further, Garland (1978) is of the opinion that this same ‘learning readiness’ paves way to ‘reading readiness’ as the child fine tunes the skill of ‘learning to read’. Hence, this aspect of learning readiness, when identified as the basis of acquiring reading skill, is labelled as ‘reading readiness’.

Reading readiness is a fusion of a number of different strands of cognitive development: visual perception of letter forms, auditory
discrimination of phonemes, language development, integration of sensory systems, and adequate mental ability. In the area of affective development, the most important characteristics probably are a desire on the part of the child to read and a curiosity about what the words on a page say. Tests of reading readiness usually do not measure affective factors, since they are very intangible. A factor in readiness to read that is difficult to quantify is persistence at a task. Frequently the obverse of this trait, labelled short attention span, is named as a handicap to learning to read, but the presence of persistence is given scant positive consideration. Readiness assessment should provide the teacher with some guidelines about each of the factors in development that are critical in reading. To inculcate reading readiness one has to use effective instructional methods as opined by Ausubel (1963) which would further lead towards appropriate—functional adequacy and develop reading performance.

The present pre-school scenario also indicates that the children of 3+ are admitted to L.K.G and are introduced to reading alphabets/numbers and two or three lettered words. But it is pathetic to note that the teachers who introduce the children to reading do not emphasise on the components of reading or take pains to find out whether the child is ready to read. Further, the present urban preschool scenario also presents a vivid picture of a child entering a preschool as early as one+ (chain of international preschools like - Eurokids, Kangroo kids, Headstart etc) and acquiring reading ability through effective reading programs and strategies. The west has also gone ahead with its preschool reading programs for children in the age group of 2+ itself (Dodge, 2002; Bicket, 2002; Leipzig, 2001) as indicated by some of the websites (www.rgtr.com, readingrockets.com, ncte.com and homeschooling). The children who are devoid of these opportunities show lesser interest in reading.
This clearly indicates that lack of reading readiness is basically a product of lack of training (Ausubel, 1963) and if due cognisance is not given to this fact, the language development, especially the reading performance of the pupils will suffer the most and can act as major detriment list for further language acquisition in particular and language and knowledge acquisition in general. Further, it was found out that the strategies to enhance reading readiness are not a much researched area (Doll, 1953; Schonnell, 1961; Downing, 1963; Lynn, 1992) and none has been devised especially for specific Indian conditions, for the age group of 3+, which is the most crucial school entrant period of today's urban scenario with the acceleration of child development (in cognitive, affective and psycho-motor areas) and, hence a need for the pragmatic analysis of the lacuna in this field arose and also enrichment/developmental programs were felt very much necessary.

The researcher felt the need to study the children of 3+ on their reading performance on two counts, they being:

1. Evolutionary acceleration of cognitive, affective and motor skills (children are showing a trend to acquire all the skills earlier than the expected age).

2. Invasion of communication and technology leading towards an enriched knowledge explosion and acquisition environment (access to T.V, educational toys, books catering to preschoolers, compact disks with interactive programs and reading packages.)

Though the present study deals with the sample of the children of 3+, the age controversy is adequately analyzed and the need to find out whether one could find reading readiness in children as early as the 3+ group is substantiated.
Further, research shows that early intervention to identify the weaknesses/neglected components are necessary; otherwise it might lead to learning disabilities like reading dyslexia or specific reading disability (Stanovich, 1992; Lefrancois, 2000), and the website www.readingrockets, also provide rich information regarding how 2 year olds also learn to read leaving alone 3 year olds, for whom there are different reading programs. Hence, it is strongly felt that 'the underdeveloped components of RR which are neglected while teaching children to read (not the maturationally weak but neglected due to lack of appropriate learning activities) should be taken care of, by providing adequate enriching strategies.'

It is strange, but true that certain streams of schooling (I.C.S.E/I.G.C.S.E) in a country whose mother tongue is not English, introduces English as first language. Since the children are from urban, elite & educated families, where the child has a multi language exposure, of which English plays a major role, makes the English language acquisition easier. Hence, the researcher felt that instead of discussing the transition of English from first language to second language, to treat it as first language itself as there was an environment for the children to acquire English. Hence, the present study was also chosen to test the reading readiness for English language which is supposedly a foreign language (international language and the language used as mother tongue in most of the urban elite homes) accepted and taught as the first language / mother tongue in most of the English medium schools in the urban areas.

The present day school scenario also presents a lacuna in teaching reading as one of the important skills required for the whole language development. In the allotted periods, the English teacher is more worried about finishing the syllabus than inculcating the language skills. Further, most of the teachers are more worried about the comprehension than the achievement of the skills or testing of the skills, let alone devising
strategies to provide an enriching reading program. Especially, reading is shown the corner and most of the teachers are ill equipped about the pre-requisites of the reading skill, let alone reading readiness. There is also a dearth of researches in this specific area of developing appropriate strategies and applications in the area of reading readiness, to support the practitioner.

**Title of the Study:** The study is entitled:

'STRATEGIES TO DEVELOP READING READINESS IN CHILDREN OF 3+ AND ITS EFFECT ON THEIR READING PERFORMANCE (ENGLISH)'

**5.2 OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY**

The study, which is being both qualitative and quantitative in nature, is mainly aimed at identifying the underdeveloped components of reading readiness among children of 3+, designing suitable strategies to develop the identified components of reading readiness and trying out the same to study its effectiveness. It also intends to analyze qualitatively the responses of the children of 3+ towards the introduced strategies. The specific objectives of the study are given below:

1) To identify and select components of reading readiness (RR) and Reading performance (RP).

2) To develop a valid and reliable battery of test on RR and RP for the age group of 3+.

3) To study the relationship between RR (overall) and its different components.

4) To identify the underdeveloped components of RR in children of 3+.

5) To design strategies to develop the underdeveloped components of RR and RR (overall), and RP among children of 3+.
6) To study the effectiveness of the designed to develop the identified components of RR and RR (overall) and RP among children of 3+.

7) To study the relationship between RR and RP (overall and component wise) in children of 3+.

8) To study the relationship between a) RR and (parent) mother child interaction (MCI) b) RP and (parent) mother child interaction.

9) To study the relationship between a) RR and peer group interaction (PGI) b) RP and peer group interaction.

10) To qualitatively analyze the management/principal and the practicing teacher’s outlook on RR and RP and the responses of the children of 3+ towards the introduced strategies.

5.3 **HYPOTHESES FOR VERIFICATION**

1. There is significant positive relationship between overall Reading Readiness (RR) and its components.

2. The designed strategies are significantly effective in developing the identified components of RR in particular and overall RR among children of 3+.

3. The children of EG will perform better than those of CG on RP.

4. There will be significant positive relationship between RR and RP (overall and component wise).

5. There is significant relationship between (a) Reading Readiness and Mother child interaction (b) Reading Performance and Mother child interaction.

6. There is significant relationship between (a) Reading Readiness and Peer Interaction (b) Reading Performance and Peer Interaction.
**Research Questions:**

Regarding Objective 10 the following research questions are raised;

1) Are the school managements/principals and practicing teachers aware of the RR concept and programs?

2) Do the schools provide for strategies to develop RR before introducing reading to the child?

3) What are the responses of the children towards the introduced strategies?

4) What are the most preferred strategies?

**Delimitations of the Study**

1) This being an experimental study is restricted to urban English medium schools wherein children are exposed to spoken English at home and play home.

2) The present study examines only the psychological, environmental and personal factors, and excludes the emotional and physiological factors of RR.

3) The component of ‘speed’ in reading is not considered in the study, as it is too early to test the speed of reading among the children of 3+.

4) The variation in month wise chronological age of children were not considered in the study as the variation of age was of only 3 months (children’s admission age ranged between 3 years 6 months to 3 years 9 months) and its influence on RR might not be considerable.

**5.4 METHODOLOGY**

The present study, aiming at identification and selection of components of RR, finding its relationship with RP, developing enrichment strategy to enhance neglected components. of RR and studying its
effectiveness is analytical, correlational and experimental in nature. It also qualitatively looks at responses of the children towards their preferred strategies and reading scenario in the sample schools through participatory observation and transacting with the management/principal and practising teachers. This is carried out in the following four phases:

1) Identification and selection of components of RR and RP.

2) Preparation of the tools for the study
   (i) Tools prepared by the Investigator
   (ii) Tools prepared by others

3) Identification of the underdeveloped components of RR in children and designing of strategies to develop the identified components.

4) Study of the effectiveness of the designed strategies designed and the relationship between RR and RP as well as other background variables.

5) Qualitative analysis of the transaction with the management/principal and practising teachers and the response of children towards strategies.

After reviewing the literature, primers and pre-primers the components of RR and RP were identified and both the test batteries were constructed. Later the RR test battery was administered after equating the children based on CPM. The underdeveloped components were identified and suitable strategies were designed to develop them. Later again the post test was administered to see the effect of the provided strategies.

Mother Child Interaction Scale was administered and Socio Metric Matrix was plotted to see the Peer Interaction.
5.5 DESIGN AND PROCEDURE

Pre test- Post test with two groups (CG & EG) design was adopted in the present study and the procedure followed to study the effectiveness of the designed strategies to develop the identified components of RR is schematically represented below:

Experimental design of the study

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sample Groups</th>
<th>Pre-test</th>
<th>Treatment</th>
<th>Post-test</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Control Group</td>
<td>Test for identification of underdeveloped components of RR</td>
<td>No Treatment</td>
<td>Administration of RR Test Battery</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Experimental Group</td>
<td>Test for identification of underdeveloped components of RR</td>
<td>Use of designed strategies for development of identified components of RR</td>
<td>Administration of RR Test Battery to see the effect of introduced strategies</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Schematic representation of the Experimental design and procedure

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sl. No.</th>
<th>Steps Followed</th>
<th>CG</th>
<th>EG</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.</td>
<td>Equate the children on their intelligence</td>
<td>Administration of CPM</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.</td>
<td>Pre-test</td>
<td>Administration of RRTB for identification of underdeveloped components of RR</td>
<td>Implement designed Strategies to develop RR (2 Hrs everyday for six months)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.</td>
<td>Treatment to Develop RR</td>
<td>No Treatment</td>
<td>Implement designed Strategies to develop RR (2 Hrs everyday for six months)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.</td>
<td>Post -Test</td>
<td>Administration of RRTB</td>
<td>Exposed to regular reading program in their respective schools after first term as usual.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.</td>
<td>Reading Program</td>
<td>Exposed to regular reading program in their respective schools after first term as usual.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
5.6 SAMPLE FOR THE STUDY

Sample for the present study was drawn at two stages –

1) Selection of schools
2) Selection of children

1) Selection of School: As the study was an experimental one, to facilitate smooth experimentation, the schools were selected from the limited geographical area is Bangalore city. Only three English medium elementary schools with L.K.G classes were randomly selected, where English was taught as I language and the children were exposed to the English Environment at home as well as at school.

2) Selection of children: As mental ability is a prerequisite for RR, it was attempted here to equate the children (essential condition for an experimental design) on their intelligence in both the groups (EG & CG) of the study. For this purpose, the non-verbal intelligence test for children-coloured Progressive matrices (C.P.M) was administered to all the children in L..K.G. class in all the three selected schools and they were classified into three categories, i.e. high, average and low based on the criteria given below, though the percentiles were computed, 1\textsuperscript{st} and 5\textsuperscript{th} category were clubbed with 2\textsuperscript{nd} and 4\textsuperscript{th} percentile respectively:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Criteria for classification</th>
<th>Intellectual Level</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Children falling at P75 and above</td>
<td>High</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Children between P 25 and P75</td>
<td>Moderate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Children at P25 and below</td>
<td>Low</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Then totally 36 children with 12 children in each category — high average and low were selected by systematic random sampling (taking every 3\textsuperscript{rd} name from the attendance) from each of the three selected schools. These 12 children in each category—high, average, low—were assigned randomly to two groups, i.e control group (CG) and Experimental group (EG), thus constituting 18 children in CG and 18 in EG from each school. Thus, totally 108 children with 54 in CG and 54 in EG, from all the three schools constituted the effective sample of the study as per the details given in table below.

### Sample of the study

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>School</th>
<th>CG</th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th>Total</th>
<th>EG</th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th>Total</th>
<th>H</th>
<th>M</th>
<th>L</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>36</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>36</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>36</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TOTAL</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>54</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>54</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>108</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### 5.7 TOOLS USED FOR THE STUDY

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>Tool</th>
<th>Remarks</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1) Reading Readiness</td>
<td>Reading Readiness test battery</td>
<td>Constructed by the Investigator</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2) Reading performance</td>
<td>Reading Performance test battery</td>
<td>Constructed by the investigator</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3) Peer Interaction</td>
<td>Socio metric matrix</td>
<td>Prepared by the Investigator (Kerlinger, 1985 Foundations of Behavioural Research)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4) Intelligence</td>
<td>Coloured progressive matrix</td>
<td>Raven (1965)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5) Mother child interaction</td>
<td>Parent child interaction scale</td>
<td>NCERT (1974)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6) Necessary data for background variables</td>
<td>Data sheet</td>
<td>Prepared by the Investigator</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
5.7.1 Identification of the Underdeveloped Components of RR in Children and to Design Remedial Strategies to Develop the identified Components.

The final RRTB was administered on a representative sample of 108 children of 3+ and their response sheets were scored on the basis of the scoring key. The scores on each component of RR and overall RR for each child was found out, mean values were calculated for each component and overall RR. Individual scores of all those in the sample was computed on each component and the children with score lower-than the mean were categorised as underdeveloped in that particular component. With this it was noticed that the children were found to have five underdeveloped components out of 16. Only these five components (VSM, VC, ASM, VMC and SC) were considered for the study. Strategies were designed to develop these components basing on the assumption, variety would induce interest and flexibility would reinforce. These activities to develop RR were continuously monitored throughout the programme. Many pre-primers and primers were analysed by the investigator to get adequate, relevant, suitable content words and strategies. After discussing the listed strategies with the guide, subject experts, experienced teachers and teacher educators, the most relevant ones were retained while keeping the availability and cost of the materials in mind. These were tried out on 4 to 5 children of 3+ age group and only the relevant ones were retained for the present study.
5.8 TECHNIQUES EMPLOYED FOR ANALYSIS OF THE DATA

Details of the statistical techniques used in the study

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Hypothesis testing</th>
<th>Statistical technique</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1) There is a significant +ve relationship between overall RR and its components.</td>
<td>Pearson 'r'</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2) Developed strategies will significantly enhance the components of RR that has not yet developed in particular and RR in general, among children of 3+.</td>
<td>Repeated measure ANOVA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3) The children of EG will perform better then those of CG on RR</td>
<td>'t' test</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4) There'll be significant relationship between RR and RP, (overall and component wise) (EG and CG are taken separately)</td>
<td>i) Pearson 'r'</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>ii) Multiple regression</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5) There is significant relationship between RR and Mother – child Interaction RP and Mother- Child interaction</td>
<td>One way ANOVA : DMRT computed when ‘F’ is found significant</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6) There is significant relationship between</td>
<td>Chi- Square (X2)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>a) RR and Peer Interaction level</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b) RP and Peer Interaction level</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The researcher transacted with management/ principal and practising teachers and collected the necessary information regarding:

a) The awareness of the management/principal and practising teachers regarding Reading Readiness and its contribution towards Reading Performance.

b) The sample schools reading readiness programs
Information was also noted down by being a participant observer regarding the responses of the children towards the introduced strategies to develop the identified components.

Further, the responses of the management/principal towards reading scenario and children towards the strategies were qualitatively analysed.

5.9 MAJOR FINDINGS OF THE STUDY


2. There is significant positive relationship between RR and its components taken separately.

3. The children of the sample of this study were found to be underdeveloped only in five components out of sixteen—Visual Closure, Auditory Sequential Memory, and Visual-Motor Co-ordination.

4. There is development in the identified components of RR due to the introduced strategies.

5. There is significant positive relationship between RR and RP.

6. There is no development in the RP due to the introduced strategies.

7. Five components of RR namely—Visual Closure, Auditory Sequential Memory, Auditory Recognition, Auditory Discrimination
and Visual-Motor Co-ordination were found to be high predictors of RP.

8. There is significant positive relationship between RR and Mother Child Interaction.

9. There is no significant relationship between RR and Peer Interaction.

10. There is significant relation between RP and Mother Child Interaction.

11. There is no significant relationship between RP and Peer Interaction.

The sum up of the observations on the responses of the children, their preferred strategies and the provision of RR programs as apart of regular academic programs in the schools are given below:

➢ The sample schools didn’t have any academic resource or program to identify the children’s readiness for reading.

➢ The children were introduced to reading without finding out whether the individual child is ‘ready to read’.

➢ The reading program started by reading the alphabets/numbers directly without being introduced to picture reading (one of the important reading strategies which invokes interest and motivates the child towards early reading habit) and later on leading to actual reading.
➢ Traditional and rigid method of Reading is introduced in all the sample schools, where they are interested in the product than the process.

➢ The teachers are not aware of the latest trend and methods of teaching reading and hence did not adopt any systematic method.

➢ The teachers insisted more on pronunciation and less on comprehension on this entry level.

➢ The sample school and teachers do not identify reading as an important skill and provide for a separate enrichment program. They are more interested in the whole language development.

➢ The schools and teachers do not have awareness regarding the importance of providing different books/library/exposure to different books.

➢ The teachers were of the opinion that with maturation and the regular activities, the need for a separate reading program is not necessary as time was their major constraint for any extra activities (completing the syllabus as per their program of work was their major concern).

➢ Local, suitable and flexible strategies are not used in the regular school program to develop RR/RP.

➢ The teachers taught the children as a whole class of 30-40 as a whole than in small groups (4-5), even when they were exposing them to initial reading.
Flexibility of strategies and rescheduling of reading programs are not noticed while teaching reading, even though the children were restless and lacked readiness to read.

Initially, majority of the children preferred to trace with their fingers than using pencils. When pencils were given to some children, they stubbornly refused to use and started tracing the path in the maze through their fingers.

The children preferred outdoor activities and games to indoor activities while developing spatial concepts.

The children preferred more 'hands on' activities, which were colourful and more familiar.

The children preferred short duration activities than lengthy ones.

Children responded enthusiastically when varied activities were provided for development of a component.

Children could learn better with the use of varied activities compared to the use of similar activities.

The criterion could be attained better when the strategies were introduced to a small group (4-5) of children, than the whole group (40-50).

The children could attain the criterion better when simple and familiar activities were provided than unfamiliar ones.

The children could attain the criterion better when there was a shift of activity after identifying that they had lost interest in the present activity.
> The children responded better to the visual activities than the audio activities.

> The children responded to direct oral instruction better than the taped instruction.

> The schools indirectly provided programs for all the components of RR except the identified underdeveloped components.

5.10 EDUCATIONAL IMPLICATIONS

The study has provided enough proof that the children of 3+ are ready to read and it is the duty of the educationists and practicing teachers to provide them the right reading environment, strategies and material. It has also shed light regarding the importance of introducing an appropriate reading readiness program for the preschool entrants and has identified that Reading Readiness is very important for the development of Reading Performance. The researcher also noticed that the sample schools did not have any programs to identify the components of RR, let alone a good RR program to develop the components. Care should be taken in a school program to identify whether the 'individual child' is 'ready to read'. This clearly indicates the importance of allowing the child to learn to read at its own pace. Care should also be taken to identify whether the material/activities/strategies provided are suitable to the age group.

The present study has found a high correlation between RR and RP, hence it is very much necessary to provide the right Reading Readiness environment, material, activities and strategies to the child to acquire the skill of reading effectively and early. It was also found that 5 components (Visual closure, Auditory Sequential Memory, Auditory Recognition, Auditory Discrimination and Visual-Motor Coordination) of RR have a high predictive value on RP. It was also
identified out of these 5 high predictors 3 components were underdeveloped (Visual Closure, Auditory Sequential Memory, and Visual-Motor Co-ordination), which calls for a lot of caution in providing the suitable enrichment programs or strategies to develop them effectively. If this is not taken care of at the earlier stages, it will grossly affect the later Reading Performance, and even might give way to reading deficiencies, dyslexia etc. Hence it is strongly felt that unless the schools recognize this and start an effective RR program focusing at providing a good reading environment, all the efforts to provide an authentic education will go in vain. So, schools should start a RR program at the crucial preschool entry level (Dodge, 2000) as early as 3+ itself.

It was also found that the components of RR (Visual Recognition, Visual Recall, Visual sequential memory, Visual Discrimination, Visual closure, Auditory Recognition, Auditory Recall, Auditory sequential memory, Auditory sequential memory, Auditory comprehension, Auditory Discrimination, Visual auditory Association, Visual motor co-ordination, Quantitative concepts, General concepts, Spatial concepts and Colour concepts) have a high correlation between each other as well as overall RR. Hence it is important to provide adequate strategies/activities to develop each of these components independently, which will ultimately contribute towards the development of overall RR - a basic necessity for developing an effective and meaningful reading performance.

Again, here the ‘strategy’ or activity introduced to develop a particular component should be attractive, meaningful, less time consuming. It should be an individual activity and involving the child wholly, or else a group strategy/activity, which is not attracting the child’s involvement, will be a failure. Hence, the suitability and familiarity (content) of the material/strategy introduced should be thought of, keeping the child’s age and capacity in mind. In case, the child is not interested in a
particular activity there should be a shift to another activity which develops the same component (lateral/parallel shift). The other factor which has to be highly stressed when choosing a particular activity for a particular child is flexibility. Here, either the children can be provided with very small group activities (4-5 in a group) or individual activities, as they cannot retain attention/concentration over a longer span of time. In case, they lose their interest in the presently introduced activity, there should be a flexible program and the teacher should be resourceful enough to introduce another activity, which catches their eyes and retains their attention to develop the underdeveloped components. The activities should also be adequately sliced according to the variety (for ex. If visual activity is introduced in the first session, auditory activity can be introduced in the next session). The study has also pointed out that the children of 3+ are more into oral activities and tracing with the finger activities initially. Hence, after providing enough exposure through simple strategies (mentioned above) they should be introduced to slightly difficult and paper pencil activities. It was also noticed that the children appreciated and responded to colourful material than the black and white material, hence the materials used should be more colourful and attractive. The children of 3+ are more oriented towards outdoor activities/hands on, so more ‘hands on’ activities should be provided in the outdoors. The difficulty level should be kept in mind before designing and introducing any activities at this pre-school entry level, as activities which they cannot do or too difficult to do can prove highly detrimental to later reading. While designing the activities, catering to the individual differences, varied activities should be planned to develop each component separately.

It was found that except for the Visual Sequential Memory, Visual Closure, Auditory Sequential Memory, Visual Motor Co-ordination and Spatial concepts, the schools catered to the other components of RR indirectly through other academic programs. Even the neglect of one of
these components of RR can prove detrimental to the later RP, hence it is necessary to develop all the components of RR for the ultimate development of RP.

The schools should first identify whether each child is ready for the reading instruction, if not the underdeveloped component should be identified and adequate strategies should be provided to develop it. Only after the underdeveloped components are developed, reading instruction should be started. If the reading instruction is forced on the child then it will lead to reading difficulties like deficiencies, dyslexia, regression etc (Lefrancois, 1997). Hence care should be taken by the school and practising teacher to provide appropriate;

1. RR program to identify whether children have achieved all the components.

2. Strategies to develop the underdeveloped components of RR, if identified.

In toto, it is emphasized that the policy makers and the different streams (SSC, ICSE, CBSE) of education should provide guidelines regarding the components of RR and RP and activities or strategies to be followed to develop reading readiness and reading performance, through extension or outreach programs.

The schools should be aware of the different minute aspects of each language skill in general and reading in particular and have enough resources and resource persons to help the practicing teachers to provide individualized instruction as there is a pedagogical shift from subject centered to child centered education. Ultimately whatever is done is done for the sake of the learner. This would also help the practicing teachers as they have time constraints for the upgradation of their
knowledge and research activities, due to their academic load. Such a step towards academic capacity building should be made compulsory.

Ultimately, the teacher by self-effort should continuously upgrade her professional competencies and skills through access to the latest reading scenario- both national and international. This can be effectively done through the net as it has reduced the time and information gap. The teacher who has the habit of upgradation will be a mine of latest happenings worldwide and introduce the latest technology and methods for creating a better reading environment (some of the important reading sites have been listed in the appendix).

Initially, the reading material need not be the usual printed one, which can be procured from the market, it can be local resources which can be initially introduced through picture reading. Then gradually the children should be lead to single alphabet/number reading and at last introduced to two/three lettered words in the end (for 3+ age group), Reading material can also be self generated by the children through their drawings or craft work and this would motivate the child as there would be self involvement. Before introducing the reading material, care should be taken to see whether the content is familiar to the child. The study found that when familiar content was used there was cumulative effect on their reading performance. It is also implied through the study that children, particularly the school entrants, learn especially from working with concrete object and labeling of materials. Hence, more concrete materials and labeling activities should be provided at this level.

The child's growth/development regarding any of its faculties depends on its social, Home and school environment. As we cannot moderate social environment, whatever moderations have to be done should be within the home and school environment. The previous
implications have touched on the school environment. And now as part of the home environment - parents, also the associates of the school, should interact with their children adequately. Care should be taken in capacity building of the parents through enlightening them about the good reading programs, activities and material, which they can provide at home. The study emphasizes (at the age of 3+) that more the Mother Child Interaction more would be the RP of their children. This implies that there should be planned interaction of the Mother and child at least, at times, which would complement the child’s Reading Performance particularly and leads towards the whole language development.

5.11 SUGGESTIONS FOR FURTHER RESEARCH

1. Attempts should be made to identify the specific factors of reading readiness, which have substantive effect on the different language competencies of writing, speaking and listening.

2. In addition to testing RR at the primary level, RR can be tested at all intervening levels and the reading material should be adequately graded.

3. The success of different approaches of reading like phonic, initial teaching alphabet etc can be tested.

4. Teacher’s competency, aptitude etc can be tested for its impact on teaching reading in general and developing reading readiness in particular.

5. Present study may be extended to rural sample and also to find the impact of many other background variables on RR and RP.

6. The study clearly presents the acceleration of reading in particular and language acquisition in general, at a very young age of 3+, keeping this as the background, review studies can be done on the stages of Piaget and Bruner’s concept development to find out
whether there are changes in the relative ages and stages as given by them.

7. Similar RR tests and strategies can be developed in vernacular languages, which would be more useful in the Government schools where the common masses who really need the school enrichment programs study.