

Reading in First and Second Language: Teachers' Beliefs and Practices

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Formal instructions on reading start in primary grades. Therefore, the focus of researchers, policy makers and other educators is on early reading instructions. Consequently, 'adolescents and their specialized needs for literacy instructions at the middle and high school level often go unnoticed by policy makers and the general public' (Alvermann, 2002, p. 189). This is problematic because literacy instructions are required across all the grades to meet specific needs of specific grades. The International Reading Association's position statement on Secondary School Reading (1990, p. 286) argues:

Students face new challenges in reading/language processing each year as they progress through grades. As educators, we must provide the support necessary to allow students to be successful in all subject area as they read monitor, question, rethink, reflect and elaborate upon the ideas and information in their reading/language experience.

In the Indian context, reading in two languages is a curriculum requirement for students especially in secondary grades. In spite of that, reading problems are not addressed properly in these graders as reading is mainly associated with the primary grades. Because of this negligence, students do not become a strategic reader even after spending ten years in schools across the country, especially in government schools. Further, teachers' are the backbone of classroom based instruction. Also, they influence and regulate the whole classroom discourse, where the reading takes place. Therefore, it is important to understand teachers' perception about the reading processes.

This study was conducted in government schools in a non-industrial urban area in Jharkhand. The present study was set within the qualitative research paradigm to examine and compare teachers' understanding and practices of reading in two languages in secondary grades. While examining and comparing, it focuses on three central questions. First, how do teachers' perceive and practice reading in first and second languages? Second, how far teachers' believe

correspond with their practices in first and second languages? Third, how teachers' perception are similar/ different in reading in two different languages?

This study not only captures descriptions of what happens in L1 and L2 classrooms, in terms of reading practices but also see the consistency/inconsistency between teachers' perception and their practices in L1 and L2.