USAGE OF WHOLE-LANGUAGE INSTRUCTION IN ELEMENTARY-SCHOOL CLASSROOMS: A CASE STUDY

DISSERTATION

Presented to the Graduate Council of the University of North Texas in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements For the Degree of

DOCTOR OF EDUCATION

By

Frank J. Miller, B.A., M.A.
Denton, Texas
August, 1992
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This qualitative research study examined the usage of whole-language instruction in the classrooms of four self-professed whole-language teachers. Data were collected from the following sources: classroom observations; interviews with the teachers and their principals; and a study of lesson plans, student work, textbooks, and curriculum guides.

The following conclusions were drawn from the study. The teachers' pre-existing philosophical views regarding language instruction influenced the effectiveness with which they implemented whole-language instruction more than any other single factor. These philosophical bases also determined, to a large extent, the kinds of whole-language practices and strategies the teachers used in their instruction. The skills-oriented teachers most often stated that they used whole-language instruction in order to review or reinforce skills. The more holistic teachers most often stressed language development, language appreciation, and self expression. The data collected in this study led to the conclusion that teachers must become knowledgeable of whole-language principles and make a personal commitment to
the whole-language philosophy in order to develop integrated, coherent whole-language instructional programs. The data also led the researcher to conclude that assessment of whole-language instruction was an area of ambiguity and uncertainty for the teachers involved in the study.

The following recommendations were made from the study. Teachers should make conscious efforts to become cognizant of their basic philosophies and beliefs regarding how children learn and develop. Teachers should then ensure that their practices are consistent with their beliefs. Increased emphasis should be placed on developing appropriate means for assessing the effectiveness of whole-language instruction. School districts should provide adequate in-service opportunities and support services and receive the commitment of the teachers before initiating district-wide whole-language programs. Further research should be conducted on how teachers are affected when they are required to teach in ways which are inconsistent with their basic philosophies and/or teaching styles.
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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Since the late 1970s, a grassroots movement called "whole language" has had a profound impact on the way the language arts have been taught in schools throughout the world (Hood, 1989). The whole-language movement will likely have a lasting influence on language instruction of the future (Harste, 1989). Yet, despite its increasing influence and popularity, the term "whole language" remains difficult to delineate and define (Watson, 1989). Kenneth Goodman (1986, p.5) defines whole language as a "way of bringing together a view of language, a view of learning, and a view of people" rather than as a "dogma to be narrowly practiced." Weaver (1988, p.44) stresses the importance of "approaching reading and writing by building upon the language and experiences of the child." Other definitions are similarly generic, including the phrases "a way of thinking, a way of living and learning with children in classrooms" (Bird, 1987, p.4), and "connected discourse in a meaningful contextual setting" (Anderson, 1984, p.616). Newman (1985, p.1) states, "Whole language isn't an
instructional approach in the usual sense, but a philo-
sophical stance."

Despite the difficulties involved in formulating a
precise, descriptive definition of whole language, most
whole-language advocates do agree on certain principles
which are inherent in its implementation. Firstly, in
whole-language instruction all aspects of language are
integrated. Writing, reading, speaking, and listening are
used naturally and in concert with one another. Furthermore,
these language skills are integrated across the content
areas. Secondly, primary emphasis is placed on meaning.
Attention to conventions and standard forms is part of whole
language, but never at the expense of the construction of
meaning. Other principles of whole language include student
ownership and responsibility for learning, "natural"
development of language skills, acceptance of errors in a
student's attempts at language usage, and informal methods
of evaluation (Watson, 1989).

Considering the difficulties involved in defining whole
language, it is not surprising that there is sometimes
disagreement over the kinds of instructional practices and
classroom activities which constitute the whole-language
approach to literacy development. At the very least, these
practices and activities must be consistent with whole-
language theory and principles of practice (Watson, 1989).
Watson (1989) wrote:
If a teacher says that whole language involves integrating the language arts across the content areas, that teacher must then turn a critical eye toward the way listening, speaking, reading, and writing are used in order to teach math and science. (p. 131)

Despite a growing body of research regarding how whole-language principles are being implemented, we do not yet know all we need to know about what influences teachers to use whole language in their classrooms, why they choose to use specific whole-language activities, or how they attempt to justify the use of these practices (Shanahan, 1991). Furthermore, not enough is known about how individual teachers attempt to assess the effectiveness of whole-language instruction (Cambourne & Turnbull, 1990). Research which investigates these questions could prove to be useful to classroom teachers who implement whole-language instruction as well as to those administrators and college instructors who would like to encourage teachers and future teachers to use whole language in their classrooms.

**Purpose of the Study**

The purpose of this study was to determine how whole-language instruction was implemented and assessed by selected elementary-school teachers and to determine the factors which influenced these teachers to use whole-language instruction in their classrooms.
Research Questions

The following questions were addressed in this study:

1. What kinds of whole-language instruction did the teachers use in their classrooms? How did the teachers evaluate the effectiveness of whole-language instruction?

2. Why did the teachers use particular whole-language strategies?

3. What were the factors which influenced the teachers to implement whole-language instruction in their classrooms?

Significance of the Study

Whole-language instruction, in one form or another, has been used in elementary-school classrooms for decades (Y. Goodman, 1989). Harste (1989) and McCaslin (1989) predict that the current grassroots whole-language movement will have a profound and lasting impact on language instruction in the future. Since, according to these authorities, the whole-language movement is more than just a passing fad, it becomes significant to learn what kinds of whole-language practices are being used in elementary-school classrooms. This study documents how four self-professed whole-language adherents implemented and assessed the effectiveness of whole-language instruction in their classrooms.
Chaney (1990) cites numerous benefits to be derived from a holistic approach to language instruction as opposed to skills-oriented programs. These benefits include integration of the language processes across the curriculum, an emphasis on meaning in learning, recognition of the communicative function of language, and an emphasis on creating a literate environment. Since the whole-language approach produces many desirable outcomes, it is important to learn what influences teachers to use this approach. This research documents the factors which influenced the four teachers to utilize whole-language practices in their classrooms.

Definition of Terms
The following terms have restricted meaning and were thusly defined for this study:

1. Whole-language instruction was defined as the classroom strategies, activities, and practices which a teacher uses in order to implement whole language in the classroom.

2. Whole-language strategies were defined as those specific ways in which a teacher implements whole-language instruction (e.g., language-experience activities, journal writing activities, shared book experiences, book publishing activities, drama presentations).

3. The terms whole-language strategies, whole-language activities, and whole-language practices were used
interchangeably depending on the context in which the terms were used.

Limitations

This study provides a qualitative description of the use of whole-language instruction by four elementary-school teachers in a limited geographical area. Due to the qualitative nature of this study, generalizations to other settings are inappropriate. A primary data-gathering method used in the study was direct observation by the researcher. Data was then analyzed qualitatively. In studies of this nature, both observer bias and subjectivity in data analysis can produce error, so results should be considered in this light.

An additional limitation in this study was the inherent intrusiveness of the observer upon the observed situation. Even though an attempt was made to be as unobtrusive as possible, the observer's presence in the classroom altered the milieu in which the observed lessons would normally have taken place.

Assumptions

The major assumption underlying this study was:

Elementary-school teachers are allowed a reasonable degree of freedom in determining content and methodology to be used in language instruction.
CHAPTER II

REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

The following literature review presents information pertaining to whole language. It begins with a historical perspective of the whole-language concept, citing authorities who have contributed to its theoretical and philosophical bases, then goes on to discuss the current whole-language movement. The final sections are concerned with research related to whole language.

Historical Perspective of Whole Language

Theoretical Roots

The roots of the whole-language movement can be traced to earlier theorists in the fields of philosophy and psychology who believed that education should be child-centered, that language should be integrated into the rest of the curriculum, that children are actively engaged in constructing their own knowledge of the world, and that social interactions play a dominant part in language development. The foremost of these earlier theorists include John Dewey, Jean Piaget, and Lev Vygotsky (McCaslin, 1989).
John Dewey proposed that the curriculum should be developed around the interests of the learner and that the learner should be actively involved in the learning process. He advocated the integration of language into all other areas of the curriculum. Dewey further stressed that school experiences should be related to life and that students would thus be motivated to develop language skills in order to tell about their own experiences and learn about the experiences of others (Dewey, 1943).

Jean Piaget advocated a constructionist viewpoint of language development. According to this view, language originates within the individual and serves as the expression of thought for the purpose of communication with others. According to Piaget, children are actively involved in learning as they construct their own conceptualizations and categories of thought. Children do not wait for someone to transmit knowledge to them, but are actively engaged in making meaning of the world around them (Piaget, 1960).

Lev Vygotsky, a Russian psychologist, emphasized the importance of the social context in language development. He explored the role of social interactions, particularly related to play, in the development of language and intellect (Vygotsky, 1986).
Contributions from Within the Field of Education

In addition to these theorists from the areas of philosophy and psychology, many authorities from within the field of education have made major contributions to the development of whole language. Specifically, contributions have been forthcoming from the fields of reading, composition, and early childhood education (Y. Goodman, 1989).

In the field of reading, Frank Smith and Kenneth Goodman (1971) established the concept of reading as an interaction between the reader, the text, and language. Based on this concept, they called for literature-based reading programs and use of the language-experience approach. Doriss Lee and Roach Van Allen (1963) defined and helped popularize the language-experience approach in the early 1960's. The works of Marie Clay (1972), Donald Holdaway (1979), Bill Martin, Jr. (1974), and others called for the use of literature-based reading programs as opposed to basal oriented programs. In New Zealand, Marie Clay (1972), Jeanette Veatch (1985), and others advocated the use of teacher-produced "Big Books," reading stories to the children on a regular basis, providing the children with a print rich environment, and immersing children in the reading of trade books and magazines.

Influences from the field of composition included the works of Alvina Burrows (1984) and Don Graves (1983). These
scholars stressed the importance of allowing children to write frequently, in their own voices, and from the very beginning of their schooling.

Advocates of integrated curriculum also contributed to the philosophical bases for the whole-language movement. William Kilpatrick (1936), expanding on the philosophical tenets of John Dewey, popularized the project approach which attempted to center all aspects of the curriculum around a central theme. Hilda Taba (1962) stressed the importance of "developing ways of helping individuals in the process of creating a unity of knowledge" (p. 299). Taba also proposed the idea that this unity of knowledge should be achieved not only by integrating the subjects in the curriculum, but by helping the students integrate the knowledge, skills, and attitudes derived from their studies into their lives.

Early childhood education contributed the views that curriculum planning should be based on student interests, that children's language should be allowed to develop in natural ways, and that play is a very important aspect of a child's intellectual development (Loughlin & Martin, 1988). The term "emergent literacy" has been coined to refer to this natural process of language development (Hall, 1987). Whole-language advocates also tend to share these same viewpoints (Loughlin & Martin, 1988).
The Current Whole-Language Movement

Foundations of the Movement

The term "whole language" is relatively new in the literature on reading and writing instruction. The term was first listed in Current Journals in Education in 1981 (Pickering, 1989). Jerome Harste and Carolyn Burke (1977) used the term to describe a theoretical perspective on how certain individuals learn to read. The first recorded organizational movement in support of whole language took place in 1978 in Columbia, Missouri. Several elementary school teachers in Columbia, under the leadership of Dorothy Watson, began meeting to discuss ways to help their students learn to love reading in spite of their district's highly-structured phonics-based reading programs. They organized to form the first TAWL (Teachers Applying Whole Language) group, and membership eventually grew to more than 150, including many administrators (Hood, 1989).

Members of the Columbia group began spreading the word by publishing newsletters and booklets, speaking at conferences, forming study groups, and eventually holding their own local conference. TAWL groups began to form at locations throughout the United States and Canada. Group members from across the continent have joined forces to form the Whole-Language Umbrella, an international confederation of whole-language support groups. Member groups range from
the 900-member Nova Scotia association to the 6-member Manhattan, Kansas, group (Hood, 1989).

Leaders of the Movement

Several prominent authorities in the fields of language development and reading instruction have emerged as spokes-persons for whole language in recent years. Kenneth Goodman's work in the areas of miscue analysis and psycholinguistics has provided a philosophical and practical basis for the movement. His wife, Yetta Goodman, has conducted research in the area of literacy development which has provided whole-language teachers with the knowledge they need to be "kidwatchers," a term Yetta has made popular (K. Goodman, Y. Goodman & Bird, 1991). Dorothy Strickland (1990), Marie Clay (1982), Bill Teale, and Elizabeth Sulzby (Teale & Sulzby, 1989) have made contributions in the area of emergent literacy. This viewpoint stresses the natural development of language and literacy skills. Dorothy Watson has been instrumental in helping clarify and define many of the principles involved in whole-language instruction and has been an avid spokes-person in favor of the movement (Watson, 1989). Brian Cambourne and Jan Turbill have made contributions in the area of assessing the effectiveness of whole-language instruction (Cambourne & Turbill, 1990).
Principles and Practices of Whole Language

Even though, as previously indicated, whole language is difficult to define, there are several principles and practices which have come to characterize the current movement and on which there is general agreement among whole-language proponents (Watson, 1989). One such principle is the idea that all aspects of language (reading, writing, speaking, and listening) develop "concurrently and inter-relatedly, rather than sequentially" (Teale & Sulzby, 1986, p. xviii). All components of language are involved in any instance of language usage, and any attempt to fragment one component from the others is different from the normal ways in which language develops. Language is learned holistically and in context, rather than in isolated bits and pieces (Froese, 1991).

Secondly, the whole-language view purports that language is meaning-driven. Indeed, "the purpose of language is to achieve an understanding of what occurs in the world and to transmit that understanding to others" (Norris & Damico, 1990, p. 214). Watson (1982) observed that meaning is at the very heart of language and that "the whole purpose of using language is to construct meaning" (p. 9).

Another tenet of whole language is that all aspects of language are naturally-developing human phenomena. The abilities to read and to write are acquired in much the same ways as are the abilities to speak and to listen. All of
these skills develop in natural ways as an individual is immersed in life situations requiring their use (Froese, 1991).

Finally, whole-language adherents view language acquisition as an active, constructive process rather than a passive one. Each individual must create a personal understanding of language through interactions with the physical and social environment. Language acquisition builds on an individual's prior knowledge and experiences, personal interests, and self-motivated purposes (Norris & Damico, 1990; Newman, 1985).

Some specific classroom practices have evolved from the aforementioned principles in recent years. Some of these practices include the reading and telling of stories, daily writing activities, literature-based reading programs, language-experience activities, extended literature activities, and reading-strategy instruction (Watson, 1982). Despite the common occurrence of these and other similar activities in whole-language classrooms, it remains difficult to categorize any specific activity as being "whole language" or "not whole language" (Newman, 1985). In the words of Lois Bird (1987, p. 4), "Whole language is a way of thinking, a way of living and learning with children in classrooms."
Assessment of Whole Language

In recent years, increased attention has been given to developing appropriate means of assessing the effectiveness of whole-language instruction (Cambourne & Turbill, 1990). Yetta Goodman (1989) stated that in order to be an effective evaluator in a whole-language situation, one must consider what is happening throughout the learning process rather than being concerned only with the end results. Based on this premise, she rejected outright the use of standardized tests as appropriate assessment tools for a whole-language program.

Cambourne and Turbill (1990) stressed that whole-language assessment must be responsive to the learners. They proposed an evaluation system that involved observing the learners, talking to them about their learning experiences, and collecting samples of their work. Other whole-language advocates (Atwell, 1987; Bird, 1989; Paris, 1991; Valencia, 1990) have promoted the use of portfolios as an assessment tool. A portfolio includes a variety of holistic evaluation measures such as anecdotal records, writing samples, lists of books read, reading and writing inventories, and questionnaires (Bird, 1989). Portfolio assessment enables teachers to evaluate the processes of learning rather than just the outcomes (Paris, 1991).
Research Related to Whole Language

Much of the research conducted to determine the effectiveness of whole language has centered around the efficacy of approaching literacy development from a whole-to-part perspective as opposed to a part-to-whole approach. In part-to-whole instruction, teachers first expose their students to the smaller aspects of language, then move on in systematic ways to deal with larger "parts" of language. For example, in reading instruction a teacher typically begins with a focus on letters and sounds, then on words, and finally on units of meaning. A whole-language approach moves in the opposite direction, from meaningful wholes toward the parts - for example, from enjoyment of a predictable story to gaining increased control over the words and the letter/sound associations (Weaver, 1990).

Research has also been conducted to study the effects of using an integrated approach to literacy development as opposed to dealing with the various components of language (i.e., speaking, listening, reading, and writing) in isolation. For example, a number of studies have been conducted to determine the relationship between students' reading and writing abilities (Stotsky, 1983). The following sections will provide a synthesis of the research supporting holistic approaches to literacy development as well as research yielding findings in favor of more skills-oriented language programs.
Research in Support of Whole Language

Most of the research providing a basis for the whole-language philosophy has been naturalistic in design. Naturalistic studies have enabled researchers to observe and analyze how children learn language, how they learn to read and write in relatively natural environments, and how they process text in order to derive meaning. A smaller number of experimental and quasi-experimental studies has provided evidence that reading and writing are more than a mere collection of skills and that literacy develops naturally in much the same way that language is acquired (Weaver, 1990).

Stotsky (1983) summarized the results of several dozen experimental studies which attempted to determine the statistical relationship between students' reading and writing abilities. Based on her analysis of these studies, she derived the following generalizations: better writers tend to be better readers; better writers tend to read more and enjoy reading more than poorer writers; and better readers tend to produce more syntactically mature writing than poorer readers. She used these conclusions to justify the practice of integrating reading and writing instruction.

Donald Graves (1983) and Jane Hansen (1987) conducted research which showed that informal learning environments, characteristic of whole-language classrooms, increased the amount of writing and reading produced by elementary children. Not only did the children tend to write
and read more, but they also took greater control over and more responsibility for their writing and reading activities.

Ribowsky's quasi-experimental study (cited in Weaver, 1990) investigated the comparative effects of a whole-language approach and a code emphasis approach to literacy development with a group of 53 kindergarten students. The experimental group received experience with Don Holdaway's (1979) Shared Book Experiences program which attempts to replicate the home bedtime story experience. The control group was taught through Lippincott's phonics-based Beginning to Read, Write, and Listen program. Ribowsky found that in all measures of literacy development, including acquisition of phonics skills, the experimental group achieved greater gains, even though these children had received no direct skills instruction.

Avery (1985) conducted a naturalistic study describing the growth of the students in her first-grade whole-language classroom. The basic thrust of her language program was to enhance the children's reading abilities through the use of daily writing activities. She concluded that, even though her students' standardized test scores in reading were higher than in previous years when she had used a phonics-based program, she was even more impressed with the enthusiasm and joy they exhibited when engaged in reading activities.
Fennacy (1988) and Pierce (1984), in separate studies, concluded that elementary-school children in whole-language classrooms exhibited no more deficiencies in phonics skills than children in phonics-based programs. Likewise, all agreed that whole-language classrooms produced children who read more, who wrote more, and who expressed a more positive attitude toward literary activities in general.

In the mid-1980's, two major national reports cited extensive research which affirmed the holistic nature of reading. The Commission on Reading's Becoming a Nation of Readers (Anderson, Hiebert, Scott, & Wilkinson, 1985) referred to reading as a holistic act and advised that "no matter how children are introduced to words, very early in the program they should have experience with reading these words in meaningful texts" (p. 43). The second report, What Works: Research About Teaching and Learning (1986), recommended that children be saturated with direct experiences with written language as a requisite for reading.

Research in Support of Part-to-Whole Instruction

Jeanne Chall (1967), in her landmark book Learning to Read: The Great Debate, attempted to synthesize the results of reading research from the beginning of the century through the early 1960's. Based on her review of the literature, she concluded that systematic phonics instruction is more effective than "meaning-emphasis"
approaches in developing "reading achievement," at least during the first three years of school. However, Marie Carbo (1988), in a critique of Chall's research synthesis, pointed out that many of the studies had serious design flaws. Furthermore, Constance Weaver (1990) stressed that the "meaning-emphasis" approaches cited in the studies were primarily sight word programs, another form of part-to-whole instruction, rather than true whole-language programs.

Subsequent studies by Becker and Gersten (1982) and Anderson et al. (1985) attempted to show the relationship between heavy phonics training in the early grades and improved reading in later grades. The results indicated that there were higher long-term gains in decoding skills, but not necessarily in other reading skills such as reading comprehension.

A review of more recent research than that included in Chall's study was conducted by Marilyn Adams in 1990. She concluded that programs which included systematic instruction on letter-to-sound correspondences generally led to a higher level of achievement in word recognition, at least in the early grades (Adams, 1990).

Research Related to This Study

Elaine Weeks (1988) conducted a naturalistic study to determine the extent to which whole-language instruction was used in 16 first grade classrooms in Utah. She reported that
less than 10 percent of the instructional time was spent in whole-language activities, and that the bulk of time (nearly 70 percent) was spent in activities related to a basal reading program.

Deborah Wells (1988) studied the effects that a whole-language environment had on students' perceptions of literacy. Through participant-observation and key-informant interviewing, she found that the students were able to make connections between classroom literacy events and their lives outside of school. Also, the students became truly literate individuals who used literacy skills, displayed literate behaviors, and recognized the aesthetic value of literacy.

Barbara Lehto (1989) used a survey and questionnaire methodology to test whether significant differences existed between whole-language and basal teachers. She concluded that there were significant differences, including the following: (1) Whole-language teachers attended more reading workshops and conferences than basal teachers. They also had more opportunity for observing other classrooms. (2) Whole-language teachers believed they had administrative support for making changes in teaching methods to a greater degree than did basal teachers. (3) Whole-language and basal teachers differed in personality types based on the Myers-Briggs Type Indicator (MTBI). Whole-language teachers preferred extraversion, intuition, feeling, and perceiving.
Basal teachers preferred introversion, sensing, feeling, and judging. Basal teachers' choice of teaching methodology was influenced primarily by reading methods courses, the student teaching experience, and the method whereby they themselves had learned to read. Whole-language teachers were influenced more by workshop experiences, peer discussions, and experimentation with various methods.

Summary
Research has been cited indicating the advantages inherent in both holistic and part-to-whole approaches to literacy development. The question naturally arises, which approach is better. The answer to the question lies largely in what it is that one is attempting to accomplish and how the results are measured, interpreted, and reported (Weaver, 1990).
CHAPTER III

PROCEDURES

Research Approach

The researcher selected a qualitative case study method for this research. Merriam (1988) defined a case study as an in-depth analysis of a single setting, a single subject, a single depository of documents, or one particular topic of interest. Examination of elementary teacher usage of whole-language instruction was a topic ideally suited for such an in-depth analysis. This study also examined the factors which influenced the teachers to include whole-language practices in their language arts programs. A qualitative case study approach was also an appropriate methodology for dealing with these data.

The four types of data-collection most commonly associated with qualitative research include participant observation, interviewing, artifact inspection, and researcher introspection. Each of these techniques provides the researcher with a different perspective on the topic of interest (Eisenhart, 1988). This research utilized each of these data-collecting techniques.
Participant observation is the most common means of data-collection in qualitative research (Bogdan & Biklen, 1982). Bogdan & Biklen (1982) observed that the extent of researcher participation can range from total nonparticipation to complete involvement at the site. They recommended that fieldworkers stay somewhere between these extremes. The extent of participation the researcher chooses to engage in is dictated by the research setting and by the purpose of the research.

Interviews are used in qualitative research to "gather descriptive data in the subjects' own words so that the researcher can develop insights on how subjects interpret some piece of the world" (Bogdan & Biklen, 1982, p.96). Denizen (1978) listed the following interview formats: the scheduled standardized interview, the nonscheduled standardized interview, and the non-standardized interview. The kind of interview a researcher chooses to use is dictated by the research setting and the nature of the information he hopes to attain.

Artifact inspection includes written and graphic materials related to the topic. When conducting qualitative research in a classroom, this could include samples of the students' work, curriculum guides, lesson plans, and other materials pertinent to the study (Bogdan & Biklen, 1982).

Researcher introspection can also play an important role in qualitative research. These reflections are commonly
recorded in the form of field notes. A researcher's field notes include detailed descriptions of the setting and events related to an observation as well as an account of the researcher's reflections and introspections (Bogdan & Biklen, 1982).

Triangulation can play a very important corroborative role in qualitative research. Triangulation is a data-gathering technique in which three or more sources are used in conjunction with one another to help increase the researcher's understanding of whatever is being investigated. Surveys, historical documents, and other sources of information can be used along with the four previously discussed data-gathering techniques (Stainback & Stainback, 1988).

A qualitative case study approach was chosen for this research topic for the following reasons:

1) The purpose of this study was to determine how whole-language instruction was being used in classrooms by selected elementary-school teachers and to determine the factors which influenced these teachers to use whole-language instruction. The goal of the data analysis was to gain a deeper understanding of the teachers' classroom practices and motives. A qualitative research approach was the most appropriate for providing this kind of information.
2) A case study model was appropriate because the data gathered was detailed in nature. Four classrooms were studied in some detail, and the resulting data were amenable to qualitative analysis and interpretation.

3) Triangulation was achieved by comparing field-notes, transcripts from interviews with teachers and administrators, curriculum guides, teacher-made lesson plans, and samples of student work. These data required qualitative methods of analysis.

4) Since data was collected in a limited geographical area with only four participants, it was inappropriate to make generalizations from the research findings.

Population

The four primary participants who were involved in this study were kindergarten, first-grade, and second-grade teachers employed in three public elementary schools located in two midwestern United States towns. All four of the teachers had the reputation of being advocates of the whole-language philosophy. The building principals at the three schools also participated in the study. All participants remained in their described positions throughout the data-collection period. See Appendix A for
demographic information related to the teachers and principals involved in the study.

**Procedures for Collection of Data**

Permission was obtained for the researcher to observe the four teachers between January 2, 1992, and March 31, 1992. The participants were randomly selected from among teachers recommended by members of the reading faculty at a nearby university. The teachers were known to be self-professed advocates of the whole-language philosophy. The participating teachers were told that the researcher was interested in observing elementary-school teachers during language arts instruction, but were not informed of his interest in whole-language instruction. The district Superintendents and the building principals were given detailed information regarding the objectives of the study. All agreed not to share these details with the involved teachers.

Preliminary contact was made with each teacher and the building principals prior to initiating the formal study. At this time, general background information about the teachers was gathered, including personal data and information about their educational backgrounds.

Each teacher was observed three times at intervals of a minimum of two weeks. The first two observations were scheduled and the other was unannounced. The observations
took place during the regularly scheduled time for language arts instruction, and lasted for a period ranging from forty-five minutes to one hour.

The researcher took fieldnotes during each classroom observation. The fieldnotes included a complete description of the setting as well as the researcher's reflections during and subsequent to the observation period.

The researcher also made an audio-tape recording of each observation. These tapes were transcribed as soon as possible (usually on the same evening) following the observation. Reflective comments were made to complement the transcriptions.

Promptly following each observation, a twenty to thirty minute taped nonstandardized interview between the teacher and researcher took place. These tapes were also transcribed, with reflective comments added, as soon as practicable after each observation period. Appendix F contains the interview schedule for the final teacher interviews.

One standardized interview with each building principal was also taped and transcribed with reflective comments. During the interviews, questions were asked regarding the principals' observations of the teachers during language arts instruction. Additionally, information was gathered pertaining to the schools' and/or districts' language arts in-service training programs, curricular requirements for
the language arts programs, and materials or resources made available to the teachers to support their language arts instruction. Appendix F contains the schedule for the principal interviews.

Documents which may have had some influence on the teachers' language arts programs such as the textbooks, reading materials, teacher manuals, teacher lesson plans, and local curriculum guides were also examined. Through the use of observation, interviews, inspection of documents related to language arts instruction, and reflective thinking, the process of triangulation was used to provide a check for internal validity.

Data Analysis

The constant comparison method (Glaser and Strauss, 1967) was used to analyze the data collected in this study. The content of fieldnotes, transcripts of classroom observations, and interview transcripts were carefully studied to determine reappearing concepts which became categories of focus. Once units of analysis began to appear, the researcher organized and coded the data into discreet categories related to the purposes of the study (e.g., choral reading activities, brainstorming activities, rationale for accepting "invented spellings," assessment of student writing).
As categories of focus began to be identified, the researcher collected data that provided additional incidents of the categories in an attempt to analyze the various aspects and dimensions under each of the categories. Interview questions were specifically formulated to shed additional light on the categories of focus and to fill gaps in the data.

After all the data had been collected, information on all the teachers was compared for similarities and differences. All of the data were analyzed and recoded in an attempt to determine what whole-language practices the teachers used, how they assessed the effectiveness of their whole-language instruction, their rationale for using particular whole-language strategies, and what factors influenced the teachers to use whole-language instruction.

Reliability was established by using the process of triangulation (Stainback & Stainback, 1988). Using this process, cross-validation was achieved by using multiple data sources. This study made use of teacher lesson plans, samples of student work, bulletin board displays, curriculum guides, textbooks, and principal interviews to provide the basis for triangulation. The information derived from these sources was used to verify the validity of the data gathered during the classroom observations and teacher interviews. Any discrepancies were noted in the findings recorded in Chapter V of this study.
CHAPTER IV

PRESENTATION AND ANALYSIS OF DATA

The data presented in this chapter regarding the usage of whole-language instruction in elementary-school classrooms have been compiled primarily from observations and interviews. Additional data have been garnered through the process of triangulation involving the careful study of lesson plans, curriculum guides, and student work. The data were gathered during the period extending from January to April, 1992.

The results of the study are presented in two sections. The first section describes data gathered from classroom observations, interviews with the participating teachers, interviews with building principals, and a study of lesson plans and student work. In this section, the observations and interviews for each teacher are described as they occurred chronologically. The second section deals with district-level curriculum guides and textbooks for the respective language arts programs.

Results from the Three Elementary Buildings
The teachers who participated in the study taught at three elementary school buildings located in two midwestern
United States towns. Throughout the study, the buildings were referred to as Buildings A, B, and C. Buildings B and C were both located in the same town and school district, while Building A was located in a neighboring town and district. The teacher at Building A, hereafter referred to as Teacher A1 or Ann, taught in a self-contained second-grade class. The teacher at Building B, Teacher B1 (Laura), taught in a half-day kindergarten program. Two first-grade teachers, Teacher C1 (Beth) and Teacher C2 (Ramona), taught in Building C. Interviews were conducted with the principals in all three buildings. All participants in the study remained in their positions throughout the data-collection period. See Appendix A for demographic information related to the teachers, principals, and schools involved in the study.

Prior to the first observations, the researcher visited with each of the teachers, building principals, and district superintendents. He explained the purposes of the study in detail to the principals and superintendents, and received their final approval for initiating the classroom visits. He met with the teachers and received approval to observe and collect data related to their language arts programs.

**Building A**

Building A had a little less than 200 students, the majority of whom were from rural, lower to middle class
families. The building contained grades K through eight all housed in self-contained classrooms. The school was the only elementary school located in a small rural town with a population of approximately 700-800.

**Teacher_A1 - Ann (Second Grade)**

Ann was a tall brunette in her early fifties. She was very enthusiastic and articulate when observed teaching her students and during interviews. Ann had received bachelors and masters degrees in elementary education from a midwestern university, and had taught in public elementary schools for thirty years. She had taught second grade in Building A for the previous twenty years. She indicated that she also taught a summer school course in writing at the local university during the summers.

**Observation One**

Date: January 7, 1992

Time: 8:27-9:09 A.M.

"A" = Ann

"S" = Student

"C" = Class

"R.C." = Researcher's Comments

R.C.: I arrived at the school at 8:15 on a cold, overcast morning. The temperature was in the upper 30's, and
there was a light northwesterly breeze which made the day feel even colder than the temperature indicated.

As I pulled up in front of the school, I was greeted by a faded red-brick structure with white masonry trim. The three-story building appeared to be of a 1920's or 1930's architectural design. Several red see-saws were located in front of the building, as well as numerous tall pine trees.

At 8:20 I entered the building and reported in to the school office. The woman behind the secretary's desk very congenially gave me directions for finding Ann's classroom. As I walked toward Ann's room, several children were walking down the hallway at a rapid pace and entering various classrooms along the hallway or going up the stairs leading to the second floor.

I entered Ann's classroom at 8:23 and found her bending over one of the desks talking with the student who was sitting there. She welcomed me with a smile and a cordial verbal greeting, then proceeded to hand me a pile of student-produced stories to look at. I sat down at an empty seat at the back of the room and looked at the stories. Some were in rough-draft form and others were in final form. Several had been laminated and stapled together in book format.

The stories were written on several different kinds of paper and were about topics of a diverse nature. Some of the titles included the following: "My Stories and Poems," "The

As I looked through the stories, the students were working at their seats. There was a lot of busy activity, movement, and noise as the children talked to each other about their work. Two students brought stories they were working on for me to look at. One was entitled "Indian Life," and the other was about "A Creature From Mars."

I observed several of the children at work, and found that they were either writing original stories or making journal entries. The journal entries consisted of completing the following open-ended sentences which were written on the chalkboard at the front of the room:

January 7, 1992

Today is Tuesday.

We are studying about foods. We will have taco boats for lunch.

I feel ______ today.

I looked at several students' log entries and found that they were writing original sentences in the blank spaces in
the format. One of the students had written the following entry:

January 7, 1992
Today is Tuesday.
We are studying about foods. We will have taco boats for lunch.
I might go to Eric's.
I feel good today.

During this period, I looked around the room and noted that the walls were covered with print. Specifically, a number of poems, all related to the theme of "winter," had been written on chart paper with heavy black felt-tip pen and were displayed on the walls all around the room. Several of the poems had student art work related to the theme of the poem displayed on the wall around the charts.

After taking attendance and completing lunch count, Ann circulated among the students to observe their writing in progress. During this time, she interacted with the children in a friendly, relaxed manner and demonstrated a great deal of interest in their work as revealed in her following comments to different students which were audio-taped during this time period:
"Did I hear you say that you wrote some stories at home last night? Oh, you didn't. I thought I heard you say that."

"Do you know what? I appreciate it when you take time to do a neat job in your log. I really appreciate it because it gives me time to read it, and maybe I'll try to do an extra good job when I answer it."

"What's this (story) going to be about? Is that the travelogue one that you were talking about?"

"Do you know what a 'quest' is? What is a 'quest'?"
(Paused to listen to student's reply.) "Sort of a trip with a purpose? Oh, okay."

R.C.: After the morning bell had rung and the Pledge of Allegiance had been recited, Ann and her class participated in a "Poetry Walk." She guided the students around the room and led them in a choral reading of each of the poems on the wall. The poems were entitled "Jack Frost;" "The Mitten Song;" "Ice;" "Fall;" "First Snow;" "Crumbs on the Snow;" "Picture;" "The Streetcars;" "Sky Bear;" and "Chicken Soup with Rice."

Throughout the Poetry Walk, Ann interacted with the students in a relaxed, congenial manner. She left the
impression that she was engaged in a running dialogue or friendly conversation with the class throughout the duration of the activity. The children seemed to feel free to spontaneously inject their comments at appropriate times without having to rely on formal turn-taking procedures. For example, between the reading of the various poems, the following exchanges took place:

A: I hope we get to see some snow, so we can realize this poem is really true.
S: It'd be nice!
A: "Ice." Now remember, I told you that this poem is by Dorothy Alda. She's a very famous poet.
S: Is she really?
A: Yes, and she wrote the "Winter" one...

R.C.: This relaxed, informal type of language interaction took place throughout this visit and during subsequent visits to Ann's class. Following the poetry walk, the class engaged in an extended literature activity. Ann first reminded the children that on the previous day they had brainstormed what they would do if they had a little girl. The activity had been based on a story which she had read to them entitled "If I Had a Little Girl." She read the story to them again, then told them that next they would
engage in a brainstorming session about what they would do if they had a little boy.

After reading the story to the class, and just prior to conducting the brainstorming session, Ann established an anticipatory set for the upcoming activity. Throughout my observations of her class, I noticed that Ann consistently went to great lengths to stimulate the students' interest in upcoming activities.

A: Remember yesterday we decided that these were all the kinds of things that the little girl really wanted to do that her mommy wouldn't let her do, or her mother and daddy wouldn't let her do. And she was determined that her little girl was going to get to do it. We also decided that we wouldn't say really real naughty things, because none of those are really, really naughty things. They are just things that are kind of against the rules.

S: Yeah, like taking one bath a week.

A: Taking one bath a week... That's not anything that's going to be terrible. But it's probably a rule in that house.

S: She could run away and never come back because of the rules in that house after two years.

A: Oh, I think that would be awfully sad.

S: I know, but, I'm talking like if she gets real tired of it.
A: Oh, okay. Two years might seem a long time after awhile. Do you have an idea? "When I Have a Little Boy," what's your little boy going to do?

(At this point the, children seemed excited about the activity. Eleven of the eighteen students raised their hands, and most of the students had animated expressions on their faces.)

A: Alright, Charles?

S: He can ride his dirt bike out whenever he wants.

R.C.: This exchange marked the beginning of an extended brainstorming activity. As the students made their contributions, Ann orally repeated their ideas. She then wrote their ideas on the chalkboard, verbatim whenever feasible, in sentence form and added the student's initials following each sentence. The following are selected representative entries from the brainstorming session:

S: He can have a pet tarantula without his mom knowing about it.

A: Alright, he can have a pet tarantula even if his mother doesn't want him to? Oh, my goodness! These are really boy things, I think. I don't know that I would want a pet tarantula. There's really nothing wrong with a pet tarantula. They're not that poisonous... not if they're from South America.
S: A rattlesnake is from South America.

A: Just a minute. (Ann wrote the word on the board.) I'm not sure how to spell "tarantula."

S: Yeah, that's right.

A: Okay, Resident Speller, I'll check it before I put it on the paper. The reason I'm confused, boys and girls, is because in Italy there's a dance called the Tarantella. It's about the tarantula, but it's spelled differently. But I think that's the way you spell it. It's a very fast dance. Maybe one of these days I'll bring the music and play it for you downstairs. Okay. What is it, Robert?

S: He can have a cobra snake if he wants to.

A: Okay. That's what we call "piggy-backing." You use other people's ideas. Okay, Jeremy?

S: He can stick his nose in a saber-toothed tiger's mouth.

A: Whoa! Do you think his mom would ever let him do that?

S: Yeah. I think so. She probably won't find a saber-toothed tiger.

A: I don't think there is a saber-toothed tiger, do you? Because that's an ancient animal. Maybe you're talking about in a museum. Okay, Thomas?

S: He can get a new pair of shoes whenever he wants.
A: Alright. Want to describe the shoes? Any particular shoes you would like for him to get?
S: No. I don’t need a new pair. I got a new pair on.
A: I thought there were some kind maybe you’d like to get that you didn’t get.
S: I got the kind I wanted.
A: Okay, Evan?
S: Whenever he goes to a Monster Truck show, he can steal a Monster Truck.
A: When he goes to a monster what?
S: ...Truck show, he can steal a Monster Truck.
A: I’m sorry, I guess my ears are going. Whenever he goes to a Monster Talk show?
S: Truck.
A: Truck show! He can steal the Monster Truck? You want him to steal or borrow?
S: He can buy one.
A: Oh, he can buy one! Okay, that’ll be better, thank you. The only reason I’m trying to change it, Evan, is because I don’t think we’d want to make your little boy be a criminal. I don’t know what a Monster Truck is. Would you explain to us what it is?
S: It’s a big truck, but built just like a regular car, like Bigfoot. It’s called a Monster Truck. The reason they call it that is because they sound like a monster that growls.
A: Oh, okay. That's some additional facts that I didn't know, either. Summer? I called you by the right name! I didn't call you June. Summer?

S: He can stay up as late as he wants.

A: Alright. I'm afraid that June... er, Summer knows about boys, because she has a brother! Frank?

S: He can buy a Harley whenever he wants.

A: He can do what?

S: He can buy a Harley whenever he wants.

A: We know what a Harley is.

S: What is it?

A: It's a motorcycle. Do you like Harleys?

S: Yeah, Mike got me a Harley-Davidson shirt.

A: Really? Is Mike your father?

S: No, he's my uncle.

A: I see. Lynette, I don't believe we've heard from you.

S: He can dress his cat anytime he wants.

A: (Laughed.) Okay, that's an unusual one! Is there anyone who hasn't got to do it? Alright, Cathy?

S: He can trash his room whenever he wants to.

A: I have feeling your momma makes you clean your room up, doesn't she? You'd like to trash your room if you were a little girl and you'd like to trash it if you were a little boy (laughed).

S: I would, too. I hate to clean my room.

A: I bet that's how my children felt, too, Cathy.
S: My room's clean all the time although my brother's cleaner in the living room.
A: Alright, Charles?
S: He can ride his bull in his house anytime he wants.
A: Do you think that would be practical?
S: He can bring his friends in anytime he wants.
A: We can put it in there. We can put, "ride a bull," just because it's pretend, if you'd rather.
S: I'd rather have it "ride a bull in the house."
A: Okay. Okay, Thomas?
S: He could take his dog out hunting when he wants to.
A: Alright. He can take his dog out hunting when he wants to. That sounds really good. You know what? It is time to go to music. Let me tell you what I'll do. I'll write these down on the piece of paper while you're gone to music, and we'll finish this when you come back.

R.C.: The observation ended at this point as Ann had the students line up and dismissed them to go to music class.

Interview One
Date: January 7, 1992
Time: 9:15-9:45 A.M.
"A" = Ann
"I" = Interviewer
"R.C." = Researcher's Comments
R.C.: The first interview was conducted immediately following the first observation. The students had been released to go to music class, and Ann and I were alone in her classroom. The interview began as Ann showed me a story one of the boys in her class had written.

A: This little boy... Now, I'm as proud of this little story as I am of any story in here, because this little Robert could not read at all. I mean, he was a total non-reader at the beginning of the year, and couldn't spell anything. This actually isn't a great story. But, he took it home, and his momma helped him edit his story that he wrote at home last night, and he's got it neatly written and brought in, and he wants me to publish that for him.

I: He's seen all these other kids really getting into it.

A: Uh, huh. And it's the biggest difference in the world. He's beginning to spell, he's beginning to read pretty well, he really is on his way. And even though it isn't anything like what some of the outstanding ones are doing, he's doing a good job! He's going to submit a book for Young Authors the same as anybody else. Well, actually, I have typed up a book... or bound a book so that everybody can submit one, so they can be a part of
our own Young Authors. So that they won’t feel like they
can’t be in it.
I: Do you use that for a motivational thing... the Young
Authors?
A: You can see, they’ve just been writing, writing,
writing, writing. And see, I have these boxes at home
because I was going to type all these up over Christmas.
I didn’t get it done. And so they’ve been whining,
"Where are our writing boxes? I don’t have any place to
put my writing! Where are our writing boxes?" That’s
precious to them. That’s their own little cubicle over
there. Every time they write something, they show it to
me, of course, then they go put it in their writing
boxes. Those are just like shoe boxes. But this little
boy, eventually, he says he’s going to write
commentaries for all these travelogue pictures
(showed me several pictures of scenes from other
countries the student had drawn). Absolutely. I couldn’t
draw as well as he does.
I: Those are really good. He just has a hard time
finishing up... putting it all together?
A: Oh, yeah. His mind just goes da-da-da-da. He just
can’t settle down. You heard him say that he wanted to
write about "the quest," and I asked him what a quest
was. He knew what a quest was. He’s very intelligent.
R.C.: I asked Ann where she had gotten the idea for the Poetry Walk activity.

A: I don’t know. I like poetry, and I sort of originated a Poetry Walk. I never read about it anywhere. I just thought, "Well, why not? Instead of having to memorize poems, why not read them everyday?" And they learn these by the end of the month. They know all the poems that we read. One reason why I wanted the poems up is because I think attending to print is the way they learn to read. And so they are attending to the print. When I first do it, we point to every word. We’ve had them enough now that they can pretty well read them. And I just tell them, "Look, I tell you how to read it. We’ll just read it that way." And so it almost becomes like choral reading by the end of the time because we read it just like I do. And they think they’re songs. They don’t really differentiate between songs and poems because we do so much of both. So, this is just because I’m lazy. Usually, I have their own writing up there on the bulletin board. Like, for instance, in November we had a Talking Tepees Village. That’s why all those little tepees are in here. We made the tepees and set them around for the village, and then they had their stories inside, and they could lift them up and read them. And so, usually, I have their own writing, but when you come
back in January, you know, ahhh... what are we going to do? So we make the Jack Frost pictures and the mitten pictures and put up a poem with them, until we get something else going. It is just an easy way to start the new year.

R.C.: I asked Ann about the student-made art projects which surrounded some of the poems on the walls, such as the mittens around the "Mittens" poem. She indicated that the purpose of the art work was to stimulate interest in the poems. Ann then volunteered the following information related to her views regarding thematic units:

A: Now sometimes I don’t have an integrated theme going. That’s where I differ from a lot of whole-language people. To me, to contrive math lessons, and contrive spelling lessons, and contrive art lessons, and contrive... It’s just as silly as having different things. So sometimes we just enjoy poetry for its own sake. It doesn’t have to correlate with anything else. We’re just enjoying the poetry. So, I’m not opposed to people who want to do a thematic thing, but if it takes all your time to plan the theme, then maybe you don’t have time to really listen to the kids and work with the kids. So sometimes I have everything all coordinated, and sometimes I don’t.
R.C.: Ann next volunteered information regarding how she planned to follow up on the day's brainstorming activity. In doing so, she revealed some of her philosophy pertaining to the children being allowed to choose their own subject matter for their writing activities.

A: Now, I'm going to have some fusses tomorrow, because this little boy who's working on his book patterned after If You Give a Mouse a Cookie is going to want to finish that instead of doing this. And he's going to say to me, "Do I have to do this, or can I finish my own thing?" These children are self-starters. They don't want story starters, they don't want suggestions, they don't want anything. Now this is more or less for the middle and low ones who don't have any ideas. But if some kid comes up to me and says, "Look, I'm in the middle of writing a book, and I just don't want to really do that," I'm going to say, "Okay, you write your book instead of this."

I: For the ones that do this, what is going to be the next thing that you do as far as their brainstorming activity today?

A: Well, I need to write that down (pointed to the sentences she had written on the board), before they get back, on this page, so I can run it off tomorrow. And then I'll let them brainstorm again, and then we'll just
leave it until tomorrow. Then I'll run that off for them, and they'll have all those things in front of them, and we'll make books. They'll choose the things that they want to put, or other things that they think of between now and tomorrow, and illustrate it. And they'll call it "When I Have a Little Boy" or "When I Have a Little Girl."

I: About how many of the students do you think will do this?

A: Will choose to do this? I think most of them.

I: It will just be a few that want to do their own?

A: It will just be a few that are my really excellent writers that won't want to do it.

R.C.: Ann and I looked through some of the stories in the box which she had shared with me during my earlier observation. She expressed pride in the students' work, and seemed to be particularly impressed with one of the books.

A: Now, this little girl, I guess, is starting another (pointed to a book entitled My Stories and Poems). I typed up thirty-seven of those little things.

I: Right! I noticed that one, "Thirty-Seven of My Poems and Stories," she had on it.
A: But I didn’t type up nearly all of them. She turns in two or three a day. And she’s already started on another one.

I: Let me see that (pointed to the student’s rough draft copy). I want to make a comparison between that and the final product. Well, she’s pretty close to writing the final product here. That’s really good!

A: And Jack’s spelling and sentence construction is not that bad, either.

R.C.: I asked Ann what kinds of assistance she gave the children in helping them get their stories from the rough draft stage to the final product. This led to a discussion of her views regarding writing conferences and methods for teaching composition skills.

A: I usually just bring them up and we talk about it, because with second graders, having writing conferences and all degenerates into chaos. There’s not anybody that really knows enough. Oh, this little character who assured me that I had spelled whatever it was... "tarantula"... right.

I: Do you correct it yourself ahead of time, then call each student up to go through your corrections?

A: Sometimes. Either way.

I: Either way. You correct it with them sometimes?
A: If I have time I correct it with them and show them what they’ve done. But I think what I do to get the capitalization and punctuation is dictated sentences in spelling. I really like Scott-Foresman Spelling for that reason. For instance, when we had lesson twelve, we had sixteen different dictated sentences, and that was what I gave for the spelling test. I gave it over two different days, and I don’t suppose I had over five that didn’t make at least 90% on that. And that means they had to capitalize, they had to punctuate, they had to spell every word correctly. So they get in the habit. I think that’s the best way to teach capitalization and punctuation. It gives them at least some reason for doing it. So I credit the dictated sentences with teaching them how to do the capitalization and punctuation. Occasionally, a kid who really knows to do it will not do it, because he’s in the hurry of the moment. The same way that you and I don’t always spell correctly or don’t always punctuate correctly sometimes.

I: That sounds like a good approach.
A: I don’t really believe in teaching spelling as such because it’s fleeting. It doesn’t mean anything.

I: Just a bunch of words?
A: They have their little word books. You probably noticed them coming up and wanting me to write things in
them. I really encourage them to try to spell the words. But for some, they just won't write the word unless they know it's correct. So they do have little dictionaries, and they bring them up, and I write the word in for them.

R.C.: Next, I questioned Ann about the journal activity which I had seen her students accomplishing during my observation. She indicated that she had the students make a journal entry for each day of the school year. Whenever possible, she wrote back to the students, responding to their comments or questions. Finally, we discussed the format for the journal entries.

I: Do you always have open-ended sentences like this (pointed to the journal format on the chalkboard) to get them started?
A: Well, probably the last nine weeks I won't put anything up there. But, for the first three nine weeks I do give them two sentences, then they are to write two sentences on their own. That's what those lines are for.
I: And then they fill in the one missing word on how they feel?
A: How they feel today, uh huh.
R.C.: We next talked for a few minutes about Ann’s personal library of children’s books which she kept at the back of her classroom:

A: Now those are all my books back there (pointed to a collection of several hundred books at the back of the room) because you can see our school library is a little bit lacking. They have silent reading in the afternoon, and they will choose a book from back there, or their library book, or bring a book from home if they want to.

R.C.: Ann explained that she had the books in her personal classroom library organized in boxes, with books related to specific units of study in each box. She related that she had plans to put the books on computer listings to make specific books more readily accessible. Following these revelations, I asked Ann about a commercially prepared vocabulary chart on a chart holder at the front of the room.

A: That goes with our reading series. But we have whole-group reading. We don’t have reading groups, and I do as little of reading out of the reading book as I can, but we’re required to do it. What I do, I have these cards (reached for stack of index cards on her desk) and, for instance, if we have that... we’ll have that today... a lesson about syllables, and we’ll explain it, and then I’ll say (looked at the name on
the top card), "Brad, will you read the first sentence?"
"Jerry," who doesn’t read well at all, "will you read
the second sentence?"
I: The cards have the children’s names on them?
A: Yes, yes.
I: So they’re not flash cards for reading. Does that help you keep order of who to call on next?
A: Yes. I would have been a little better off to use them today, because they wouldn’t be speaking out. If I have the cards in my hand, they know that I’m not going to call on anybody except the one name I have on my card.
I: I noticed that they were free to call out, as long as it stayed under control.
A: That doesn’t bother me.
I: Do you use these (pointed to the name cards) when it reaches the point where you need to structure the discussion?
A: Yeah. You remember, I told them, "If we can do it in an orderly way, then I won’t get the cards, but..."
Because, with the brainstorming, sometimes, it gives them an idea, and the spontaneous ideas, sometimes, are the best.
I: Sure, yeah!
A: So, I don’t really like to use these when we’re brainstorming. I think it kind of puts a damper on them.
R. C.: Ann concluded the interview by relating where she had gotten many of the ideas for the day’s lesson:

A: Well, now, I didn’t really finish telling you where a lot of this came from. A lot of it came from a little book called Reading Is Only the Tiger’s Tail by Marlene and Robert McCracken. I have all of their thematic books. They’re wonderful. And you can look at those and see basically where I got a lot of the ideas. But see, this was back in the seventies when they were doing this. The idea was that her mother was a teacher in Nova Scotia who had no books. She had to do something, so she just taught through language, through good literature.

R.C.: I thanked Ann for letting me visit her class and left so she would have time to prepare for the next activity with her students.

Observation Two
Date: January 30, 1992
Time: 8:30-9:15 A.M.
"A" = Ann
"S" = Student
"C" = Class
"R.C." = Researcher’s Comments
R.C.: I arrived at the school at 8:22 on a calm, overcast day. The temperature was in the lower 50's, unusually mild January weather for this part of the country. In front of the school, a woman driving a late model Cadillac was letting two small girls out of the car on the passenger side facing the school. The two girls chatted cheerfully as they walked down the sidewalk toward the school building.

At 8:25, I got out of my car and entered the building. I checked in at the office, and went directly to Ann's classroom. When I entered the room, Ann greeted me warmly and introduced me to her student teacher, Mrs. Stevens. I sat in a chair at a table in the back of the classroom.

The children were working on their log entries and other writing activities while waiting for school to officially begin. During this time period, several students approached the teacher to share their log entries or stories with her.

One boy brought me a story he had written entitled "The Magic Dragon" and asked me to read it. He said he was going to make it into a book. Another boy showed me a book he had made called Things I Like. The story had been typed with a word processor, and the pages had been laminated and stapled together in book form. There were several illustrations and a title page.

As I looked around the room, I noticed that the room arrangements and decorations were much the same as they had
been on my first visit. The following log-entry format was written on the chalkboard:

January 30, 1992
Today is Thursday.
We will write a Trick Motif story today.
We will do another science experiment.

I feel ______ today.

At 8:30, the class recited the Pledge of Allegiance and sang "My Country 'Tis of Thee," after which Ann introduced the formal lesson for the period. The purpose of the lesson was to expand on the children's understanding of the trick motif and to motivate the students to write a story of that genre. I have included extensive samples of dialogue from the lesson in an attempt to capture the flavor and essence of Ann's interactions with her class.

A: Today we're going to write a story about and illustrate the trick motif. Now, let's talk a little bit more about the trick motif. How many of you have ever tricked anybody (paused as several children raised their hands)? Okay, we'll talk about that in just a minute.
Has it always been a bad trick, like the fox did to the Gingerbread Man?

C: No.

A: No, there could be good tricks, also. I've tricked my children at home into doing little chores around the house by saying, "Oh, I'll bet you can't do that!"

Sometimes, I've even tricked school children into doing things by saying, "Oh, I don't think you can do that!"

And that's a good trick, because it helps children realize they can do what they might not think they can do. You know, we read a story about a school teacher in which she tricked her children. Can you think of that story?

S: Viola Swamp!

S: Mrs. Nelson.

A: Viola Swamp, but what's the name of the story?

S: Miss Nelson Is Missing.

S: Miss Nelson Has a Field Day.

A: Miss Nelson Is Missing or Miss Nelson Has a Field Day.

S: Miss Nelson Is Back.

A: Miss Nelson Is Back. In all of those stories, Miss Nelson really tricked her children, didn't she?

S: Yeah, she did.

A: Was it a bad trick?

C: No.
A: No, but she made them realize that they could behave well, didn’t she? So there are all kinds of tricks that are good. Now when we start writing your stories, let’s talk just a little bit about what you are going to put in the beginning. Raise your hand if you know what we are going to put in the beginning of our stories.

(Several children called out at the same time.)

A: I’d appreciate it if you’d raise your hand. I know you know it, but please raise your hand so you can contribute equally along with the others. What do you think?

S: Well, in Miss Nelson Is Missing, one book ends the same like the first one. It had a cousin or a sister of a twin that looks just like her. But the other one wasn’t, or she dressed up like Viola Swamp.

A: That’s right. Her twin sister did it, too. So you’re right. It wasn’t always Miss Nelson that was tricking them. That’s true. Alright, Jimmy said that when we do the beginning, we do "Who, What, and Where." (Ann wrote the words on the chalkboard.) We call that the setting. And sometimes we identify the problem. Not necessarily in this kind of motif do you do that, because you don’t necessarily have a problem. Except that in The Gingerbread Boy, there was a problem, wasn’t there? What was the problem?

S: The gingerbread boy got away.
A: Alright, the gingerbread boy got away from the little old woman. So I'm going to put down "The Problem." (Ann paused to write the words on the chalkboard.) In your story, you may want to put down the problem that is facing your characters. Now...
S: I wasn't finished.
A: Well, sweetheart, I'm sorry, but we really kind of need to move on.
S: Well, there's one I'm wanting to say real quick. Well, all of her children tricked her friends in the classroom, and dressed up like her.
A: Uh huh, you're right. I hadn't thought about that, but that's absolutely true. That's true. And I'm glad I took time for that comment, Charles. Sometimes, you know, teachers want to move on, and sometimes little kids have got really good comments. Now, what comes at the end of this middle of the story? (Ann paused here, waiting for a student response.) Remember what comes right at the very end of the middle? What, Frank?
S: The gingerbread boy?
A: Well, not necessarily the gingerbread boy, but in any story. Brad?
S: The high point.
A: The high point of the story where the problem is resolved. In *The Gingerbread Man*, it was resolved by the
fox going, "Snip, snap." Anybody remember that long word I told you yesterday about when words sound like...?
S: Ah - something.
A: No, onomatopoeia! When words sound like the sound that they make. "Snip, snap." I think that sounds just like that fox's jaw is going, "Snip, snap."
S: "Snip, snap."
A: Or "bang," "crash."
S: "Bash."
A: Yes, those are words that are onomatopoeia. And if somebody says, "I bet you don't know what 'onomatopoeia' is," you can say, "I do, too! I know it! I know what that word means." Okay, so you might want to think, when you're writing your story, how the problem's going to be resolved. Because everything in the middle is going to lead to that. Then the ending is very short, isn't it?
S: No, the ending is more... I mean the middle is more longer, but the front and the end is more shorter.
A: That's right. And the ending may be something as simple as saying, "They lived happily ever after," "That was the end of the gingerbread boy," or whatever you want it to be.
S: Or, "She got married."
A: Yeah. In The Gingerbread Boy, we had animals talking, so your story doesn't have to be realistic, does it? But it can be realistic. What do you want? (Ann looked
toward a student on the back row who had his hand raised.)

S: Can we start?
A: Oh, no. I want to talk just a minute more. You're eager to get at it, aren't you! Have you thought about your story?
S: Uh, huh. I already started.
A: M-m-m... You could have an animal trick. You remember we talked about how, in Red Riding Hood, the wolf tricked her. And, you know, I thought of another story as I woke up this morning. Remember the story we read about why the opossum's tail has no fur?
S: Oh-h-h!
A: Remember how Rabbit tricked the opossum by tying the hair back on. It was so vain about its beautiful, fluffy tail. So the trick can be a lesson learned. Maybe your character has some qualities that aren't just the best and someone tricks them to teach them a lesson.
S: Real opossums don't have tails like that.
A: Well, this one's a legend to explain why they don't have tails like that. It was a Cherokee folk tale to tell why the opossum doesn't have a fluffy tail. That he once had a fluffy tail, and he got so vain about it the other animals cut off his hair.
S: Because he was bragging about his tail every day, so they cut his tail off so maybe it would learn him a lesson.
A: There's another fable about...
S: And it was the trick motif.
A: Yes, it was. It was the trick motif. There's another very short fable about a fox and a crow. The fox was kind of hungry, and he saw this crow fly up in a tree, and the crow had some cheese in his mouth. So Fox thought, "H-m-m! That crow's never going to give me that cheese. I'm never going to get that cheese from that crow. How can I trick...?" You know, always in stories, it's the fox that is so clever, tricking little farm animals.
S: Sometimes other animals.
A: Well, sometimes. But...
S: Well, what happened?
A: So, he thought, "That crow doesn't have a very pretty singing voice, but I'll bet she thinks she does. So as he was talking to her, he said, "O-h-h, how I long to hear your singing voice, Miss Crow!" She looked down at him...
S: ...and the cheese fell in his mouth!
A: That's right! The crow got so engrossed that this fox was flattering her and telling her, "Oh my, Honey, you've got such a wonderful singing voice!" Deep down,
she probably knew she didn't have a good voice, but she thought, "Well, I'll sing for this guy! He thinks I've got a good singing voice!" And, sph-t-t-t-t, there went the cheese, down where the fox could get it! He out-foxed her.

S: It went down his pipeline.

A: (Laughed heartily.) That could have been! That wasn't in the story, but I could see it with videos. Now, Frank, thank you for raising your hand.

S: Mine's going to be about sports. There's this football and this other ball. And it's a basketball, and it tricks him.

A: You're going to have a basketball trick a football?

S: Yeah!

A: Well, how unique! Now, I don't want another story about a basketball and football. That's Frank's idea.

S: I'm going to have a baseball fool a soccer ball.

A: It's different, but it's still the same idea. I'd rather you get a different idea. What's yours going to be about, Ryan?

S: It's about a man who tricks people. He says he's blind and deaf. And it says it right here, it says (looked at notebook paper on which he had written), "He (unintelligible)."

A: Okay, you've already started. Uh-h-h, I can't hold them back, Mr. Miller. They get ahead of me.
S: I’m going to make mine with Popeye in it.
A: I can tell that we’re not going to have time to write if I don’t let you start.
S: Can we begin now?
A: Uh, yes. I’m going to have the paper passers pass the paper. And, Jimmy, I’ve got sad news for you.
S: What?
A: I’d like for you to write it before you illustrate it. Please try.
S: Can I staple it before I write it?
A: Yes, you can staple it to an illustration if you want to.

R.C.: The children began working on their stories. They remained busy throughout the writing period, sometimes stopping to converse with their neighbors about what they were writing.

Ann assigned one boy to write his story at the word processor and asked the student teacher to help him. The student told her his story, and she transcribed it for him.

Ann went around the room helping children as they worked. She spent a lot of time helping one particular boy who was sitting at a desk located separately from the rest of the students. I noticed that Ann did not spell words for the children, but encouraged them to "sound it out," and accepted what they wrote.
At 9:09, Ann had the students stop working and line up for physical education class. She told them that she would provide time later for them to finish their stories.

Interview Two
Date: Jan. 30, 1992
Time: 9:10-9:35 A.M.
"A" = Ann
"I" = Interviewer
"R.C." = Researcher's Comments

This interview took place immediately following the second observation. The students had been released to go to P.E. class. Ann, her student teacher, and I were in her classroom. I began the interview by asking Ann what she had done in previous class sessions to lead up to the day's lesson.

A: Well, we've done three other motifs, for one thing. We've done a rescue motif and a confrontation motif and a conflict motif. But, anyway, this was the fourth in story motifs. But Monday, we started with The Gingerbread Boy, because it is an example of a trick motif. And then Tuesday, we story-mapped The Gingerbread Boy - the beginning, the middle, and the end. And then, Wednesday, we did sensory things that we could find in the story so that they might add sensory words to their
R. C.: My next question was concerned with how Ann planned to evaluate the day's activity. This led to a discussion of her general approach to evaluating the students' writing efforts.

A: I don't give them a grade.
I: Okay, on the report card, in writing, do you...?
A: Well, we don't have to give letter grades, so it's only "Satisfactory," "Excellent," or "Needs Improvement." And, as far as a language grade, I write a long letter to the parents, and I go into detail about what their language strengths are and what their language weaknesses are. And, really, I put whatever grade I want to on the report card. I do not have empirical evidence for my grades. But I do know what they are doing, and the parents know what I'm doing. I've never had a grade questioned.
I: How do you keep up, during the reporting period, with the work the children have done that you would base the grade on?
A: Oh, I have writing boxes, where they put all their writing. And, mostly, what we do for language is writing and dictated sentences in spelling. I keep grades on
those. I do keep grades on their spelling tests, which is sort of an empirical evidence. I test them for capitalization and punctuation by giving dictated sentences. But as far as their stories, I look over what they have done, and we publish several stories, and so on. It's obvious, if you look at the children's stories, for anybody who really knows about plot and writing, if they're still struggling with it.

I: It sounds like a portfolio-type assessment.

A: Yes.

R.C.: Ann and I next engaged in a discussion regarding her views toward invented spelling and procedures for helping the students change their rough writing drafts into finished products:

I: How do you help the children while they are writing? What kinds of help do you try to give, and what kinds of help do you try to avoid? For example, how to spell words...?

A: Well, they have word books, and if they are the type child who just won't go ahead and write unless they know how to spell the word correctly, I ask them to come, and I'll just write it in the word book. I encourage them to learn to spell, or to try to spell. I'm sure you noticed when I was talking to Robert, that I had told him
"caught" was fine spelled "c-o-t," because I knew what he meant. And he was satisfied with that. Some of them come and say, "Is this the way to spell it?" and if it is, alright, and if it isn't, alright. I'll tell them, "That's fine. I can read it."

I: How will you deal with Robert later, when you change the rough draft into the final product? The word "caught"... How will you deal with making the transition?

A: Well, usually I just show them how to spell it correctly, because he's not ready to spell it correctly. I'm encouraged that he can spell it "c-o-t," because he has not heard vowels in the middle of words until just recently. He heard no vowel sounds, so for him to spell it "c-o-t" is a real sign that he is moving into the spelling stage.

I: Uh, huh. And if he uses that word enough, do you feel like it will eventually...?

A: What happens, when you do a lot of writing... I noticed that a little girl yesterday, all of a sudden, was using quotation marks correctly. Because when we edit, and then she sees the finished product, she says to herself, "Oh! I should put those!" She hasn't yet seen the comma before the quotation marks, but she's making that progress. These children, when they see
it... "Oh! That's how that's spelled!" because they've made the mistake, and they see the correction.

R.C.: At this point, I directed the interview toward a discussion of the student whose desk was separated from the other students and who Ann had spent a lot of time helping individually during my observation.

I: I noticed today that you spent a lot of time over with Jeremy.
A: Yes.
I: And I noticed he's separate. His desk is separate.
A: That's by his choice.
I: Okay. He just feels like he'll write better there, possibly, or work better?
A: He just likes to be by himself. I had him in a row, and he said, "Can I move my desk over here?"
I: Why was it that you were spending quite a bit of time with him today?
A. Because he can't do it. He can't write his own story. I was taking it by dictation.
I: I noticed the rest of the class felt free to come over and ask you questions.
A: Uh, huh. I had told them that they could come over and ask questions, because you can't really... I mean, I was fortunate to have my student teacher be able to work
with one on the computer, because you can’t really spend all of your time at second grade with one child without helping the others. But, I don’t think he lost his train of thought, and I don’t think the others were really obtrusive in their questions. They’re quiet when they come over.

R.C.: I asked Ann how she integrated the word processor at the back of her classroom into her writing program. This led to the following dialogue:

A: We have certain days they can have the computer. But today, the student teacher is going to shadow Karl all day.

I: I see.

A: And she’s a computer whiz. I am grateful for the fact she knows how to type the stories into the computer, which I don’t know how to do yet.

I: You need to learn how to do that!

A: I know, and I’m going to learn. I thought it would do Karl’s ego so much good to be able to be the one on the computer, because he, yesterday, completed a story that was not really a story. It was just a series of sentences.
I: He showed me Things I Like. You get those things published fast! I noticed it was already in a little book form.
A: Oh, yeah.
I: And he'd just done that yesterday?
A: No, he'd done that a little while ago, but he decided he wanted it published.
I: I see.
A: But, yeah, she is really a whiz! We've got all of those stories over there and all of these over here (pointed to two piles of student work).
I: That's going to come in handy for you.
A: Yeah, it is. I'm so grateful.

R.C.: The next portion of the interview dealt with how Ann motivated her students to want to write so much:

I: How would you explain how you get the class, or why the class is so interested in writing?
A: Because I think their writing is wonderful!
I: Do they pick up on that, that you feel that way?
A: I think... Don't you feel that? I value it! Every little thing they do, I value. And I just think it's wonderful, and I brag on them. And not insincerely. I really do think it's wonderful. And I'm not up-tight if they don't write some days, because some days I wouldn't
want to write. And I don't have two of my best writers here today. Karen writes... How many stories does she write a day (looked toward the student teacher)?

Student Teacher: Two or three.

A: Two or three. They take them to recess to write. They just like to write. If I give them free time: "Oh! Do we have any white paper? Can we make books?" They just like to do that. It's something they've created. It's something they enjoy. And you just have to be patient with some of the little children who are not yet ready to do it. It's helped Robert read. He could not read at the beginning of the year.

I: Do you find a correlation with a lot of the children, that as their writing progresses, they tend to improve in their reading?

A: Yeah. I fully believe that, because they attend to words. If they attend to print, they will read, eventually. And what you have at the beginning of second grade is a lot of kids that look around, who don't know that that print is print.

R.C.: Ann had previously introduced me to the first-grade teacher in her building, and had informed me that she exposed her first-graders to a lot of literature and involved them in writing activities. I followed this lead, and probed to determine if this advance preparation
had any positive effects on Ann's second-grade language program:

I: You mentioned once before that the first grade teacher also works on a lot of language type activities like you're working on. Have you found that that has made a difference in the children that you're working with now in comparison with other children in the past who didn't have that experience?
A: Oh, yes! Yes. It's like I don't have to start at the beginning. They've already had that training, and they already know a lot of good literature. It's just totally different. The other teacher was a good first grade teacher, but she did not emphasize language and she did not do any of the writing things. And so I had to start at ground zero.
I: Do you feel that the children seem to have a better attitude toward language activities after having that in first grade?
A: Well, yes, they do. They love it. And it's really interesting. If I need to know... I don't have my books on computer. That's another thing that the student teacher is going to do for me. And if I need to know where a book is, I say, "Does anyone know where Miss Nelson Is Missing is?" Some kid always knows which box it's in. They know that literature. They can find
anything I want them to find, because they've been through it. They read out of those books every afternoon for silent reading.

R.C.: My final question to wrap up this interview was to ask Ann why she emphasized writing so much in her language program. This question unexpectedly led to a discussion regarding standardized testing.

I: Okay, my concluding question today is: What is your rationale, if you can sum it up in the time period we have here, for spending so much time and putting so much emphasis on writing?
A: It works. My children's test scores are above average.
I: Test scores in what?
A: In achievement tests. They are always above the mean.
I: In all language activities?
A: Well, not necessarily in the language portion of the test, but the reading and the language. Actually, on the language portion they may not do quite as well, because we don't do a lot of the little nit-picky things.
I: Oh, you're speaking about the grammar part? They may not quite do as well?
A: Uh, huh. They may not do quite as well on that, but the reading, they score way above the mean. And I think
the whole-language activities are what make them want to read.

I: Do any of the standardized tests that you have the children take include writing?
A: No.
I: That's too bad.
A: That's too bad.
I: That's where you could probably tell the difference.
A: Oh, I think so. For me, it works. And for me, it's a much more natural and easy way to teach. It involves a lot more of my effort. I mean, it's teaching all the time. I'm working one-to-one with kids all the time when I'm doing it. I can't just say, "Here's a worksheet, and I'm going to grade it." But, I think that they learn more. I obviously do, or I wouldn't do it.
I: They obviously enjoy being at school in your room.
A: I think so.
I: You have all of them working on things they want to be working on almost all the time. You're the first person that I have come across in all my student teacher observations that has been able to carry off what you do as well as you do.
A: Thanks! I appreciate that.
Observation Three

Date: March 2, 1992
Time: 8:30-9:10 A.M.

"A" = Ann
"S" = Student
"C" = Class
"R.C." = Researcher's Comments

R.C.: I arrived at Building A at 8:25 A.M. and found the area in front of the school deserted except for one late arrival, a small boy who was getting out of a 1990 Ford Probe driven by a woman. As I got out of my car and walked toward the building, I felt a light southwesterly breeze in my face. Even though the skies were overcast, the sixty-five degree temperature made the day feel rather pleasant.

After checking in at the school office, I arrived in Ann's class at 8:28 A.M. Ann and her student teacher were working on some papers at the teacher's desk. I greeted my hosts, then took my place at the back of the room.

Most of the students were writing at their desks. One girl was at the computer, and another girl was watching over her shoulder. A boy was passing out some math papers which the students had recently completed. Several of the children talked quietly to one another as they worked at their seats.

Ann placed a box near me and asked me to look over the contents when I had time. I looked through the materials and found 20-30 books which had been written and illustrated by
the students. The pages of the books had been laminated, and
colorful adhesive shelf paper had been placed over the
covers. During the course of my visit, I was able to read
most of the books and was favorably impressed with the
quality of the work. Some of the titles included the
following: The Mystery of the Exploding Grand Canyon; When I
Have a Little Girl; Santa on the Road; and Sports.

At 8:32, Ann asked the students to be seated so she
could take the lunch count and check roll. The students
read, wrote, or talked quietly to their neighbors while the
teacher completed these administrative tasks.

During this time period, I was able to look around and
observe the materials displayed throughout the room. The
most noticeable change was that all of the poems which had
been up on my two previous visits had been replaced with
poems about the spring season.

At 8:37, the class recited the Pledge of Allegiance then
gathered around a chart on the south wall on which a poem
entitled "March" had been written. Ann then initiated a
"poetry walk" similar to the one she had conducted during my
first visit.

A: Boys and girls, I'd rather you wouldn't read with me
this morning, the poems. Just kind of read them silently
as I read them aloud, because this is the first time
we've seen them for this month. I have a certain way
that I want you to say them. So don’t confuse the issue by saying them with me. Let’s go!

R.C.: At this point, Ann led the class in the poetry walk. She led the children around the room and read the poems as they listened. The names of the poems were "March," "Wearing of the Green," "Night," "The Wind," "The Kite," "Who Has Seen the Wind?" and "Far and High." As she read the poems, Ann made a concerted effort to bring the poems alive for the children. For example, she introduced "The Wearing of the Green" by saying:

A: Now, I’m going to say this today with an Irish brogue, because it’s a poem about Saint Patrick’s Day. You don’t have to say it with an Irish Brogue, but my grandfather came from Ireland, and I remember how he used to talk. So, sometimes we’ll say it with a little Irish brogue.

R.C.: On several occasions, Ann told the children about the authors of the poems. She also established an anticipatory set by pointing out aspects of the poems which the students might find to be interesting. For example, she made the following introductory comments before reading "The Wind" by Robert Louis Stevenson:
A: This poem is by an author that you are going to read about many, many times as you get older. His name is Robert Louis Stevenson. He wrote a lot of novels, but he also wrote poems. This is one of my favorites. But there are things in this that will make you think that it's a long time ago because it says, "And all around I heard you pass, like ladies' skirts across the grass." Not many of our ladies wear long skirts that would touch the grass. But there is one refrain that keeps going on in there: "O wind, a-blowing all day long, O wind, that sings so loud a song!" It comes in three different times after the stanzas of the poem.

R.C.: On one occasion during the poetry walk, Ann used the poetry as a medium for working on vocabulary development with her students. The following interaction took place after she had read a phrase in the poem "Far and High" which told about a kite "romping in the windy air":

A: What does it mean to "romp?" (Ann paused here, but no students responded to her question.) Well, when children romp, it just means they skip and play. And she's saying that her kite is romping in the windy air. "Frolicking" and "romping" mean a lot the same thing.
R.C.: To conclude the poetry walk, Ann achieved closure by helping the children relate the content of the poems to their own experiences. She also emphasized the underlying theme which ran throughout all of the poems:

A: Did you notice any particular theme with the poems this month?
S: Yes.
A: What were they mostly about?
C: Wind.
A: The wind! Why did I put "wind" poems up in March?
S: March Winds!
A: March is the windy month. They say that March comes in like a lion (made a roaring sound) and goes out like a lamb. Sometimes it doesn’t come in like a lion because it didn’t. But sometimes, out here on this windy hill, we can almost get blown off the playground. Sometimes we got a lion’s wind in February, didn’t we? Remember that we tried to go out to play, and we just couldn’t even stay out there?
S: Yes.
A: We’re liable to get some days like that in March.

R.C.: After concluding the poetry walk and the follow-up discussion, Ann initiated the lesson proper for the morning. The lesson consisted of an extension of the class’s study of
literary motifs. On this occasion, the children would be learning about the motif involving a conflict within a society.

A: Do you remember that we’ve been talking about the kinds of conflicts in literature? Who can tell me what kind of conflict we wrote about first? Remember what Ira’s conflict was? Frank?
S: His teddy bear.
A: Well, it was about his teddy bear, but was it with another person, or what was the conflict? Jeremy?
S: A conflict between himself.
A: Alright. It was a conflict within himself. And this was what we wrote the class book about. We brainstormed for a lot of ideas about what we would have a conflict within ourselves. And then we did all the brainstorming for all of the pages, and voted, and wrote this class book. Then we had a conflict between people. Remember that was the story we wrote last week. Today we’re going to talk about a book that we read before when we were doing motifs, The Island of the Skog. I’m not going to read it. We’re just going to talk about it. Now, we already talked about this when we were talking about a journey motif. We talked about The Island of the Skog because the mice went on a very long journey, didn’t they? But today we’re going to talk about the mice in
The Island of the Skog in a different way. Because the mice had a conflict with something that wasn't between... Well, a couple of the mice did have a conflict between themselves, but the mice group as a whole didn't have conflicts between themselves. They didn't have a conflict inside themselves. They had a conflict with the society of which they were members. Now the society means where they were living and who was in charge. Who was in charge where they were living? Let's see hands. Who was in charge where the mice were living? Do you remember? What were they afraid of? (Ann paused, but received no response.) Maybe I'd better read it again. Do you remember?

S: I wasn't here that day.

A: Alright. I'm going to take time to read it then, if you don't remember it. Because this is very important. I think you'll remember it once I get into it.

R.C.: Ann read The Island of the Skog to the class. The story told about a group of mice who decided to sail from their homeland because of problems with the cats and dogs who lived there. They sailed for several days until they reached an island, The Island of the Skog. They discovered giant footprints on the island. The mice built a trap to catch the monster. The next morning, however, the trap was empty and their ship had been cut loose and had sailed away.
They set another trap by putting some honey inside a loop connected to a kite. Soon the monster, a skog, came to eat the honey and was lifted into the air by the kite. A costume fell off the monster to reveal a small animal. The mice discovered that the skog had dressed up in the costume because he was afraid of them. He had cut their ship loose because he thought they were aboard it and would leave the island. The mice and the skog decided to share the island and have a big celebration in honor of their new partnership.

A: Now, let's talk about these people and why they left the society they were in. Why did the mice leave?
S: The cats.
A: And the dogs. They had no control over their society. Ned?
S: They weren't satisfied.
A: They weren't satisfied. That's a good word. What did they say that made you know they were really unhappy?
S: They didn't like to be in the hole.
A: Alright. They said they had to stay in their hole all day long, and they couldn't come out of their hole. Yes.
S: Well, a cat killed one of the mice.
A: Yes. And a dog killed one of the mice. So they were actually afraid and they were dissatisfied, weren't they? They were not satisfied. Okay.
R.C.: At this point in the lesson, Ann initiated a discussion concerning the author and illustrator of the book she had just read:

A: By the way, before we leave this book, if I were to cover up the name of the author, would you know who it was?
S: Steven Kellogg.
A: Steven Kellogg. You can tell his illustrations a mile away. Now this book happens to be story and pictures by Steven Kellogg. He didn't always write the book. The Day That Jimmy's Boa Ate the Wash was written by another lady, and Steven Kellogg just was the illustrator. That's like our own little Jimmy here, who gets to go to Young Authors as an author and as an illustrator. He's an author and an illustrator. And that's what Steven Kellogg is. Sometimes he authors his own books, and sometimes he just does the illustrations. But you can always tell by the complexity and the intricate details of the illustrations that it's Steven Kellogg.

R.C.: After stimulating the students' interest in the book, Ann initiated a pre-writing brainstorming activity with the class:
A: If we’re going to think of writing our own stories about a group that wants to leave the society they’re in, we’re going to have to think of some reasons why people or animals might want to leave. Let your minds just wander. Let’s talk about some reasons. We’ll finish this at our language time tomorrow if we don’t finish it today. What are some reasons that people or animals might want to leave a place? Let’s put down the reasons why these people want to leave. Donald?

S: Because of the dogs and cats.

A: Well, what is the real reason, though? It’s not just dogs and cats. What is the emotion involved?

S: Oh, I know.

A: Let’s let Donald think for a minute. Alright. Let’s have some ideas from Jennifer.

S: They were not satisfied.

A: Alright, not satisfied. (Ann wrote the student’s contribution on the chalkboard under the heading of "Reasons.") What’s another reason?

S: Because they were scared.

A: Scared. (Ann wrote the student’s contribution on the chalkboard.)

R.C.: This phase of the brainstorming activity continued for approximately five more minutes. Some other of the students’ contributions included the following: afraid,
unhappy with their surroundings, being treated badly, being tormented, being tortured, being taunted, and being teased. Next, Ann initiated a second phase of the brainstorming activity by having the students think of animals that might not be liked by another group:

A: Okay. Can you think of any particular animals that are not liked by another group? Remember in The Secret of NIMH, the rats wanted to build a new society because they don't want to take from humans. And also, they don't like to live above ground. They like to live underground. So rats might be an animal that would be one that needs to move. What are some other animals that are kind of universally disliked?

R.C.: Ann wrote the students' contributions on the board under the heading of "Who." Some of the students' ideas included the following: worms, snakes, alligators, skunks, slugs, cockroaches, lizards, sharks, spiders, bees, wasps, and hornets. Following the brainstorming activity, Ann set the stage for the writing activity to be completed on the following day:

A: I think, when you think about the animals that are disliked, you are going to think of more reasons why they might have to or want to move. That's what we're
going to write our story about tomorrow. You be thinking about that, about some other animals or kinds of people that might want to move.

S: I know some people that are disliked.

T: Well, I don’t think we are going to get into any prejudice-like things. I was thinking more like a group of children might decide to run away and form their own society because they don’t like adult rules. That kind of thing. Not prejudice kinds of things where there’s no reason for their being disliked.

R.C.: The teacher explained that it was time for the class period to end and that they would resume the activity at a later time. The students lined up and went to P.E. class.

Interview Three
Date: March 2, 1992
Time: 9:10-9:35 A.M.

"A" = Ann
"I" = Interviewer
"R.C." = Researcher’s Comments

R.C.: This interview took place immediately following the third observation. The students had been released to go to P.E. class, and Ann and I were in her classroom with her student teacher. I began the interview by informing Ann of
the purpose of my visits and congratulating her on the apparent success of her language curriculum. Our first topic of discussion was her writing program. I initiated the discussion by asking what she considered to be the primary benefits derived from having her students engage in so many writing activities.

A: I just feel it works. I think it works for all areas of the curriculum. When they can write it down, they know it. And when it’s their product, they’re interested in it. They learn to read their writing. They learn to express themselves through writing. A lot of times, the shy ones will write when they won’t get up and speak. All of the language arts are valid, but the writing is, I think, the primary one.

I: I notice that when you do writing, you include the other aspects of language. You have a lot of talking involved, they read what they’ve written, and...

A: There has to be a preparation for writing. If you don’t give them the scaffolding, they’re never going to write. In other words, everything is practically handed to them before they have to write.

I: Uh, huh. The first time I came, I wondered how you got these kids so interested in writing. But then, since I’ve come these other times, I see the things that you do to lead up to it. It doesn’t just come naturally.
You’re right. I taught second grade long enough to know that if you just tell the kids to sit down and write, it doesn’t work.

A: You don’t get much. No.

R.C.: I told Ann that I was interested in finding out about other aspects of her language program. She began by telling me about her reading instruction:

A: We don’t have reading groups, but we do use the basal in a whole-group setting and, of course, it has a phonetic aspect to it. However, when they are writing, I also ask them to try to spell, to do invented spelling. And I’ll ask them, "What sound does this make? What vowel sound do you hear?" and so on. So they get a lot of phonics both ways. I think the phonics they get in their writing is really superior to what we do... But we are required to use the basal, so that’s the reason I do that.

I: Okay. And supplemental reading materials... What do you use there as far as giving the children their own choices sometimes on what they read?

A: Well, as you can see in the back of the room, I think I easily have a thousand paperback books that are my own. For thirty minutes in the afternoon, we do sustained silent reading when they have their choice.
I: How does that work out as far as their interest is concerned? Do most of them find a book and read?
A: Oh, yeah. The only trouble that I have with it is that some of them are wanting to write at that time. It's not that they're not wanting to do anything. It's that they have a story they've started, and sometimes I do allow them to write during that time. They're so interested in finishing their story that they really can't get their mind on reading a book. So sometimes, if they ask special permission, "May I write during this time?" then I do let them. Or sometimes we split the time and have fifteen minutes reading and fifteen minutes writing.
I: That's good that you give them that freedom.
A: The thing that I found, though, is that these children know those books, and they know exactly where they are. Well, as a matter-of-fact, when I was hunting for Island of the Skog, I said, "Does anybody know where that is?" And a child knew where it was.

R.C.: Next we discussed Ann's spelling program. She stated that she used the dictated sentences tests from the Scott-Foresman text. She reiterated that she thought the dictated sentences contributed to her students' composition skills. The tests gave the children practice in using proper
punctuation and capitalization, as well as developing their spelling skills.

I asked Ann about her grammar instruction. She told me that the class did not do much work on grammar skills in isolation, but she preferred that they practice the skills in relevant contexts.

A: Occasionally, I'll use little exercises just to emphasize a certain point of grammar. We did a pilot project for Scott-Foresman, and a lady came to ask me about it, and I said, "It's much too simple. It's much too easy. It's much too boring."

I: When you compare it to the writing they're doing, you have a good point.

A: For my children, it's like coming down a notch to have to do those silly pages, because we've long since passed that up. The typical language program for second grade is really too simple. They wouldn't be very interested in it.

I: And not very relevant compared to the things they've been doing.

A: They give a little space about two inches by two inches or two inches by four inches to write a story in. And that's just a beginning. I think the typical language book for second grade requires far too little, or asks far too little of the second graders. They don't
do any scaffolding. They don't do any preparation. I just don't have much patience with language books for second grade.

R.C.: At this point in the interview, I asked Ann how much she tried to integrate language activities into the content areas.

A: Well, probably not as much as I should. I do to a certain extent, but I'm kind of evolving into a whole-language teacher all the time, and this is one of the areas that I'm still working on. I'm developing thematic units and so on, but I'm the kind of a person that if I don't have it all together, I don't want to start it. Of course, we write about things that are science connected, or whatever. But I haven't done as much of that as I probably, you know...

I: By looking at these stories, that seems to be happening, anyway. I could tell that there were common themes that they tend to write about, and I just assumed that those were things that you had been studying about.

A: Well, the fact is that when we are studying something in science, and they have free writing, they're going to write about it because they're interested in that. Social studies is the same way. But as far as really developing... I have a little bit of hesitancy at what I
think about as contrived thematic units. Sometimes they contrive math lessons that are really not what the child may need in math. And we contrive connecting it to social studies, when maybe they need some regular social studies concepts presented. So I probably will never go with a thematic unit if it doesn’t make sense.

R.C.: I questioned Ann about what she thought were the primary influences that led to her using whole-language practices in her classroom.

A: Well, I heard the McCrackens many years ago.

I: When was this, approximately?

A: Back in either the late sixties or early seventies. We had a program in our district in which we tried to get away from the language text. We did a lot of this pre-writing kind of thing. We had language games. We started using a lot of poetry, a lot of literature. It was really the precursor to the whole-language movement, but we were doing it in our district back in the late sixties and early seventies. We had a two day workshop with Robert and Marlene McCracken. Everything they said made sense to me. It made sense because it was the way I’d sort of learned way back in a country school. It just made good sense to use good language and good
literature with children and build on that. I tried it, it worked, and I've done it ever since.

I: You mentioned that it went along with what you had learned back in the country school. Was this when you were in school?
A: Yes.
I: So you did pick up some things looking back on what you had done during your own school days.
A: Oh, yes. Because country schools, typically, didn't have all of the texts and materials, and so you had to do a lot of work from what you had.
I: Okay, what about college training? Do you feel like that had any influence, looking back?
A: Not really. I don't recall having this kind of training. In fact, I had a very poor language arts class. But, of course, you're going to have to realize I graduated in 1959. The language arts methods course that I took was the poorest methods course we had. A lot of the others were better.
I: Can you think of any other workshops or in-service that you've had other than McCracken?
A: Oh, many, many in-service programs at the regional education center.
I: Any that you feel have influenced you?
A: The regional education center has had authors there many, many times. I don't think I've missed one, except
last Saturday when I had to go to a Young Authors planning session. So the authors that I’ve been able to see at the education center and the International Reading Association programs that I have been to have been very influential.

I: Now that you’re trying to incorporate, and you’re still working on your whole-language program, where do you get your ideas and information? Do you read, go to workshops?

A: I do all those things. I read books about whole language, and I’m very much influenced by the McCracken stuff because I think they have ideas that really, really work.

I: Are you talking about the work that the McCrackens are doing now, or are you looking back, or a combination?

A: Oh, no. They’re still... They have theme books, thematic unit books, that are, I think, superior to anything on the market. And they teach science and social studies. They don’t do much with math. I’m kind of inclined that way myself. There’s a certain sequence that children need in math, and I think if you did only thematic units, you might miss sequence in math. But the McCrackens do writing and literature and social studies and science. And I’ve done a lot of their ideas.
R.C.: I asked Ann some questions related to her teaching career. She revealed that she had taught for "thirty some-odd years." She had taught first grade for "six or seven years," then spent three years teaching in reading readiness and Chapter I reading programs. She had spent the previous twenty years teaching second grade in Building A.

My next topic of discussion with Ann was related to her methods of evaluation or assessment. Specifically, I asked how she assessed the students' progress in spelling and reading.

I: How about the reading?
A: I do rather informal testing of reading, because I pay very careful attention. I don't always document it, even on paper. I keep in my mind the skills that the children need, and I write a long detailed report to the parents.
I: You shared some of those with me.
A: I do that. But I find, with second grade, it's very difficult to test... to write down grades every day, because they may be up one day and down the next. It's very ethereal.
R.C.: Following the interview, Ann allowed me to see her lesson plans for the period covered by this study. She permitted me to take notes related to the plans, which I later used as a means of triangulation in an attempt to get a clearer perception of her overall language program.

Lesson Plans

Ann's lesson plans indicated that she used whole-language practices throughout the curriculum. She regularly listed reading and writing activities in the content areas, particularly in science and social studies. She also had language activities interspersed throughout each day's curriculum, as opposed to setting aside a specific portion of the day to be devoted to these activities. See Appendix B for a listing of the types of whole-language practices Ann included in her lesson plans.

Principal Interview (Building A)

Date: March 3, 1992
Time: 10:30-10:50
"I" = Interviewer
"P" = Principal
"R.C." = Researcher's Comments

R.C.: This interview took place in the principal's office. Mr. Richards stated that he had been principal at Building A for five years. Prior to that, he had been
principal of a Catholic school in a nearby town for ten years.

Mr. Richards revealed that Building A housed approximately 175 students, most of whom were from rural, lower-income families. Approximately 5-10 percent of the students were from upper-income families. He stated that Ann's students were representative of the school population in general.

When I asked Mr. Richards what guidelines the district had to guide the second-grade teachers in their language programs, the following exchange took place:

P: Basically, most of the teachers in the second grade level and the lower grades work with the whole-language concept. The Bill Martin language workshops are attended, basically, over a period of four or five years. Whole language is used quite a bit in this district.

I: Is this encouraged, do you feel, at the district level?

P: I think so. I think it is encouraged at the principalship level. As far as district-wide, I don't think it is mandated. But I think the whole language is a way to approach teaching language to children.

I: Is there a curriculum guide for second grade?
P: We do have a curriculum guide for the district that lists specific things that they need to do in the language area. Right now we’re updating the curriculum because of the possibility that, as outcome-based education continues, we’ll have to go into that. So we are updating the curriculum at this point.

I: As far as textbooks are concerned, she showed me the texts that they use. Would you say that these are required or optional?

P: Most of the textbooks that we have in this school are the same type of textbooks used district-wide. In other words, we have a curriculum coordinator that works out of the board office and takes care of ordering all the textbooks. And so, the textbooks that we use in this particular building are used across the district.

R.C.: I asked Mr. Richards what types of in-service opportunities the district provided for the teachers to enhance their language programs. He replied that numerous opportunities for in-service were provided through the nearby regional education center and through the local university. He specifically mentioned the Bill Martin Workshop sponsored by the university that several of his teachers had attended in recent years.
I then asked Mr. Richards what he considered to be some of the characteristics of an effective second-grade language program. He responded in the following way:

P: Well I think, probably, I could give you an example. You've had the opportunity to visit Ann's second-grade class. I think one of the things that you probably notice in her classroom is that she makes learning fun for the students. In other words, they're considered to be a part of the class. She makes them feel like they have something to offer, thereby making it fun. They're more excited about it, and they want to participate in it. So I think, regardless of what type of approach you use, you have to get the interest of the students. You've got to be enthused with what you're doing. You've got to be able to motivate them. And I think that's one of the reasons why the second grade class here, particularly at this school, is doing very well with language arts. It's fun, but they're actually learning at the same time, and I think that's a big aspect of it.

R.C.: Mr. Richards indicated that he had observed Ann's language program on several occasions, and was very pleased and impressed with what she was doing. He also stated that he felt the parents of Ann's students were very satisfied and impressed with what she did in the area of language instruction.
Building B

Building B was located on the outskirts of town near the local university. The building housed grades K-5, all in self-contained classrooms. The student population was primarily middle-class. A large number of the students were dependents of University employees.

Teacher B1 - Laura (Kindergarten)

Laura was a brunette of average height and build. She was very outgoing and congenial both towards me and to the kindergarten children during my observations. Laura had taught at the elementary-school level for twenty-three years, the last eighteen of those being in kindergarten. She had just begun working in Building B the year prior to this study. The kindergarten program at Building B was a half-day program, and Laura taught both the morning and afternoon sessions.

Observation One

Date: Jan. 6, 1992
Time: 10:25-11:00 A.M.
"L" = Laura
"S" = Student
"C" = Class
"R.C." = Researcher's Comments
R.C.: I arrived at the building at 10:15 A.M. on an overcast winter day. Even though the temperature was in the lower forties, it did not feel cold because the winds were calm.

The school building was a single-storied, red-brick structure of a fairly modern design. A moderately busy street passed in front of the building, so I found it necessary to park behind the building. I had to pass through a busy playground to get from my car to the building, and was nearly hit by a red rubber ball which had been thrown by one of a group of "dodge-ballers."

I had difficulty finding a rear entrance to the building, and was let in through a work room entrance by the school custodian. He informed me that almost everyone entered the building through "his work room."

Laura met me at the school office and offered me a cup of coffee. I had time for one sip before we had to leave to meet her kindergarten students who were returning from Physical Education class.

As we met Laura's students in the hallway, I was immediately impressed with their friendly, cheerful mannerisms. Most had smiles on their faces, and several greeted me as they passed by on their way into the classroom. One boy smiled and said, "Are you the gentleman who is going to help us with Writing Workshop?"
As the children entered the classroom, their teacher had them sit in a circle on the floor on the west side of the room facing a chart holder on which a poem entitled "Alligator Pie" was displayed. Laura began the morning's lesson by directing the children's attention to the poem:

L: Today we need to talk about something special before we go to Writing Workshop. Do you remember our poem we've been working on?
C: Yes.
L: Okay, there's a special word in there. We have "alligator," but there's another special word that we've been talking about this week. We talked about it. What word is it?
C: I!
L: I! Did you know that, besides being a letter, "I" is a word? Did you know that? Let's look. Let's read it, and we'll find it.

R.C.: The class participated in a choral reading of the poem, led by the teacher. Following the choral reading, the following exchange took place:

S: I see two "I"s!
L: It's a word, isn't it?
S: I see three "I"s!
S: I see five!
L: You can see lots of "I"s up here. We're going to find them in just a minute. Are you ready? Now before we find the word "I," I want to find out what it means. Can you tell me what "I" means?
(Several students called out at once).
L: Put your hands up, and I'll know who's ready to tell me. Heather?
S: I love you?
L: But what does "I" mean? Can you explain it? It's hard! Okay, Ben did this (pointed to herself)! What does this mean?
S: Me!
L: It means "me." Okay, what does "me" mean?
S: It starts with a "w."
L: M-m-me?
S: It starts with a "m!"
L: If it's upside down it means you saw a "w", but it's really an "m." "M" says "mmmmmm." That's not one we studied together, but you know it. What does "me" mean?
S: You!
L: It means "you!" What does "you" mean?
S: You.
L: Well, let me show you a trick here and see if you can figure it out. I'm going to put another word in place of "I" here, and you see if maybe you think that's what it
means. Okay, let's try it. Listen carefully to know what
it means.

R.C. Laura read a portion of the poem and replaced the
word "I" with her own name.

L: What does "I" stand for there?
S: You.
S: Mrs. Stevenson.
S: Your name.
L: It stands for your name! What a wonderful way to say
it! When you use "I" in a story it stands for your name,
doesn't it? So if I wrote this story, "I" would stand
for Mrs. Stevenson! If Holly wrote this story, who would
it stand for?
C: Holly!
L: Holly.
L: If Lori wrote this story, who would it stand for?
C: Lori.
L: And do you know what's so special about your name?
Remember what's special about your name? When you write
your name, what do you have to do?
S: You have to make a capital.
L: You have to make a capital letter to show that it's
special. So when I use this word to stand for my name,
what do I have to do?
C: Capitalize it!
L: I'd have to capitalize it. I can't use a lower case letter, can I? So I have to use a capital "I," because that stands for me, and I'm important! And when it stands for you, you're important. So you have to capitalize "I," okay? Now let's see if you can find all the "I"s in here. Jacob, can you come find an "I" for me? (A student went to the chart and pointed to an "I" in the poem.) Did you find an "I"? Who else sees an "I"? Brad?
S: I do! I do!
S: I do!
L: Okay, who else sees one? (Several children went to the chart and circled "I"s with a magic marker as their names were called.) Do you think there are a lot of them in here?
C: Yes!
L: Do you think there are as many as there are "alligator"s?
S: I don't know.
L: How many times was "alligator" in our story?
(Several children called out different answers at the same time.)
L: Do you think there are ten "I"s up here?
S: Probably more than ten.
L: Now look (pointed to an "i" inside a word). Is that just by itself? If it has a letter with it, then we can't use it, can we? Only if it's by itself. Do you see another one? There's another one. Okay, I see at least one more, Tommy. Do you see another one?
S: I see one. I see one! I see one, Teacher! I see one. I see two.
L: Hold on, now! Tommy circled this, and I want to tell you why. Do you see this apostrophe... this funny little mark here? That means that is two words, just like when we write our words up there, and it's two words, so we draw a ring around it. It's made up of two words. One of the words is "I." "I'll die." So it was okay for him to circle "I," because it is the word "I." Kendra, did you find another one? Okay, we're going to read and see if we have them all. Now, let's read it and see if we can find them. Now remember, when you're reading, what are we looking for?
S: "I."
L: Are we ready?
(The class participated in another choral reading of the "Alligator Pie" poem led by teacher.)
L: Now let's just read it because we can read it. We've got all the "I"s and we've got all the "alligators."
Here we go.
(The class repeated a choral reading of the entire "Alligator Pie" poem led by the teacher.)

L: Now when you write your stories today, and you need to use the word "I" for your name, you're going to capitalize it, right? So get your writing folders and crayons.

R.C.: There was much movement and talking as children got their materials and moved to the writing center. The children sat at tables on the east side of the room, with four students at each table. There was much interaction among the students as they wrote and drew.

There was one parent volunteer who went from group to group offering the children help as needed. The teacher also circulated among the students, giving them help and suggestions with their work. All of the children appeared to be constructively engaged in the drawing and writing activities.

Most of the children drew pictures first, then the teacher and parent assistant used their pictures to probe for verbal input related to the pictures. They sometimes had the students try to write out words, phrases, and sentences independently. At times, however, the parent spelled out words for the children or wrote the words for the children to copy. The teacher had the children try to sound the words
out, and sometimes pointed to letters on a vocabulary chart on the wall.

At one point, the teacher reminded a group of children about the "I" word the class had previously discussed, and took the children to the chart to review the words. On another occasion, Laura asked a girl if she had capitalized the word "I" as they had talked about in the morning’s lesson. The teacher expressed approval when she found that the child had, indeed, capitalized the word.

I walked around the room to observe the work that the children were doing. Several of them were drawing pictures and writing about "The Gingerbread Man." One boy was writing and drawing about "A Horse." A little girl’s story was entitled "Me and My Mother," and was illustrated with a picture of a woman and a gingerbread boy.

At 10:55, a bell rang, and several of the children said, "Oh, no!" as they realized it was time to stop the writing activity and get ready to go home for the day. Laura reminded the students to put the day’s work in their writing folders, after which the children got their coats and lined up to go home.

Interview One
Date: Jan. 13, 1992
Time: 2:45-3:15
"L" = Laura
R.C.: This interview took place four days following the first observation. I met Laura in her classroom five minutes after the children had been dismissed for the day. I began the interview by asking Laura where she had gotten the ideas for the activities the class had participated in related to the "Alligator Pie" poem.

L: When I was team teaching in [named town], I was an assisting teacher, and we team taught with another kindergarten teacher. We shared our ideas and planned all of our things together for the day. That poem, she got when she was in Alaska. Then I found out at a Bill Martin workshop this summer, that is a book that was written in Australia. I have it on order, but they have to go through so much to get it out of Australia that it's been on order for six months. So I keep hoping that I'm going to get it, because I'd like to have the book. I put it on the chart because the children like the poem so much.

I: I notice that you still have that up. Have you done other activities with the poem?

L: Right now we are just reading it. Then there is another one about "The Snowman." This week we have been doing snowmen, because it snowed for the first time on
Monday! So we're doing a poem called "The Snowman." It's about the little snowman "he had a carrot nose. Along came a bunny, and what do you suppose, the hungry little bunny, looking for his lunch, ate the little snowman's nose... nibble, nibble, crunch!" So this week, when we did our Writing Workshop, we flipped it over and talked about that poem. I try to have two or three charts for each month. They're different ones, so when we are done with last month's, then I take those down just like a bulletin board. And then at the end of the year, in May, I will start bringing some of them back and we will review to remember when we did. And then we review and see how many remember, and they usually remember them quite well. So we have two or three language experience stories that they memorize every month.

R.C.: I asked Laura if she had a specific repertoire of activities that she went through with all of the poems that she used, and whether she used the same poems each year.

L: There are certain things like the gingerbread story that I try to do every year, because it involves a lot of really good things that I've built on.

I: It has a more set format of things you like to do with it?
L: Yeah. And it is a pattern story. There's also one from "(Named state) Week" that we are going to be starting on in just a few days. It was written by a teacher in (named city and state), and it's called "What Would You See?" It's repetitive. In fact, I think it was probably based on "Brown Bear" that Bill Martin does, because it's, "What would you see if you were riding along, riding along in the middle of (named state)? Would you see:...?" and then it'll say some kind of zoo animal. And then it'll say, "No, you wouldn't see a 'blank', but you would see..." and then it mentions a (named state) animal.

I: That does sound very similar to "Brown Bear."

L: Yeah. We do that, and then we add our own things at the end, so every year we add our own pages. And then, at the end of the story, it says, "You would see them if you went to the zoo." And that's what we did! It was actually a zoo trip they wrote it for. So we do that and then illustrate it. And then we do "Five Little (named state flower) Sitting in a Row," another good one for "(named state) Week". And Bob Peters comes out and does a program on (named state) animals for us. He brings the stuffed animals, and we talk about the animals and their habitats. We try to work science in with that. So not just history and social studies, but then science,
also... plus the language. So every time I can, I interrelate it.

I: And you base it on something they're interested in, too.

L: Uh huh. You build experiences, so that those are important.

R.C.: At this point in the interview, I asked Laura to tell me about the Writing Workshop activity I had seen the class participate in during my observation. I began the discussion by asking her how often her class engaged in the Writing Workshop.

L: I wish we could do it every day, but we don't have enough time. So right now, on my schedule, we do it on Tuesdays and Thursdays because those are the days that I can get mother volunteers to come in. I usually try to have at least two mother volunteers besides myself to help with the writing and the spelling and the encouragement.

I: How do you determine... or how do the children determine what they are going to write about?

L: They choose. That was one of the early mini-lessons that we had before we came back to write when we started Writing Workshop. We said, "What are some things you
know about? What are some things you could write about?"
I never use story starters. Never.
I: I noticed a lot of the children were writing and
drawing about gingerbread men. Had you studied that?
L: That is what we had done two weeks before Christmas.
We started out on our gingerbread unit, and what I did
is, I started out on Monday, and I read a gingerbread
story. And that's all we did, just read the gingerbread
story. Then the next day I read a new version that had a
different ending. And we talked about the different
characters, how they changed, and how the ending
changed. Then the third day, I read another version. It
still ended differently and had different characters.
And then we wrote up on the bulletin board the author,
and the name of the book, and how the characters
changed, and how the gingerbread man got caught. That's
what those versions up there around the gingerbread man
are (pointed to a bulletin board at the back of the
room).

R.C.: At this point, Laura gave a detailed account of an
extended literature activity her class had recently
completed related to the story of the Gingerbread Man.

L: Friday is our cooking day. And so on our cooking day,
I said, "Gosh guys, what shall we make today?"
"Gingerbread men!" They knew what was coming. So we made our gingerbread men, and there were two steps. So on Friday we made the dough, and then it was kind of a science lesson because we talked about spices, how they smell, how they taste versus how they smell, because cinnamon smells wonderful but, by itself, tastes horrible. And we talked about that they did not taste good by themselves, but they make other things taste good. So they're kind of like a catalyst. I didn't tell them that when they did it, but we went through that. And then on Monday, it's a dough, where you roll it out like Play Doh, and you mold it. So each child molded their own gingerbread boy, and we added the eyes and the raisins. And we put it on foil with their names, so that everybody got their own gingerbread boy back. Our principal came down and took them down to the kitchen, and the cooks cooked them.

I: Well, good!

L: Then on the way to P.E., we went in to check on them, and miraculously enough, they had disappeared. They ran away! So we spent the rest of the day, every special class we went to, we looked for them. We said, "Have you seen them?" And, of course, I had them. They had it all planned. The principal knew when we came through: "Boys and girls, they came through here, but all they said was, 'Run. run as fast as you can! You can't catch me!"
I'm the Gingerbread Man'!" So we kept going, and then when school was out I did not tell them where they were, because I wanted that anticipation for the next day when they came back, saying, "Have you found our gingerbread men?" I said, "No, I haven't. What are we going to do?" So then the next day, we went to one more special class and didn't find them. So when we came back by the library, I said, "Well, let's stop here." I had worked it out with the librarian. We had the school Christmas tree in the library. We worked it out, and she said, "You know, when I came in this morning, they were asleep under the Christmas tree. And when I saw them," she said, "I asked them if they would like to see a Reading Rainbow." We have TV's back in the workroom, so she says, "I invited them back here, and they came to see a Reading Rainbow. And I shut the door, and they're still in there." So we went back through the workroom, and found them, and caught them, and carried them back here, and ate them before they ran away again. That's how our story ended. Then the rest of that week we spent writing our chart story, just in a rough draft. Then I told the boys and girls over vacation I would type the story for them. So I typed the story, and we started this week in centers, and they are doing the covers. At center time they are doing their covers. Then next week we will start at centers, and they will illustrate each page. I
wrote it so that each page has a different special helper on it, so when we get done, not only do we have a gingerbread story, it's also about the helpers in our school. It's about our music teacher, our librarian, our P.E. teacher, our principal, our secretary, and our cooks.

I: Where did the specific words for this come from (pointed to the story on the chart)?

L: From the children. I said, "What happened? How are we going to write this?" And then you brainstorm that.

I: How do you record it when the children say it?

L: On a big chart. It's really rough when I write that. I think it's back here (walked to nearby table and picked up a chart from the table). When we start on Monday, I'll show them that this page matches their page. Then we'll talk about what kind of picture we want to put to match the words.

I: Is this what you wrote as they said it?

L: No. This (pointed to a less neatly printed page underneath the one that I had pointed to) is what I wrote as they said it (laughed). We do a lot of echo spelling, and like "gingerbread" we would echo spell the first time. Then we wouldn't the rest. Otherwise, we'd never get this done. But we usually all spell like "g," and then they do "g," "i," "i," "n," "n," "g," "g"... and then "gingerbread." So they know that it's made up
of letters, and when you put them all together, it's a word.

I: So it's no threat to them, but they're still seeing how it works.

L: But they're still seeing. And the ones who are ready, that really makes sense to them. The ones who are not ready, it just kind of goes (gestured with a hand movement over her head). And we keep doing it, so the next time I hope that they get it.

I: What ends up happening to the book that you are making?

L: Those books will be theirs. Each child has their own.

I: Okay, good.

L: When theirs are done, they take it home, because they are real anxious right now to get that done. Then at centers I'll have them, in groups, make illustrations for the big book.

I: Well, good!

L: And then we'll laminate this, and this will become our big book that we can go back about once a month and say, "Okay, let's read our gingerbread story. We haven't read it for a while."

I: Do you leave places in that book where they can illustrate them if they want to?

L: Well, they illustrate on big paper, and then I cut it out and glue it in here.
I: I see. I mean the little books that you send home.
L: Yes. There's a big space in there for them to make their own illustrations.

R.C.: When I had observed the Writing Workshop activity, I noticed that the parent helper had often told the children how to spell words. Laura, on the other hand, had asked the children to sound the words out. In an attempt to resolve this apparent discrepancy, I asked Laura what her views were on helping the children spell words while they were writing.

L: I try to model. I don't want the parents that come in to help me to feel threatened, either. So I try to model with them. Like when I'm at a table, I make sure that they know that I don't spell for them... that they have to sound it out. And I ask other children at the table, if that child doesn't know. I'll say, "Does anybody here know what 'p' says or what letter says 'puh'?" And they'll say, "Oh, yeah! 'P'.' So when I change their places around, I try to make sure there is a speller at every table. You know, a child that's already got it figured out. He knows what letter says what sound and can pretty much help them spell. And then, say, if somebody over there just spelled "house," and I'll say, "You know, Brad and I were just working on 'house'. If you go over there, Brad will spell it for you." And they
begin to know who the spellers are, who they can ask for help. So that almost, towards the end of the year, I wouldn't have to have the parents here. We can do some activities without parents.

I: How do you get the parents to volunteer?

L: I tell them at Back-To-School Night, the first week of school, that I have to have parents for Writing Workshop, that it's very important, and that I need at least two parents to come in to help with Writing Workshop. I have, even in my lowest schools, never not had volunteers.

I: What type training do you give them?

L: I haven't, and I really need to. I've been thinking about having an evening... The only thing is, after they donate their time during the day, I feel so badly asking them to come back. But I have a couple of moms that, even though I've modeled, have not picked it up. So I'm going to have to have an evening class and just say, "This is really their practice time, when they put the sounds and the letters together. And so, you know, it is good for them." Some of the moms like to write, especially long words. They write it out and have them copy it, which isn't bad. That's still a good practice. It's just that I would like them to encourage the children more to sound it out, at least the first sound.
I: I noticed some children had strips with the words written on them. Was that the parent doing that?
L: Yes, that was the parent doing that.
I: But your view is you try to help them sound it out.
L: I would prefer that they start sounding it out, because it’s practice time. As far as I’m concerned, the product of Writing Workshop is not the important thing, it’s the practice. I want the practice, that’s what I want.
I: So if someone is doing it for them, they’re not getting the practice.
L: They’re not getting the practice.

R.C.: While I had been observing the children during Writing Workshop, I noticed that most of them began by drawing first. I asked Laura if that was by design or if it was just a natural tendency on the part of the students.

L: That is what children most often do. What I’ve noticed is my readers, my ones that were early readers, they are the ones who choose to write the story first, because that’s how they get their ideas together. My immature children always draw first. I have children that still are labeling. I have some that never get to words. That’s why whole language works for me, because I can have children who are still drawing pictures and
they still feel successful, and they are doing what's age-appropriate for them. I have kids who are writing stories and putting pages together to make books, and it's still age-appropriate for them.

R.C.: My next questions for Laura were related to assessment. I began the discussion by asking how she determined which children are passed on to first grade.

L: In this district, parents determine that. I can say, "These things this child lacks." I can recommend that they be retained, but unless I talk to those parents all year long, I can not retain them. But the portfolio, which is what I call their writing for me, their writing folders, they're dated from the first day of our Writing Workshop to the end. It does demonstrate that they've all made some progress, but I can use those to say, "This child still is writing many letters backwards. This child is not writing sentences. This child is not able, sometimes, to even write his name yet. He is still depending on pictures, and that shows a lot of immaturity." So I've got that portfolio of their work, and that's why their work does not go home. Writing Workshop work stays in their folder. And that's why, because it's dated, and I can put their work in order, and I can see for assessment what's happened.
R.C.: During the Writing Workshop activity, I had noticed Laura directing students' attention to the alphabet chart on several occasions. I asked her what she had been doing on these occasions.

L: Usually, if they can't remember what the letter looks like, that's all they need, is just a reminder. I might say, you know, "a, b, c," so that they're learning some way to find a letter if they don't know it.

I: It was a letter they were trying to write, and you were just reminding them?

L: Yes, reminding them which way it goes and how it looks. Sometimes I write on the table. You're not supposed to do that, but I'll say, "It goes this way," and then I'll erase it (laughed). I really don't like to carry a paper around, because they feel like that's a crutch for them, and I don't want them to rely on me. I want them to rely on each other.

R.C.: At this point in the interview, Laura volunteered the following information regarding some organizational aspects of Writing Workshop and her rationale for including it in her curriculum:

L: Now, Writing Workshop does not start in kindergarten until the second nine weeks. I could start sooner, but
the kids are more comfortable if I wait one nine weeks until they get used to going to school. They understand what's expected of them and they feel very comfortable here before I spring... You know, most of the kids it doesn't bother, but there are a few that, if you say... You know, I found that more of my children think they can write than think they can read. I work very hard at trying to make them think they can read, because they can. They can read a lot of things. But it's much easier to convince them that they are writers than it is to convince them that they are readers because they use parent and brother and sister definitions of what reading is, instead of a kindergarten definition of what reading is. It's been real hard to get over that, and we do a lot of other activities throughout the day that help convince them they're readers.

I: That attests to the success of the Writing Workshop.
L: Because then they think they can read. I mean, they've written this, and now they know what it says, so they're reading. So that's another reason why to do Writing Workshop. If I had an all-day kindergarten, a little more time, you know, we'd do Writing Workshop every day. But I'm limited by time.

I: So you pretty well stick to two times a week, for both classes?
L: Yeah. We do a lot of other writing. I mean that's not the only writing-type things we do. A lot of times in our reading, in our centers early in the morning, there are a lot of writing activities, too. But, free writing, when we just write, that’s the only time we do it.

Observation Two
Date: January 20, 1992
Time: 8:30-9:15 A.M.
"L" = Laura
"S" = Student
"C" = Class
"R.C." = Researcher's Comments

R.C.: I arrived at the school at 8:23, and parked along the side of the driveway behind the school building. The playground was empty this time as I walked from my car to the building. I was very conscious of the bright sun and mild temperature (55-60 degrees) as I approached the school.

I entered through the custodian’s workroom and signed in at the office. The halls were deserted as I walked to Laura’s classroom at the south end of the building. When I entered her room, the children were seated in a semi-circle around the teacher on the west side of the room facing a "Calendar" bulletin board. Laura was talking to the class as I took my seat:
L: Okay, read to me. Right up here (pointed to a chart on the wall.) Okay, Julie, ready? Can you see it? Read with me.

C: (Reading off chart on the wall): Today is Monday, January 20, 1992. Today we have music and computers.
L: Now, I see some other things that are not correct. What do we have to do with our tallies?

R.C.: Laura helped the students determine the day's date, as well as the dates for the preceding and succeeding days. In doing this, she integrated math skills with language usage. She did this in a very interactive way, encouraging the children to participate and praising their verbal contributions. On several occasions, Laura made obvious efforts to utilize the students' interests in determining the direction the discussion was to take:

S: That's my favorite number!
L: What's your favorite number?
S: Twenty-five.
L: Why is that, Tammy?
S: Because Christmas comes after it.
L: Because Christmas morning comes on twenty-five, doesn't it?
R.C.: Laura next had the students help her determine how many days they had been attending school. Again, the students were very participative and verbal throughout the activity. After determining that they had gone to school for 93 days, Laura had the students help her decide how to write the number:

L: Okay, we know ninety-three days. It's pretty long. How am I going to write it?
S: 9, 3.
L: 9, 3. Ninety-three days that we've been going to school. Well this week the magic number will be "9," so that you can practice writing that, and maybe that will help you so you don't confuse the "p" and the "9."

R.C.: At this point in the lesson, Laura introduced the "Letter of the Week:"

L: We have a new letter this week! What's up here (pointed to a "Letter of the Week" bulletin board located beside the "Calendar" bulletin board)?
C: "K!"
L: "K!"
S: For "cat!"
L: For "cat!" What do you think about that?
S: "Kathy."
L: "K" for "cat?"
S: For "Kathy!" K-a-t-h-y!
L: Well, I think "Kathy" is going to work, but let's look back here at "C" (pointed to letter chart). What do we have at "C," Ben? See our words?
S: "Cat."
L: "Cat." What does that tell you about "C" and "K?"
Say "cat" and "kitten."
S: "Cat" and "kitten."
L: But "kitten" starts with "k." Okay? But "c-c-cat" is a "c" word. I wanted you to see that before we start. That's going to be our trouble this week, is "c" and "k," because they're an awful lot alike. What are we going to add on our song?
S: Kitten!
L: Okay...
S: Here we go!
L: ...here we go.
(The children sang an "Alphabet Song," accompanying the song on the phonograph and led by the teacher):

We will help you learn to read.
"K" will help you learn to read.
Apple, apple, ah, ah, ah.
Apple, apple, ah, ah, ah.
Baby, baby, buh, buh, buh.
Baby, baby, buh, buh, buh.
Cookie, cookie, cuh, cuh, cuh.
Cookie, cookie, cuh, cuh, cuh.
Doggie, doggie, duh, duh, duh.
Doggie, doggie, duh, duh, duh.
Elbow, elbow, eh, eh, eh.
Elbow, elbow, eh, eh, eh.
Flower, flower, f, f, f.
Flower, flower, f, f, f.
Garden, garden, guh, guh, guh.
Garden, garden, guh, guh, guh.
Hammer, hammer, huh, huh, huh.
Hammer, hammer, huh, huh, huh.
Igloo, igloo, i, i, i.
Igloo, igloo, i, i, i.
Jelly, jelly, jeh, jeh, jeh.
Jelly, jelly, jeh, jeh, jeh.
L: Here’s our new word!
(The class resumed singing):
Kitten, kitten, kuh, kuh, kuh.
Kitten, kitten, kuh, kuh, kuh.
Lion, lion, luh, luh, luh.
Lion, lion, luh, luh, luh.
L: Okay, that’s next week’s. Let’s see who our new friend over here is (pointed to a picture on the bulletin board). Who is our new friend?
C: It’s a kangaroo!
L: It's a kangaroo this week, and her name is Kathy. Not to be confused with our Kathy, right? This is Kathy, the Kangaroo.

S: Kathy's my cousin!

L: We have lots of Kathy's. Well, this Kathy is Kathy the Kangaroo, and this is how our song goes:

"K" is the kicking sound.

"K" is the kicking sound.

Keh, keh, keh,

Keh, keh, keh.

Kangaroos can kick.

Kangaroos can kick.

Keh, keh, keh,

Keh, keh, keh.

I want you to think about that. How did you say that "k" sound? You said, "keh, keh, keh." Do you remember when we did the coughing sound? How did it sound? It was back here (pointed to her throat). "Keh, keh, keh."

C: Keh, keh, keh, keh, keh, keh.

L: Can you tell the difference? It's a very little difference. It's going to be hard for us to do this, but I know you can! Who are our names up here today (pointed to names on the "Letter of the Week" bulletin board)?

Everybody knows this one.

C: "Kathy!"
L: "Kathy." We have a Kathy in our class, don't you? We have a "k" name in the afternoon, and it's "Kyra." "Kyra," in the afternoon class. "Kyra." Now, I put a space there, and I put another name there. Does anybody know that name?

(Several students called out various guesses at the same time.)

S: (Named state.)

L: Who said that? George, how did you know that was (named state).

S: I guessed.

L: A lucky guess! Well, sometimes that happens, too, doesn't it?

S: And we're going to have a book about (named state).

L: Our state is going to have a birthday next week, and we've been talking about that, so I thought maybe we could put its name up here. Now I want you to be looking for our state's name someplace else. Sometimes when you go in front of a public building, you will see this flag (pointed to flag picture on the bulletin board). We haven't talked about it yet. Whose flag do you think this is?

C: (Named state.)

L: How can you tell?

(Several students called out answers at the same time.)
L: If you look at this flag, can you match it to my word up here? Are those the same?
C: Yes!
L: Yes, (spelled the name of the state) is (named state). Spell it with me.
(The class and teacher echo spelled the name of the state.)
S: I know why it’s capitalized.
S: Because it’s a special town flag.
L: It’s a special state flag. It’s called (named state), and that’s why we capitalize it. You’re right, Tommy. Very good! Okay, I want you to be looking next week, when you go someplace, if you see this flag, will you try to remember where you saw it? Then when you come back to circle another day, you can tell me whether you saw the (named state) flag for me.
(Several children called out at the same time.)
L: Okay, he says he’s seen it at MacDonald’s!
S: It’s outside!
L: Tell them where outside, Ben.
S: On the pole!
L: Okay, if you look across the street on the pole, Ben says you will see the flag.
(Several of the children started to get up and move to the windows.)
L: Stay where you are!
S: It’s a blue one!
L: Stay where you are, and I’ll pull the blind up so you can see it (pulled up the blind). Can you see it underneath the U. S. flag?
C: I see it! I see it!
L: Now you can see it. Do you see it? Now can ya’ll see it?
C: Yes!
L: There it is... the (named state) flag!
S: Yea!
L: There’s another one in front of our school. Okay, what letter do I need?
C: "K!"
L: Okay, I’ll put a capital "K" ... *
S: ...and a lower case.
L: ...and a lower case "k" (teacher wrote the letters on a chart on the bulletin board with a felt-tip pen). Now, Mindy thinks she has something that starts with "k."
What do you have? Loud!
S: Kevin.
L: Kevin is a friend of yours in first grade, isn’t he?
Well, now you’ll know how to spell his name. What do we have to do first?
(Several students called out at the same time.)
L: Okay, listen to Mindy. What do we have first? What do we have to do to it?
S: Capital it.
L: Capitalize it. Here we go. Capital "K." Okay, spell it with me (wrote the letters on the chart as she and the class echo spelled the word).
S: "K-e-v-i-n." "Kevin." I have the same friend as she does. Me and Megan have the same friend.
L: You know Kevin, too, don't you? Okay, Martha, what do you think starts with a "k?"
S: Kangaroo.
L: Kangaroo! Okay, spell it with me. "K..."
S: "K..."
(The class echo spelled "kangaroo" as the teacher wrote the word on the chart.)
L: "Kangaroo!" I'll have to draw a kangaroo.
S: I know how to make one!
L: Okay, you have to have a nose (drew the picture on the chart by the word as she gave the description), and you have to have pointed ears, and you have to have its tail so it can hop. Okay, tell me about his legs. He has big ones in the back. What will we do on the front?
S: Real little ones.
L: Well, he has to have four legs. Are they big or little?
C: Big!
L: His front arms are big? You'd better look at the picture of the kangaroo.
S: No, they're little. They're little.
S: They're like this (traced a small pointed shape in the air).
L: They're little.
S: You have to make his pouch!
L: Oops! He has to have a pouch.
S: We're making kangaroos for centers.
L: How do you know that? You've been looking at my desk, haven't you?
S: Uh, huh. Yes.
(Several children laughed.)
L: Okay, do any of the rest of you have another "k" word?
S: Kathy.
L: Kathy! Our Kathy has the letter. Capital "K." Oh, spell with me. Capital "K!"
S: Capital "K."
(The class echo spelled "Kathy" as the teacher wrote the word on the chart.)
L: Okay, we'll put a bow in her hair, so she won't look like Kevin (drew a picture of a girl on the chart).
S: I know something! Kitten!
L: "Kitten." Let's spell it. "K."
C: "K."
The class echo spelled "kitten" as the teacher wrote the word on the chart.

L: Karrie, look at "kitten." Brittany, look at "kitten." It's kind of unusual looking. What's unusual about it in the middle?

S: Two "t"s.

L: Two "t"s! Why would "kitten" have two "t"s.

S: For "kit"... "kitten."

S: "Kit...ten."

L: You can only hear one. Do you say "kit...ten?"

S: T,t,t,t... kitten.

L: No! That's one of those things we don't know about yet, but we can write it.

S: "Kitten!"

S: I know how to make a kitten! I know how to make all the kitty!

L: There you go (drew a picture of a kitten on the chart). When you do your homework paper, you get to make your own kitten, alright? Okay, I'll take one more, then we need to go back to centers, because the "Computer Mom" will be here.

S: (Named state.)

L: Okay, capital "K..."

C: Capital "K..."

(The class echo spelled the name of the state as the teacher wrote the word on the chart.)
S: Make a flower!
L: A (named state) flower? How about if we just put the state of (named state)?
C: Yeah!
L: Do you know what our state looks like?
(Several students called out at the same time.)
L: Oops! We’ve got to go look. We’ve got to find it. Look over here. If you’ve got to know the shape of (named state), how are we going to find out?
S: The map!
L: Okay, here’s our map (pulled down roll-up map).
Here’s (named state and pointed to the state on the map). What does it look like?

R.C. Laura and the class talked about what the shape of the state was like. Laura explained that the irregular shape of the border at places was caused by a river which separated the state from neighboring states. She then drew a picture of the state on the chart.

S: We should have made a flower!
S: There’s a word in flower.
L: There’s a word in it? We’re going to make a flower. Just a second, and I’ll show you. Remember, today after you finish writing your page, we have our thank you note for "Picture Person," and we can sign it. And the
pictures for "Picture Person Day" are in the front, so look in the front of it, then you can sign your name. Very quietly, walk back to your table for directions for centers.

R.C.: The students talked with one another as they walked to the other side of the room and sat down at the tables located there. After the children were seated, the teacher began giving directions for the centers:

L: Okay, it's "k" week! What's one center you think we're going to have today?
S: Kangaroo!
L: Kangaroo. Kathy, knows that from looking on my desk. Now, this kangaroo is special because, like you said, kangaroos have a pocket, don't they? And so, inside that pocket, what do we have?
C: A baby!
L: They have their baby kangaroos. Now let me show you how to make the pocket. When you get your paper, do you see the line from capital "K" to lower case "k" (showed kangaroo sample to the class)?
S: Yeah.
L: Okay, that part, I'm going to have to cut for you with a little knife, okay?
S: Oh, no!
L: But I'll be very careful, I promise you. I know how to use a knife. I've been practicing, so I know how to use it. So on the back, if we just put the slit here (demonstrated) and put the kangaroo through it, what would happen?
S: It would come out.
L: It would fall out, wouldn't it? So we have to make her a pocket. So what we're going to do is take this piece of square paper and put Scotch tape back here to hold it on the paper. Then, when you put your finger right in here, it makes the pocket (demonstrated). And then your baby kangaroo won't fall out, okay? "K" is for "kangaroo."

R.C.: Laura then showed the class how to make a state flower out of construction paper and colored tissue paper. She told the children that they would be making a book about their state to take home to show their parents.

Laura explained that at the next center, the children would practice writing the letter "K." She had them practice making the letter by tracing the shape in the air with their fingers.

L: Okay, now, somebody told me about a special birthday we're going to be having today. Remember who told me about the special birthday?
S: Amanda.

L: Amanda, can you tell us whose birthday it is today? What is his name?

S: Luther King.

L: Well, how did you guys know that? You heard it on the news, didn’t you.

S: No, my mom told me.

L: You’re mom told you.

S: Teacher, I found out. I knew.

L: Well, today in our centers, we’re going to work on a story about Martin Luther King. He was a Black man who had a dream about everyone being free and equal. And so we’re going to find out more information about Martin Luther King.

S: His mother had a baby.

L: Yeah. It was Martin Luther King, and it’s his birthday. We’re going to talk about Martin Luther King today.

R.C.: At this point, Laura talked over the P.A. system to the office secretary. She asked the secretary if the "computer moms" had arrived yet. The secretary said she would check to see. Laura then passed out materials for the centers. The children were free to choose which activity to work on first.
As the children worked, Laura went from table to table to read and discuss a Martin Luther King story with the children. She took the children to the map on the west wall to show them where Montgomery, Alabama, was. In between visiting the tables to talk about Martin Luther King, she stopped off at other tables to help individual children with the activities.

After the class had been working on the centers for approximately five minutes, several of the students left to go to the computer room with the "Computer Mom." At intervals of approximately fifteen minutes, the teacher rang a hand bell, and the children changed activities. The class followed this format until the end of the period.

Interview Two
Date: January 22, 1992
Time: 8:05-8:35 A.M.
Place: Classroom
"L" = Laura
"I" = Interviewer
"R.C." = Researcher's Comments

R.C.: This interview took place two days following the second observation during Laura's morning break. I initiated the discussion by asking Laura to tell me where she had gotten the ideas for her "Letter of the Week" activity.
L: I'm not sure where I got it, because I started doing this eighteen years ago, and I found out that it correlated with what we were doing, and it adapts to any reading series, because the letter of the week doesn't have to be done in "a, b, c" order. It depends on what series you're using. If the reading series the school district uses comes in order, then I do it in sequence. Otherwise, a lot of the programs go in...(paused).

I: ...some other sequence?

L: Well, yeah, or frequency of use. They use the most frequent ones first, so that they know those more. It's easily adaptable to any program.

I: So the program that you use is not any packaged program, but you just developed it yourself?

L: It's been developed over the years from things that work. What I did was, I found a set of graphics. My husband is a printing teacher, so when I needed a set of graphics, he helped me find a set. Then I took one set, and I put the letter on a plain sheet of paper, and that's their homework paper. The day that I introduce the letter that's up on the bulletin board, there's a piece of paper that goes home that has that letter on it, and it's called their homework. That goes home on Monday, and then they have all week to do it. I have a sheet that the parents know things they can put on it and have. And so that reinforces. It's kind of like a
newsletter to the parents: "This is the letter we're studying this week. Emphasize it at home. Work with your child on this paper." On Friday they bring it back, and we play the Letter Game.

R.C.: At this point in the interview, I directed Laura's attention to the "Letter of the Week" bulletin board on the west wall and asked her where she had gotten the ideas for the displays on the board.

L: Well, this set's called "Amos and His Friends" (pointed to pictures on the bulletin board), the one that has the songs to go with it. That was a set that I found one of the first years I taught, and it's now out of print. So again, I went back to my husband who is a printer. He printed up the originals. We copied these (showed me a little "ABC's" booklet that had the same pictures as the bulletin board). Then I made a book for each child, and I have it duplicated. Then I went back and I just cut and pasted, and used this on the computer to make a cover. Then each child has his own book.
I: Oh, that is neat!
L: So this is reinforcement. This isn't something I do as a center or anything. This is something they can go back and do in their free time, whenever they want to do it. But then it goes home at the end of the year, and
all of the songs are in the back. So over the summer, if they’re working on something and, "Mom, how does that go?" then there’s something they can go back to, to reinforce the songs.

I: Does the book go all the way from "A" through "Z?"
L: "A" through "Z." That is what I like about the set, and why I’ve hung on to it. It’s the only set I know that does a song, and it includes both vowel sounds.

I: What are some of the other things you do during the week with this letter?

L: Okay, we review every day, of course, what these things are. We don’t spend an awful lot of time on it, because they get bored with it. We’ll go back every day and read them. If we, during the week, come up with more words, then we’ll go back and add it. This morning, when they come back, I’ll move this over here (indicated that she would move the "K" chart on the chart holder over to the "K" bulletin board), so that it’s a reference. They know we’ve done it, and then, during the week, we’ll add more things as they think of them. This is a springboard for their homework paper, because at home they are looking for pictures out of magazines that start with "k." They’re looking for words that start with "k," family names that start with "k," and they’re putting those on their papers. So if they say something about their homework, I’ll say, "Oh! Well, maybe this is one
more that you can put on your homework paper." They are making their own alphabet book like we're making. This is our class alphabet book (showed me a big class-made alphabet book). All of their pages are in a folder right now. At the end of the year, I put all of those together for each child, and by the end of the year they've written their own alphabet book of things that mean something to them.

I: What is your overall rationale behind having the "Letter of the Week?"

L: Because that makes it important. It's just like anything else. If you talk about one thing for that week, it emphasizes it, and it gives them a chance to really look closely at that letter and see the sounds that it makes. When we were brainstorming, somebody said "cake." Well, that gives us a reference to go back to, too. We can go back and say, "Oh, you know, 'cake' was on 'c' week. Let's go back and see if it... Yeah, here it is!" So you can go back and refer to what we've already done. You can add the new things. You can see why it doesn't go on "k" because it's already on "c."

I: I noticed during the activity center time that you were referring back to some things that you had worked on over here. One of the children had written an "I," and had made it a capital. And you said, "Well, good! You remembered what we did on 'Alligator Pie' this
morning." Then I noticed another time you brought a person over to look at the chart.

L: It’s just a concrete way to go back to something we’ve already done. And I hope that it gives them a beginning for using references, because our whole life we’re going to use references. We’re going to use dictionaries. I mean all of our knowledge doesn’t have to be in our heads. We have to learn how to find knowledge, and I hope that will give them a way to understand that it’s okay to go someplace else and look for some information. It doesn’t have to be up here (pointed to her head). We have to be smart enough to go look.

R.C.: I changed the focus of the interview at this point, and asked Laura to explain where she had gotten the ideas for the activity center projects which her children had participated in during my previous visit. This led to a discussion of her organizational procedures and rationale for using activity centers as part of her instructional program.

L: Well, (the activity centers) are a collection of things. I always add something new every year. It depends, sometimes, on when it falls. You know, what activities we’re doing. Like right now, it always
interrelates with science and social studies. So, since it's "(named state) Week," then we started our state book. We also try to do writing with it. You know, it's the "Senses" unit, so next week we'll add some senses things. Because, during science, like on Wednesday, at the very last thing, then we're seeing the old Jiminy Cricket films on the five senses. I love those, because on every one of them, he says, "Do you know how I know all this?"

I: "I read it!"

L: "I read it in a book." And, you know, that's Walt Disney from way back when, and it reinforces every time, "How do I know this? I got it out of a book." And so that's a way to interrelate all that back. But the (named state) unit includes reading. We've learned songs about (named state). Now we're writing about (named state), with our own drawings. And I've learned over the years, that's one terrific way to get rid of those stupid fill-in-the-blank worksheets. It's that they draw their own, and then relate it back to language.

R.C.: At this point in the interview, Laura proceeded to tell me about the bulletin boards in her room, after which we resumed our discussion related to the activity centers.
L: Every board has something to do with the unit we're working on, so they're always teaching. They don't change... like the five senses will stay up until we've done five weeks of five senses (pointed to "Senses" bulletin board on the north wall). And then the winter one (pointed to "Seasons" bulletin board on the northwest wall) stays up for three months because we continue every once in a while during those three months to say, "Well, it's still winter! That's the season it is." The cakes and the things on the calendar also relate, because they are color-coded by the season, so we have the blue month down, and we'll talk about winter again when we put January up and bring February down. It's still blue, because that's winter. So, we're kind of correlating the math: three months, three months, three months. We're trying to get math and reading in, so that they know they read in math and they do numbers in reading. Because even though we're reading "January," we're also reading the numbers.

I: I noticed that the children worked at their desks on the different activities, but they also got up and did some other activities, like tracing the "k" with their fingers in the rice, and so on. Then a bell rang. What was the significance?
L: That means it's time to clean up. That means, when the bell rings, free time is over, or it's the end of a center and we need to change.
I: What is your rationale for that? Do you just not want them to spend the whole time doing one thing and not getting to the others?
L: No, because otherwise, you know, if you give them free choice, I found, they all want to do the same things. But if they work on one thing too long, then they never get to something else. And it's still something else that they need to experience, because kindergarten is experiences. I'm building on all those things that they are going to build on in first grade, and if you don't taste a little bit of everything, then you don't know what you want.
I: Alright, what is your rationale for using your centers? What are you trying to accomplish?
L: Because it's better exploration. The children have more time to interact at their table and help each other than if we're doing a whole group thing. If you do a whole group thing, you have one that did it in five minutes and they're done, and they have nothing else to do. And then, you know, you find something else to keep them busy, and I'd rather not keep them busy. I'd rather they stay interacting with each other. I've got them placed, like at Writing Workshop, so there's a "speller"
at each table so that they can interact to help each other and they learn that... cooperative learning. By doing that, and by each group working on a different activity, then they have to cooperate at this table, with this group of children. Then that group of children changes every two weeks so that we’re developing... You know, kindergarten has to develop all of those social things, too. So we’re not only working, we’re working together. And this way they can explore better, too. It gives them more of a chance to explore the activity and develop it in any way that they want to.

R.C. Next, I asked Laura to explain the grading system that she used to evaluate and report the children’s progress.

L: We just have like a plus if they’re doing it or a check mark if they have not accomplished it.
I: How would you assess the different things when they are all working at their centers together?
L: What I end up doing is a checklist. You know, we go through and they do the alphabet for me. If they’re able to do so many letters, I write down how many letters they do, and then I write down the letters they don’t know. We’re not required to put down the letters they don’t know on their report card, but I keep a record of
that for parents. And so, we’re really checking skills rather than specifics. We’re trying to rewrite the grade card, but it’s been real difficult, because most of the kindergartens do not use centers. Most of the kindergartens do not do Writing Workshop. Most of the kindergartens do not do process math. So what I’m wanting on a grade card is very different from what my colleagues are wanting on a grade card. So we’re going to a checklist with some extra lines that we can add things that we’d like to include. As far as the writing, there’s nothing on the grade card that says that they are able to do some of the things that my children are doing.

I: I have visited some of the other kindergartens that try to keep the children in whole group activities all day long, staying together on the same activities, at the same rate, and I definitely was impressed with your system here.

L: I feel like it’s worked for my children. I think that it gives them opportunities that sitting together does not, because I do not have to stay and do worksheets. I think when you go with the whole group, and you try to keep everybody together, then you’re forced to do worksheets. You’re forced to do things where they cut and paste and everybody has to get done at the same
time. My children are experiencing the same things, but they’re not necessarily doing it in the same way.

I: It’s more at their own level and at their own pace.

L: At their own pace, and there’s no perfection. I really promote not putting stars on the papers. They know that they did a good job or a bad job or if they could have done better. The only thing that I do put a stamp on is if they practice their letters correctly. They know that they’ve done a good job. And I put a sticker on their books when they read them, because we do a lot of making small books and reading them. They know that before they go home they have to model reading that to me, and to every child that’s a different level. You know, one child has it memorized and they do it, one child’s reading word for word, one child looks at the picture and knows what it says. But we’re still modeling reading, and they know they can read that book whether they are actually reading word-by-word. So I’m trying to change the definition, to them, of what reading is. Because reading is interpreting what we see on the page to mean. You know, it’s not word-by-word. And so, my children are able to do that, on a level. When they can do that, they take their book home. Then they have something to practice with at home. It relates to the curriculum. They’re going to read their (named state) books before they take them home. They’re going to read
their gingerbread books before they take them home. They just finished their monster color books, and they read those to me before they took them home.

I: Well, your system seems to be working. From what I've seen, they're all really into their writing activities. I haven't seen them that much in their reading, but when you do the reading up here, they're all very involved.

L: They're pretty much on task. I have a couple that aren't on task, but they have other problems. The reason they're not on task is something else. I don't think it's the activity.

R.C.: During my previous visit, I had noticed a class scrapbook on a round table in the center of the room. I asked Laura to explain how the scrapbook had been made and the kinds of things that were included.

L: These are only the highlights of what we've done. We've done lots of other things that I can't get around to take pictures of. But we start out the year, the first day of school, and we take a picture of the whole group. Then every time we have a special speaker in, every time we're doing a special project, I try to take pictures of what we're doing, so the parents can see what's going on in kindergarten, visually.
I: Is this primarily for the parents, or do the kids look at it quite a bit, too?

L: Oh, the kids... This is their book!

I: Do they try to read the captions, the children, or do they want to know what it says?

L: They want to know why the words are there. They want to know what it says, and I will sit down sometimes and read those with them. Mostly, they love to look and see what they've done, and that they are in the picture.

I: I'll bet most of your kids could read "Zero the Hero" right there (pointed to a page in the book).

L: That's right. I think they could.

I: Because they remember about Zero the Hero.

L: They know this says "Zero the Hero," because Zero brought them those cards one day when he came to visit.

I: That's how my son learned how to read... by memorizing the captions on the Dr. Seuss books. Then later he knew that those words said this, and pretty soon he made the connection.

L: Yes, and it's connected. I think the writing helps along with that. I think the writing has to be there, also. Physically, them holding the pencil and writing it and knowing that what they wrote has meaning. They learn language, and they learn reading, and they learn writing just like they learn language. It works. They come to school with all these thousands of words that they know.
There's got to be something right about that or they wouldn't have learned it, and if they teach reading and writing the same way, it's natural and it's not a stumbling stone for anybody. So they look at these, and then I do put them in the hallway first for the parents, so when the parents come to pick children up and they have a few minutes in the hall, they're out there reading and seeing what we're doing.

I: Can we go look at that?

R.C.: We walked out in the hall together and looked at some photographs with captions which had been taped onto the hallway wall. The pictures were of Laura's students engaged in various school activities.

I: Okay, so what is in the scrapbook, most of those were originally out here in the hall?
L: They all come to the hall first, and then parents have a chance, and other children in the school have a chance to see them. I've even had my middle-schoolers that wait out here for the bus sit here and read all these. It's a real subtle way to say, "This is what we are doing in kindergarten." And then it goes into the book. Then we take the book when it's finished, and it goes down to the library. It goes into a special bag, and then only the first graders may check it out. It
becomes a library book, and the first graders may check out the book that they made last year. And she says it’s checked out every single day.

R.C.: I asked Laura to tell me about her teaching career. She revealed that she had been teaching for twenty-three years, the previous eighteen years being at the kindergarten level. Prior to that, she had taught fourth grade, first grade, and remedial reading. I asked Laura why she had decided to stick with the kindergarten level.

L: Well, I really enjoyed it, and I finally decided that that was my niche, that I had a talent for teaching younger children. And there are so many people that don’t like to teach younger children that this is where I belonged.

I: Was it primarily an enjoyment factor, or feeling like you were accomplishing things, or maybe a combination?
L: I think a combination. You know, I felt very successful, and I really did enjoy it.

R.C.: The next focus for the interview centered around Laura’s educational background. I asked Laura what levels she had been prepared to teach.
L: It was not pre-school. I was in K-8 program, and originally I taught fourth grade. I was also qualified core curriculum in middle school. But when I went to (named town) with my husband, the only opening was remedial reading. So I went to remedial reading, and I worked with young children. The more I worked with the young children and the sixth grade, I decided I really didn’t like sixth grade. I really didn’t like sixth grade! The only opening that they had the next year was in kindergarten. And so I took it.

Observation Three
Date: February 20, 1992
Time: 10:30-11:00 AM
"L" = Laura
"S" = Student
"C" = Class
"R.C." = Researcher's Comments

R.C.: The sun shone brightly on a mild, windy day as I arrived at Building B. I parked in the driveway behind the building at 10:25, then walked across an empty playground to the rear of the building. I entered through the custodian’s workroom, and was greeted inside by the custodian who remembered me from my previous visits.

After checking in at the office, I walked down the hallway to Laura’s classroom. Her children were just
entering the classroom after being in music class. They passed by me at the door, then went to the back of the room and sat in a semi-circle facing the teacher who stood near the west wall of the room. The teacher asked for volunteers to come forward and share the stories they had been working on. Several children raised their hands, and the teacher called on a boy to go first.

L: Hold it up, so we can make sure the children can see it. What are you drawing about?
S: A car.
L: What is your picture of?
S: A car.
L: C-a-r. What are you going to spell? C-a...
S: That's an "r."
L: That's an "r." So what did he spell? C-a-r.
C: Car!
L: Car! Isn't that wonderful? Because this is one of the first pictures that George has shared with us. Why are you writing about a car?
S: I like them.
L: Do you like cars?
S: Yeah.
L: Would you like some ideas for your car?
S: Uh, huh.
L: Okay. We'd like some ideas of other things that he can include about his car in his story.
S: What's going to happen after this?
L: What might happen after this?
S: It'll probably get crashed.
L: My goodness, we'd better find out what happens next, hadn't we?
S: Where is the car going to have a crash at?
L: Where is it going to have a crash?
S: At school.
L: Right after going to school?
S: Yes!
L: It's going to crash out in front of... Oh, goodness!
Let's find out what else is going to happen. One more person.
(Several students called out at the same time.)
L: Sh-h-h. Okay, who are you going to ask next? You have one more person to finish up with. Okay, we still have a question. George, why is this car going to crash?
S: (Unintelligible)
L: Well, hopefully, the car won't be driving down the street. Okay, thank you, George. It will be interesting to see how your story turns out. Marissa, are you ready? Marissa, what is your story about today?
R.C.: The student showed a picture of a girl, a man, and a clover leaf and read the caption beneath the picture.

S: "I Found a Giant Clover."

L: What's this word (pointed to the word "Giant") underneath the girl's picture? Say it one more time, really loud, once more.

S: "I Found a Giant Clover."

L: Okay, let's see if we have any questions for her. Do you have a question for her?

S: Uh, huh.

L: See, he wants to know more about it.

S: What's going to happen after the leprechaun?

L: He thinks maybe this is a leprechaun (pointed to the man in the picture). Is he right?

S: No.

L: I don't think so. Look at the blond hair. Do leprechauns usually have blond hair?

S: (Called out an unintelligible comment about Saint Patrick's Day.)

L: Oh! Where? Where? Marissa, do you think that a leprechaun is going to come after there? He says... He knows something about Saint Patrick's Day, doesn't he?

S: I'm not going to make a story about that.

L: She's not going to change it into a story about a leprechaun.
S: Then why does it have a leprechaun on it?
L: Okay, Marissa. Listen to Marissa.
S: What's that (pointed to clover).
L: This is a clover. Okay, what is another name for a clover?
S: Leprechaun.
L: No. A leprechaun is a wee little person. What's another name for a clover?
S: It's a plant.
L: How about "shamrock?" Have you heard that word before?
S: Yeah!
L: Another word for "clover" is "shamrock" that we use on Saint Patrick's. But you notice she didn't use that word. She didn't choose to use "shamrock," because she says this is not a Saint Patrick's Day story. Okay, but if you were writing a Saint Patrick's Day story, could you use "shamrock?"
C: Yes.
L: Sure, you could! You could change the word to make it "shamrock." Okay, do you have other questions for Marissa?
S: Is it a four-leaf clover?
L: Did you know there's a song about that? (Sang): "I'm looking over the four-leaf clover." If that was four-leaved. That one is a three-leaf. One more person.
S: Are you going to color it?

(Marissa whispered something into the teacher's ear.)

L: Well, tell her that. Maybe that's some information she needs to know.

S: I can make three wishes.

L: Why do you think you can wish three wishes? Tell her how you learned that.

S: I saw it on "Care Bears."

L: It was in a Care Bears story. She wanted you to know that. Maybe you'd like to make three wishes on your clover. Remember, there is a Care Bear that has a clover on his tummy. Thank you, Marissa. Okay, Jacob is ready. Do we have our eyes up here ready for Jacob?

S: Yeah.

L: Okay, I'll hold it up, so that they can see. Do you remember what he said his title was?

S: My Bird Book.

L: My Bird Book. Let's do it loud.

S: (Read very softly): My Bird Book. "My hummingbird."

L: Oh, he learned about that from Mr. Matthews, remember?

S: (Read the captions at the bottom of the pages in his book): "My Bald Eagle." "My Meadowlark." "My Bluebirds."

L: Now, do you have some ideas for him that will help us read the book a little bit better? I think you probably will. Okay, Jacob, who would you like to call on?
S: Jackie.
S: Are you going to color those bluebirds blue?
L: I thought maybe that would be a question. He wasn't quite finished.
S: Is it a bird book?
L: Yes, it is a bird book.
S: Why don't you color it yellow?
L: Oh, okay. She was remembering that the meadowlark had a yellow breast. He'll color it. He'll make sure that it's marked so you can see it. Evan, are you ready?

R.C.: Evan went to the front of the room near the teacher and showed his picture.

L: Paul.
S: It doesn't have no eyes.
L: Okay, listen to what Evan has to say about his picture. What are you writing about?
S: A gingerbread boy.
L: A gingerbread man! Tell us what your story's going to be like. He hasn't started his words. He hasn't started his story yet.
S: And no eyes.
L: I can see his eyes. You just can't see them because you're further away. Okay, what is your story going to be about? Do you know which version you're going to
make? Which version of the story do you like the best? Which was your favorite version that we read about the gingerbread boy?
S: I don’t know.
L: Who might he have chasing him?
S: The fox.
L: Ah, he wants the fox to get him. Is the fox going to be sneaky or cross the water? What’s he going to do?
S: Go across the water.
L: Okay, he says he’s going to go across the water, and the fox is going to get him. Do you remember any of the details about who is going to chase him before the fox gets him?
S: The wolf.
L: The wolf. Who else? Let’s ask them. Who are some of the people that chased the gingerbread boy?
(Several students called out at the same time.)
L: Oh, put your hands up so that Evan can call on you. Some ideas for who could chase the gingerbread boy.
S: A wolf could eat him.
L: No, that’s the fox. He’s already said the fox is going to take him across the water. But a wolf could chase him. Okay, Evan, someone else.

R.C.: Evan asked to go to the rest room, so the teacher dismissed him.
L: Okay, do we have someone else that needs to share today?
C: No!
L: Okay, sit right there, because I need to remind you of some things before you go back. Let’s look at our poem up here.

R.C.: The children turned and looked at a poem entitled "Wiggly Tooth" on the display easel. At this point, Laura initiated a lesson dealing with irregular plural nouns:

L: Do you remember this morning we had a couple of words that when there is one, it’s one way and when there are two, it’s another way. Do you remember the word we found this morning when we talked about it?
S: Yes.
L: What word was it?
S: "Tooth!"
L: "Tooth." When it’s one, it’s "tooth." When it’s two or more, it’s... (paused)
S: "...teeth."
L: "Teeth." Do you remember what we found?
S: Find "teeth" now.
L: Well, do we have teeth on here (indicated the chart with the poem)? Do you remember the poem? Do we have "teeth?"
S: Uh, huh.

S: "Tooth!"

L: No, those are not "teeth" in our poem. Why don't we go back and read it, and we'll see.

S: Yeah.

L: Let's read it.

R.C.: Laura pointed to the words as she read the poem, and the children attempted to read along with her. The poem was about a wiggly tooth that came out when a child bit into a piece of taffy candy.

S: It got stuck!

L: If they had used "teeth," what do you think would have happened?

S: Two of his teeth would have came out! Or maybe more!

L: Or maybe more! What would you do if you had two or three teeth fall out at the same time?

S: Ouch!

L: It would be hard to eat, too, wouldn't it?

S: I know. My sister has lots of them out.

L: Oh! We wouldn't want to change this word to teeth, would we?

S: My grandfather doesn't have any teeth.

L: Because we don't want all of our teeth to fall out at once.
S: And your sister has braces.
L: So, when you're doing your writing today, if you need to use the word "tooth" for a tooth story or the word "mouse" that we found the other day, make sure you change the form of the word, okay?

R.C.: The teacher dismissed the class to go to Writing Workshop. The students sat at tables on the east side of the room and started writing stories. The teacher had two parent assistants, and they all circulated around the room offering the children assistance and encouragement as they worked.

Interview Three
Date: March 2, 1992
Time: 2:50-3:15 P.M.
"I" = Interviewer
"L" = Laura
"R.C." = Researcher's Comments

R.C.: This interview took place in Laura's classroom after the children had been dismissed from school. I informed Laura of the purposes of my study, then pointed out that I was impressed with the number of writing activities in which her students engaged. I asked what her rationale was for having the children spend so much of their time at school in writing activities.
L: Because in my search for things to make things appropriate for every child, I found out about whole language, and I found out about Writing Workshop. I found out that was one way to make language where the kid came from. They can be at the picture stage or they can be at the reading stage, and still it makes sense to them. It's appropriate, and they're on-task when they're doing it.

I: How did you find out about Writing Workshop, in particular?

L: I was at (named university) at the time, teaching at (named school), and we had a lot of foreign students. I was really going, "Okay, how am I going to meet all of their needs?" And Jo Beth Allen, who is now in Georgia, started this class for whole language. I took it twice, then I took it again as just a participant. We started there, and got a group going. We got a TAWL group going to support the group, so that we felt like a community of writers ourselves. Then we could do it in the classroom. So I was doing research for her.

R.C.: I expressed my interest in learning more about other aspects of Laura's language program which I had not had much opportunity to observe. First I asked her to tell me more about her reading readiness program.
L: Well, that's a great debate. I just read an article the other day out of *Teacher* that Frank Smith was writing. The great debate has always been whether to teach phonics or not to teach phonics (laughed).

I: I read that article.

L: I was very interested, because we have the same battle. I guess he's of the opinion I am. Children can't rely on phonics. That is not the way they are going to learn how to read. It just isn't. I figured that out just by watching kids all these years. But it's a nice thing to fall back on. It's a nice "reason for," and sometimes they need a "reason for," something to work with. So I try to combine a little bit of both, so that they understand that reading... I don't want them to be word readers. I want them to read for meaning. But I also want them to be able to fall back on phonics, if they need to, for sounding-out skills. Because I grew up, and we were whole word, you know. When I was in elementary school, they skipped the phonics, so I had no phonics. I didn't learn it until I went to college.

I: Same here.

L: And I'm going, "Well, all of those other people seem to have something neat to fall back. You know, it's kind of nice to go, "Puh..." So I decided that I wanted my program to be some of each, so that I can use it. Again, looking for something that you can use with twenty-four
different children which I have this year and every class. None of them are alike.

I: How do you organize your reading program, or reading readiness program?

L: Okay, the way I found works best is in centers. And we do a whole group lesson. You know, traditional circle time. We start out and we introduce at circle time, and then I use centers to apply what we learned as a group lesson.

I: Okay, I have seen some of that with the poem about the pies.

L: Right. With the calendar. Uh, huh. All those kinds of things. Those are kind of our group lessons. We talk about the letter "p," and we talk about what it's going to do and things that might start with it. Then we come back, and our centers are our application when we practice. So is Writing Workshop. We practice.

R.C.: I asked Laura how much she became involved in spelling instruction with her class.

L: We do echo spelling. I think you got a little bit of that.

I: Yes, I saw some of that.

L: And it's not convention. You have to draw a very fine line there with kids in telling them how important
spelling is, because they're not ready for convention yet. They don't have the rules, and they don't have all of those things which make convention easy. I want them to know that there are correct ways to spell things, but I want them to know that the way they sound it out, until they know the rules, is fine. You've got to be real careful. But I do make sure that whenever they spell somebody's name, that a name is so important that we just don't misspell it. If they want to know how to spell somebody's name, if they'll come to me I'll spell it for them. Then we practice the correct spelling by doing the echo spelling, so they know that that is the correct way. And it's amazing. They'll spell "my," "m-i," for a long time. Then all of a sudden, the light goes on and they think, "You know I read that in a book, and it's "m-y." And I say, "You know, you're right. And you can spell it that way from now on." It makes sense to them, and it's okay.

I: I saw some of that when they were doing the writing. You were accepting their invented spellings, and I noticed the parent was going around trying to get them to spell every word right. We talked about that before.

R.C.: Next, I introduced the topic of English grammar instruction. I told Laura that my impression during my
observations was that she seemed to incorporate this into her verbal language and writing activities.

L: Those are in our little mini-lessons. That's another reason I like Writing Workshop, is because if you're not talking about things that you read and things that you write, then those things don't come up. They can be very incidental and yet one child can know those and apply it instantly, and another child, it's over their head. And I don't mind if they listen to it or not.
I: Do you ever have any direct instruction on the proper way to make a sentence or any grammar instruction, or is it primarily the way I saw it when I was in here?
L: Through the word charts, and through the things that we already know.
I: Modeling?
L: Modeling, yeah.

R.C.: I asked Laura if she could look back and determine what influenced her to begin whole-language instruction.

L: Well, I think it was finding out about it. You know, I was looking for an answer, and I found that, and it worked. I was out searching for something, and that just filled the bill. So it's been like since 1984, 1985. And see, it happened all along because we used experience
stories back then. But in college, they were still coming with neat things that involved repetitious language and using patterns and those kinds of things, and using literature.

I: They say that whole language is a philosophy. Do you feel that you had this basic philosophy before you even starting hearing about any of the whole-language practices?

L: Yes, because I always felt like my kids had to be read to every day, and they had to be involved in their stories. There had to be a high level of interest there. We had to read stories over and over. So I think that's probably one reason I really picked up on whole language, because it did fit in with my philosophy I already had, but stronger.

I: So instead of being converted over to whole language, you more or less discovered some new things?

L: Yes, I discovered some neat things I could add to my repertoire.

I: I think for a lot of teachers, it legitimatizes the things that they have been trying to do, but didn't know if it was okay or not.

L: Yes. They say, "That's what I was doing! The whole time I was doing that, and it's okay! I can do it." And that's right. And still, the hard thing about whole
language is when we get down to how do you measure it. I think we're still looking. How do you measure it?
I: Very good! We're on the same wavelength. My next question: How do you evaluate the effectiveness?

R.C.: Laura had very conveniently led the flow of discussion toward the next topic on my agenda: assessment of whole-language practices.

L: Well, I think that we're headed in that direction with portfolios. I think especially with kindergarten, with the writing. And see, it is not a part of my curriculum that I have to measure right now. But with the new state assessment program coming down the pike, it is going to be something that we're going to measure. And so, I think it makes it very easy for us to say, "This is appropriate, because look, it can be measured in this way." And that was the problem with getting into whole language. People didn't see a way to measure it. They'd say, "Now wait a minute. How are you going to tell that they've done this English assignment if you can't see it." And now we're saying that you can keep a portfolio, and that you can see that they're using that lesson, that mini-lesson, whatever.
I: And you can see the progress. What better way to evaluate than to show progress?
L: Well, I have a lot of kids that can name the rules, but they can't apply them. That's what the state assessment program is getting down to, is those kids that always knew the rules, but could never apply them. Now they're saying, "You know, they can't apply all this stuff, and they're failing all these tests because they can't work in the real world, because they don't know how to apply what they've learned." So this is one of those places where our practice is writing a story. We're applying what we're learning. In fact, we're probably doing more curriculum right now in my room than some first grades, because we're writing. And yet, I don't feel like I'm above the kids. I mean, I think I'm on level with what they need to do. They're practicing letters. I can't tell you how, but it's magical (laughed). I don't know how they learn it better, but they do, by writing it. Something about putting that "a" down on paper and knowing it's an "a" works much better than filling in a worksheet that says, "This is an 'a'."

I: Well, they're tying it to their language. It's a context with meaning.

L: Yeah. They're learning reading and writing like they learn language. But there's something magical about it. I: That's one of the big precepts of whole language: You apply learning to the children's language.
L: Uh, huh. And we've kind of gotten away from that. I think it scares teachers. It scares a lot of teachers because it isn't written down in the teacher's manual. And it's what you do with it. It's your own ideas. It's giving you that chance to be creative. So many teachers have taught out of that dumb book so long, they don't know how to be creative. I know they've got the ability, or they wouldn't have been teachers.

I: And the day they start trying to package this and program it is when it will start losing some of its effectiveness. Then you're getting away from the children's language.

L: That's right. That's right. We've already got companies who are saying, "Oh look! Here's a little package you can buy. "This thematic unit, or whatever they call it. And that's going to take away, again. We have to be careful of it.

R.C.: Next, I probed to determine if specific experiences in Laura's past had been instrumental in influencing her to use whole-language instruction. First, I asked if any experiences during her college preparation had had any discernible impact.

L: Wonderful things! Especially when I worked with Jo Beth Allen, and classes that I had with her.
I: Now this was post-graduate work?
L: Right.
I: How about your undergraduate training? Your language arts methods class?
L: No, I'm afraid not (laughed).
I: Then you went back later, specifically for some classes that...
L: I was specifically looking for ways to... I was teaching fourth grade. Then I was hired and, of course, moved with my husband, and the only opening was in kindergarten. I went, "Kindergarten! Yikes!" And so I taught it for a year, hoping I was doing all the right things. Then I went back for a workshop saying, "Okay, now tell me what I should have been teaching them." Fortunately, they matched (laughed)! Fortunately for those kids I taught that year. But then I just kept thinking, "There's got to be more, there's got to be more." My training wasn't in early childhood. I haven't taken, specifically, early childhood courses. Just other things, and lots more science, and lots more of everything that I could get my hands on.
I: Can you pinpoint any workshops or in-services that you feel were helpful?
L: Well, I'm not sure. Well, Bill Martin is wonderful. He's a really good reinforcer. I had already been to
most of those things with Jo Beth, though. But Bill Martin, especially. And belonging to the TAWL group.

I: Do you still participate in that?

L: I still belong. Of course, it's five hours to there. That's the closest TAWL group. We have one that's thinking about starting. Around here we're working through IRA into a TAWL. We're not there yet, but they're beginning. IRA is branching out and beginning to look more like a TAWL group. And there is one in Missouri, but I haven't gotten a hold of the people over there to find out when they meet and that kind of stuff.

I: I think that one in Missouri was the first one. One of the first, or probably the first. At Columbia.

L: Uh, huh. The one in Columbia. Yeah. That's where we used to go to our workshops and things, over there.

I: Okay. Then I was going to ask about visiting authors. You mentioned Bill Martin has had an influence.

L: Uh, huh. Bill Martin and the books by Lucy Caulkins, you know, Frank Smith...

I: Yeah, I was going to ask next about reading. So you've read some of the works by some of the people in whole language?

L: Yes. I have a lot of those. I have a lot of those (laughed). There's no other way to keep current on what's going on and what people are trying and what's working and how to assess it. Those things that I'm not
sure about, I wasn't getting any place else. So I do a lot of reading. That's one good thing about the TAWL groups. I'm still getting the TAWL newsletter from my former group, and that's one neat thing about it. It reviews those new things that are coming out and says, "Here's a really great book!" There's a new one out Laura Heller wrote. She was connected with (named university). Some of the pictures are of colleagues that I taught with in (named city), and they're going, "Wow, I know all these people! Let's read this!" And go on to Donald Graves, you know. We did this with Jo Beth Allen. We did a conference call with him. So we got to talk to him. We didn't see him, but I saw him later and met him and got him to sign my book. But, you know, one-to-one, we're just like kids. One-to-one experiences, we learn a lot (laughed)! I also get the Wright Company book, and it reviews a lot of the books. A lot of the whole-language authors are going through there, and there are reviews in the front of it, too. New ones. So you have some idea, at least grade level, how it's going to apply.

R.C.: Following the interview, Laura allowed me to see her lesson plans for the period covered by this study. She permitted me to take notes related to the plans, which I was
able to use as a means of triangulation in order to gain a clearer perception of her overall language program.

Lesson Plans

A review of Laura’s lesson plans showed that she centered her entire curriculum around whole-language principles. Almost every lesson she had in her plan book allowed for language expression of some kind. When the students were not verbally interacting with her or with one another, they were to be engaged in some kind of activity involving reading or writing. Even her plans for math instruction regularly included verbal interaction and reading activities. See Appendix B for a more complete listing of the kinds of language activities listed in Laura’s lesson plans.

Principal Interview (Building B)

Date: February 20, 1992

Time: 11:05-11:20 A.M.

"P" = Principal

"I" = Interviewer

"R.C." = Researcher’s Comments

R.C.: This interview took place in the principal’s office. Mr. Jacobs and I were alone in his office for the duration of the interview. Mr. Jacobs stated that he had been principal of Building B for the past 22 years.
Approximately 290 students attended the school. When asked to describe the characteristics of the student population in his school, Mr. Jacobs replied that up until around ten years ago, the school had been relatively isolated from some of the problems that the other schools in town faced. However, in recent years, he felt his school had had as many academic and disciplinary problems as the other schools.

I asked what guidelines the district provided for the kindergarten teachers to assist them in their language programs:

P: Well, we have a written curriculum guide that we follow. Every teacher has a copy of that and knows the objectives. And in that, we also have ways to reach those objectives - activities and lists of materials that we provide that can be used. But we're not limited to any of the materials. We do have the objectives, and they're written, and they follow the curriculum guide. I: What about textbooks at the kindergarten level? Or workbooks?

P: Well, we do have some textbooks that are offered. In Laura's program, she doesn't use them all. She doesn't use the one in math, and she doesn't use the one in reading very much because she has her own way of doing both of those activities.
R.C.: Mr. Jacobs stated that the teachers in his building were given a lot of leeway in developing their language programs as long as they met the district's objectives. They were free to use materials and approaches of their choosing, but were tied in to meeting the specified objectives.

I asked Mr. Jacobs what kinds of language arts in-service opportunities were provided for the kindergarten teachers in the district. He replied that a variety of activities were provided through the regional service center, the local university, and the professional organizations that some of the teachers belonged to.

Next, I asked Mr. Jacobs what he felt were some of the characteristics of a good language arts program at the kindergarten level:

P: Well, I think that kindergarten is a lot different and much less academic in their approach to language than any other grades that we've got. I think, probably, a lot of the children's experiences... looking at those, and looking at things in more of a whole setting, rather than the parts that we try to teach to some of the other grades. So, a kind of a whole way of looking at language.

I: Do you feel that that's the district's philosophy, too?
P: I think that we have the flexibility to look at that. I think that our district is struggling with the philosophy for kindergarten. We have some kindergarten teachers that want to be very academic, and we have some others that feel that that's not the way to be at this age for children. So, there's a difference. I think we have the flexibility to allow both of those. And Laura, of course, does not look at needing the academic work for the children. And we don't require that. We think that her program is doing very well. In fact, it shines, because we have a lot of interest in other teachers coming to observe her, and she's always requested by other teachers to come and visit their staff.

I: How about the parents? How well is she received by them?

P: I think, very well received by the parents, because they can see the progress that the children are making and they can see that it's a natural kind of a thing - not introducing anything that's foreign to them at all, using the things around them that they know every day, and making learning a natural thing rather than taking them through a lot of paperwork that would be, perhaps, unnatural.

R.C.: I asked Mr. Jacobs how much financial support the district provided for the teachers to develop their language
arts programs. He stated that he had a building budget and made every effort possible to support the teachers in their programs. In fact, Laura had made several requests for extra materials, and he had never yet had to turn her down.

Mr. Jacobs expressed approval for Laura's language program and for her teaching abilities in general. He indicated that he particularly liked the fact that her entire curriculum was so interrelated and cohesive.

**Building C**

Building C housed approximately 300 students in grades K through five. Approximately 40 percent of the students were on the reduced or free lunch program, which was indicative of the socio-economic conditions of the surrounding community. There were, according to the building principal, Mrs. Johnson, a large number of single parent families in the community. Mrs. Johnson reported, however, that the school did not have any more students in special programs than other schools in the district.

**Teacher C1 - Beth (First Grade)**

Beth was an outgoing, friendly teacher who exuded a high-energy level on each occasion that I was around her. She was slight of build, and had short, rather curly, brown hair. Beth was in her middle forties, and had been teaching
for eleven years. She had taught third grade in Building C for five years before moving to first grade the previous year.

Observation One
Date: January 15, 1992
Time: 11:30-12:15
"B" = Beth
"S" = Student
"C" = Class
"R.C." = Researcher's Comments

R.C.: I arrived at the school fifteen minutes early on a bitterly cold winter day. The temperature was in the mid-teens, but a brisk northerly wind dropped the chill factor to the sub-zero mark.

The school was located in a lower socio-economic area, with many poorly-maintained, small frame houses in the immediate neighborhood. The building itself was a red-bricked two-story structure of a 1930-ish style architecture. Many of the rooms had window-unit air conditioners. There was a small playground surrounded by a chain-link fence on the west end of the building, and all other sides of the school grounds were bordered by residential streets.

I parked on the street in front of the building, and as I left my car, I noticed several parents letting small
children out of their cars for P.M. kindergarten class. When I entered the building, I saw several children lined up outside the kindergarten doors.

I reported to the office, explained to the woman at the secretary's desk who I was, and was given directions to Beth's first grade class. As I walked down the hallway toward Beth's classroom, I noticed that the ceilings in the hallway were very high. The building, in general, left the impression of being very old, but well-maintained. Much student work was displayed in the halls, and the building and classrooms were clean and uncluttered.

When I reached Beth's classroom, her students were just returning from lunch. I entered the room ahead of the children and sat in a chair at a small table in the back of the room. As the students entered the room, most were visiting quietly with one another.

As I looked around the room, I was immediately impressed with the amount of print that was on display. There were several poems and posters with captions displayed on the walls. Many children's books were in evidence at various locations around the classroom. A big book (approximately 12" X 18") was displayed on an easel at the front of the room. After the children had entered the room, the teacher had them sit in a semi-circle around her facing the big book. When all the children had settled in, Beth initiated an extended literature activity related to the big book. I
have included extensive dialogue in an attempt to capture the essence and flavor of the lesson.

B: Okay, we're going to be looking at our big book today. Alright, Timmy (called on a student who had raised his hand).

S: I made this book and maybe I'll bring it tomorrow. It's called (unintelligible). It's funny. I made it up.

B: Did you make it yourself at home.

S: I did.

B: That's great. Will you bring it and share it with us? Okay, we started this book yesterday. And what was the name of the book? Anna, can you tell me?

S: Huggles' Breakfast.

B: Huggles' Breakfast. Who can come up and find Huggles on the front of this book? Matt, can you?

(The student pointed to the picture on the front of the book.)

B: Super! Who can describe Huggles to me, how he looks on this page? How about it, Sharon?

S: Well, he has a big body and a big nose.

B: Okay. Well, not too big, is it?

S: He's got yellow eyes, and yellow teeth, and a yellow belly button.

B: Yeah, that's one of the first things you noticed about him yesterday, wasn't it? Brian?
S: It looks like he ate the moon.
B: Why do you say that?
S: It looks like it.
B: Why does it look like he ate the moon?
S: Because it looks like the moon.
B: What looks like the moon?
S: His belly button.
B: Oh! Okay. How does that look like the moon?
S: It's oval, and it's yellow, and shiny.
B: Good idea! Okay, let's take a look at our story together. Yesterday you guys had some wonderful ideas about all the things that he might be able to eat for breakfast. Let's take a look at our story. Let's read it together. I want your eyes up here on the words and read with me.
C: Huggles' Breakfast!
B: Good job! Read.
C: A carrot.

R.C.: The teacher covered up the extreme right hand portion of the page with a strip of blue construction paper as the children read from the page. I learned later that she was covering up a small drawing on each page which gave a clue as to what was going to be on the next page.

S: What is that blue thing?
B: What is that?

S: A piece of paper.

B: That's covering up my page, isn't it?

S: You put it on there.

S: It's a piece of paper.

B: Yeah, but I wonder what's on the next page?

S: A drawing of Huggles.

B: Do you think Huggles is on it?

S: A piece of cake!

S: Huggles' mother! Huggles' mother.

S: He's eating cake.

B: Are you sure?

S: I remember.

B: Let's look and see. Janet says, "Watch him!" Let's check her out. Are you ready? All eyes on the blue paper.

S: Yeah!

B: Shh. I'm going to the next page. What's on the next page? Does anybody remember? Okay, I'm turning the page. Amanda?

S: What do you think's on the next page?

B: Now don't tell us why, okay? Let's see if she's right.

(The teacher turned the page and several students called out at the same time).

B: What does this say?
C: A fish!

B: Who can tell me what they think is on the next page? Kelly?

S: A bone.

B: A bone. Let's see if she's right. Is she? Is she right? Let's read it.

C: A bone.

B: Who thinks they know what will be on the next page? Karen?

S: A banana.

B: Will you be right? Are you ready?

S: I know what it is.

B: Okay, let's read it.

C: A banana.

B: Who can tell me what's on the next page? Jessica, what about it?

S: A sausage.

B: She thinks it's a sausage. Are you sure? Ready? Eyes on the blue paper. Let's read what it says.

C: A sausage.

(Several students called out at the same time):

"Ring, ring."

B: Oh, I think you're figuring it out. What's going to be on the next page? What about it? Tad, what do think is on the next page?

S: A phone.
B: Are you ready (turned the page)?
C: Ring, ring.
B: Was Tad correct?
C: Yes.
B: We had such good detectives. Did anybody figure out how they were able to tell? Who can figure that out? Kami, how about it?
S: Because it shows how the picture on the next page will look.
B: Did anybody notice that?
C: Yes!
B: Let's check back and see. Let's read what this says (turned to the title page).
C: *Huggles' Breakfast*
B: This says, "A carrot." What do you see over on the side of the page? Ned, what do you see? What do you see along with Huggles and his carrot?
S: I know!
B: Do you see anything else on that page?
S: A cake.
B: A cake. So do you think that might lead to an idea for us?
S: Yes.
B: What does it tell us? Elaine, what does it tell us?
S: The next picture may be a cake.
B: Do you think Elaine is correct?
S: Correct.
B: She is. Let's read it.
C: A cake!
B: What do you see in this picture besides Huggles and the cake, Kelly?
S: A fish.
B: A fish. Let's read it.
C: A fish!
B: Who can come up and show us a clue on this page and point to it? Bill, how about you? Come up and point to it. A part of a...
C: ...bone.
B: Do they have to draw the whole thing?
S: No.
B: No. They just drew you a little bit of it, didn't they?
S: A little bit.
B: And we have a clue. Let's read it.
C: A bone.
B: What's down at the corner of this page? Josh?
S: A banana.
B: A banana. Let's read it.
C: A banana.
B: And we know it's going to be...
C: ...a banana.
B: A banana, okay. Who can come up and find a clue on this page? Brett, how about you? And sure enough, what do we take out of the pan?
S: A sausage.
B: Where is the clue on this page? Matt, come up and show us.
S: Ring, ring.
S: A telephone.
B: A telephone, and sure enough...
C: Ring, ring!
B: Now let's shift around this way.
(The students shifted places and positioned themselves in front of a chart entitled "Huggles' Breakfast.")
B: Eyes up here. You wrote some neat things yesterday about other things that Huggles could eat for breakfast. And we put your what...
S: Initials.
B: Your initials. Today we're going to read it. I'm not going to point to anybody. I'm not going to give you a clue. Let's see if you can read what you wrote down yesterday. And if you can't, we'll help you. Are you ready? Let's read this part together (pointed to title).
C: "Huggles Breakfast."
B: Here we go.
S: A pizza.
S: A book.
S: Ice cream.

R.C.: The children read the rest of their contributions which included the following: a penguin, a human, an Icee, a fire truck, a thousand thistles, a toilet, biscuits and gravy, a giant, a horse, a spider, an apple, a cow, a carrot, one bathroom slipper, a sweatshirt, and a bathtub. After the sharing period, Beth initiated the following exchange:

B: Some of you asked, yesterday, if we were going to make a book out of this. I think we will! Now let’s think for just a minute. I would like you to make a page to read and display. I would like for you to make your page that you suggested. I want one page. Then we’re going to put them all together like we have in our "H" book.

S: Do we have to make the one that had one thousand thistles in it?
B: I think you’re going to have to draw one thousand thistles, Kevin.
S: Ohh...
B: We may talk about that.
B: I would like for your parents to have to do what you just did for that book. How could we do that? Alright,
we'll take it home. What's something else we could do to make it similar to what you guys had to yesterday? What was going to be on the next page? How in the world could you do that?
S: I know!
B: Kelly, give your idea (paused and waited for student to respond). Do you know what you want here? Just think about it, and we'll come back to you when you think of it. Elaine?
S: We could turn the book where the back of the book will be in front.
B: Okay, we could do that. We could do that. Melissa?
S: You could color another paper over the picture that should be at the end, and put a piece of paper over it.
B: Okay. Lisa?
S: Make it words where you have to read it.
B: We could do that. We could come up with words to read. John?
S: Make it in order and then, just look up there and put that one that's after it on top of it in the picture.
B: Okay. John, can you say it again real loud.
S: Just put them in order, and then we can look up there and make a picture of the other thing beside it.
B: What would you do, Garner, if Kelly draws Huggles eating a what... say, a pizza? What should she put real
small down in the corner of her picture? Kelly, do you know?
S: Huggles reading a book.
B: Well, we’ll do that. What else? Anybody know what John suggested that we should put in the corner? Kami?
S: We should write what, uh...
B: Keep on, keep it going.
S: We should write what we have drawn.
B: Well, we’re going to put a picture to do that.
S: We could draw half of a book.
B: Okay, let’s do what she says. Elaine, say it again a little louder.
S: We could draw half of a book.
B: Okay, when Kelly draws Huggles eating a pizza, down in the corner, then you would draw a half of...
S: ...a book.
B: A book. So that John’s guess is what’s going to be on the next page. Now, what would you draw next? Carl, what would you draw? Huggles eating a...
S: ...book.
B: Book. And what would you draw a little tiny picture of down in the bottom of your page, or to the side of your page? Do you you know what you would draw? What comes next?
S: A word.
B: Okay, not the word, but what? A picture of what will be on the next page. Brett, what does it say?
S: Ice cream.
B: Ice cream. So Carl, you’re going to draw a tiny picture of what?
S: Ice cream.
B: Brett, you’re going to do ice cream. What are you going to draw a tiny picture of?
S: Celery.
B: Good! Okay, and who is the celery person?
S: Janet.
B: Janet. Janet, what are you going to draw a tiny picture of?
S: A penguin.
B: Okay, who has the penguin?
S: Bill.
B: Bill, you’re going to draw a picture of a penguin, and you’re going to draw a little tiny picture of what?
S: A human.
B: A human. I think you’re getting the idea. John, you’re going to draw Huggles eating a...
S: ...human.
B: Human, and you’re going to draw a little hint of what?
S: An Icee.
B: An Icee. Kelly, you're going to draw Huggles eating an...
S: ...Icee.
B: An Icee, and then you're going to draw a hint, in the background, of what?
S: A fire truck.
B: Right! Do you get the idea? Okay! I will be around to help you if you forget what you're supposed to draw little tiny. Now, it can be just half of it, or if yours is a banana, you can draw the stem of...
S: ...a banana.
B: A banana. Okay. If you wanted to draw a book, you could just draw a page out of the book. What are some of the other things that we could do on here?
S: I know!
B: Lisa, do you have any other ideas?
S: When you have a jet, you could draw a thing like... (drew propeller shape in the air with her fingers) in front of it.
B: Like the front of it? Like the propeller in the front? Any other ideas? Frank? Any other ideas on here?
S: When you have a fire truck, you can draw a little piece of fire.
B: I'm going to send you back to your desks. I want you to draw a picture of who?
C: Huggles!
B: Huggles. And he’s going to be eating, or getting ready to eat. Which one would you like, Jeff?

S: I want to draw the Icee, and when you’re drawing the part of the next one in the corner, you just draw a fire truck’s ladder.

B: Okay! Did you hear what he said?

S: Yeah!

B: Okay, good idea. Alright, when we draw Huggles what color should he be?

C: Purple!

B: Should he take up that much space on the paper (indicated a small space in the center of the paper)?

C: No!

B: Now, don’t forget to leave room at the bottom of your paper to write what you’re drawing. For example, Kelly will write "a pizza" at the bottom of hers. Any questions? Kami?

S: Why couldn’t you just cut those out in little strips and glue them on the page of the book?

B: That’s not a bad idea. You know, I’ll think about that. This time I think I’ll let you write it in your words. Will that be okay?

C: Yeah, yeah.

S: Can I paint Huggles?

B: We have done that before.

S: Yea!
B: No, this is going to be done with your crayons. Any questions about what to do? Now, later on some of you asked me if you could write your own book. After we do our book together, if some of you would like to write your own book, you may certainly do that.

S: Do we have to put ours in it?

B: No. You can put whatever... It's your choice. It's your book, John. You can do whatever you'd like to.

S: Can I draw a piece of a pizza?

B: Yes. Did you hear what Kelly said? Kelly doesn't have to draw a whole pizza. She can draw a what? A slice of pizza.

R.C.: Beth passed out paper to the students and directed them to return to their seats and start working on the project. Most of the children got right to work. Several talked to their neighbors about their projects for a minute or two, then began working.

Throughout the duration of the activity, most of the children worked for several minutes, stopped to share their work with a neighbor, then got right back to work. Several of the children got out of their seats and approached the teacher for help, and she reminded them to raise their hands for help. She went from child to child offering suggestions and encouragement throughout the duration of the activity.
Interview One

Date: Jan. 15, 1992
Time: 12:20-12:45

"B" = Beth
"I" = Interviewer
"R.C." = Researcher’s Comments

R.C.: This interview took place immediately following the first observation. The students had been released to go to music, and Beth and I were alone in her classroom. I began by asking Beth where she had gotten her ideas for the extended literature activity which I had witnessed during my previous visit to her classroom.

B: Right now I am developing my whole language program. I have purchased, on my own and through the school, many big books. Now, what I am doing is, if I have a specific skill we are doing in reading with my regular reading book that I am trying to reinforce, I try to find a big book that I can pull out of. Not always, because sometimes the big book is so good in itself that I use it just for the language.

I: Did this particular one correlate with something you were working on?

B: Yes, this morning we had, in our reading series, predicting things from looking at the pictures.

I: You chose a good one to go along with it!
B: It really is. I don't want to mislead you. I get a lot of ideas out of books, but this one was my own because of the predicting. This is very simple, so they could follow along and understand.

I: So, you had the big book, and you made the connection in your mind that it would be good with the lesson?

B: Yes, I just made the connection in my mind. There are some suggestions that go along with this book that don't even talk about predictions.

I: And the format of the big book is set up for predicting what happens on the next page.

B: They would probably have been able to read this on their own, but it's still a good book, and it's a good one to make a big book from. Now I can really tell if they understand when they get done if their pictures show me.

R.C.: During my previous visit, it had been apparent that the class had already completed some activities related to the big book about Huggles. For example, they had completed the language experience activity which Beth had recorded on the chart at the front of the room. I asked Beth to describe the activities the students had previously accomplished related to the book.
B: Yesterday, I introduced the book. I read it to them, and we read it together. "You guys can think of some other things that Huggles might eat for breakfast." And see, I love this whole language because they can suggest anything, and I can accept it. Some of this might be pretty silly to someone else, but I've learned by experience. Like when George said "a human," I wanted to go "Oooh, choose something..." My inner instincts said, "Choose something else, George." But if I just leave it alone, it's better off. If you even question anything that they donate, then you can feel... It's a closed feeling. So anyway, what I did yesterday, was I put "Huggles' Breakfast" up there (pointed to the chalkboard) and then each child, boy, they're ready. They've got a billion things, each of them. They were already asking me yesterday, "Can I write my own book?"

I: Well, good! Great!

B: You heard someone ask me this morning, "When can we do this?"

I: Yes, they seemed ready.

B: And Jeff is writing one at home.

I: I noticed their reaction when you said, "And now we'll do our big book," and they all were saying, "Good!"

B: Yes, they were ready to go. Then I wrote what they said and their initials. And, Frank, that's all I do. I
just ask them to raise their hand, and they give me what they want with their initial, and then I go right back and they have to read what they said. And I'm amazed, they even learn each other's initials. You heard them reminding each other, "Jenie, that's yours." You know, they all knew her initials, and that she ought to say something.

I: Did you write that (pointed to language experience chart) as they said it?
B: As fast as I can.
I: You're a good fast writer!
B: I'm getting better! I wasn't good at the beginning of the year (laughed). But, I can get it out pretty fast now. You can see that sometimes I get it on the wrong line. I'd like to have two spaces between each one but sometimes I'm writing so fast... But I write it in different colors, because colors catch the children's eyes. It also helps the child if he remembers, "Gee, mine was the green one on that page!" And they'll use this, Frank, for a jillion different things. Sometimes when they have a little free time, they may choose one of the things just because it seems like some of them are fascinated with a "thousand thistles." That was Don's idea. We had a book called Yuck Soup. We read Yuck Soup, and did a lot of brainstorming about "yucky soup." Then we changed it the next week to "yum soup." We made
a big book from it, and it was very easy. I just made the pot and we put it together in no time.

R.C.: At this point, the interview changed directions as Beth began explaining how the class had produced a big book and participated in other activities related to a commercial big book called *Yuck Soup*.

B: This is *Yum Soup* (pointed to a big book the children had made). The things that they suggested, they colored, and cut it out, and I took just exactly what they colored and cut out, and put it over the pot. It only takes a second to get this book put together. The faster I do them and put them together and get them back out here for the kids, the better off they are. Don't get me wrong, sometimes we try to make a beautiful one. But if I take my time and try to make it too beautiful, by the time you get it back to the kids, m-m-m, you know... Then, after we did all this, we made "yum soup." They each brought what they suggested. They all had good ideas. Several of them would suggest the same thing, and that's O.K. They told the things they brought and the whole works. And like I said, I put this one together overnight. We did this right the day before Thanksgiving, so they really enjoyed it.
R.C.: Next Beth volunteered information related to some books that her students had recently written:

B: They've been writing some books on their own. We read a big book called *Shopping*, and they made their own little books. We read *Freight Train*. I don't know if you noticed the paintings in the hall...

I: No, I'll look at them.

B: You look at them. We read *Freight Train* by Don Cruz. It's an excellent big book, and it's to review color words. And then we painted a freight train and put it out in the hall. They all got to choose the car that they wanted to paint, and then we wrote books called *Freight Train*. Now on that one, what I did was, after we had read the book a couple of times, I closed the book and said, "Now, tell me everything you remember about this book." They could tell me every phrase out of that book. I wrote it just like that. Then I said, "You design your own book." And see, they could just take what they wanted off of that and try their own. Then there were other children who would deviate from that. Elizabeth actually wrote one called *The Lost Train*.

I: I noticed that she does good work and works really hard.

B: Yes, and that's fine. But, I like starting out giving them a pattern, because that gives the ones who are
threated by this... They feel comfortable and eventually, hopefully, they'll grow and go off on their own, too.

R.C.: I asked Beth if she had a standardized format for her extended literature activities, or whether she varied the format depending on the nature of the lesson.

B: I change it all the time. We don't always make a class book, we don't always paint, we don't always predict. We just do something different each time, and I try to vary it. I would like, if I ever got good enough, to base my reading upon this. But I still use the basal. I do both of them. But I find this is an excellent format for reinforcing, and I consider it a teaching tool just like the basal.

R.C.: At this point, I probed to try to get an indication of Beth's thoughts regarding how her principal and district officials would feel if she were to base her language program entirely on literature-based instruction.

B: I honestly believe my principal has given me the okay on this. I honestly believe that if I could show them that I am teaching the curriculum, you know, the goals and objectives in the curriculum, and I have documented
that I am doing it, that I could do it. Now, I don't know if I'll ever reach that point. I still like the basal, too. I like doing both. I see no problems with it. I don't want to rule out one for the other. When I first came down to first grade, one of the things that the other first grade teachers did was drill and drill on sight word vocabulary. It didn't connect with the reading book. It may have been ahead of it or behind it. I didn't feel that it helped them to practice the words that we have covered. You know, just per se, to take a list of six words to study. I have so many children who would not learn... When I first came down here it was a totally phonics-based program. Alright, I have half of a class here who do not speak correct language. They do not say their sounds correctly at home, and it is very difficult for them to learn language along with that phonics-based program. Now, don't get me wrong. They can be taught and they can be reinforced with the activities in here, but it all needs to be part of something, and this I like. Because I can go up there (pointed to big book), and I can go through the same book and take each one of the words and teach long and short vowels. And they love it. You could tell how excited they were. They don't get that excited over the reader (laughed). I: They definitely wouldn't get that excited over a chart of words!
B: And what's nice is I have a real book to read. When we get done, I'll probably send their big book home along with the little book, and they can read it both sizes.

R.C.: I questioned Beth about some poems and other bulletin board displays in her room. One of the poems, entitled "Snowman," had little snowmen that the children had made all around it. Several other poems also had student art work around them. Beth stated that she liked to have the children's work displayed as much as possible. She gave an example of the kind of student work that she liked to exhibit:

B: Last year we read a book called I Am Afraid Of. It was a little book that told things that they were afraid of. The kids each drew a picture, and we put it up there (pointed to a bulletin board high on the west wall above the windows), and they could go over there and read it. And they'll come over here and read these (pointed to poems on the west wall).

R.C.: Beth stated that her previous principal would not have approved of having so much of the children's work on display, because he had preferred commercially prepared bulletin boards related to current units of study. However,
her present principal approved of Beth’s efforts to display more of the students’ work. Beth directed my attention to a poem on the west wall of the room entitled "Happy New Year."

B: "Happy New Year!" This is a song (sang from words on chart): "Happy New Year! Happy New Year! Everyone! Everyone! January’s here! January’s here! Let’s have fun! Let’s have fun!"

I: Do you have the kids sing it?

B: We sing it, and we do it every morning.

I: Do they primarily go by memorizing it, or are a lot of them trying to read along, too?

B: A lot of them read it, a lot of them memorize it, a lot of them just hear everybody else and learn it. And I don’t care which it is. Pretty soon they’ll be writing something at their desks, and they’ll say, "I want to write 'happy'." Then they’ll come over here and get that word "happy" off of there. Or they may want to write "fun." We haven’t had "fun" yet, and you’d think we would have. Some of them who don’t sound out real well will remember that it’s over here.

I: How did you end up getting this final product where they were spelling "gymnastics" and so on (pointed to student art works with New Year’s Resolutions written on them which were displayed around the poem)?

B: I wrote this, Frank. I wrote this, just like this.
I: Did they tell you...?

B: Yes, they came up very seriously to think about something that they would like to do differently. And some of them are really neat. Jim’s was to get along with his sister a lot better. You and I can’t read them, but they can read them.

I: Did you have them watch you writing it as you wrote it?

B: Yes, I did. And they could read it at that time. I can’t swear that they all go back and reread it everyday, but they really do. they like it.

R.C.: Next, Beth referred to a chart near where we were standing which contained a list of spelling words on it:

B: I still do word families. That’s an old fashioned thing, but we have a little spelling program. No big deal, but we just take a little word family each week. This week it’s "-ig," with the letters in front of it. They’ll go over to it and get it for their writing. I’m trying to write more all the time. The more they write, the better they become.

Observation Two

Date: January 27, 1992

Time: 11:45 A.M.-12:20 P.M.
R.C.: The temperature was in the mid-forties, with calm winds and an overcast sky, as I arrived at Building C for my second observation of Beth's class. I arrived a few minutes early, and parked on the side of the street in front of the school building. As I started to enter the building, I was met by a steady flow of older students (fourth or fifth graders) going in the opposite direction. I held the door open as approximately twenty students filed by on the way to the playground. All were warmly bundled in heavy coats, and some carried jump ropes, balls, and other typical recess paraphernalia.

After the last student had exited, I proceeded to enter the building and sign in at the school office. When I arrived at Beth's classroom, her students were in the hallway taking a rest room break following lunch. I went into the classroom and took my place at the rear of the room. Soon, the children began entering the room and sitting at their desks.

As I looked around the room, I observed several new bulletin boards and wall decorations which had been put up since my previous visit. These new additions included a
"State" bulletin board and a display entitled "If You Give a Mouse a Cookie."

After the children were settled into the room, the teacher had them come to the front of the room and sit on the floor in a semi-circle facing her and a big book resting on an easel beside her. The book was entitled If You Give a Mouse a Cookie. She directed the children’s attention to the book, then initiated the following extended literature activity:

B: Okay, the title of this book... Read it with me. Are you ready?
C and B: If You Give a Mouse a Cookie.
B: We’re going to do something new with it today, and I’ll bet you haven’t done this before. Okay, If You Give a Mouse a Cookie. We’re going to find out what happens today if you give a mouse a cookie.
(Beth and the class read the title page together. The teacher pointed to each word with a wooden pointer as the class read.)
B: Do you think this is the mouse (pointed to the picture on the title page)?
C: Yes.
B: Yes. I know most of you knew who he was when you saw the little mouse on my bulletin board back there. Here
we go. I’ll read it the first time, even though there are a few people in here who have not read it.

R.C.: Beth read the big book entitled *If You Give a Mouse a Cookie* to the class. She interacted with the students as she read, asking them questions about the pictures in the book and asking them to supply several words. The story told about what would happen if you gave a mouse a cookie or various other items. At the end of the story, the mouse asked that a story be read to him. After hearing the story and seeing the illustrations, the little mouse became so excited that he wanted to draw an illustration of his own. Beth stopped reading the story at this point and had the children predict what kind of picture the mouse might choose to draw.

B: Okay now, don’t anybody yell it out. How many of you remember the picture that he drew?

(Two students raised their hands.)

B: Now if you don’t remember, don’t put your hand up. Remember, I don’t want you to say it. I want the rest of you, and you two who raised your hands, to think what a little mouse might draw for a picture. No, I didn’t ask for you to tell anybody what he drew! I want you to think about it. If you were this little mouse, let’s see, what are all of the things you’d have?
S: A cheese!
B: Well, you might draw a cheese. But what are some of the things he asked for? What did he ask for first? He asked for a...
C: ...cookie.
B: And then he had a glass of...
C: ...milk.
B: What else would you like to have? Can you think of anything else? Kelly, what's something else you would like to have?
S: A haircut?
B: A haircut! What do you think this little mouse might draw?
S: I don't know.
B: No. I don't want to know. I'm going to give you a piece of paper just like the little mouse had. I want you to go to your seats and draw a picture just like you think that little mouse might have drawn when he got the crayons and paper.
(Several students called out at the same time.)
B: Josh, I don't want you telling anything! Okay, don't whisper back there. I see you back there! Don't do it!
(Several children laughed.)
B: We'll finish the book after you've finished with your pictures. We are going to make some cookies, so we can
have a cookie just like the little mouse in the story had a cookie.
S: Are we rolling them?
B: I already have the dough ready here. When you are quietly working on your picture, I will call you up and let you put your cookie on your sheet.
S: A real cookie?
B: A real cookie.
S: M-m-m!
B: Chocolate. But you must be doing what?
S: Drawing.
B: Drawing. Very good. I just want you to think about what a little mouse might think about.
S: I know!
B: Remember, there is no wrong or right answer. Okay? I just want you to be thinking of what you think the little mouse might draw. Any questions about what to do? You're going to draw with your pencils first, and then color it in with crayons.

R.C. The students worked on their pictures at their desks for approximately ten minutes. Several of the students showed their pictures to their neighbors as they worked. After most of the students had finished their pictures, Beth had those who were finished go to the front of the room to share their pictures with the other students.
B: Okay, we’re going to go ahead and start sharing. If you are not finished, you go ahead and finish, but you might want to look up at these pictures if you would like. Okay, remember our rule. If somebody else is talking, we don’t what?

S: Talk.

S: Butt in.

B: Tad, stand up and show us yours. What do you think he drew?

(The student stood up and showed his picture.)

B: Good! Who is that?

S: His family.

B: His family. Good picture! What do you think, Jeremy?

Stand up and show everybody! What is that?

S: His family.

B: Ashley, what do you think?

S: A cookie.

B: You think he drew a cookie. Kelly, what do you think?

S: His family, and they’re eating cookies.

R.C.: Several other students shared their pictures with the class. Their ideas included the following: a mouse with a cookie, a house, his family, cookies and milk, and some cheese. At one point during the sharing, a student asked how to spell the word "cookie." Beth told him to look at the back bulletin board where the word could be found. After all the
children had shared their pictures. Beth resumed the reading of the story.

B: Okay. Let us find out. Some of you made some excellent guesses. And the picture is finished (pointed to the big book), and sure enough, what is it?
S: His family!
S: And I knew it!

R.C.: Beth finished reading the book to the class, then had the students make predictions about what they thought might happen next. She collected the children's art work and dismissed them to go to music class.

Interview Two
Date: January 27, 1992
Time: 11:45 AM - 12:15 PM
"B" = Beth
"I" = Interviewer
"R.C." = Researcher's Comments

R.C.: This interview took place immediately following the second observation. The students had been released to go to music class, and Beth and I were alone in her classroom. I began the discussion by asking Beth to tell me where she had gotten the ideas for the day's lesson.
B: I have not had *If You Give a Mouse a Cookie* this year. Last year, when I did it with my first graders, the kindergarten teacher had not had the book, and so it was new to them. You know, it was very exciting and very thrilling. But, of course, this could happen to me many times when more of these big books catch on. When you’re the only one around using them, it’s really super. But they have had the book, and then we have practicum students that come here in the fall. Each one of them takes two of our students and works with them a couple of times a week for several weeks. A couple of those girls have used *If You Give a Mouse a Cookie*. When I put that mouse up there (pointed to bulletin board) and they all went, "Oh! It’s *If You Give a Mouse a Cookie*!" I thought, "Oh, great!"

I: I noticed some of them had had it, and some hadn’t.

B: Really. And some of those who had had it didn’t remember what the little mouse drew, so it will work out fine. But I have a little mouse unit that I’ll do after I do the big book. It’s just some literature based around some little mice, and some puppets with mice, and the story of the pied piper.

I: Do you get part of your ideas from the package that it comes with (indicated the big book) or do you make up your ideas?
B: This one, I did. I'll show you (turned through pages of the study guide which accompanied the big book). I'll probably pretty much go along with this. It has some very good ideas. But they don't always have the ideas that you like or that apply to what your curriculum does. Now I came up with the picture of the book by myself (indicated picture of a mouse on the back bulletin board). They didn't have that picture, but that was so good, I couldn't resist that big blank white paper and that little mouse there with his crayons.

R.C.: At this point, Beth volunteered information regarding the kinds of activities she planned to do next related to the big book:

B: Tomorrow, we will read it again and we will list all of the things that the mouse will get if you give him a cookie. Then we're going to make a list of what the mouse will do. And then, I'll probably skip this part (indicated an activity in the study guide), but I'll do the contractions, because first graders are just starting to learn that. We'll pull the contractions out of the book and make a list of those. And all of these will be posted around the room. I'll probably put this one (pointed to a picture in the study guide) back there on the bulletin board, and then I hope I can use things
that they draw. I don't know how we'll do it for sure, but I do want to make the cycle of everything that he does. Then they can get an idea of how the order of the story goes. Then I'll have these things up around the room. When I get done with this, I think I have a puppet somewhere that I'll have out for them to do. Then I'll have these contractions up, probably back there on the board. Then I'll let them write their own stories about a little mouse.

I: Good. That's one of the things that I wanted to ask: What other activities will you do? What will you do with the pictures they made today?

B: Today? Oh, I'll put them back there for now (indicated back bulletin board).

B: Right. I just need more room for that.

R.C.: I asked Beth where she got her big books.

B: I get them several different places. They come in book orders now. This year, they've started putting them with book orders, so I can order them. Like, if I have a jillion points, I can get them free. Or I can buy them at a reduced price through Scholastic and through Trumpet Club. They're the two main ones who will give them to you. Also, if the children buy a bunch of books, I can get them free, if I have enough bonus points.
I: Do most of them come with a little booklet that gives you ideas?

B: Yes, most of them do. Now, this one does (pointed to the *If You Give a Mouse a Cookie* big book). The one we did last week was out of MacMillan, and it also has the teaching guide that comes with it. I'm not real thrilled with their ideas, but what I do like is that they have the little book. We're still finishing it up. That's the only part I don't like (indicated a little mimeographed replica of the big book), but the kids like it. So this is the point, if the kids like it. I haven't done this before. The little book came with it. So they're going to color pictures, and then we're going to take it down and read it to the kindergarteners.

I: Is this (pointed to the little book) identical, as far as the pages and the pictures and the words on each page, to the big book?

B: Identical. It's just a smaller version. That's what's nice about it. I've got a lot of big books left, and if I spend too much time on each one of them, I won't get through that many of them. I'd rather expose them to more than try to keep thinking of neat ideas to go with them.

I: Are you coming up with a lot of your program this year? Are you using some of the books for the first time?
B: Right.

I: Are there also others that you have used in the past?
B: Right. This is a new one (picked up a book off of a nearby table).

I: So, you’re just working on trying to find the ones that you like best to use?
B: Yes. This one I drew the "t" out of... "tuh."

R.C.: I probed this lead by asking Beth to explain her rationale for using the big books. Specifically, I asked her if she centered the class’s skills studies around the big books, or if she tried to find big books which reinforced the skill she happened to be studying at the time.

B: These are reviews of the skills that we have already covered in our reading series. I will not teach a new skill out of this (pointed to the big book). Now maybe later on, I’ll change my mind, because I’m always ready to change my mind – very easily (laughed)! I’m very good at that! But right now, I use it to review. We talked about the color words in it. And we had had color words. We talked about the teeth. We talked about adding on, like three bears... three brown bears... three brown bears growling.

I: In this book there was that pattern (pointed to the If You Give a Mouse a Cookie big book).
B: Right, and it does it very well. We made puppets on Wednesday. Now we've started coloring our own books, and we're going to read it to the kindergarten.

R.C.: We began a discussion related to the new bulletin board displays which had been added subsequent to my initial observation and interview. First, I asked about a poem which was exhibited on a chart located on the chalkboard at the front of the room.

B: We're going to start it today, and it's going to go up here (pointed to bulletin board area on the north wall at the back of the room). We're going to make flowers to put around it.

I: Okay, and then the blends (indicated pictures with blend words written on them which were taped onto the chalkboard)... Is this related to your regular program?

B: Yes. That was our basal. And I feel we'll cover it all in this poem.

I: Is that a regular pattern that you like to do? You might study these blends, and then reinforce the skill with the poem?

B: Right. For right now, the whole language I use as a review.

I: And reinforcement?

B: Right. For reinforcement.
Observation Three

Date: March 5, 1992

Time: 11:45 A.M.-12:20 P.M.

"B" = Beth

"S" = Student

"C" = Class

"R.C." = Researcher's Comments

R.C.: I arrived, dressed in suit and tie, five minutes before my appointment on a mild, partially overcast day. The temperature was in the 55-60 degree range, and the national and state flags on the flagpole in front of the school were flapping in a strong southwesterly wind. As I walked toward the building, I passed a group of fourth or fifth graders on their way to the playground. I held the door open for a group of four or five stragglers, then entered the building. After signing in at the office, I walked down the hallway toward Beth's room.

The children were all seated at their desks when I entered and sat in a chair at the back of the classroom. The teacher introduced me to the class (for the first time), then had the children sit at the front of the room for "story time." When the children were seated in a semi-circle on the floor, she sat in a chair facing the class and holding a standard-sized book in her hands. Then Beth initiated a skills-based extended literature activity
related to the book. The primary focus of the lesson was a review of compound words.

B: Okay, we've been reading a story called...
C: ...The Tree-House.
B: Today, we're going to have some of you to be the animals and to read the part that concerns the animal. I need some people who want to be the giraffe. Raise your hand if you want to be the giraffe. (Teacher named several students to read the part of the story about the giraffe.) You're the giraffes. Okay, Zebra. (Named several students to be the zebras.) Okay, who wants to be the elephant? (Named several students.) Tiger? (Named several students.) Lion? (Named several students.) And who else hasn't got to be one yet? Brett, you're the monkey, okay? Are we ready?

R.C.: Beth and the class read the book entitled The Tree-House together. The teacher held up the book and pointed to the words as the children read. Groups of children read the parts about each animal as had been previously assigned. Beth then directed the children's attention to a chart on the chalkboard which had the words from the book written on it with yellow felt tip pen. She and the students read the story again, this time referring to the words on the chart. After the choral reading had been
completed, Beth initiated a review of compound words related to the story.

B: Good job! Now, yesterday, when we were doing our reading, we did a skills sheet that introduced a brand new word to you. I'm not even going to give you a clue. Does anybody remember? It wasn't "nouns". That was in our English. Something in reading was new. Brad, do you remember?
S: Cumper words?
B: Cuh...
S: Cumper words?
B: Cumper words. Well, they were a different kind of words. John?
S: Com...
B: Com-pound words. Let's write that up here. (Beth articulated "compound words" as she wrote the words on the chalkboard.) I told you that really wasn't a first grade word, was it?
S: No.
B: I told you that it was a word older people use, but I thought you could use it. Who can tell me what a compound word is? Missy?
S: Like when you put like "dog"... "hot," and then "dog," or something. And then put it together, "hotdog."
B: Okay, it's actually what? Aaron?
S: Two words put together.
B: To make...?
S: ...a full word.
B: ...a full word. In fact, when we read our story, "tree-house" is a compound word, isn't it? Now they don't have to have this hyphen (pointed to the hyphen in the word "tree-house" on the chart). But, you know, two words put together to make one word. What are the two words in "tree-house"? Who can tell me? Elaine?
S: "Tree" and "house".
B: Yes, and we can put them together and they make a compound word, "tree-house."
S: "Tree-house."
B: Okay. Can anybody think of any others. We talked about some yesterday. Carol?
S: Football.
B: Good one.

R.C.: The teacher articulated and wrote the compound words suggested by the students on the chalkboard throughout the duration of the brainstorming activity. Some of the other compound words suggested by the students were basketball, baseball, ballgame, something, playground, everything, everyday, softball, volleyball, and soccerball. Beth corrected students who suggested the words picnic and quarter by telling them that these were two syllable words,
but not compound words. Following the brainstorming activity, Beth had each student read the word he or she had contributed as she pointed to the words on the chart. All of the students read the words fluently and without hesitation.

B: Excellent! These are all compound words. Today, we’re going to play a game with the compound words. I’m going to give you some little words, and you have to find your partner who has the word that will go with yours. Now this may be hard, so we may just practice on this, alright?

R.C.: The teacher passed out a small card with one half of a compound word written on it to each student. The students showed their cards to each other, trying to match one another’s cards to make compound words. The teacher had the students sit together on the floor after they had found their partners. After all the students were seated, Beth had the students come up in pairs to reveal the compound words their cards had made. As the pairs of students read the compound words they had made, Beth took the cards and placed them together in a card holder taped to the chalkboard. Compound words made by the students included catfish, baseball, into, something, hotdog, sunset, playpen, lighthouse, and football. After all the words had been placed in the chart holder, the teacher and class read the
words together. Beth informed the students that they would be using the same compound words in sentences the next day.

Beth then organized the class to finish a project they had previously started. The children had made sentence strips telling what they would like to do if they were in a tree-house. They had also drawn and colored tree-house pictures. On this occasion, the students would be completing an art project to be used in conjunction with the sentence strips.

B: Today I want you to finish up your tree-house picture. You have two things to do to finish up our tree-house pictures. To do that, we have to go through and rewrite what we wrote yesterday. I talked to you about that already. We’ve written down what you’re to write. I will give you a square of paper that looks like this (held up a sheet of white paper). I want you to very carefully copy what you wrote yesterday in this square, and very carefully cut around it. This is going to be with your picture (held up sentence strips). For example, this is Janet’s (showed the class one of the strips), and Janet wrote, "I read a book in my tree-house." Janet is not going to have to change much, because she began hers with a capital and ended it with a...
C: ...period.
B: Period. So make sure you remember to do that today. After you get this written, then I'm going to give you the brown pieces for your ladder. Now we're probably going to work, off and on, all afternoon on this. First thing you're going to do is measure. Where does the ladder start (held the brown strips over a tree-house picture, extending the strips from a picture of a tree-house downward to the ground)?

S: On the top.
S: On the bottom.
B: On the bottom? My strips of paper are too long, aren't they? So I'm going to have to put my strips together and decide where I want my ladder to go to.

R.C.: Beth proceeded to give the class directions for making a ladder out of brown strips of construction paper, and for gluing the ladders on tree-house pictures the students had made the previous day. The teacher then gave the children directions for gluing the sentence strips they had written onto the picture below the tree-house.

The students got supplies and returned to their seats to begin work. They began by rewriting their sentences onto the clean strip of paper. Some of their sentences included the following: "I like to read books in my tree-house;" "I like to take my brother into my tree-house and read to him;" and "I like to take a nap in my tree-house."
The students had previously drawn trees with tree-houses and pictures of themselves in their tree-houses doing whatever their sentences said they would like to do. They rewrote final, neat copies of their draft sentences and glued ladders leading from the ground to the tree-houses as their teacher had previously directed. The students worked very steadily on their projects until 12:20 when the teacher had them stop their work and line up to go to Physical Education class.

Interview Three
Date: March 5, 1992
Time: 12:20-12:50
"I" = Interview
"B" = Beth
"R.C." = Researcher's Comments

R.C.: This interview took place immediately following the third observation. The class had been released to go to music class, and Beth and I were alone in her classroom. I began by telling her the purpose of my study, then told her that I was interested in aspects of her language curriculum other than those I had been able to observe during my visits. I asked her how she organized her reading program.

B: I teach whole-group. I don't like reading groups. We have a system which we developed. I came down to first
grade four years ago and started out with reading
groups, and I didn't like it. I didn't like it any
better in first grade than I did in third grade. I'd
always been against it because putting children in
groups labels them. It classifies them. You have your
upper children who just go right along and do everything
they would have done regardless of whether you were a
good teacher or not.
I: So you, basically, adapt the basal program to your
whole-class situation?
B: We adapt the program to work on all of them. We're
all working on the same story. It's much easier to teach
everybody. We do a lot of cooperative learning and
partner reading. We usually spend three days on a story,
and we really work that vocabulary over.

R.C.: I asked Beth if she tried to incorporate language
activities into the content areas.

B: Yes, we do.
I: Do you try to have stories and poems connected to
social studies and the other content areas?
B: You're talking about whole language. Yes, we do. This
compound word thing was... We had a compound word skills
sheet. This is the first time we've done compound words.
I: So you were tying it in?
B: We tie it in, you know. And after Ramona and I get really good at this, we’ll have it down pat. Next year we’ll know to do *The Tree-House* with compound words. This year, we’re just pretty much experimenting. And sometimes, I may start out in the morning and not even decide to do what I had decided to do in my lesson plans that day, simply because this year we’re experimenting.

R.C.: I asked Beth how she assessed the effectiveness of her whole-language instruction.

B: Well, last year was my first year to teach whole language in the classroom and teach the class whole-group. My achievement test scores went up from the average of 40-60. It didn’t seem to matter whether I did a good job of teaching or not, we always hit the 40-60 mark. Last year, it was like between 60 and 80. That’s quite a jump.

I: As the year progresses, do you keep copies of the students’ work to show progress?

B: I probably do that in writing, mainly.

I: How do you communicate this to parents?

B: So far, we haven’t. They simply know that we’re doing whole language in here, and they see the books coming home. That alone, so far, has been impressive to our parents.
I: Okay, so you show the parents the students' work?
B: I'm not going to take the time, but I'm sure Ramona showed you the little books we do. It's a four-step plan. We were going to give you a copy of it. I found that and implemented it.
I: Uh, huh. She gave me a copy of it.
B: That's how I do it. We keep many records, and the parents see from time to time how we're doing. As we go along, I think we'll get better at it. You know, a better way to confer with the parents.
I: But last year, your first year, you were able to see some improvements on the standardized tests?
B: Definitely. I have a copy of the achievement tests, and there's a definite 10 to 20 percent jump. It was enough for me.

R.C.: Next, I asked Beth to explain what had initially influenced her to begin using whole-language practices.

B: Probably the main one is Bill Martin, the Bill Martin Workshop that came here. It just all made sense, you know, teaching children with their own language. It's much more fun. Like when I write their words up on the column, did you notice how well they knew what they had put up there? Since it was their writing, they knew exactly what they had written.
I: Yes, they did very well.
B: Learning is more meaningful when it comes from within.
I: Can you think of any influences from your college undergraduate program that would have led you into doing some whole-language type practices?
B: No, because this wasn't in at that time. It was one of the methods that was probably taught or explained to us, but there were no demonstrations given. I think the teachers at the university now do a beautiful job. My three daughters are all college students in education, and they come out with so much good stuff. But we still need to be having teachers out in the field doing these things, and we don't have too many doing it.
I: So most of what you have picked up, then, has been since you got out of school?
B: Right. Well, I graduated in 1981, so that's been a while.

R.C.: At this point in the conversation, I followed Beth's lead and questioned her about her teaching career. She had been teaching for eleven years, including short stints in second grade, sixth grade, and gifted education. Beth had come to Building C six years earlier as a third-grade teacher. She had taught third grade for five years, then had changed to first grade and taught there for
the previous three years. She explained that she had changed from third grade to first grade because at the upper level so many children "were against reading before they even got started."

The next topic for discussion was the day's lesson related to the tree-house story. Beth explained that she had read the story on the previous day, and had then asked the students to draw pictures of what they thought the tree-house would look like. The children had then written a sentence to tell what they would do in the tree-house.

Next, Beth showed me an example of a student's creative writing from a previous lesson that the class had done. She read through the story which was entitled "The Happy Telephone," pointing out several "invented spellings." She went on to explain what she did with the stories when the children had completed them. In doing so, she revealed much of her philosophy concerning the relationship between "invented writing" and helping the students achieve final, edited written products.

B: They come up, and they read this to the other children. I staple it together. I have a stamp that says "unedited." I send it home, and they can read it to mom and dad.

I: Great!
B: Alright, but it says "unedited," so they'll know. Yesterday they wrote, and they did a pretty good job. But then I called them up, just a few of them, and said, "Now we've got to write this. In here we write this so that you can read it and I can. We're going to put it out in the hall and up on the door, and there are a lot of people that are going to come in here. We've got to write it in the language that they know." This is perfectly comprehensible to the children. And so I show them. Some of it I can also instruct. Like so many of them write "like," "l-i-k." And I say, "Now what's the rule that we know about long 'i'?" "Oh, yeah! It has an 'e' on the end of it." But if it's something really major... And I've got several children in here who are learning-disabled, and one who is a real behavior problem. For some of those children, I just go ahead and write what they say, because this is no big deal.

R.C.: I asked Beth to tell me about the bulletin board displays which she had put up since my second observation. Specifically, I asked her to tell me about a bulletin board display at the back of the room entitled "Champions."

B: Okay, we have a little book called Champions. It says "People" and "shoot." It has two words: "People skate," "People throw." It shows everything that's going on at
the Olympics. We did that during the Olympics. Then I asked them how we could change this to write about themselves. They told me what to write: "Children skate, children swim, children throw, children jump, children dive." They listed everything they can think of that children could do if we had Olympics for children or that they liked to do. Then they drew a picture of what they would like to do. They really enjoyed it, because this was at the same time that the Winter Olympics were going on.

I: They did a good job.
B: Yeah. It had a lot of meaning.
I: I saw your little circles there (pointed to the Olympics symbol on the side of the bulletin board display) and figured that might have been connected to the Olympics.
B: Right. And this (pointed to a bulletin board on the west wall) was just a poem by Shel Silverstein. I folded the paper in half and put little curves for the neck, and then I gave all of them that little sheet folded in half.
I: I saw this at Ramona’s. I notice you do some of the same things, and then other times you branch off into other things of your own.
B: We do a lot of the same things. Most of the time we do the same things, because it’s much wiser.
I: You can both use each other's ideas.

B: Yeah. Why break our necks? Like after spring break, we have two poems we're going to trade, because there's no reason for us to both write the same poem. You know, we can trade it back and forth. It works real well.

R.C.: Following the interview, Beth allowed me to see her lesson plans for the period covered by this study. She permitted me to take notes related to the plans, which I was able to use as a means of triangulation in order to gain a clearer perception of her overall language program.

**Lesson Plans**

Beth's lesson plans listed a daily 25 minute "Whole Language" time. Most of the whole-language activities listed in Appendix B were accomplished during this time period. Other language-oriented activities included a 25 minute "Story time" after lunch, a 15 minute free reading period one day a week, and a 20 minute "Show and Tell" activity each Friday. Beth's lesson plans indicated that she also occasionally used literature and writing activities in her social studies program. Most of the rest of the lessons in her plan book were skills-oriented and taken from the textbooks. The reading program was centered around the basal reader and included whole-class "round robin" reading, phonics instruction, and the completing of worksheets and workbook pages.
Teacher C2 - Ramona (First Grade)

Ramona was a quiet, reserved individual in her early forties. She was of average height and build, with short brown hair and a friendly smile. Ramona had taught school for seventeen years, all in kindergarten and the primary grades. She had taught first grade for the previous four years.

Observation One
Date: Jan. 17, 1992
Time: 1:10-1:45
"R" = Ramona
"S" = Student
"C" = Class
"R.C." = Researcher's Comments

R.C.: I arrived at Building C at 1:00 P.M. on a cold, blustery winter day. The skies were overcast, with a hint of sun shining through. The street in front of the school was deserted as I parked my car and entered the building.

Upon entering the building, I checked in at the office, then proceeded down the hallway toward Ramona's classroom. I met her and her class coming down the hall, returning from music class. I entered the classroom before the children and sat in a chair at a table located in the back of the room.

As the children entered the room, they sat on the floor at the front of the room facing a chart holder on which a
poem called "Drumpp the Grump" was displayed. The poem was printed on lined chart paper with most of the words in broad black felt-tip pen lettering. Some of the words, however, were in red lettering. The teacher stood by the poem facing the students and initiated a skills-oriented extended literature activity related to consonant blends.

S: Some of the letters are red, and some of them are black.
R: Some of them are red, and what are those red letters? Kristi?
S: The blends.
R: They're the blends, aren't they? Here's a "d-r."
Here's a "g-r." What does "g-r" say?
C: Gruh!
R: There's another "g-r."
C: Gruh.
R: Okay, what would "s-m" say?
C: Smuh!
R: Right. What would "c-h" say?
C: Chuh!
R: "S-l?"
C: Sluh!
R: Right. Okay, now let's just read this poem. I'll read it to you first, and you listen. Remember we had a story this morning about the little boy that likes to draw and
drew imaginary characters? Okay, this character is kind of imaginary, too. He's not something real. So use your imagination.

R.C.: Ramona read the poem entitled "Drumpp the Grump" by Shel Silverstein as the children listened attentively. After reading the poem, Ramona discussed certain aspects of the poem with the class:

R: Who remembers the name of the poem? Kathy?
S: "Dwumpp the Gwump."
R: That's "d-r" now. Druh.
C: "Drumpp the Grump."
R: What does it mean to be a "grump?" Billy?
S: It means that you're not feeling very good.
R: Well, not always not feeling good. Ashley?
S: Feeling grumpy.
R: What does feeling grumpy mean?
S: It means you're feeling kind of mad at yourself.
R: Kind of mad at yourself? What do you think, Jimmy?
S: Kind of mad.
R: Kind of mad? Not in a good mood? Brad?
S: You might yell at people.
R: You might yell at people. You're grumpy. Uh huh. Okay. Watch Clifford, and if you can read along with me, fine.
R.C.: Ramona led the class in a choral reading of the poem. As she read, she pointed to each word with a pointer which had Clifford the Big Red Dog on the end of it. After the choral reading, Ramona initiated an activity in which the class reviewed the consonant blend sounds which they had been exposed to in the poem.

R: Now, I'm going to give you a card. You can look at it, but don't say it. Even if you know what the words are, don't say it. (Ramona passed out a card to each child in the class.) You can look at it, but don't say it out loud. Okay, I'm going to call someone up and have you read your word. Has anyone figured out your word? Oh, good! Rebecca, let's bring your word up first.

(A student brought up her card and showed it to the teacher.)

R: Alright now, show them what it is, because someone else might have that same word. It starts with an "f-l." Do you have that word? Let's see. Mary? Okay now, lay your word down on the floor.

(Both students laid their cards on the floor where the rest of the class could see them.)

R: Now let's just look at theirs for a minute. Can you sound it out?

S: I know!

R: What do you think it is?
S: "Fleas."
R: Very good! And it's got an "f-l"...
S: ..."fluh."
R: ..."fluh," at the beginning. Okay, thank you. (The teacher picked up the cards and placed them in the card holder.) Who else has sounded out your word? Todd? (The student took his card to the front and showed it to the class.)

R.C.: This procedure continued until all the children had brought their cards to be placed in the card holder. The teacher stressed the consonant blend or digraph sounds in the words as they were placed in the card holder. The following words were on the cards: fleas, smelly, snake, Drumpp, grump, prize, gruff, and cheese.

R: Alright, let's read through it again. I want you to listen carefully because you're going to do something with the poem in just a minute. Now if we had done our poem in the morning, we would have our worksheet. We're going to do our worksheet in the morning. It's going to have some of these same blends on it. Okay, ready?

R.C.: The class engaged in a choral reading of the "Drumpp the Grump" poem led by the teacher. After the choral
reading was concluded, the lesson continued in the following manner:

R: What does it mean to be a "contradictory cuss?" What do you think, Billy?
S: Some kind of mad.
R: Well, you never know. If I tell you to sit down, and you're going to do the opposite, right? That's what it means to be contradictory. Okay now, when you get your paper in a minute, I want you to turn your paper like this (showed children how to turn their papers), the long way, and draw what you think this Drumpp looks like. Drumpp the Grump.
S: I know what he looks like.
R: Okay, listen carefully this last time, especially. Now, don't look at your neighbor. Your neighbor might have a completely different idea of what he looks like. Right?

R.C.: The teacher passed out sheets of white drawing paper, and the children returned to their seats. After the children were seated, there was initially much chatter and interaction among the students. However, soon they were all actively engaged in drawing and coloring their pictures.
Interview One

Date: January 21, 1992

Time: 12:45-1:05 P.M.

"R" = Ramona

"I" = Interviewer

"R.C." = Researcher's Comments

R.C.: This interview took place four days following the initial observation. I began by referring to the consonant blends lesson which I had observed during my previous observation. I asked Ramona if she normally tried to incorporate skills studies into ongoing literature activities or if she tried to find literature activities which could be used to reinforce skills areas that the class was working on at a given time.

R: We use the basal reader, and I try to find poems or stories that correlate with whatever the skill is that we're working on.

I: So you were studying blends, and that poem just happened to lend itself to having a lot of the same blends in it?

R: Right.

I: Where did you get the idea of the poem to go along with the lesson? Is that a poem that you've had in the past, that you've used before?
R: Well I have Shel Silverstein and another one. I think Where the Sidewalk Ends is where that one came from. I can’t remember which one. I should have it on the poem.

I: So sometimes you just make a connection in your mind between the skill you’re studying, and you might just think, “Oh, this poem has a lot of those same sounds?” I noticed that you have this chart here (pointed to the card holder on the front chalkboard where Ramona had place the blends flash cards during my previous visit). It has the vowels on top. That day you were working on blends. Is that just a chart that you use to hold the words?

R: I use it constantly.

I: Just for lots of different purposes?

R: Yeah. We haven’t had that too long. Beth and I ordered that, you know, my co-worker, when we first started trying to do more whole language. It came from the Wright Group. In fact, we paid for it ourselves, because we were excited about doing a lot of these things. At the end of the year there was no money available, so we just bought it.

R.C. I directed Ramona’s attention to a chart on the front bulletin board which had the caption "He Hugs a Lot" written in black felt tip pen at the top. The chart contained a number of sentences, also written with a black
felt tip pen. Initials had been written at the end of each sentence. I asked Ramona to explain how the chart had been produced.

R: That's a new activity. At whole-language time this morning, I started a new big book. Of course, we vary the activities that we do. You know, they give suggestions. You get a little pamphlet that gives you lots of ideas. But this is over what do you think the book's predicting? What do you think the book is going to be about? And what did we do?

I: Are those the predictions that the children made (pointed to chart)?

R: Uh, huh.

I: Well, good!

R: Just by looking at the cover. I didn't have very much time.

R.C.: Ramona next showed me a big book her class had made related to the "Huggles" story which Beth had read to her class during one of my visits. The students had drawn pictures and written captions pertaining to what they would want Huggles to have for breakfast. Ramona had put all the pages together in the form of a big book.
I: Do you also use that type of thing for a little reading lesson and let the children read from the big book?
R: Uh, huh. We read it together. Then I always have the books available for them to read.
I: Did you make that chart right there (pointed to language experience chart) as the children said it to you so they could see you writing it?
R: Uh, huh.

R.C.: Next, I reminded Ramona of the "Drumpp the Grump" pictures her class had drawn during my previous observation and asked if they were available for me to see.

R: They're right there on the board (pointed to bulletin board at the back of the room).
I: Okay, right! (We walked to the back of the room and looked at the pictures on the bulletin board.) So you moved the chart back here that has the poem on it. Then all around it, they put their pictures.
R: Aren't they wonderful!
I: They used their imaginations!
R: I thought it was wonderful. But you can quickly see who listened carefully. There's only two, I think, that put smiles on their faces. She always draws wonderful
little people (pointed to picture of a smiling Drumpp the Grump).

I: That may reflect her personality more than her lack of listening.

R: Yes, yes! Right. And Nick is wonderful at drawing, and he got so involved (pointed to another picture of a smiling Drumpp the Grump), he forgot that it is a grump, and grumps won't normally have a smile.

I: Maybe they just like friendly grumps!

R: Uh, huh.

I: Okay, I was going to ask what you do with your drawings, but it's obvious (pointed to the pictures on the bulletin board), and I guess the children really enjoy seeing their work.

R: Yes, they do. They've had a lot of fun with this.

I: Have you done any other activities related to this particular poem, or was that pretty much the objective of that lesson: to read it and notice the blends in it and draw what they thought the grump looked like?

R: Right. I probably won't do a whole lot more with it, other than read it.

R.C.: I asked Ramona to tell me about the nature of some of the other extended literature activities in which she engaged with her class.
R: The big books that we do, you know, most of them we finish within a week... four days to five. But, like Yuck Soup, this took a week and a half, probably. Yuck Soup's not here right now. The big book is Yuck Soup.
I: Uh, huh. I'm familiar with it.
R: We made a list, first, of the yuckiest things they could think of.
I: Was that brainstorming?
R: Brainstorming. Uh, huh. And I got something from everybody. And then we made an adaptation from the book. We also had Stone Soup, and another book, Root Soup. And then, after we'd made the list of yucky things, we said, "Well, wouldn't it be fun to make some 'yum soup'?" You know, something that would be good to eat. And what kinds of things do you like in soup, you know. We made a list, and then I ran off a little sheet, so the parents knew what they would like to bring. It was sort of like "stone soup" then. I brought two big crock pots. Beth and I both did this. And then I brought the stew meat for it.
I: She described this to me.
R: Oh, she did? Okay, uh, huh.
I: I bet the kids really liked it.
R: They loved it! And, of course, this was very easy then to make this big book.
R.C.: We looked at the other bulletin boards in the classroom, and I observed that she used many of the same poems and bulletin board displays that Beth used. When I mentioned this to Ramona, she stated that she and Beth worked together and did many of the same things.

R: I think she's a wonderful teacher, and I was really happy when she moved down and we started working together. We're about the same age, our kids are about grown, and we just have a lot of fun working together.

Observation Two
Date: February 11, 1992
Time: 10:15-10:50 A.M.
"R" = Ramona
"S" = Student
"C" = Class
"R.C." = Researcher's Comments

R.C.: I arrived at Building C at 10:05 A.M. on a drizzly, overcast day, with the temperatures hovering in the lower fifty-degree range. I parked in front of the school and held an umbrella over my head as I made my way from my car to the building.

I made my usual stop at the school office to sign the visitor's register, then went directly to Ramona's
classroom. When I arrived, the children were just returning from Physical Education class.

I preceded the children into the classroom and sat at the back of the room. As the students entered, the teacher had them put away their math papers and clear their desks. She then directed them to sit on the floor in a semi-circle at the front of the room. Ramona sat in a chair facing the students, and directed their attention to a big book on an easel to her left. She told the students that they would read the story together first, then they would see which students could read a page by themselves. Ramona asked a child to come help her hold the book. The class and teacher then read the big book, entitled Cookie’s Week, together. The book told about a little mouse named Cookie and the difficulties he got into each day of the week. The story was written in a cause-effect format, first stating what Cookie did, then telling the calamitous results of his actions.

After the choral reading activity, Ramona called on volunteers to read each page of the book. Many of the children needed help in reading various words on the pages. Ramona was very supportive and encouraging as she immediately supplied any words the children were not sure of.

Following the second reading of the book, Ramona directed the students’ attention to some large flash cards
taped to the west wall. On each flash card was written the name of a day of the week.

R: When we sit down, and I call on you, we're going to have to remember how you wrote your sentences in your journal, right? Now let's forget the word "on." We won't read "on" each time, but let's just look at the days of the week. Usually, on a calendar, the days of the week start with "Sunday," don't they? But remember I moved Sunday down, because our story started on Monday. All the trouble she got into on Monday... Okay, let's start at the top:

R and C: (Read from the word cards): Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday, Friday, Saturday, Sunday.

R: Okay, I'm going to point to one, and call on you. Let's see if you can tell me what day it is. Use your beginning sounds.

R.C.: Ramona pointed to different word cards and called on various children to read the words on the cards. Most of the children were able to read the words correctly. If a student had difficulties, Ramona encouraged the child to sound the word out using phonics skills. After calling on several children to read the words on the cards, Ramona had the entire class read the cards in order from Monday through Sunday. The teacher then had the students return to their
desks and face the bulletin board on the east wall where a language experience chart from a previous class activity was located.

R: Okay now, you're going to read your sentence just like you wrote it when you wrote in your journal. And then Mrs. Phillips wrote it for you when she edited your story, remember? Now look, I know a few of you are not quite finished with your stories. Now I want you to think of a day of the week. It doesn't matter which one you choose. You can say, "On Monday," you can say, "On Saturday," "On Friday," "On Tuesday." And you're going to read, "Cookie," whatever Cookie did, what happened because he did that, and finish up, "everywhere." Right? Okay, let's see if Billy can begin.

(The student read off the language experience charts on the bulletin board):

S: On Thursday, Cookie tore up his pillow, and feathers flew everywhere.

R: Very good! Kathy.

S: On Tuesday, Cookie fell in the ice box, and ice cream flew everywhere.

R: Very good! Ashley.

S: On Tuesday, Cookie fell in some paint...

R: Remember, you have to be able to read everyone else's sentences as well as your own to choose something for
your story. Some of you aren’t quite finished. Okay, Ashley, go ahead. Cookie...

S: Cookie fell in some paint, and paint flew everywhere.

R: Okay, Brad.

S: On... (Paused.)

R: That’s the day. On...

S: On Thursday, Cookie... (Paused.)

R: ...dried...

S: ...dried in the drier and there were clothes everywhere.

R: Tamela.

S: On Friday, Cookie got in the cupboard, and dishes landed everywhere.

R: Very good! Holly.

S: On Friday, Cookie fell in the chimney, and ashes went everywhere.


S: On Sunday, Cookie got in the bathtub and water went everywhere.

R: ...splashed everywhere. Jerry.

R.C.: The activity continued in this way until all of the children in the class had read their sentences. When several of the children had difficulties reading some of the words, Ramona immediately supplied the unknown words. She
praised the children after they had completed their sentences.

R: Okay, very good. Any others that we missed? Now, think. You're going to have to get your thinking cap on. How many used Brad's idea in your story?

R.C.: Several students raise their hands. The teacher then continued to determine in this way how many students had used each of the ideas in the stories they had previously written.

R: Okay, in this story, just like the one that we started today, you had a character, right? Cookie. And Cookie had a problem, and this situation happened after the problem arose. The problem was when he tore up his pillow. Right? And the feathers flew everywhere. And we have a beginning and an ending for each page of our story, don't we? And some of you ended your story in a different way, I know. Okay, we haven't had time to look at the poem I've put up for Valentine's Day (indicated poem on the bulletin board by the language experience charts). How many of you have looked at it and read it yourself? (Several students raised their hands.) A few. Okay, I'll read it first, and then you can read it with me.
R.C.: Ramona read the poem entitled "My Love for You," then had the class read the poem along with her. She then had several different volunteers read the poem aloud by themselves. Most of the students read the short poem with no mistakes. When a student had difficulties with a word, Ramona immediately supplied the word. After several students had read the poem, the class began preparing to go to lunch.

Interview Two
Date: February 12, 1992
Time: 12:45-1:15
"R" = Ramona
"I" = Interviewer
"R.C." = Researcher's Comments

R.C.: This interview took place on the day following the second classroom observation. I began the interview by asking Ramona to reconstruct the procedures the class had gone through to make the language experience charts related to the big book she had read.

R: First, of course, we read the story. I read Cookie's Week to them. They read it with me. The second day, we brainstormed about what Cookie might do to get into mischief. Like, similar to the story where he upset the plant on the window sill or he fell in the toilet and water splashed everywhere. So we concentrated just on
the problem. What situation did he find himself in or what problem did he have? As they gave me ideas, I wrote them on the chart here (pointed to one of the language experience charts), using different colors like we do it always. Then, of course, we always use their initials to give them credit for their work. That's all we did that day.

I: I see. You did the cause, or what he did, one day.

R: The cause. Uh, huh. The next day, I gave them another activity to work on, and I called them over two at a time and I said, "Now what happened when he tore up his pillow, Brandon?" And Brandon said, "The feathers flew everywhere."

I: Well, that's good! You had a whole-class brainstorming activity where each child gave his or her own cause, then you did the effects individually.

R: The next day. Uh, huh.

I: Okay, and then I was interested in where you got the idea to have four different places they were reading from. First, the day of the week (pointed to the strips on the west wall on which the days of the week were written), then the cause, then the effect, then "everywhere" (pointed to the charts on the east wall). Did you think of that format yourself?

R: I... Yes (laughed).

I: The kids seemed to really enjoy it.
R: They did.
I: It made them think.
R: They did. This wasn’t, probably, a real good idea, having it over here (pointed to the day of the week cards on the west wall).
I: They didn’t seem to have trouble with that.
R: Uh, huh. Right! When you’ve written it, and you get credit for it, then they can read it. They may not be able to read out of the basal reader, but they can read, and they love it. Then, of course, I added "Cookie." I didn’t want to write every word. I didn’t have enough room, so I put a little line instead of writing "everywhere." And that’s just the way we did it.

R.C.: Ramona showed me some books that the children had made using the information on the language experience charts. I asked her to explain the process the students had gone through in order to make the books. Ramona explained that she liked to structure each writing activity a little differently in order to provide an element of variety and freshness to each experience. For this writing activity, she had required the students to use their own ideas off the language experience charts to make their first page. For the subsequent pages, she had allowed them to choose any of the ideas off of the language experience charts or to make up new ideas on their own. After all the students had completed
their "sloppy copies," she planned to have a parent volunteer type the words for each page using a word processor. Then the students would draw an illustration for each page, after which she would help them "publish" their stories in book form. She showed me a sample of a book which had been laminated and bound together with staples.

I asked Ramona to explain how she planned to evaluate or assess the effectiveness of the book-writing activity:

R: Good question. We don't give grades for language in first grade.
I: What type of report cards do you have?
R: We do give them a grade in writing. But, we never consider that creative writing, you know.
I: Is this speaking, primarily, of handwriting?
R: Uh, huh. I really hadn't thought about how I would give a grade. It would be difficult (laughed).
I: Just so you'll understand, I'm not proposing that I think it would be appropriate. This leaves you free to help the children work with their composition, and not be tied down with grades so much.
R: Uh, huh. Right. That's why they suggest not having lines for the children. The reasoning is that if you give them lined paper, like we give them for writing, and expect them to start at the top and make a straight line, two half circles, and make it like mine, make it
"right," then they are conditioned to do that for their story writing. And it doesn't need to be that way.

I: I see. They would get so bogged down on the writing process, they wouldn't pay any attention to the content.

R: Right. I tried to explain to them that a writer...

You get an idea, you want to get it down fast. You don't care whether it's real neat, as long as you can read it. Then they take it out to the parent in the hall, and the parent edits and writes it down correctly for them.

R.C.: Ramona revealed that she had been doing language experience activities with her class since the previous year, and that it was an attempt to use more of the children's language in her language instruction. She then told where she got many of her ideas for language activities:

R: The more you do, the more things you think of to do, like the big books. I never thought I was particularly creative. I'm not an artist and I don't write books, but with kids you think of different ways to do things, and you find out it's fun. Some things don't work so well, and so we don't do them again.

R.C.: I asked Ramona if she often tried to integrate the different subject areas into her language program as she had
done with the math lesson dealing with the days of the week. She stated that she was not always able to integrate her curriculum, but did try to stay aware of the possibilities of doing so.

Observation Three
Date: March 4, 1992
Time: 10:15-10:50 A.M.
"R" = Ramona
"S" = Student
"C" = Class
"R.C." = Researcher's Comments

R.C.: I arrived at the school at 10:10 A.M. on a drizzly day with calm winds and a temperature in the middle fifties. A group of children was playing on the playground at the west end of the building. I recognized several of the children, and realized that it was the first grade students who were having recess.

I entered the building, signed in at the office, and proceeded directly to Ramona's classroom. The room was empty, so I waited in the hallway until 10:17 when her class came in from recess. I preceded them into the room, and sat at the back of the room as was my custom.

The children entered the room, and sat at their desks. The teacher had them clear their desks off, then asked them to be seated in a semi-circle on the floor at the front of
the classroom. She stood in front of them and directed their attention to a chart on the front chalkboard on which a poem had been written with yellow felt-tip pen.

R: Okay, I told you earlier that I had put a poem up this morning. This is old, old, old. I'll bet your grandmothers and your great-grandmothers heard this. Has anyone read part of it? Do you know what it's about? Kristi has. Did you read all of it? Okay, who's the character? Kristi?

S: Wee Willie (pronounced the word with a long "i" sound in the first syllable) Winkie.

R: Willie. It's Willie. Wee Willie Winkie. Have you heard of it anybody?

S: Yeah, I have.

R: Wee Willie Winkie. Okay. Watch as I read, and listen.

R.C.: Ramona pointed to the words with a pointer as she read the poem off the chart. Several of the children tried to read along with her.

R: Wee Willie Winkie

runs through the town,

upstairs and downstairs

in his night gown.
Tapping at the window

crying at the lock

Are the babes in their beds?

for it's now ten o'clock.

R: How many of you have heard that?

S: I remember my grandmother said it.

R: You remember hearing Grandmother say it. Brad?

S: My grandma has a picture in her house, and it has that in it.

R: Okay. Does anyone else remember seeing this somewhere? Charles?

S: I've got a book that has it in it.

R: It's a nursery rhyme, isn't it?

S: I was going to say that I have a nursery rhyme book that has it in it.

R: Do you remember hearing it, too, Robert?

S: I can remember my Grandma saying it.

R: Did you really? Keith?

S: I have a little book that has a whole bunch of nursery rhymes.

R: Okay. Billy?

S: My sister has a nursery rhyme book that has this in it.

R: It has that one in it?

S: Except it says "twelve o'clock."
R: It says "twelve o'clock" instead of "ten o'clock?"
Sometimes they're different, depending on what book it's in. Alright, let's read it together this time.

R.C.: Ramona and the class read the poem together. Ramona pointed to the words on the chart as the students read. After the choral reading, Ramona divided the class into halves and had one group read the first verse of the poem and the other half read the second verse. Ramona read along and pointed to the words on the chart as the groups read the poem. After the choral reading, Ramona gave directions for completing an art project related to the poem.

R: Now we're going to do something. Remember I told you this morning, we're going to do something with this poem. I'm going to give you a sheet of paper in a few minutes, and I want you to turn your paper this way, up and down. And I want you to draw a house. We're going to put your houses back on our board, and we're going to make a little village back there where Wee Willie Winkie lives.

S: My book has a bed, and it shows him at home at night, and it shows him peeking outdoors in his nightgown.
R: I hope some of you will show an upstairs and a downstairs on your house. That's why I said to turn it
this way. We don't want it like a one-story. We want tall houses. I want your roof to go clear up to the top. I don't want a little house down here. Tomorrow we'll add some little people. You might even show some people peeping out of the windows watching Wee Willie Winkie. And then we'll have someone make Wee Willie Winkie, and we'll put a little nightgown on him in some way. I've done it before with some Kleenex, and it will look like cloth. If I can find something, we'll use some cloth for Wee Willie Winkie's nightgown while he's running through the upstairs and the downstairs in his nightgown. What was he doing that for? What was he running around in his nightgown for? Charles?
S: To see if all babes are asleep.
R: Right. And, what did you say, twelve o'clock, Billy?
S: Uh, huh.
R: Ten o'clock would be better than twelve, wouldn't it? Maybe eight o'clock would be better than ten if they're little!

R.C.: At this point, the teacher passed out a piece of white drawing paper to each child. The children returned to their seats and got right to work on their pictures.
The teacher monitored and assisted the children as they worked. She encouraged the children to draw with pencil first, then color the pictures.
Several of the children talked quietly to one another about their pictures as they worked. The children were very busy and industrious as they worked on their pictures.

Ramona told the children that later they would draw themselves outside of their houses. She had them cut out their house pictures, put their names on the back, and turn them in. She stapled the houses on a bulletin board at the back of the room as the children turned them in. At 10:50, the children began washing their hands for lunch, and I made my exit as unobtrusively as possible.

**Interview Three**

Date: March 4, 1992

Time: 12:45-1:10 P.M.

"R" = Ramona

"I" = Interviewer

"R.C." = Researcher's Comments

R.C.: This interview took place in Ramona's classroom during her break on the afternoon of the third observation. I began by explaining the purpose of my study, then initiated the following conversation:

I: I noticed one time when I set up an appointment, that you mentioned "whole-language time." Do you have a certain time period that's set aside, apart from your
other reading program, that you work specifically on those types of activities?
R: Yes, we try to, but we don't every day.

R.C.: I told Ramona that I was interested in aspects of her language program other than those which I had been able to observe during my visits. First, I asked about her reading program.

R: We started last year, for the first time, teaching whole-group reading. We're not teaching reading through whole language. We're using the basal reader. We have picked up several ideas through whole-language workshops that we're doing quite different from what we did before. But there is a time when we teach whole-group.
I: When you do the whole-class reading, how does that work as far as the children's actual reading? Do they normally read out loud, or sometimes read silently things of their choice?
R: I try different things all the time. We take three days for a story. The first day, I introduce the new vocabulary. These are the four new words that they probably did not know before (pointed to words on a chart holder at the front of the room). Although, now they're doing so much reading that they'll say, "I knew that word, because I had it with reading practicum
students or in one of my reading groups." These are words they should be able to decode. And this (pointed to one of the words on the chart) is the name of a character. I wrote up, before they came in this morning, sentences that came from the book, from my manual. Then, when I tell them what a word is, I say, "Do you see a sentence over here that has that word in it?" Then we underline it. Then I read the story to them. I think that's very important. The reading manuals do not tell you to do that. They have the children read it silently, the first page. Then you ask them questions.

I: Predictions on the next page and so on.

R: Right, make predictions. But, they don't know the vocabulary and they don't know what the story's about. Some of these stories are dumb! You know, they really are. They're not the best literature. It wasn't our idea originally, but we have found that by reading the story to them, they love it. You know, they listen very carefully. They have a book in front of them, right here on the floor. They follow along. And, of course, we have to be very strict when we start this. It's very structured. They have to be with me, the whole group, unlike a small group, or they're not going to learn. If they are not, then I say, "Go move your car." You know, they are in trouble if they are not listening. One little boy, this fall, when I started out, had lots of
problems listening. I said, after two or three
reminders, "You will be working with me at recess if you
cannot stay with me and the whole group." And we did
that several days. Then he started listening more
carefully and staying with me. And then, I read to them.
Then, depending on how long the story is, they read with
me. We read the story again together, everybody. And
then, the second day, we read with a partner. We review
the vocabulary. The kids make up their own sentences,
and then they copy those sentences the second day, take
it home, and the parents know that they are to have the
kids read them. That helps a lot. The vocabulary is
going home, the sentences the kids made up. They’re
given credit for the one they made up... their initials.
And then, the third day, I call it "round robin"
(laughed) reading. Sometimes it’s in our chairs,
sometimes it’s up here, and they don’t know when I’m
going to call on them to read a sentence. That works
pretty well, too. By that time, most of them can read it
very well. That’s how we do it.
I: So you’ve adapted the basal program to fit the way
you want to do it.
R: Right. Uh, huh.
R.C.: Next, I asked Ramona to explain how she assessed the effectiveness of the activities which she had the students engage in during the whole-language period.

R: By having them read the poems later in the week, usually. This is the first day we did this one (pointed to the "Wee Willie Winkie" poem). Tomorrow we’ll make our little people and put it up. I’ll have one person read one line, you know. We really do the whole language, trying to improve reading skills, of course, like we’re trying to do in everything we do. But also, our primary purpose is to have the children enjoy literature. And, you could see this morning, they love it. They can read it.

R.C.: I asked Ramona how much emphasis she placed on writing during her whole-language instruction.

R: We haven’t been doing that for you, probably, but we have... We really don’t do a lot of that in the fall, because in first grade, it takes them a while to be able to sound out words and to be able to spell anything. And so, I do give them journals, and we usually do that in the morning, during whole-language time. We just kind of stop with the poetry and the other things we do, and every day or so I give them time to write. Remember the
last thing I did with you? You know, that was writing, if that's what you mean. Creative writing. Uh, huh.

R.C.: Our next topic of discussion was Ramona's views toward accepting the children's "invented spelling."

A: I never spell for them. They come up and ask me, and I say, "Well, how does it begin? How does it sound?" Usually, they'll try to put a silent "e" on the end if it's a long vowel. As long as they phonetically spell it, then that's the way I have them write it. And we don't worry about it (laughed).

R.C.: I asked Ramona if she tried to integrate reading and writing activities into the other curriculum areas such as science and social studies.

R: Not every day, but we try to adapt. If I see a need, I... Well, for instance, like days of the week.
I: We talked about that last time. You incorporated that into a math lesson.
R: I saw a poem or something, and I thought, "I need to put that in earlier with math." So, you know, we try. We're kind of new at this.
I: So you're working on integrating your curriculum?
R: Right. And this is a new math series, so it'll take a little time. But, yeah, we do try to make it more interesting by adding language-type activities into our math and science.

R.C.: Next, I asked Ramona if she had observed any differences in her students' scores on standardized tests since she had initiated her whole-language instruction.

R: Yes. We noticed it even before test time last year. There are certain little activities that we give the children later in the spring (showed me a language skills worksheet). When we gave these before last year, the lower kids and even some of the middle kids struggled with this. But they did far better last year. We felt like it was because of the way we were doing reading whole-group and exposing them to more language. And our low kids did do better on the achievement test. We could see a little difference in our scores.

R.C.: Our next topic of discussion was related to Ramona's evolution as a whole-language teacher. I asked her if she could pinpoint what first influenced her to implement whole-language instruction.
R: Hmmm (laughed). I think probably the first was the Bill Martin workshops.

I: How long ago was this, the first one that you were exposed to?

R: Three years ago. I went two years.

I: You mentioned that Beth has influenced you some. Or you've influenced each other, I guess. Did she go to the same workshops?

R: She went the year before I did. That was when she was in third grade, though. Also, we really got going last year after we went to Wright Group in Kansas City. It was a wonderful... the best ever. A couple of our teachers went. A third grade and fifth grade teacher went recently.

I: What are some things that you picked up there that you're finding helpful?

R: This idea (pointed to the "Wee Willie Winkie" bulletin board). They just had every wall full. We took our camera. We took pictures. A lot of the ideas that we're doing, we got from them. We adapt their concepts in a lot of different ways.

I: Big books? Did you pick up any ideas there?

R: Yes. Uh, huh. Of course, we've been ordering big books through our Scholastic order. And I like to go to (named bookstore) in (named city). Every time I go, I
don't pick up a big book. They're very expensive. But I've always tried to collect good literature.
I: Now let me ask about some specific areas, or things that have happened in your past, and then find out if these things had any influence on your working with whole language now.
R: Okay.
I: Anything in your college classes that you can think of?
R: That was too long ago (laughed).
I: You went all those years of teaching after having those courses, and it wasn't until maybe three years ago that you really started working with this, so...
R: When I went through teacher training, Horace Mann (referred to laboratory school which was formerly located at the local university) was here. Do you know about Horace Mann?
I: Some.
R: And, you know, we did our methods at Horace Mann with the teachers there. Some of the things that we're doing are things that I did when I first started teaching. They used a lot of poetry. But we're just doing it in a different way now. And so, I don't know whether you can say I picked up any ideas then that I'm using now.
I: Do you do much reading related to whole language?
R: I try to. I belong to NEA, you know, and Delta Kappa Gamma. If I see articles in the journals or that... "Today..." I don't know if you get that or not. You probably don't belong to NEA, but it's a large publication. And every once in a while, they'll have something in there.

R.C.: The next phase of the interview centered around Ramona's experience as an elementary school teacher. She revealed that she had been teaching for seventeen years.

I: In what grades?
R: I taught second grade when I was first out of college. And then I worked with Head Start as an education coordinator for about five years. I stayed home, too, when my girls were little, so I could have taught twenty-six years or twenty-seven years. Then I taught kindergarten for nine years, and then I moved into first grade, and that was four.
I: How long have you taught in this building?
R: About fourteen years.

R.C.: Our final topic of conversation related to Ramona's educational background:
I: Tell me about your educational background. You mentioned that you went to (named university).

R: Uh, huh. I just got a B.S. in education, originally.

I: In elementary education?

R: Elementary education. And then I started teaching in second grade. And then I went back and got my masters quite a bit later.

I: In what field was that?

R: In education.

R.C.: Following the interview, Ramona allowed me to see her lesson plans for the period covered by this study. She permitted me to take notes related to the plans, which I was able to use as a means of triangulation in order to gain a clearer perception of her overall language program.

Lesson Plans

The activities listed on Ramona's lesson plans were very much the same as those listed in Beth's plans. She had a daily "Whole Language" time and "Story time," as well as a weekly "Show and Tell" and free reading period. Several language activities were also listed as part of the social studies instruction. See Appendix B for a more complete listing of the kinds of language activities accomplished during these times. Most of the rest of the activities
listed in Ramona’s plans were skills-oriented and taken from the text books. Her reading program was basal-oriented and included whole-class "round robin" reading, skills instruction, and having the students complete worksheets and workbook pages.

Principal Interview (Building C)

Date: January 27, 1992
Time: 2:45-2:55 P.M.
"R.C." = Researcher’s Comments

R.C.: This interview took place over the telephone. Mrs. Johnson expressed a preference to have the interview over the telephone for the sake of convenience. The following is a summary of the telephone conversation.

This was Mrs. Johnson’s first year as principal in Building C. The previous year had been her first year as a principal, but her assignment had been in a nearby district.

Building C had approximately 300 students, 135 of whom were on the free or reduced lunch program. This percentage was indicative of the socio-economic conditions in the surrounding community. There was a large number of single-parent families in the community served by the school. However, Mrs. Johnson stated that the school did not have any more students in special programs than other schools in the district.
The district had written curriculum guides in the language arts area, and the teachers were required to meet the objectives listed in the guides. However, the teachers were given a certain degree of individual freedom in determining how the objectives were to be met. The district provided the teachers with textbooks in the areas of English and spelling, and the teachers were expected to use these in their language programs. The district had also adopted a basal reading program, and the teachers were expected to use this in their reading instruction. However, the teachers were free to use supplemental materials and to incorporate other methods for meeting the district's prescribed objectives.

The district provided the teachers with numerous opportunities to attend in-service programs in the language arts area. The regional service center, approximately twenty miles away, provided several annual in-service opportunities, as did the local university. In particular, a Bill Martin Workshop was offered each year at the university, and the service center had several visiting authors each year. The district also provided the teachers with limited funds which the teachers could use to purchase supplemental materials to help them in their language arts programs.

Mrs. Johnson indicated that she had observed Beth's and Ramona's language instruction on numerous occasions, and was
very supportive of their efforts in the area of whole language. She stated that she had attended a whole-language workshop, and was impressed with this approach.

Mrs. Johnson indicated that she thought the parents were supportive of Beth's and Ramona's language programs. In fact, each had several parents who helped with her language activities on a regular basis.

District Curriculum Guides and Textbooks

Building A

The district-wide second-grade language arts curriculum guide for Building A was written by Ann herself. The objectives for the program stressed writing skills and exposure to good children's literature. Some of the objectives were specifically stated, such as the requirement to introduce the children to story motifs, plot, setting, and characters. Other objectives were stated more generally, such as the requirement to read quality children's novels to the students each day. Emphasis was placed on reading and writing in the content areas.

The district provided textbooks for the second-grade spelling and reading programs. Both sets of textbooks were published by Scott-Foresman. No textbook was provided for grammar instruction. The teachers in the district were
expected to meet the objectives provided in the curriculum guide as well as in the teacher’s manuals for the textbooks.

Building B

The district-wide language program for kindergarten in Building B was outlined in two separate curriculum guides, one for reading and another for language arts. The curriculum guide for reading contained objectives related to word identification, vocabulary, comprehension, study skills, and literary understanding and appreciation. Some of the specific objectives included the following: introduce learning of capital and lower case letters; initiate learning of initial letter sounds; initiate vocabulary readiness through language experience; initiate listening skills such as following directions; and initiate an appreciation for children’s literature.

The curriculum guide for language arts was more limited in scope. Some of its objectives included the following: participate in class experience stories; capitalize first letter of their first name; introduce correct formation of manuscript letters and numerals 0 through 9; encourage class participation; follow simple directions; and spell first name correctly.

The district provided a reading textbook for the kindergarten language program. The teachers were expected to meet the objectives outlined in the curriculum guides, but
were given carte-blanche in determining how the objectives were to be met. As previously stated, Laura elected not to use the textbook in her reading program.

**Building C**

Building C was located in the same school district as Building B. Two separate curriculum guides were provided for the first-grade language program, one for reading and the other for language arts. Most of the objectives in the reading guide were skills-oriented in nature. Some specific objectives included the following: introduce long and short vowels, consonants, blends, and digraphs; introduce structural analysis skills of affixes, syllabication, compound words, root words, and contractions; and introduce literal comprehension skills such as finding details, main idea, sequence, and following directions. Other objectives were more generally stated, such as the requirements to introduce an appreciation for literature and to introduce oral reading with expression.

The language arts curriculum guide for first grade was almost entirely skills-oriented in nature. Some of the objectives from this document included the following: write sentences, letters, short stories, and short answers; identify a sentence; introduce use of capital letters at the beginning of the sentence and proper names; and reinforce correct formation of manuscript letters and numerals.
The district provided textbooks for reading and English, but none for spelling. The reading text was a phonics-oriented basal series published by Ginn & Company. The English text was published by Silver Burdette, and was a skills-oriented program. Both first-grade teachers stated that for spelling, they used the Frank Schaffer word-families lists.
CHAPTER V

FINDINGS, CONCLUSIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The data collected in this qualitative study provided a description of the whole-language practices and assessment strategies employed by four self-professed whole-language teachers. The data also delineated the reasons the teachers utilized whole language practices as well as the factors which influenced them to initiate their whole-language instruction.

The four elementary teachers involved in the study were employed in three public elementary schools located in two midwestern United States towns. Laura taught at the kindergarten level, and had been teaching for 23 years. Ann was a second-grade teacher with over 30 years of teaching experience. Beth and Ramona taught first grade in the same building and shared many ideas with one another. Beth had been teaching for 11 years, and Ramona had 17 years of elementary teaching experience.

The researcher observed each teacher's class during language instruction on three separate occasions, then interviewed the teachers following each observation. Data were also derived from interviews with building principals.
and a study of lesson plans, student work, and district curriculum guides and textbooks.

Findings

Whole Language Practices

Certain whole-language practices were utilized by all of the teachers involved in the study (See Appendix B). The following practices, identified by Dorothy Watson (1982) as being characteristic of whole-language instruction, were observed in each class: reading to the students daily; language experience activities; extended literature activities; and bringing familiar language into the classroom. All of the teachers accepted "invented spellings" and other non-standard forms of language usage (Hall, 1987). Several other strategies, which may be viewed as sub-categories of the practices mentioned above, were also observed in each classroom. These strategies were book publishing, choral reading, brainstorming, and the reading of poetry.

None of the teachers had the students read to themselves (Watson, 1982) during the researcher's observations. Ann, however, listed a daily "free reading" time on her lesson plans. She was also the only one to talk about the importance of having children read self-selected materials.
for pleasure. Beth and Ramona listed in their plans a short period for reading library books one day a week.

Ann and Laura emphasized writing very strongly in their curricula, and had the students write every day (Watson, 1982). For Ann, in particular, writing served as a focal point for the language program. Laura had her kindergarten students participate in a Writing Workshop activity two days a week as well as providing additional writing opportunities throughout the week. Beth and Ramona also had their students engage in writing activities, but not as frequently or extensively as the other two teachers. Both stated that they were working toward including more writing activities in their language programs.

Ann’s and Laura’s lesson plans listed numerous opportunities for their students to read and write in the content areas (Watson, 1989). Samples of student work, bulletin board displays, and interview comments indicated that these two teachers did, indeed, integrate language activities with the content areas on a regular basis. However, there were no indications in Beth’s or Ramona’s lesson plans or during observations that they either required or encouraged the children to regularly engage in reading or writing activities in the content areas.

As previously mentioned, all of the teachers allowed, and often encouraged, the students to bring their everyday language into the classroom. Ann and Laura, in particular,
made use of the students' language, often modifying their lessons to follow the students' lead and to expand on their contributions.

Assessment

All of the teachers used informal assessment practices, including observing student performance and collecting samples of student work (Cambourne & Turbill, 1990), in an attempt to measure the effectiveness of their language programs. Laura also used a checklist to document progress in specific areas of language development (Bird, 1989).

All but Laura used standardized tests as a gauge in determining the efficacy of their whole-language instruction. Ann, Beth, and Ramona all stated that their students' test scores had increased as a result of their whole-language practices. Ann, however, indicated that scores on the grammar portion of her tests were not always higher because she did not teach her students the "nit-picky kinds of things" that were included on the test. Additionally, Ramona said she could tell that her students' performance on language skills worksheets had improved since she had started using whole-language instruction. See Appendix C for a tabular listing of the teachers' assessment practices.
Rationale for Using Whole-Language Instruction

The researcher initiated this study with the intent of determining why the teachers used specific whole-language practices. However, the data collected during the study did not provide a definitive answer to this question. When asked about their reasons for using specific practices, the teachers almost always answered in more generic terms, giving their reasons for using whole-language instruction in general. For that reason, this section addresses the teachers' rationales for using whole-language practices in a general sense.

The teachers' stated reasons for using whole-language practices were many and varied (See Appendix D). Ann and Laura seemed extremely knowledgeable of whole-language principles, and could usually provide a coherent rationale for their different practices. Beth and Ramona, on the other hand, gave fewer reasons for using whole-language instruction, and the reasons they did give were often stated in rather simplistic terms (e.g., "It's fun," "The kids love it.") Ann and Laura most often stressed language development as the basis for their choice of whole-language practices, whereas Beth and Ramona emphasized skills development. On several occasions, both Beth and Ramona stated that they used whole-language instruction primarily for skills development, and that a criterion for selecting instructional materials was that these materials review or
reinforce skills which were being covered in the basal reader at a given time.

Factors Which Influenced the Teachers to Use Whole-Language Instruction

The influence most commonly and frequently mentioned by all four teachers was the Bill Martin Workshop which they had all attended in recent years at the local university (See Appendix E). Other influences mentioned by all four teachers included the following: other conferences and workshops; other visiting authors; and personal reading.

None of the teachers pinpointed any of their undergraduate education courses as being significantly influential. Laura stated that she had been influenced by some of her postgraduate courses. She had, however, taken these courses for the express purpose of expanding her knowledge of whole-language principles and practices. The courses had been taught by a well-known whole-language advocate at a neighboring university.

Ann and Laura both indicated that whole-language principles coincided with beliefs and philosophical tenets they had held before they had even heard of whole language as such. From this perspective, they had added to their existing repertoire some whole-language practices rather than being converted over to a new approach. Beth and Ramona, on the other hand, had been more skills-oriented in
their past teaching. Many of the principles and practices of whole language were qualitatively different from their customary teaching methods. They were attempting to incorporate some whole language-practices into their skills-based programs.

Ann and Laura cited the influence of membership in professional organizations. Ann’s influences also included school district language program guidelines (which she, herself, had helped formulate) and similarities between whole language and her own early schooling in a one-room schoolhouse. Laura, Beth, and Ramona cited the influence of co-workers. Ramona, in particular, was influenced by Beth’s example, and followed her lead in implementing whole-language activities.

Conclusions

Whole-Language Practices

The teachers involved in this study had differing perceptions as to what comprised a whole-language program. Two of the teachers, Beth and Ramona, listed a "Whole-Language Time" on their lesson plans, during which they conducted most of their whole-language activities. This suggests they looked upon whole language as being an alternative way to organize their language instruction rather than as a philosophical view which pervaded their
entire curricula and influenced the way they perceived language development in general (Bird, 1987). These two teachers seemed to lack an in-depth understanding of whole-language principles and often had difficulty explaining their rationale for using whole-language practices. They left the impression they were using whole language because it was the "in" thing, rather than because of a congruence with their skills-oriented perspectives regarding language development. It remained to be seen whether these two teachers would be able to make the break from their skills-based orientation and become whole-language proponents in the true sense of the term.

Ann and Laura, on the other hand, had gone beyond what was in the whole-language literature, and had developed their own unique, coherent programs. Rather than collecting a bagful of whole-language gimmicks because they "sounded good," these two teachers had added some uniquely whole-language practices to their repertoires because these practices were consistent with their pre-existing views of language development.

It seems apparent that these teachers' pre-existing philosophies directly influenced the effectiveness with which they applied whole-language practices. This is consistent with Isenberg’s conclusions (Isenberg, 1990) that teachers are more effective when their approaches to
teaching are consistent with their theoretical leanings and philosophical beliefs.

However, it is worthwhile to note that, even though many of their basic beliefs were antithetical to whole-language principles, Beth and Ramona were able to enrich their language programs by using some whole-language practices. Even though they used whole-language instruction primarily to enhance skills development, these practices exposed the children to extensive literature, encouraged oral language development, and resulted in many opportunities for writing development. By the same token, Ann and Laura incorporated a number of skills-based activities into their whole-language instruction. There are positive aspects to varying approaches to language development, and effective teachers often include in their programs what they consider to be the best characteristics of each alternative approach.

Assessment

All four teachers seemed uncertain as to the best way of assessing the effectiveness of their whole-language instruction. It appeared that this was an area they had not thought out very clearly. They sometimes seemed to be relying on faith that the children were benefiting from the instruction, but were not able to point out valid concrete ways of verifying this assumption. They most often pointed to standardized test scores as an indicator, even though
this measure tends to be skills-based, and is thus an inappropriate gauge for the effectiveness of whole-language practices. All four teachers indicated that they relied on observation and collected samples of student work, and Laura stated that she used a checklist to document skills development, but none of the teachers demonstrated that she had developed a systematic approach for assessing the overall effectiveness of her whole-language instruction. Laura was the only one to express an awareness of the literature documenting the difficulties involved in assessing the effectiveness of whole-language instruction (Cambourne & Turbill, 1990). The data collected in this study indicated that assessment was an area of ambiguity and uncertainty for the teachers involved.

Rationale for Using Whole-Language Practices

The reasons the teachers gave for utilizing various whole-language practices (See Appendix D) seemed to be driven by what they considered to be important in language development. The skills-oriented teachers most often stated that they used whole language in order to review or reinforce skills and to increase standardized test scores. The more holistic teachers more often stressed language development, language appreciation, and self-expression. Although all the teachers gave numerous reasons for using whole language, the most commonly stated reasons seemed to
be motivated by each teacher's basic philosophy of language development. This difference in beginning points permeated every lesson observed throughout the duration of the study. The teachers' philosophical bases determined, more than any other single factor, the methods and practices used in their whole-language instruction (Isenberg, 1990).

Factors Which Influenced the Teachers to Use Whole-Language Instruction

Ramona indicated on more than one occasion that she had been influenced by Beth in her decision to implement whole-language instruction and relied on her for specific ideas and practices. These two teachers team taught and used many of the same lessons and activities. Their lesson plans for the "Whole Language Time" were almost identical. Her dependence on Beth's influence and leadership likely accounted for the fact that Ramona was the teacher least able to articulate her rationale for using whole-language practices. Her approach was extremely skills-oriented, frequently failing to adhere to the whole-language viewpoint regarding language development. She effectively utilized several whole-language techniques during "Whole Language Time," but seldom applied whole-language principles throughout the rest of her curriculum, commenting on one occasion that she "did not teach reading by whole language."
It can be implied from Ramona's example that teachers must become knowledgeable of whole-language principles and make a personal commitment to the whole-language philosophy in order to develop an integrated, coherent whole-language instructional program. Merely developing an awareness of and proficiency in implementing whole-language practices and techniques will not be sufficient.

Recommendations

Recommendations for Teachers

Teachers should make conscious efforts to become cognizant of their basic philosophies and beliefs regarding how children learn and develop. These efforts should include, but not be restricted to the following: extensive reading; frequent introspection and reflective thinking; attendance at workshops and other in-service opportunities; the sharing of ideas and beliefs with colleagues; and empirical observations and experimentations. After gaining an understanding of their philosophical bents, teachers should make every effort to ensure that their practices are consistent with their beliefs.

It is further recommended that whole-language teachers address the issue of assessment with more urgency. With the increased emphasis on educational accountability, it becomes imperative that whole-language practitioners be able to
demonstrate in concrete ways the effectiveness of their language instruction. The researcher proposes that portfolio assessment (Atwell, 1987; Bird, 1989; Paris, 1991; Valencia, 1990) is the most appropriate approach, and recommends that whole-language teachers consider this technique for assessing the effectiveness of their language programs.

Recommendations for School Districts

When initiating new programs, particularly those such as whole language which are closely tied to underlying theoretical and philosophical premises, school districts must ensure that teachers are committed to the programs. Also, adequate in-service opportunities and support services must be provided to ensure that the teachers are solidly grounded in the philosophical, theoretical, and practical bases underlying the new programs. Furthermore, administrators must be aware of the need to allow for diversity and individual differences among the teachers in the district. These administrators must remain cognizant of the fact that whole language may not be for every teacher - that some teachers may be more effective approaching language development from alternative perspectives which are more consistent with their basic philosophical beliefs (Isenberg, 1990).
Recommendations for Further Research

The researcher recommends that further research be conducted on how teachers are affected when they attempt to teach in ways which are inconsistent with their basic philosophies and/or teaching styles (e.g., attempting to use the whole-language approach when the teacher espouses a more skills-oriented philosophy) (Isenberg, 1990).

Further research is also called for in the area of assessment of whole-language instruction. The researcher suggests that additional research be conducted to determine the ways in which whole-language practices are currently being assessed and to pose more effective methods for such assessment.

The researcher also recommends that quantitative research be conducted to more closely study the rationales which teachers give for using particular whole-language strategies. This research should measure the correlation between the stated rationales and generally accepted principles of whole language.
Demographic Chart for the Teachers

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Teacher Name</th>
<th>Grade Level Taught</th>
<th>Teaching Experience</th>
<th>Educational Background</th>
<th>Age</th>
<th>Family Information</th>
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<td>Lower 50's</td>
<td>Girl in College (Sec. Ed. major)</td>
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<td>Laura</td>
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<td>40's</td>
<td>3 Teenage Boys</td>
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<tr>
<td>Beth</td>
<td>1st</td>
<td>11 Yrs</td>
<td>BS El Ed</td>
<td>40's</td>
<td>3 Girls in college (El. Ed. majors)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ramona</td>
<td>1st</td>
<td>17 Yrs</td>
<td>MS El Ed</td>
<td>40's</td>
<td>3 Girls Grown Children</td>
</tr>
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Demographics for the Principals and Schools

**Principal Demographics**

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<thead>
<tr>
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<th>Principal C</th>
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<td>50's</td>
<td>40's</td>
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<td>Yes</td>
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<td>Whole Language?</td>
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<tr>
<td>Supportive of</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Whole Language?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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**School Demographics**

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<td>Students</td>
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<td>Grade Levels</td>
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<td>Socio-Economic</td>
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<td>Middle Income</td>
<td>Low Income</td>
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<td>Students in</td>
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<td>District</td>
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<tr>
<td>Schools in</td>
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<tr>
<td>District *</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

*Note: Schools B and C were located in the same town and school district. School A was located in a small town approximately 15 miles away.*
APPENDIX B

WHOLE-LANGUAGE PRACTICES
Whole-Language Practices as Identified in the Literature and/or Observed in This Study

Teacher Reading to the Students Daily (Watson, 1982)
Students Reading to Themselves Daily (Watson, 1982)
Students Writing Every Day (Watson, 1982)
Reading Across the Curriculum (Watson, 1982)
Writing Across the Curriculum (Watson, 1982)
Language Experience Activities (Watson, 1982)
Extended Literature Activities (Watson, 1982)
Bringing Familiar Language Into the Classroom (Watson, 1982)
Acceptance of "Invented Spellings" (Hall, 1987)
Choral Reading
Brainstorming
Use of Poetry
Use of Big Books
Comparison of Whole-Language Practices Observed During Visits and Practices Listed on Lesson Plans
(Ann - Second Grade)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Whole-Language Practice</th>
<th>Observed</th>
<th>Lesson Plans</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Teacher Reading to the Students Daily</td>
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<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Students Reading to Themselves Daily</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Students Writing Every Day</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Book Publishing</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
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<tr>
<td>Reading Across the Curriculum</td>
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<td>X</td>
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<tr>
<td>Writing Across the Curriculum</td>
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<tr>
<td>Language Experience Activities</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Extended Literature Activities</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Choral Reading</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Brainstorming</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
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<tr>
<td>Use of Poetry</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
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<tr>
<td>Use of Big Books</td>
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<td>Bringing Familiar Language Into the Classroom</td>
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<tr>
<td>Acceptance of &quot;Invented Spellings&quot;</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>n/a</td>
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</table>
Comparison of Whole-Language Practices Observed During Visits and Practices Listed on Lesson Plans (Laura - KG)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Whole-Language Practice</th>
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</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Teacher Reading to the Students Daily</td>
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<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Students Reading to Themselves Daily</td>
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<td>Students Writing Every Day</td>
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<td>X</td>
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<td>Book Publishing</td>
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<td>Writing Across the Curriculum</td>
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<td>Language Experience Activities</td>
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<td>Extended Literature Activities</td>
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<td>Choral Reading</td>
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<td>Brainstorming</td>
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<tr>
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<td>X</td>
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<tr>
<td>Use of Big Books</td>
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<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bringing Familiar Language Into the Classroom</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>n/a</td>
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<tr>
<td>Acceptance of &quot;Invented Spellings&quot;</td>
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<td>n/a</td>
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</table>
Comparison of Whole-Language Practices Observed During Visits and Practices Listed on Lesson Plans (Beth - First Grade)

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<td>Teacher Reading to the Students Daily</td>
<td>X</td>
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<tr>
<td>Students Reading to Themselves Daily</td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Students Writing Every Day</td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Book Publishing</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
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<tr>
<td>Reading Across the Curriculum</td>
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<tr>
<td>Writing Across the Curriculum</td>
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<td>Language Experience Activities</td>
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<tr>
<td>Extended Literature Activities</td>
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<td>Choral Reading</td>
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<td>Brainstorming</td>
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<td>Use of Poetry</td>
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<td>Use of Big Books</td>
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<td>Acceptance of &quot;Invented Spellings&quot;</td>
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Comparison of Whole-Language Practices Observed During Visits and Practices Listed on Lesson Plans (Ramona - First Grade)

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<td>Brainstorming</td>
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<tr>
<td>Use of Big Books</td>
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<tr>
<td>Bringing Familiar Language Into the Classroom</td>
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Whole-Language Practices Observed During Visits  
(Comparison of Teachers)

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<tr>
<th>Whole-Language Practice</th>
<th>Ann</th>
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<th>Beth</th>
<th>Ramona</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Teacher Reading to the Students Daily</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>X</td>
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<tr>
<td>Students Reading to Themselves Daily</td>
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<tr>
<td>Students Writing Every Day</td>
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<td>Book Publishing</td>
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Whole-Language Practices Listed on Lesson Plans
(Comparison of Teachers)

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<th>Laura</th>
<th>Beth</th>
<th>Ramona</th>
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<tr>
<td>Students Reading to Themselves Daily</td>
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<tr>
<td>Students Writing Every Day</td>
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<tr>
<td>Book Publishing</td>
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<td>Choral Reading</td>
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APPENDIX C

ASSESSMENT OF WHOLE-LANGUAGE INSTRUCTION
### Assessment of Whole-Language Instruction

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Method of Assessment</th>
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APPENDIX D

RATIONALE FOR USING WHOLE-LANGUAGE INSTRUCTION
### Rationale For Using Whole-Language Instruction

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<tr>
<th>Reason</th>
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<th>Ramona</th>
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<tr>
<td>Improve Reading Skills</td>
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<td>Review and Reinforce Skills</td>
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<td>Provide Reading Strategies Instruction</td>
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<td>Create Interest in Language</td>
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<td>Encourage Self-Expression</td>
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<td>Enhance Language Development</td>
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<tr>
<td>Provide for Application of Language</td>
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<td>Develop Language Appreciation</td>
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<tr>
<td>Develop Literature Appreciation</td>
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<tr>
<td>Promote Better Attitude Toward Language Activities</td>
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<td>Keep children on task</td>
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<tr>
<td>Provide Practice</td>
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<td>Eliminate Textbooks</td>
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<td>Eliminate Worksheets</td>
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<td>Students Learn More</td>
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<td>Higher Test Scores</td>
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<td>More Fun</td>
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<td>Meaningful</td>
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APPENDIX E

FACTORS WHICH INFLUENCED THE TEACHERS TO USE
WHOLE-LANGUAGE INSTRUCTION
Factors Which Influenced the Teachers to Use Whole-Language Instruction

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Influencing Factor</th>
<th>Ann</th>
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<th>Beth</th>
<th>Ramona</th>
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<tr>
<td>Undergraduate Courses</td>
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<td>Conferences/Workshops</td>
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<td>Bill Martin Workshop</td>
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<td>(Specifically Stated)</td>
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<td>Co-Workers' Influence</td>
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<td>School District Language Program Guidelines</td>
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<td>Patterned After Own Early Schooling</td>
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<td>Compatible with Personal Philosophy</td>
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</table>
APPENDIX F

INTERVIEW SCHEDULES
Principal Interview

Demographics:

How long have you been a principal? At this school?

Approximately how many students attend this school?

In general, how would you describe or typify the student population in this school?

Language Program:

What guidelines does the district have to guide and/or assist the (grade level) teachers in their language program?

Curriculum guide(s)?

Textbook(s)? Required or optional?

In-service opportunities? Recent in-service programs?

In your opinion, what are some of the characteristics and objectives of an effective language program at the (grade) level?

How much leeway or freedom do the teachers in your building have in developing their own language programs?

How much financial support is given by the district for the language programs (e.g., trade books, materials, etc.)?

Teacher Data:

How much opportunity have you had to observe (teacher's name)'s language program?

How do you feel about her language program?

How well does her program seem to be accepted by the parents of her students?
Final Teacher Interview

Language Program:
Tell more about other aspects of your language program:
  reading
  spelling
  English

How do you try to integrate language into the content areas?

How do you assess the effectiveness of your whole-language instruction?

What influenced you to use whole-language instruction?

Personal information:
  How long been teaching? Where? What grade levels/subjects?

Educational background:
  Degrees held? When were degrees received? Major fields of study? Universities attended?
REFERENCES
REFERENCES


