CHILDREN’S RESPONSES TO LITERATURE
READ ALOUD IN THE CLASSROOM

DISSERTATION

Presented in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for
the Degree Doctor of Philosophy in the Graduate
School of the Ohio State University

By

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* * * * *

The Ohio State University
1987

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To My Husband
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My most sincere appreciation must be given to my husband who diligently read, and reread my various drafts. His reassuring nature seemed to place the writing of this document in a manageable context.
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CHAPTER I
INTRODUCTION

Introduction

In primary school classrooms throughout the country, children can be seen sitting on a rug in a corner of their classroom. The attention of these children is given to the classroom teacher who is reading aloud a story. The occurrence of this read aloud activity in elementary school classrooms ranges from several times a day to never.

According to Hillman (1975) there are five major reasons for reading aloud to children which have been gleaned from recent linguistic and psychological research, in addition to folklore and intuition. Hillman asserts these reasons are:

1. It allows the modeling of language patterns. (syntactic and phonemic)

2. It allows an identification with models.

3. It provides a commonality of experience to listeners from diverse backgrounds.

4. It promotes listening/reading comprehension skills.

5. It motivates children to want to read. (Hillman, 1975, p. 2)
While much of the practice of reading aloud in school settings is based upon traditional practices and teacher's intuition, some studies have explored the educational benefits of reading aloud. Documentation for the support of reading aloud to children has been generated by research studies conducted in elementary school classrooms in a variety of locations with positive effects: increased comprehension and knowledge of vocabulary as measured on reading test scores in primary grade children, (Cohen, 1968), and in intermediate level children, (Porter, 1969, Brilchle, 1984); and in the language expansion of Standard English with bidialectal black children in kindergarten through third grade in inner-city schools. (Cullinan, Jagger and Stickland, 1974)

These read aloud studies have focused on one particular aspect of children's increased learning potential. However, little research has been implemented to describe student and teacher interactions that might explicate the nature of reading aloud to children. This study is designed to explore and describe children's behaviors during the read aloud event as well as beyond the event. In focusing attention on the verbal and nonverbal responses of children related to the read aloud event, the direction of research shifts from measuring a
final outcome, a product, to describing the nature of the read aloud event, the process.

In this chapter the presentation of read aloud studies which are particularly relevant for this study are organized under the areas of reading achievement and language expansion. The findings from these studies help provide a rationale for extending the data collection of a read aloud study beyond the elementary school classroom and into the home environment. The cultural perspectives of the students are also seen as facets which need to be investigated. Lastly, the limitations of implementing such a study are presented.

Reading Achievement

Cohen (1968) studied the effects of a daily read aloud program on the reading achievement of second grade children in inner-city schools in New York City. She found that a daily program of reading aloud to the students by the classroom teacher for an academic school year had significantly increased the reading achievement of the students in the experimental group over the control group in the areas of vocabulary, word knowledge and reading comprehension.

Briechele (1984), a classroom teacher, studied the effects of a read aloud program on the reading
achievement of her sixth grade students who attended an elementary school in an upper middle class community. She read aloud to her sixth grade students for twenty-five minutes a day, three times a week for a period of eight weeks. The test scores of the students in the experimental group showed a significant gain over scores of the students in the control group in reading comprehension. Her findings indicate that reading aloud to sixth grade students on a regular basis is an effective method for improving the reading comprehension of students.

Porter (1969) studied the effects of reading aloud to fourth, fifth and sixth grade students in inner-city schools in the mid-western city of Columbus, Ohio. High school Juniors, who came from the children's immediate neighborhood, read aloud selected stories twice weekly for thirty minutes over a period of twenty weeks. Porter found that there was a significant increase in reading achievement of the students in the experimental group over the control group in the areas of vocabulary, comprehension and total reading. She concluded that:

The results of this study suggested that with only two thirty-minute periods of reading each week significant increases in reading achievement were made. If teachers at all grade levels provided time for reading aloud to children on a regular basis, the gains in reading skills should be even more significant. (Porter, 1969, p. 214)
However, in another study, (Lyons, 1972), first and second grade students who listened to children's literature read aloud did not show significantly higher reading scores over the respective control groups. Lyons' study was conducted over a twelve week period with children's literature read aloud three times each week. The read aloud experimental program was administered by eight undergraduate students who were majoring in elementary education and were selected from a pool of volunteers.

In assessing possible reasons for a level of no significance in the Lyon's study, two reasons seemed tenable. One reason is the length of the study. Lyons acknowledged this possible factor and stated:

It can be inferred from the results of this investigation that a short period of specialized treatment is not sufficient to override the general nature of the reading practices. The teacher's daily practices over an extended period of time, and the special emphases that exist in the classroom appear to be the more important influence. (Lyons, 1972, p. 126)

Another possible reason is that the undergraduate students who administered the read aloud program were strangers to the children. Lyons' findings suggest that the reader, herself, may have an impact, in an undetermined way, on the effects of the read aloud
program.

**Language Expansion**

Cullinan, Jagger and Strickland (1974) expanded the design of the Cohen study, and included in their study a component for the measurement of language expansion of Standard English in bidialectal black children in kindergarten through third grade classes. Specifically, the researchers were concerned with the effects of a literature-based oral language program on the ability of black primary students to reproduce the structures of Standard English without decreasing their Black dialect. These researchers found that although there were greater gains in language development of the students in the experimental over the control groups in Standard English, the experimental treatment was significantly more effective only at the kindergarten level.

From the findings of their study, Hooper and Hare (1982) concluded that reading aloud to first grade children in inner-city public schools has an impact on the children's experiential background and on their language appropriate behaviors. The children in the group receiving the treatment significantly expanded their knowledge of the targeted topic of "circuses". The classroom teacher implemented the read aloud program
twice weekly for a period of forty minutes.

Findings from the research studies cited substantiate the supposition that a systematic, daily program of reading aloud to children, which is part of the classroom teacher's curriculum, is, indeed, beneficial for students.

Nature of the Problem

In general, read aloud studies, and in particular the read aloud studies cited, seek to establish a correlational co-efficient between read aloud programs and student achievement. These studies rely on the use of statistical analysis of quantitative research methodology to document the positive effects of reading aloud to children.

While findings from read aloud studies utilizing quantitative methodology do yield important knowledge to educators, these statistical findings offer no information as to the social context of the experimental classrooms in which the read aloud treatment was introduced, nor do they offer information as to how any one child in these elementary classrooms responded to the stories during the read aloud activity. Rubin (1981) writes that:
Quantification obviously has its place, but carries with it an unavoidable reductionism. The price for scientific neatness can be failure to explore the very heart of the process under study because emotions and associations cannot be captured, preserved or communicated through numbers. (Rubin, 1981, p. 27, 28)

Limitations of Methodology

Within these read aloud studies there may have been a greater impact in other areas besides reading achievement, more than can be assessed from a standardized test. From the study of her son, Paul, Bissex (1980) postulates that:

What may appear on the surface and through standardized test results as quantitative changes—reading more words, longer books, more kinds of materials, more words per minute—arise from qualitative changes in reading strategies and purposes, not merely from more of the same skills (like acquiring more sight words). (Bissex, 1980, p. 168)

Studies which quantitatively measure and then report in their findings the effects of reading aloud to elementary school children tend to focus on one aspect of students' learning achievement. This narrow focus of statistical measurement, such as reading comprehension, tends to give a fragmentary interpretation of the effects of reading aloud to elementary school children.
A child who is sitting on the rug and listening to the classroom teacher read aloud a story responds to that story with verbal and nonverbal behaviors. This storytime activity provides a setting in which the responses of the children can directly be observed. These observable responses offer valuable information for evaluating an individual child as well as for noting patterns of similar responses within a group of children in the classroom.

Thoughtful and systematic consideration of these observable responses of the children during the read aloud activity can yield a wealth of knowledge in understanding each child’s potential for literary development. Ultimately, it is the classroom teacher who is responsible for the nurture and development of each child’s literary experiences during the school day. Chambers (1983) posits that teachers, as well as librarians, carry the responsibility for bringing children and books together.

The Classroom Teacher As Researcher

There appears to be a new, emerging paradigm in educational research today. The idea of teachers conducting research studies in their own classrooms is slowly gaining a modest acceptance in the United States.
The trend is to replace the researcher/teacher with the concept of the teacher researcher. (Cullinan and Strickland, 1986) These researchers assert: "Outside researchers no longer invade classrooms with preconceived notions of what should be done; teachers assume leadership as the professionals they are". (Cullinan and Strickland, 1986, p. 798, 799)

Brchiele's study was conducted in her own sixth grade classroom, although she did enlist the services of a volunteer, a retired fourth grade teacher, to properly implement her experimental research design.

Brissey (1982), a first grade teacher, implemented a study in her own classroom. She systematically observed and recorded the responses of her students to fifteen stories that she read aloud to her children over a period of four months. In her study, Brissey sought the development of a tool for observing and recording students' responses to children's literature during the storytime activity. This method would allow classroom teachers to become more skillful at observation. From the findings of her study, she concluded that more formal research is needed:

For identifying ways in which children reveal language acquisition processes, their comprehension of language and stories, their imaginative use and extension of book language, as well as other physical, dramatic, emotional, and verbal responses
while hearing stories read aloud.
(Brissey, 1982, p. 145)

A classroom teacher who systematically observes and records her students' responses to children's literature read aloud, and uses the findings gleaned from her research data as a tool for evaluation and development of each child's potential bridges the gap between educational research and actual classroom practice. All too often, educational research is conducted, and the data carried away by the researchers who make no further attempt to share their findings with the classroom teacher. This type of educational research offers little guidance to the classroom teacher who struggles to provide her children with the "best" curriculum that educational research has found to be appropriate. DeLapp (1980) writes that:

If classroom and teaching research is to make contributions to our understanding of the processes of education, the results, in the final analysis, must be meaningful to classroom teachers. It is their actions and understandings at the classroom level that determine to an important degree the processes of education in our schools.
(DeLapp, 1980, p. 5)

**Length of the Study**

Brissey stated that her four month investigation gave her valuable information in understanding the
response patterns of her students to children's literature read aloud. A longer period of investigation might yield even more and deeper insights into students' responses to children's literature read aloud. Klefer (1982) in a descriptive investigation of the responses of first and second grade children to picture books, found that these children's responses to picture books changed over time. She concluded:

Time is necessary for all these variations in children's responses, time for each child to look at a book, time to think about the book and time to make connections to events both past and future. The amount of time needed for responses to develop can range from several minutes to several years, although this long-term response may be more difficult to nurture or identify. (Klefer, 1982, p. 173, 174)

As the educational researcher, the classroom teacher has the benefit of being a part of the social context of the elementary classroom environment. The classroom teacher is able to systematically and continually observe and record the responses of the students to children's literature, read aloud, daily over the period of an academic school year. She has access to all of the children's work, which may, in some less direct or obvious way, reflect their responses to stories read aloud. She can observe and record the students' responses throughout the school day without the
limitation of observation for a predetermined period of time each day or targeted days during each week.

Focus on Multi-cultural Perspectives

The read aloud activity can also be seen as a cultural, literary event. The literature on the topic of reading aloud to children suggests that during this storytime activity the children learn about the text or story, and also form concepts about language and experiences that may be new or different from those previously experienced by them. (Martinez and Roser, 1985)

In discussing second language reading, Murphy (1980) postulates that:

It is through this familiarization with the purpose of books that the desire to read is fostered. Through children's literature, second language learners gain experience in the uses of language and increase their vocabulary and their depth in the development of concepts. (Murphy, 1980, p. 194)

The act of reading is also understood to be a transaction involving the reader and the text. (Rosenblatt, 1978) In the case of young children, it is a willing adult who acts as an intermediary and reads aloud the text to the child. This transaction can be termed a cultural event, for it integrates the cultural background of the reader with that of the author.
directly, and of the author indirectly through the characters and their interactions. (Bruce, 1983)

Recent research in reading comprehension suggests that when one reads, he or she projects a schema upon the text. Whether schemata relate to the perception of content, to the procedure for determining meaning, or to the style of talking about a text, schemata are acquired or learned, and they appear to constitute the major form of variation among readers. (Purves, 1975)

Rosenblatt (1985) has for many years spoken of the importance of the role of the reader. She writes that:

Any encounter between readers, teachers, and texts in a classroom has as its setting the society, the community, the ethos of the school, the total curriculum, the cumulative social concepts embodied in the works presented to the pupil over the years, and the earlier experiences with literature at home and in school. The dynamics of the particular classroom, in turn, provide a context for the individual students' evocations and responses. (Rosenblatt, 1985, p. 50)

Existing read aloud studies have generally focused on elementary classrooms with children who have similar cultural backgrounds. Little, if any, research has explored the nature of students' responses during the storytime activity in elementary school classrooms with children who have many different cultural backgrounds.
Beyond the Classroom Environment

Some studies of early readers have used a research design in which a major component of data collection comes from the home. One aspect of these studies sought to describe the home environment of early readers (Durkin, 1966), young, fluent readers, (Clark, 1976) and active and nonactive sixth grade readers (Sostarich, 1974).

In Durkin's study (1966) of early readers the home environment of these children was described. She found that early readers had listened to stories read aloud by adults and that the parents took time with their children when the children were interested in reading. Clark’s study (1976) was set in Scotland and the findings from her study supported the findings of Durkin. Clark found that young fluent readers had listened to stories read aloud in the home on a consistent basis and that parents felt that reading was an important activity in the home. Sostarich (1974) studied active and nonactive sixth grade readers. In her investigation of the home environment of the active readers, she noted that parents of the active sixth grade readers had read aloud to their children when they were younger.

These studies describe the home environment of the early readers through transcripts from personal
interviews with parents and from information gleaned from questionnaires completed by the parents who ultimately relied on memory to answer the questions. Liston (1980) writes that the factor of accuracy of memory of past events may influence the results of these surveys.

However, a study in which data is recorded at home by the parents concurrently with data recorded in the elementary classroom by the classroom teacher reduces the problematic situation of having parents rely on their memory of past events. A system of concurrent recording of a child's response to stories read aloud in the classroom broadens the context of the literary responses of the child. It seems reasonable to assume that children continue to respond to children's literature read aloud in the classroom long after the read aloud activity and continue to respond to the read aloud books beyond the elementary school classroom environment.

**Problem Statement**

The body of research in students' responses to children's literature read aloud is increasing; however, much of this research has been generated with native-English speaking children who live in the United States. Present read aloud research has left unanswered questions
related to:

1. language learning potential
2. methodology
3. home and school contributions
4. cultural perspectives

A research study which incorporates these four issues broadens the scope of children's responses which have generally been limited to the read aloud episodes. A study which employs qualitative research methodology to explore and describe the responses of students to children's literature read aloud in a multi-cultural elementary school classroom allows these issues to be addressed. A study of this scope would include the collection of data during the read aloud event, beyond the read aloud event and into the home setting. This focus of research expands and defines the nature of children's literary responses to occur well beyond the storytime activity. The responses of the children to the books read aloud become the center of the investigation. A study of this dimension has not yet been undertaken.

Definition of Terms

For the purpose of this study, the term "multi-cultural" describes an elementary school classroom in
which the students are citizens of many different countries. A multi-cultural classroom represents a student population which comes from many different countries and speaks many different languages as their mother-tongues. Although the multi-cultural classroom maintains English as the language of instruction, many of the children speak another language in their home.

The term "international" describes the general population of students at the school. The term international can be expanded to describe the parent community of the school as well. International schools are usually located in a country in which the language of the host country is not English. Children who attend international schools are seldom citizens of the host country in which an international school is located.

A "read aloud event" is defined as a session in which a book is read aloud to the students by the classroom teacher and in which the session is audio-taped. The read aloud event begins when the children are settled and before the read aloud book is introduced. The read aloud event is concluded when the children no longer respond verbally to the book.

"Literary links" are defined as children's responses during the read aloud event in which a connection is made between an aspect of the read aloud book with some
feature of another book.

The Huck Inventory of Children’s Literary Background is a test designed to evaluate the general knowledge level of students in children’s literature which is most often read aloud to children living in the United States. There are 63 multiple choice items which assess a broad knowledge children’s literature.

Identified Needs for the Study

The primary need identified thus far is for an investigation of students’ responses to children’s literature read aloud in the elementary school classroom that encompasses cultural differences. Within the international educational community, there are children who come from many different countries, and speak languages other than English as their mother-tongue. This classroom representation of children who come from many different cultures offers the classroom teacher researcher the unique opportunity to observe the responses of these students to children’s literature read aloud.

Another identified need is that an investigation also incorporate the concurrent recording by the parents in the home environment the responses of their children to literature read aloud in the classroom.
Systematically recording the responses of students to children's literature read aloud in the multi-cultural elementary classroom as well as recording, in some form, the responses of the children in the home situation to the books read aloud in the classroom broadens the context of the students' responses to include more of the life of the child, not limiting the recording of the children's responses to just the classroom environment.

Another identified need is that an investigation of students' responses to children's literature read aloud be implemented for a period of an academic school year in order to record children's responses over an extended length of time. To implement a study of this nature, the researcher is best situated in the role of the classroom teacher. A teacher's daily presence in the classroom gives her access to students, to school life, to colleagues and to her own lessons, and enables her to carry out long-term studies with a high degree of continuity. (McCutcheon, 1981)

Furthermore, the investigation is to explore and describe students' responses to children's literature read aloud beyond the immediate responses of the children during the storytime activity. For example, children's responses to the books read aloud can be observed through their writing, their oral language, and their endeavors
Allwright (1983) states that:

Perhaps the most important...is that what unites classroom centered researchers is precisely their concern for what happens in classrooms and thus the first place to look if we really want to understand how to help our learners learn more effectively. (Allwright, 1983, p. 202)

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study is to systematically explore and describe the responses of students to children's literature read aloud in an elementary school classroom over the period of an academic school year. The study is conducted in an elementary school classroom which has a multi-cultural population of students.

Qualitative research methodology was chosen as the frame for recording the responses of students to children's literature read aloud in an elementary school classroom. The decision to use qualitative research methodology was based on the belief in the importance of social context in the investigation of students' responses to children's literature read aloud. Wilson (1979) writes:

Naturalistic observation...and unobtrusive measurement are increasingly seen as important tools for social scientists and evaluators to use when they want information about changes in students
behavior in everyday contexts, rather than information about performance in specified measurement situations. (Wilson, 1979, p. 7)

The observation of children's responses in a wholistic manner permits all responses of the students to be recorded. Limiting the focus of a study to a particular facet of the responses of the students creates a problematic situation. It increases the danger of inferring that one aspect of students' responses is more valuable than other responses not recorded. Another danger is that no clear picture emerges as to the interrelatedness of the responses of the children. In a predetermined data collection system isolated variables may emerge as important that might be less so when viewed in a total social context of the situation. Without studying wholistically a particular phenomenon, the interrelationship of the parts cannot be adequately assessed. Therefore, it is important for this study that the methodology of naturalistic inquiry be used.

Research Questions

Tentative questions which served to initially guide the collection of data for this study are listed here. The numbers of the following questions do not connote a level of importance to the study. The first set of questions pertains to the responses of the students
during the read aloud episodes; the second set of questions focuses on the students' responses outside of the read aloud event in the classroom, and the third set of questions focuses on the responses of the students in their home environment.

During the read aloud episodes, what is the nature of children's responses? The following questions address this area of investigation:

1. In what ways do students respond to children's literature read aloud during the storytime activity?

2. During the storytime activity, are there differences and/or similarities or patterns in children's responses to the books read aloud.

3. In what ways, other than verbal responses, do the students respond to children's literature read aloud in the storytime activity?

In the school environment, do students respond to children's literature read aloud beyond the storytime activity? Questions which focus on this area of investigation are:

1. Are students' responses to children's literature read aloud observable in their writing, artwork, oral language or other endeavors that the children pursue in their daily school activities?

2. If the students' responses to children's literature read aloud are observable in forms other than during the read aloud
activity, how are the children's responses apparent?

Do students respond to children's literature read aloud beyond the school environment? Questions that focus on this area of investigation are:

1. Do students continue to respond to children's literature read aloud in the classroom in their home environment?

2. If students do continue to respond at home to children's literature read aloud in the classroom, what forms do these responses take?

Limitations of the Study

1. The classroom teacher is the researcher and in that capacity is part of the social context of the classroom environment.

The classroom teacher researcher is the reader of the books. In that role, she is part of the dynamics of the read aloud events; she cannot divorce herself from the social context of the read aloud episodes. Thus, she maintains an "inside-out" perspective. However, what might be defined as a limitation from one perspective can be viewed as an asset from another perspective.

Bolster (1983), an advocate of ethnographic research methodology, feels ethnography "has the greatest potential for generating knowledge that is both useful
and interesting to teachers." (Bolster, 1983, p. 305) In his book on teachers and classroom research, Hopkins (1985) relies on Stenhouse to expand Bolster's point. Hopkins writes:

Stenhouse goes further...and suggests not only a research approach that is grounded in the reality of the classroom culture but one that is under the control of teachers. (Hopkins, 1985 p. 29)

While this role of teacher and researcher is acknowledged to be a factor in the study, qualitative triangulation (cross-checking) measures can be implemented to assure credibility of the research.

2. Enrollment of the class can change. Not all of the students who are initially enrolled in September will be present in June. New students may enter the class throughout the school year. Therefore, a stable population cannot be guaranteed.

In an international school community the population of students in an elementary school classroom can change dramatically. During the school year the principal wage earners of families can be transferred by their employers to other countries. Although the number of students usually remains stable, new children enter and other children withdraw which represents a continuing shift in enrollment. Children usually remain in one international educational community for a period of two or three years.
3. Circumstances or situations which the researcher cannot control or possibly anticipate may effect the nature of the study.

One acknowledged factor is the unpredictable composition of students in the class. Questions such as: 1) how many of the students in the class will speak English, 2) what countries and languages will be represented by the students, and 3) what will be the number of children in the class usually remain unanswered until the last few days before school commences.

Another factor is the occurrence of unexpected changes in the schedule of the school. General concerns of a study being conducted in a foreign country are also acknowledged. Most of the international schools are not located in the United States. The site for this study is an international school located in France.

Summary

This chapter provided a brief representation of present read aloud research. In surveying and discussing present read aloud studies, it became apparent that there were unanswered questions in the fields of: 1) language learning potential, 2) research methodology 3) home and school contributions, and 4) multi-cultural perspectives. Specific needs in these areas were delineated, and for the purpose of this study, specific terminology was
explained and defined.

The purpose of this study is to systematically explore and describe the responses of students in a multi-cultural elementary school classroom in an effort to "track" children's response during as well as beyond the read aloud event. The length of the study is an academic school year and is framed in the qualitative inquiry mode of research with the classroom teacher as researcher. The study includes not only a description of the responses of the children to stories read aloud by the classroom teacher in the social context of the elementary classroom, but also incorporates a description of the responses of the children to these books in the home environment, as recorded by reports from the parents.

The research studies on reading aloud to children presented in Chapter 1 were included to establish a structure for this study. Chapter 2 contains a more detailed review of read aloud research and incorporates a focus on reading aloud to preschool children in the home as well as parental influences on reading aloud to their children.
CHAPTER II
A REVIEW OF READ ALOUD LITERATURE

The secret of it all lies in the parents' reading aloud to and with the child...and a mother or father or friend who cares enough for children to play this way and to read aloud to them. (Huey, 1908, p. 332)

Huey wrote those words in his book, The Psychology and Pedagogy of Reading, over seventy-five years ago. The "it" found in Huey's words refers to children learning to read. Today, the positive effects of reading aloud to children are no longer a secret and have been substantiated by solid evidence. This evidence has been gleaned from research studies initiated mainly in the last two decades.

Read aloud studies have been conducted in different sites: the home environment, the elementary school classroom and the laboratory situation. Different methodological approaches have been employed: case studies, longitudinal studies, experimental designs and ethnography. The chronological ages of the children who participated in the studies have ranged from infancy to adolescence.
Findings from read aloud studies, utilizing various research designs, confirm an intuitive truth, long held by prominent authorities in the fields of reading education and child development, that reading aloud to children is beneficial and, indeed, crucial for the development of readers.

Although various methodological research designs have been employed, it becomes apparent from a perusal of the read aloud literature that there is a chronological order in the pattern of the researchers' choices of methodology. For example, early read aloud studies conducted in the 1960's and early 1970's were mainly correlational in design. (Cohen, 1968, Strickland, 1971) These studies sought to statistically measure the relationship that hypothetically existed between the effect of reading aloud to children and the children's subsequent advances in one aspect of literacy development, such as reading achievement or language acquisition. Later, the studies became more descriptive in nature, (Ninio and Bruner, 1978, Ninio, 1980) and at present there appears to be a trend towards the implementation of ethnographic style methodology. (Kingore, 1981, Heath, 1983, Cochran-Smith, 1984)

The first section of this review of the read aloud literature is divided into the areas of language
acquisition and reading. For this review, language development and language expansion are distinguished in that language development focuses on preschool children while language expansion focuses on children in school environments. The area of reading is divided into the subheadings of reading achievement, reading attitudes and reading interest.

The next section presents studies which have explored children's early literacy experiences and addresses the techniques of the adult reader when reading aloud to children. Planned read aloud programs which have been developed and based on recent read aloud research are described and read aloud practices of parents and classroom teachers are delineated.

The following section addresses the problems of keeping currently knowledgeable in children's literature and the values of rereading particular books. Descriptive studies which focus on the interactions of reader and children during the read aloud episodes are presented. The last section presents the beliefs of educators on the values of reading aloud to children.

**Language Development**

In the early 1960's, Irwin (1960) studied the systematic effects of reading aloud on the phonological
production of very young children. Infants were exposed to the experimental treatment at the age of eleven months, and continued with the experiment until the age of thirty months. While mothers in the experimental group were given books and a reading regimen to follow, the mothers in the control group were given no such steps. Spontaneous vocalization of the infants was written in the international phonetic alphabet and recorded by the researcher in the home of these infants every two months throughout the experiment. After the sixth month of the study, it was found that the infants in the experimental group significantly increased over the infants in the control group in phonological production and continued to increase throughout the length of the experiment.

Cazden (1966), citing Irwin's study as well as her own research, posits that reading aloud to an individual child is helpful for language stimulation for two reasons. One reason is that the read aloud event occurs in a warm physical setting. Secondly, the pictures, to which the mother and child are attending, stimulate interpolated dialogue.

In an effort to examine a relationship between exposure to the written language and children's rate of linguistic development, Chomsky (1972) surveyed
thirty-six children, ages six through ten. She recorded the children's reading background as well as their current reading activity. Her data were gathered from questionnaires completed by children and adults, and from a daily record, which was kept at home and documented all engagements in reading during a one week period.

An analysis was made between the amount and complexity of books read and heard in that period of one week and the recall and recognition of the children to the reading books heard and read. From her findings, she concluded that there is a relationship between exposure to children's books and stages of linguistics growth.

Chomsky also made a specific calculation of the amount of time read aloud to the preschool children during that one week period and the complexity of the books read aloud. She found that a relationship exists between the complexity of the children's books and linguistic stages and postulated that there is a relationship between exposure to the complex language of children's literature and children's knowledge of language.

Burroughs (1970) investigated the effects of a read aloud program on the language development of children three years old who were from low socio-economic home environments. These young children listened to stories
read aloud every day for a period of three months. The children who received the experimental treatment scored significantly higher than the children in the control group in the areas of receptive vocabulary, expressive vocabulary, length of sentences used, and on the Peabody Picture Vocabulary Test.

During the late 1970's, there seemed to be a shift in research paradigms. Read aloud studies which employed statistical analysis to measure the effect of reading aloud to preschool children and one aspect of the children's learning achievement were superseded by studies which described the interaction that occurs within the read aloud episode. The following descriptive studies focus on the interaction between mother and child as they read books together.

Ninio and Bruner (1978) studied joint picture book reading in one infant and mother dyad from a middle class community. The length of the descriptive study was ten months. The infant began the study at the age of eight months. Joint action of the parent and child was centered on book reading with the pictures acting as referents. From the study of this infant and mother dyad, it was learned that the mother "scaffolds" or helps the child to express an utterance. Since the interaction of the mother and infant has the
characteristic of providing for an immediate feedback system, these researchers concluded that book dialog is a good form to teach labeling to the infant.

In a later study, Ninio (1980) expanded the study of Ninio and Bruner and investigated this interactional process with twenty middle-class and twenty lower class infant and mother dyads who were living in Israel. Each dyad was observed one time in the home. The book reading episode was recorded by audio tape and with field notes. In comparing the findings from each group, Ninio concluded that low socio-economic status mothers, while thought to be adequate teachers of vocabulary, were probably inadequate for enhancing the rapid progression of their infants to more complex levels of language use. Ninio stated:

Already, their lack of skill in eliciting active labeling from their infants has probably resulted in the latter having a less firmly established productive vocabulary than high-SES infants of the same age. (Ninio, 1980, p. 589)

Feltelson and Goldstein (1986) also conducted a study in Israel in an effort to assess book reading episodes with kindergarten children and their parents in school-oriented and nonschool-oriented families. These researchers stress the importance of knowing whether differences in early childhood literacy events, such as
book reading episodes, between social subgroups within the same society are typical of only that society or whether it is a wider phenomenon. As a point of comparison for the book reading episodes in Israel, Feitelson and Goldstein selected research findings from studies conducted in the United States. From their data, collected from 102 families connected with thirty-four kindergarten children, they concluded that: "Differences in storybook reading practices among different social groups reported in the United States are not a local phenomenon." (Feitelson and Goldstein, 1986, p. 928)

**Language Expansion**

Bailey (1969) sought to determine whether the participation in activities of a library resource program would improve the psycholinguistic abilities of a group of disadvantaged first grade students who were attending inner-city schools. This experimental treatment program consisted of selected activities using children's literature and storytelling devices and was initiated in the autumn for one hour a day, five days a week for a period of twelve weeks. A control group of children did not participate in the additional library resource program.
From an analysis of the data, it was found that there was a significant improvement of the experimental group over the control group of disadvantaged children, who did not participate in the library resource program, in total language ability. Bailey recommends that:

Intensive uses of children's books and story-telling devices, such as the activities of the library resource program, be employed to improve the language ability of disadvantaged children as they enter first grade.
(Bailey, 1969, p. 3848A)

Strickland (1971) attempted to expand the language performance of black kindergarten children from low socio-economic families. She hypothesized that these bicultulectal black kindergarten children who were exposed to a literature-based oral language program would manifest greater language expansion than a comparable group of children who would not be exposed to such a program. The experimental treatment consisted of a daily read aloud activity which was followed by an oral language activity. The control group of kindergarten children listened to a story read aloud daily but did not participate in an activity which sought the language participation of the children.

Each classroom teacher was provided with fifty selected books for the read aloud events. The teachers in the experimental group were given additional training
in techniques to properly implement the oral language activities. Strickland's findings revealed that there was a significance favoring the children in the experimental group over the children in the control group. She concluded that:

The experimental treatment offers strong evidence that educationally disadvantaged, Negro, kindergarten students who speak a nonstandard dialect can expand their language repertoire to include standard English. Equally important, the analysis of the nonstandard repetitions indicates that this can be done without negating the child's native dialect. (Strickland, 1971, p. 1406A)

Later, Cullinan, Jaggar and Strickland (1974) studied the effects of reading aloud to minority children, who express themselves in black dialect, and their acquisition of Standard English. The researchers placed fifty carefully selected books in both experimental and control classrooms, kindergarten through third grade levels. The experimental group of children heard a story read aloud daily, plus participated in at least one oral language activity. The children in the control group did not participate in oral language activities. Although all groups of children exhibited measurable growth, statistically significant growth was only achieved at the kindergarten level.
A conclusion drawn from the findings of these two studies and supported by the findings of other read aloud studies is that a read aloud program appears to be more beneficial when introduced early in the child’s academic school program.

According to Hooper and Hare (1982), their study demonstrates that reading aloud to first grade children has an impact on the children’s experiential background and on their language appropriate behaviors. Their subjects were twenty-six black first grade children, who exhibited above average or average academic performance, and were attending an inner-city public school. The first grade children in the experimental treatment group were read aloud books by their classroom teacher twice weekly for a period of eight weeks. The read aloud activity lasted for a period of forty minutes. The children in the control group continued with their regular school program.

Results from this study revealed that the children in the group who received the treatment significantly expanded their knowledge of the targeted topic of "circuses". Hooper and Hare speculate that:

*Students might certainly be able to extend their knowledge in ways not heretofore open to them, while enjoying the more subjective
but quite apparent, pleasures of listening to books read aloud.
(Hooper and Hare, 1982, p. 257)

However, Fisher (1972) investigated two aspects of an adult's influence on a child's acquisition of syntactic structure and vocabulary. The adult's inputs were:
1) the language data provided by an adult through an experimental program of reading aloud children's literature rich in varied syntactic structures and vocabulary and 2) opportunity for the child to practice his/her own language with feedback from an adult through a program of sharing and oral discussion. The children who participated in the study were kindergarten, first and second grade students from middle socio-economic families and were attending schools in Franklin county, Ohio. Twelve undergraduate students in education worked in pairs with an experimental group of children placed in a children's literature program and an experimental group of children placed in the sharing-discussion program, both at the same grade level. The experimental treatments were administered three times a week for a period of twelve weeks. From her findings, it was shown that there was no significant level of difference between the treatment group and the control group on the children's acquisition of syntactic structures or on acquisition of vocabulary.
While all other studies cited thus far focused on the language expansion of students who were from families of low socio-economic status and were attending inner-city schools, the study by Fisher was conducted in a middle class community. In light of the distinction of environmental factors, Fisher suggested one possible reason for a level of no significance in her study was that the patterns of language of the children in her study were not as linguistically different from the language patterns found in children’s literature as the differences in the language pattern of the children in the other studies. Thus, a greater divergence existed between the language patterns of the disadvantaged students and the language patterns of children’s literature. (McCormick, 1977)

Reading aloud to infants and young children has been found beneficial for language acquisition of children. There is evidence to suggest that the book reading episodes of mother and child dyads have similarities which cut across different cultures. This finding has particular relevance for this study. The literature also suggests that if preschool children have not been exposed to book reading experiences in the home, the school environment can provide these literacy experiences with beneficial results.
Reading Achievement

Ferguson (1979) investigated the effects of children who listen to stories read aloud and their low reading readiness scores. Kindergarten children were divided into three groups: 1) group one heard stories read aloud daily; 2) group two were exposed to a combination of stories being read aloud or other activities; 3) group three participated in their regular kindergarten program. The findings from her investigation indicated that group one made significantly greater gains in reading readiness than groups two and three.

In an effort to effect positive change in children's reading performance, a study was conducted in inner-city schools in New York City. Cohen (1968) sought: 1) the solution to children who were unmotivated to read and were unready to read and 2) to strengthen children's ability to read as well as their desire to do so. Using an experimental design, she placed fifty carefully selected books in the experimental second grade classrooms. The teachers in these classrooms were directed to read aloud daily from the selected books and were cautioned to read with dramatic effect and proper phrasing as well as to attend and consider the prior knowledge of their students. After the children listened to the daily book selection, they participated in an
extension activity from the choices in a manual, which was provided for the classroom teachers by the researcher. The students in the control group listened to an occasional story or no story at all.

Results from the study by Cohen showed that the children in the experimental group made significant gains over the children in the control group in the areas of word vocabulary, word knowledge and comprehension. When analyzing the scores of the lowest experimental and control groups of children, it was found that the experimental group made the most significant gains.

Another study (Raftery, 1974) investigated whether the reading achievement of second grade students would be increased by statistical measurement with the introduction of a read aloud program conducted three times weekly. The experimental treatment was administered by volunteers who were undergraduate students majoring in elementary education. Results from the Raftery study revealed that the second grade children who listened to stories read aloud by the undergraduate students made significant gains in reading achievement when compared to the students in the control group.

Porter (1969) studied the effects of a read aloud program, administered by high school juniors, on middle grade students level of reading achievement and reading
interest. Using Project Promise as a springboard, subjects were fourth, fifth and sixth grade students who listened to selected stories twice weekly for a period of thirty minutes. Growth of total experimental subjects over the control groups was significant in reading achievement in the areas of vocabulary, comprehension and in total reading. In assessing each grade level separately, it was found that the level of significance of reading achievement was highest at the fourth grade level and decreased in the fifth and sixth grade levels. The interest of the students in the read aloud program was highest at the fourth grade level and decreased at the fifth and sixth grades respectively.

In her three month study, Weidner (1976) investigated the possibility of a relationship existing between fourth grade children who experienced various amounts and frequency of exposure to children's literature read aloud by the classroom teacher and their reading comprehension and listening comprehension. Her findings revealed that the amount and frequency of exposure to children's literature read aloud by the classroom teacher did make a difference in performance of the students in the areas of total listening, listening vocabulary and reading paragraph comprehension, which was measured by the Durrell Listening-Reading Series. It is
noted that the students who listened to stories read aloud five times a week for a period of ten minutes each day attained the best performance scores.

Weidner also included a descriptive component in her study. From an analysis of this data, she found that students who made the greatest gains were described, in part, as children who 1) have grade level or below grade level scores on the initial reading and listening test and 2) have positive attitudes toward reading and reading aloud by the classroom teacher.

As late as 1984 Briechle employed an experimental design to assess the effects of a read aloud program on the reading achievement of her sixth grade students. Her findings supported the findings of previous read aloud studies, in that reading aloud to sixth grade students on a regular basis is an effective method for improving reading comprehension.

Walters and Gunderson (1985) explored another social context in read aloud research. The researchers studied the effects of reading aloud to bilingual children who speak Cantonese as their first language and English as a second language. The students were randomly selected from fourth grade English as a Second Language, ESL, classes. From a pool of volunteers, parents were selected as adult readers based on their level of
performance in reading aloud during an audition. Children who listened to stories read aloud were placed into two groups. One group listened to stories in Cantonese and the other group listened to stories read aloud in English. A third group participated in a "catch up" time. The experimental treatments, one conducted in Cantonese and the other conducted in English, were administered twice a week for a period of forty minutes over a three month duration. From an analysis of the students' scores on the Gates-MacGinitie Reading Test, it was revealed that all three groups had made significant gains in English language reading. Hearing stories read aloud in Cantonese did not negatively effect these students' progress in their ability to read in the English language.

Walters and Gunderson stated that their study had an important message. They wrote:

These findings suggest a way that non-English speaking parents can contribute significantly to a school program: by reading aloud to their own and other children.
(Walters and Gunderson, 1985 p. 68)

Burgdorf (1966) investigated the effects of children's literature, either presented in a read aloud program or presented for the student's individual silent reading, on fourth, fifth and sixth grade students'
ability to draw inferences from the selected stories. An interview technique was used to record the students' responses to the questions which were designed to elicit inferences. It was found that the reading scores, vocabulary and comprehension, were not significantly related to literary scores of the students who listened to selections read aloud. However, the scores on drawing inferences from the literary selections were significantly higher when children listened to stories read aloud to them than when they read the stories independently. Authorities in reading education have long attested to the merits of selecting books for read aloud which are above the children's own reading ability, thus exposing the students to children's literature they would not be able to read on their own. (Huck, 1979)

**Reading Attitudes**

In her study Sirota (1971) hypothesized that the addition of a planned children's literature program of daily reading aloud to students by the classroom teacher would result in a significant increase in the quantity and quality of voluntary reading by fifth grade students. The students in the experimental classes heard children's literature read aloud, daily, for a period of twenty to thirty minutes. Sirota writes that her findings
Indicated a planned children's literature program of daily reading aloud by the classroom teacher can have a significant effect on the quantity and quality of children's voluntary reading.

Berg-Cross (1978) investigated the possibility that preschoolers who hear stories read aloud which emphasize particular values such as sex roles, friendship, death, and risk taking will alter the children's attitudes toward the targeted values. Four, five and six year old children in the experimental group heard such stories, while the children in the control group listened to stories read aloud, but did not hear stories which emphasized the values targeted by the researchers. Berg-Cross found little change in attitudes of the children in the control group, but noted substantial, positive changes in the attitudes of the children in the experimental group.

Bartlett (1980) investigated the effects of reading aloud children's literature by the classroom teacher on the reading attitudes of selected fourth grade children. The experimental treatment consisted of a daily read aloud event which lasted for a period of fifteen minutes. The study was conducted for twelve weeks. Bartlett found that the fourth grade students who received the experimental treatment read a greater number of books
when compared to the number of books read by the students
in the control group.

Foreman (1981) used the activity of reading aloud to
third grade children to investigate a relationship
between third grade students' attitudes toward reading
and their appreciation ratings of humorous picture books,
and attitudes toward reading and listening comprehension
of humorous story elements presented in children's
literature. In this study, the nine stories were
previously tape recorded and the cassette played for the
children in the experimental group.

From the findings of Foreman, it was revealed that
no significant relationships existed between appreciation
ratings and listening comprehension, between attitudes
toward reading and listening comprehension or between
attitudes toward reading and appreciation ratings. A
reasonable concern arises as to the effect that the mode
of presentation, prerecorded stories on a cassette,
influenced the results of the study. Did the use of a
tape cassette recorder affect, in some undetermined way,
the responses of the children to the selected stories?
Certainly, the children did not have an opportunity for
personal interaction during the listening of the cassette
tape.
Sabo (1980) investigated the effects of a read aloud program on the self-selected reading choices of third and fourth grade students. These students first listened to stories read aloud by classroom teachers and then participated in discussions, which were directed by the classroom teacher. The questions were based on Purves' four categories of response to literature. From the results of her study, Hamilton asserted that if one wants to influence children to read, it is advisable that a person should read aloud to these children.

In another pre- and post-test study, Hampton (1972) investigated the belief that reading aloud to children, held by many educators, is a motivational source of desirable effects on children's reading behaviors. Hampton chose to measure the effects on students' attitudes towards reading and the quantity of voluntary reading when exposed to a read aloud program. The investigation lasted for a period of eight weeks. Children's literature was read aloud to the students by the researcher each day for a period of thirty minutes. From the results of her study, Hampton concluded that teachers of sixth grade students are not warranted in assuming that simply reading aloud to the students will stimulate them to read on their own. One possible reason for a level of no significance is that the length of this
study, which was eight weeks, is too short to statistically measure the targeted effects of her investigation. The attitudes of the students toward reading may be more difficult to influence at this age level.

Reading Interest

Mason and Blanton (1971) used an interview technique to assess the effects of reading aloud to three, four and five year old children on these preschoolers' reading interest. The researchers asked the children three questions:

1. Do you enjoy having someone read to you?
2. What do you like to hear read to you?
3. If you could read by yourself, what books would you read?

These children overwhelmingly responded that they enjoyed having stories read aloud to them and could name many books that they enjoyed hearing. Mason and Blanton concluded that reading aloud to young children is beneficial, and that the read aloud activity could be a component of reading instruction by selecting books for reading aloud which are part of the child’s instructional reading program.
The New York City Public Library system conducts surveys in conjunction with their read aloud programs which are given in selected libraries. Reluctant readers who attended one such read aloud program were observed by their classroom teacher as having more enthusiasm in reading. This reported enthusiasm was supported concretely by statistical data that documented the increased amount of books these children signed out from the library. (Butler 1980)

Haskett and Lenfesty (1974) investigated the relationship that might exist between reading aloud to preschool children and an increased amount of time the children spent looking at books as part of a free time choice in their classroom. Their findings indicated that adults reading aloud stories to these children did produce larger and more stable increases in the desired behaviors of these children.

A major goal of the Boodt study (1984) sought to develop a method to help students change their attitudes toward reading, as well as to improve their reading and listening skills. A daily program of reading aloud which included critical listening, reading and thinking skills was instituted in the experimental group of fourth through sixth grade students who had been placed in a remedial reading class. The experimental group of
children were exposed to the read aloud treatment for a period of eighteen weeks. The students in the control group received the regular instruction in their basal reading program.

From an analysis of covariance, the findings from the Boodt study revealed that the read aloud program was effective in improving the critical listening, critical reading and general reading comprehension of the fourth, fifth and sixth grade remedial students in the experimental group. From data collected through observation, Boodt noted that the attitudes of the children toward reading were also changing. She stated:

One fourth grader, who had expressed a dislike for reading and who appeared to be uninterested in the listening lessons, was overheard during the seventh week of the study telling a friend, 'Reading is fun!' (Boodt, 1984, p. 394)

In general, the length of the read aloud study and the frequency of the read aloud episodes appear to have an impact on the results. Read aloud studies which were conducted for a longer period of time and were administered with more frequency were generally more successful. It appears that studies in which the readers were classroom teachers or people who were known to the children also showed greater success. This situation suggests that the degree of familiarity of the reader may
influence the responses of the children to the books read aloud. At present, little research has explored what influence the reader herself might have on the responses of the children.

**Early Literacy Experiences**

The home environment seems to play a critical role in providing children with an understanding of the process of reading. Children, who are successful with initial reading and writing instruction, often have a home environment which encourages and supports the child’s early literacy experiences. Roser (1986) writes:

> Parents who have read aloud to their children, asked and answered questions, pointed out and modeled its use, and engaged their young children in talk (including talk about print) have watched those children do well as they begin school. (Roser, 1986, p. 16)

Sostarich (1974) studied active and nonactive sixth grade readers. In her investigation of the home of active readers, she discovered that the parents of these children had read aloud to them when the children were younger, had provided the home with plenty of books and had provided a place for these children to read and store their own books.

In Durkin’s study (1966) of early readers, the home environment of these children was described. From her
investigation, she found that the parents of early readers had read aloud to the children and that the parents took time with their children when the children were interested in reading. Clark’s study (1976), conducted in Scotland ten years later, supported the findings of Durkin. Clark found that the parents of young fluent readers had read aloud to their children on a consistent basis and that the parents felt reading was an important activity in the home.

An important discovery, gleaned from the studies of children who learn to read without formal instruction before entering school, is that these children possessed a commonality of experience. Early readers had listened to stories read aloud from a young age. With this knowledge as a basis for further research, studies were conducted which introduced read aloud intervention programs into the literacy experiences of preschool children.

One study focused on the effects of a particular parent. Henry (1974) studied parental differences with regard to sex in effecting a child’s reading readiness level. Henry targeted kindergarten children in investigating the relationship between boys whose father read aloud to them and the score of these kindergarteners on reading readiness measures compared with the scores of
kindergarten children whose mother read aloud to them or those kindergarten children who heard no stories read aloud by their parents. The children listened to stories read aloud for a period of six months prior to entering first grade. Henry's findings revealed that boys whose fathers read aloud to them scored better on one measure of reading readiness, words in context.

In a study by Hoskins (1976), the parents of sixty-four children agreed to participate in a summer program lasting for a period of three months. These children were to enter kindergarten in September. Parents of the experimental group read aloud to their children for a minimum of sixty minutes each week. When compared with the children in the control group, the children in the experimental group scored significantly higher on the Stanford Early Achievement Test, which was administered during the initial weeks of school. Hoskins concluded that:

1. Parents who read aloud to their preschool children in a specific or regular pattern enhance their preschoolers academic readiness for the kindergarten experience.

2. Children who come from homes where there is a rich home reading environment appear to have an educational advantage over their peers who come from homes that reflect a meager home-reading environment. (Hoskins, 1976, p. 624A)
These read aloud intervention studies statistically measured the effects of the read aloud programs on various dependent variables such as reading readiness scores and language acquisition. Clearly, findings from read aloud intervention studies, substantiated the efficacy of parents reading aloud to their young children.

Changing the Focus of Research

By the nature of their research design, most studies of early readers presented certain limitations. Doake (1982) writes that:

Because these studies of early readers were retrospective in nature, they were not able to indicate how this wealth of experience with books and reading contributed to their reading development. (Doake, 1982, p. 2)

Method studies looked at skill acquisition in the absence of context. Researchers neither defined the intervention treatment, nor scrutinized the social interactions which lie at the heart of the learning process. The correlational, pre-and-post test approach to intervention studies imposed limitations which were seen as too pervasive. It was felt by some researchers that the correlational studies provided a basis for drawing superficial conclusions about test performance
outcomes of certain curricula, but offered no information concerning the learning process in which students were engaged. (Putnam, 1982)

Some researchers began to consider critically or to investigate microscopically what was actually occurring during the read aloud events. In acknowledging the importance of defining and describing the social context in which the read aloud activity occurs, the researchers were presented with the need to adopt an alternative research design. The experimental design of quantitative methodology did not permit the inclusion of social context. Therefore, some researchers turned to more naturalistic methods of inquiry and descriptive read aloud studies began to emerge.

Walker and Kuerbitz (1979) descriptively studied the hypothesized relationship between reading aloud to preschool children and their subsequent success in beginning reading. A questionnaire was sent to the parents of thirty-six first grade students. From the responses of parents on the questionnaires, the researchers were able to assess three aspects of the read aloud event. These facets were: 1) frequency with which the preschoolers heard stories read aloud, 2) parents' perception of whether the child did or did not enjoy the story time event and 3) number of parents who used the
storytime event for such activities as talking about the story read aloud. Walker and Kuerbitz affirmed: "If the analysis of data did reveal anything it was that story time is a positive factor contributing to beginning reading success." (Walker and Kuerbitz, 1979, p. 153)

In the Walker and Kuerbitz study, it was interesting to find that ninety-seven percent of the preschoolers were perceived by their parents as having enjoyed the storytime activity. This information concurs with the research findings of Mason and Blanton (1971) in that most children find the read aloud event a pleasurable experience.

Kenyon (1979) studied the relationship between students and parents perceptions of the students' reading interests and home reading environment. Subjects were high school students who were placed into three categories, based on their level of reading achievement: above average, average and below average. Data were collected from three open-ended questions. From an analysis of the responses, it was learned that the students in the above average and average reading achievement groups stated that they had listened to stories read aloud to them by family members with more frequency than the students in the below average reading achievement group.
Styles of Reading Aloud

Flood (1977) investigated the relationship between parental style during the read aloud event and the preschool child’s performance on selected prereading tasks. From an analysis of his data, six components of the parent and child read aloud episodes appeared to be most beneficial for the child. These components are:

1. total number of words spoken by the child
2. number of questions answered by the child
3. number of questions asked by the child
4. warm-up preparatory questions asked by the parents
5. post-story evaluative questions asked by the parents
6. positive reinforcement by the parents
(Flood, 1977, p. 865, 866)

Based on the findings of Flood’s investigation, it appears that children need to be involved in the story reading event from beginning to end. This supposition concurs with findings from the Walker and Kuerbitz’s study. Walker and Kuerbitz postulate that the storyline activity which went beyond just an oral reading of the text became more effective as a tool for developing readiness for success in children’s initial reading instruction. Therefore, it is reasonable to assert that during the read aloud event the role of the child should
not be one of passive listener but one of active participant.

In an effort to develop an instrument to measure the effectiveness of teachers who read aloud to their students, sixty-three teachers, who ranged from prekindergarten to second grade levels, agreed to participate in a study with this focus. (Lamme, 1976) The teachers were videotaped while reading aloud a picture book to the children in their classrooms. Eight items, from the total isolated items found in the teachers' storytime activity, were assessed by the Reading Aloud to Children Scale (RACS) to contribute substantially to the quality of the read aloud performance. These items are:

1. child involvement in the story reading
2. amount of eye contact between reader and audience
3. putting expression into the reading quality of the reader's voice
4. pointing to words and pictures in the book
5. familiarity with the story
6. selection of the book
7. grouping the children in such a way that all could see the pictures and hear the story
8. highlighting the words and language of the story
From an understanding of scaffolding observed in infant and mother dyads by Ninio and Bruner, to the observation of the read aloud episodes with preschool children and parents by Flood, to the development of the Reading Aloud to Children Scale by Lamme, all findings point to the importance of the child's active involvement during the story reading events. Yet, a survey by Morrow (1985) found that when stories were read aloud to children attending nursery schools and kindergarten classes, "the stories read aloud were typically neither preceded nor followed by questions or discussions." (Morrow, 1985, p. 871)

Planned Read Aloud Programs

Read aloud programs are being developed and appear to reflect and to incorporate the knowledge gleaned from current read aloud research. Educators who design these programs for parents of young children are delivering the message of the values of parents reading aloud to their children.

In an attempt to collect activities and recommendations which promote the positive involvement of parents in their children's growth in reading, Vukelich (1984) conducted a search through the professional literature. From suggestions that were most frequently
reported for parent and child involvement, the activity of ‘reading aloud to your child’ was suggested twenty-two out of twenty-four times.

Some school systems are initiating and developing their own read aloud programs to offer parents who live in their school district. "Introducing Preschool Children to Reading Through Parent Involvement" is one such planned read aloud program. This five year project is funded by a New York State Education grant. The major focus of this endeavor is to introduce and educate the parents of preschool children to the research findings and theories which relate to the positive effects of reading aloud to young children.

This information is disseminated by newsletters, which are mailed each year to the families identified by the school census, by scheduled evening lectures, and by school personnel who accept invitations to speak at various community organizations.

McKay (1981) writes of this project:

It is the contention of this project that children’s inherent language development and the subtleties of the oral-aural act itself make reading aloud to young children the essential ingredient of the beginning reading process. (McKay, 1981, p. 3)

The effectiveness of this project is being evaluated over a period of five years. The results of standardized
tests, which are administered at the end of first grade, are being used as the assessment tool for the evaluation of the read aloud program.

Another project (Lautenschlager and Hertz, 1984) focuses on the parent and child read aloud event. This project was developed by educators to inform parents of the values of reading aloud to their young children. They state: "Our motivation was to contact as many parents of preschool children as possible and to give these parents background and techniques which would enable the children to have an extremely positive first experience with reading." (Lautenschlager and Hertz, 1984, p. 18)

During the meetings, held to educate the parents, various activities were presented, such as having the parents view the video, "The Lap Technique", produced by Jett-Simpson, giving to parents copies of a bibliography of appropriate children's books for reading aloud to young children and copies of an article written by Chan which extols the values of reading aloud to children. In preparation for these meetings, there was a strong publicity campaign to ensure that this project reached the largest possible audience.

At the conclusion of these meetings, the organizers requested that the parents complete a brief
questionnaire. From the parental responses on this survey, it was learned that nearly one hundred percent of the parents who attended the presentations would like to have the series continue and to have the presentations expanded to include more materials on read aloud. Based on the enthusiasm of the parents, this school district plans more projects of a similar nature.

Knowledge, intuitively understood, of the values of parental involvement in the education of their children is being substantiated from initial feedback of programs such as the ones just described. With acceptance of this knowledge, educators need to be encouraged to continue their efforts to involve the parents in their children's education. (Vukelich, 1984)

Boothroyd and Donham (1981) describe an all-school read aloud program. According to these writers, "the most exciting by-product of the program has been the extent to which students are reading and are excited about books and authors." (Boothroyd and Donham, 1981, p. 772) All faculty members of the school actively participate in this program. At the scheduled read aloud time, the children find the classroom of the faculty members in whose literature group they will be a participant. During the sessions, the teacher reads aloud the book and later acts as leader in a discussion
of the selected book. According to these authors, this read aloud children's literature program has three crucial elements:

1. The children choose the books they hear.

2. Schoolwide coordination assures that children do not hear the same stories year after year.

3. There is an instructional unit for each book read. (Boothroyd and Donham, 1981, p. 774)

As another example, a read aloud tutoring program was envisioned by an elementary school principal. (Anderson, 1984) This principal scheduled a meeting of reading personnel in her district. At the conclusion of this meeting a volunteer tutorial program had been developed. The program involved seventy-five selected high school students and parent volunteers. These volunteers read aloud or listened to third and fourth grade children read aloud for approximately forty-five minutes a day over a period of one semester. The elementary school students were selected for the read aloud program on the basis of their level of reading performance which was required to be at least six months below grade level. The writers state that:

Teachers and tutors reported evidence of more positive attitudes and higher interests in achievement in academic subjects as well as
many more children migrating, unaided to the Library Center. (Anderson, 1984, p. 15)

The New Brunswick Comprehensive Reading/Language Arts Plan (Botel, 1979) is an integrative framework of goals for a developmental reading/language arts program. The developers of this program strongly emphasize that teachers must read aloud to their children every day. These authors delineate actions required for the implementation of reading aloud to the students. Among these activities are:

1. Encourage and train parents to read to their children daily and to engage their children in oral language responses beginning at the earliest possible age (6 months to 1 year is not too young) and continuing throughout their school careers.

2. Set guidelines for preschool and elementary teachers to read to their students daily from a wide variety of appropriate prose and poetry.

3. Set guidelines for secondary teachers to read to students regularly, literary selections related to their unit of study.

4. Administration personnel might occasionally visit classrooms and read to students.

5. Arrange for inservice programs which will increase the understanding and significance of this critical experience.

6. Reference lists of appropriate books to be read to children should be provided. (Botel, 1979, p. 11)
The authors of this plan provide for strong parent involvement and stress that parents should be influenced to provide a literate home environment for their children. According to this plan, part of the responsibility for educating parents in the values of reading aloud to their children is assumed by the school system.

Some school districts are actively developing and adopting read aloud programs for students in their districts, but are these read aloud programs just isolated incidents of a few dedicated educators who are implementing into practice the findings of recent read aloud research? What is the general pattern of read aloud practices of parents and classroom teachers?

Read Aloud Practices

Read aloud research has given the educational community evidence for the inclusion of a daily read aloud program into the curricula of the elementary classroom. Read aloud research has also supported the efficacy of parents reading aloud to their children. To what extent, if any, has this evidence had an impact on read aloud practices of parents and classroom teachers? A few surveys have been conducted to assess actual read aloud practices.
Prater (1985) conducted a survey to determine the practices of parents who read aloud to their preschool children who were three, four and five years of age and were enrolled in child-care facilities. From a pool of 900 Kinder-Care Learning Centers located across the United States, fifty Kinder-Care Learning Centers were selected by stratified random sampling. From her demographic data, Prater acknowledged that the family level of education and income indicate that the sample was predominantly middle to upper class. Questionnaires were distributed to the parents and focused on the following:

1. demographic data
2. frequency and length of read aloud sessions
3. sources of books
4. person who usually reads aloud
5. verbal interaction during sessions
6. favorite books
7. read aloud time and place
8. child’s familiarity with well-known characters from children’s literature

From an analysis of the parental responses on the questionnaires, it was revealed that eighty-three percent of the parents reported that they read aloud to their children several times a week or more, while eighty-nine
percent spent at least fifteen minutes in a read aloud episode. Mothers were reading to their children more often than fathers. Over ninety-nine percent of the parents reported occasional or frequent verbal interaction during the read-aloud events. The favorite read aloud time was bedtime.

Primary sources of reading material for the read aloud events were books found in the home. Favorite read aloud books were "grocery store" books, such as, Care Bears and Smurfs, or familiar folk tales and fairy tales. The percentage of children who were familiar with well-known characters in children's literature ranged from five percent to sixty-five percent with less than twenty percent of the children who knew a majority of the characters.

This low percentage of children who were familiar with famous characters in children's literature directs attention to a potential problem about appropriate selection of the read aloud books by parents. Prater recommends that:

Since many children spend more daytime hours in preschool settings than with their parents, child care workers must share the responsibility for introducing young children to the joy available in good books. (Prater, 1985, p. 9)
Prater emphasizes that employees of child care centers need to be knowledgeable in the field of children's literature and need to accept the role of helping parents become familiar with children's literature.

Results from Prater's survey indicated that although parents appear to be taking the time to read aloud to their children, the quality of many of the children's books they select for reading aloud to their children are of dubious literary merit. Prater states that child-care center employees are in an ideal position to educate parents in the values of reading aloud to their children as well as to make suggestions regarding the selection of books for read aloud.

Kimmel and Segal (1983) postulate that despite all the research evidence and expert opinion as to the values of reading aloud to children, precious little of the practice is occurring in the classrooms. They state that: "Most children we talked to report that, after kindergarten, only one or two teachers read aloud to them with any regularity." (Kimmel and Segal, 1983, p. 28, 29)

Kimmel and Segal suggest reasons that the read aloud event is not a practice in classrooms. These reasons are: 1) accountability by the schools, 2) an increasing
emphasis on learning programs, and 3) the "back to basics" mood. In another view of read aloud practices, Willems and Willems (1979) write that while many primary elementary teachers read aloud to their children, intermediate grade teachers have stopped the read aloud practice. Willems and Willems speculate that perhaps intermediate level teachers feel that older elementary students can read on their own and, therefore, these intermediate level teachers find that reading aloud to their children unnecessary. Frick (1986) concurs with Willems and Willems. Based on her experiences, Frick writes that a disconcerting number of higher elementary and middle school teachers believe that storytelling and reading aloud won't work with their more sophisticated students.

Yet, Stahlschmidt and Johnson (1984) conducted a survey to assess read aloud practices of classroom teachers, kindergarten through sixth grade, in a midwestern community with a population of approximately 30,000 people. From an analysis of the responses reported by the teachers, it was learned that ninety-six percent of the teachers did read aloud to their students. Approximately ninety-three percent of the teachers responded that they read aloud daily or two or three times each week. Smith, Greenlaw and Scott (1987)
conducted a survey of 254 elementary teachers, kindergarten through six grade, in Kansas and Texas to assess teachers' read aloud habits. From an analysis of the responses on the survey, it was found that these elementary teachers read aloud for periods of twenty minutes on an average of 4.3 times per week.

Unfortunately, the results of these studies make no distinction between the responses of the primary and intermediate level teachers' read aloud practices; therefore, these figures may give a possible inaccurate description of actual read aloud practices of teachers at any one grade level. This conflicting information tends to obfuscate a clear understanding of actual classroom read aloud practices. In an attempt to clarify apparently conflicting information on read aloud practices, a few researchers have systematically documented actual classroom practices in a more delineated fashion.

Sword (1979) surveyed twenty-nine kindergarten teachers in a large mid-western city in an effort to describe their current practices and procedures of read aloud programs in their classrooms. This survey did not elicit information as to how often the kindergarten teachers read aloud to their children. Had this information been requested, the findings from the survey
on read aloud practices and procedures would have been richer in contextually understanding the read aloud programs these kindergarten teachers presented to their students.

However, from the results of Sword's survey, it was learned that most kindergarten teachers preferred books for read aloud which were published many years ago. The most recently published book was *The Snowy Day* by Ezra Jack Keats, published in 1962. Smith, Greenlaw and Scott (1987) also compiled a list of books that were most frequently read aloud at the kindergarten level. Kansas and Texas teachers were surveyed to assess the teachers read aloud habits. From an analysis of the responses of the teachers, it was shown that the most recent published book these kindergarten teachers shared during the read aloud events was *Clown of God* by Tomie de Paola, published in 1978. From the responses to this question, it is clear that new publications in children's literature are not being introduced to the children in these classrooms.

In assessing the quality of books selected for read aloud, Sword found that the kindergarten teachers chose twenty-three percent high quality, sixty percent medium quality, and seventeen percent low quality. Criteria for evaluating the quality of the preferred read aloud books
were based on an instrument developed by Sword. Ten percent of the books selected for read aloud were beginning readers with restrictive vocabulary.

In addressing the apparent lack of knowledge of these kindergarten teachers about recent children's literature publications and appropriate criteria for evaluating the quality of children's books, Sword recommends that:

1. College and university courses in children's literature should provide knowledge about and experience with book selection aids.

2. Teachers should receive in-service training to familiarize them with selection tools in order to compensate for possible lack of such training earlier and in order to keep them up-to-date with the newest publications available.
   (Sword, 1979, p. 11, 12)

In an effort to ascertain what intermediate grade teachers read aloud to their students, Tom (1969) surveyed, by questionnaire, 582 teachers of grades four, five and six throughout the United States. In her survey, Tom did include questions that dealt with the frequency of the read aloud events and found that forty percent of the intermediate level teachers do read aloud to their students on a regular basis. A smaller percentage of teachers in grades five and six read aloud to their students. Some reasons that teachers reported for reading aloud to their students include: 1) the
development of children's appreciation for types of literature, 2) for the enjoyment of the children, and 3) to extend the children's experiences. Some reasons that other teachers reported for not reading aloud to their students include: 1) not enough time in the school day, 2) other subjects are deemed more important, and 3) the need to know more about children's books.

Although the teachers who reported that they do not read aloud to their students may believe that the activity of reading aloud to their students is enjoyable, these teachers still appear to view the skill development procedures as a more important activity in teaching reading.

Tom's findings also revealed that the teacher's preferred books for reading aloud in the intermediate grade also do not have current publishing dates. Island of the Blue Dolphins by Scott O'Dell, published in 1960, was the most recent date of publication.

Reading aloud to students in the secondary schools is seldom espoused in the read aloud literature, although one study is an exception to this general situation. Carneal and Bohning (1984), prompted by the difficulty of locating suitable read aloud material at the secondary level, conducted a survey in order to compile a list of suitable materials for secondary teachers to read aloud.
Questionnaires were sent to members of the Florida Secondary Reading Council and the Florida Organization of Teacher Educators in Reading. The survey requested that respondents report materials which they have found suitable for reading aloud.

The results of the survey indicated that secondary teachers report reading aloud newspaper articles, magazines, books, short stories, poetry and humor respectively. Carneal and Bohning emphasize that "reading aloud to secondary students deserves a place in the reading curriculum." (Carneal and Bohning, 1984, p.3)

In her research study, Franson (1985) sought to discover reasons some teachers read aloud to their students and other teachers do not. She conducted her research in one school district in Georgia. One hundred seven teachers, eight supervisory personnel, and twelve students were interviewed, plus twelve classroom read aloud episodes were observed. The teachers who participated in the study were selected across all grade levels. According to Franson, frequent reasons for teachers to avoid the practice of reading aloud to their students were: 1) the age of students, 2) the grade level of students, and 3) the pressure to cover course content.
However, an enlightening discovery made by Franson was that the decision of teachers who choose not to read aloud to their students is not an entrenched state of thought. A conclusion reached by Franson is that:

Teachers not already reading aloud to students could be swayed in favor of the method if documented research on its benefits were presented to them along with practical suggestions of how to incorporate the read aloud method into their instructional plans. (Franson, 1985, p. 96)

From the results of her study, Franson recommends that classroom teachers need to extend and refine their own knowledge of children’s and adolescent literature. Although Franson’s recommendation is well taken, the task of keeping current and informed of a body of literature that is constantly expanding can appear unmanageable to many classroom teachers.

Problems of Keeping Current in Children’s Literature

Researchers, such as Franson, Tom and Sword, have described the problems of present classroom teachers in keeping knowledgeable current in children’s literature. How pervasive is classroom teachers’ lack of knowledge in the field of children’s literature? Mangelir and Corboy (1981) designed a questionnaire to address this question.
In an effort to ascertain teachers' knowledge of children's literature, Mangelrul and Corboy surveyed over 500 classroom teachers. On their survey, one question asked the teachers to name three children's books which were published in the last five years. Ninety-one percent could not name three books and seventy-one percent could not name a single book. A second question asked the teachers to name a book published in the last seven years in each genre of children's literature. The percentage of teachers who were able to adequately answer this question ranged from twenty-one percent for a book of fiction to three percent for a book of poetry anthology.

From the results of this survey, it is reasonable to assert that a definite and serious problem does exist. In an effort to keep present classroom teachers abreast of current publications in children's literature as well as to provide appropriate criteria for evaluating the quality of children's books, several researchers have recommended that in-service workshops be offered. One possible approach the university might take to address this problem would be to extend its outreach function. Demonstrations and consultations in children's literature with a focus on the integrated language arts program in school settings might reach teachers who ordinarily would
not actively seek exposure to current trends in children's literature or language arts research. (Chism, 1984)

Suggestions have also been expressed that target undergraduate programs in education. One suggestion is that college curricula, offered in teacher education programs, should include courses in children's literature. One acknowledged way for college professors to introduce their undergraduate students to children's literature as well as to educate college students in the values of reading aloud to children is to model the preferred behavior in their own classrooms.

Two college instructors, Stansell and Moss, begin each class session in their reading methods course with a read aloud time. According to Stansell and Moss (1983), the initial bewilderment of the students in hearing college instructors read aloud to them is replaced by a growing awareness of the benefits and values of sharing children's literature with children. The instructors cite evidence to support the assertion that their students were more prepared and inclined to use children's literature. An increased number of undergraduate students used the books read aloud in their university class in their elementary classroom field experiences. Stansell and Moss further conclude that the
undergraduate students began to realize the value of
daily reading aloud to their elementary children.

Although undergraduate students in education may
have the opportunity to implement children's literature
in the elementary classroom as part of their preservice
training, Hayes (1984) feels that it is also important
for non-education majors to have this opportunity. Hayes
gives non-education majors enrolled in his children's
literature course just such an opportunity. Twenty-one
students, who were not majoring in education but were
enrolled in his children's literature course, were given
an assignment which was designed to bring together
undergraduate students, children, and children's
literature. The course assignment included six sessions
in which the undergraduate students either read aloud or
told a story to a group of young children. After
completion of the read aloud sessions, these students
submitted to Hayes a written report which described their
read aloud experiences with the young children. From
analysis of these written reports, Hayes concluded that
the twenty-one undergraduates learned:

A great deal about the children and about
sharing books with children...They learned that
reading to children involves a triad of elements:
enthusiastic reader, actively involved listener,
and meaningful book. On the human level, the
book is probably less important than the interaction of reader and listener.
(Hayes, 1984, p. 229)

The supposition of Hayes that the interaction of the reader and listener is possibly a more important part of the read aloud event than the book, is also shared by other researchers and is a central focus of this study. Studies which explore this interaction of reader and listener have appeared in recent read aloud literature.

Values of Repeated Readings

According to Martinez and Roser (1985), one suggestion for reading aloud that appears to be absent from the literature is the value of rereading children's literature. Martinez and Roser report on their findings, which were gleaned from one home case study of parent and child read aloud events and one study of preschool children and classroom teacher read aloud events. All read aloud episodes were audio-taped and later analyzed to determine differences in the children's responses when they were listening to unfamiliar and familiar stories read aloud.

From the results of their study, Martinez and Roser discovered that:

1. Children in both settings (home and school) talked more when they were
familiar with the story.

2. The children's talk changed form when they were familiar with the story.

3. The children's story talk tended to focus on different aspects of the story as the story was read again.

4. When the story was read repeatedly, the children's responses indicated greater depth of understanding.
   
   (Martinez and Roser, 1985, p. 738)

Martinez (1983) also emphasized the value of repeated readings of particular books for a child. Drawing from the findings of her case study of the read aloud events of a father and daughter dyad, she writes:

In her initial experience with a book, Maria Dolores often had little to say while the story was being read. When she did make comments or ask questions, they were often of a literal nature. In subsequent readings, she became more verbal and her responses were often of a non-literal nature.
   
   (Martinez, 1983, p. 206)

Miles, (1985) asserts the value of rereading certain books. In his study, stories were read aloud to classes of first, second, third and fifth grade children. The study was conducted over a period of one week with one day intervals between repeated readings of the selected stories. Miles states that his research design was different from the usual format in which an adult reads aloud the story and afterwards the children respond to previously devised questions. In the Miles study, after
the second reading of the story, an open-ended discussion format was introduced. After a third reading of the story, the children participated in either a drawing or a drama activity. From the results of his study, Miles concluded that: "All these elements, multiple readings and reflection time, multisensory activities, diverse questioning, help the child in the process of achieving the personal meaning from story." (Miles, 1985, p. 348)

In actual classroom practice, Beaver (1982), a first grade teacher, writes of the importance of primary children listening to stories reread on several occasions. She states:

If I had only read *Say It* once, the children never would have developed an appreciation for it. By sharing the book on four different occasions, we were able to discuss far more aspects of the book, such as language, illustrations, and techniques used by the illustrator, which because of short attention spans, could never have been done in one sitting.

(Beaver, 1982, p. 148)

**Interactions During the Story Reading Events**

Microscopically studying the read aloud events helps to complete a fragmentary understanding of just what occurs when a story is read aloud to children. Parent and child storytime interactions, which occur in the home, offer a researcher the opportunity to investigate
just how young children begin to comprehend or make sense of the story being read aloud to them.

Martinez (1983) investigated the interactions during the storytime episode of a father and his four and a half year old daughter. The study was conducted over a period of four months in which the parent audio-taped the storytime activity three nights each week. From an analysis of the transcriptions, it was revealed that the child showed concern for a literal understanding of the story, but also went beyond just a literal level and expressed inferential, evaluative and experiential responses to the stories read aloud by her father. Since the researcher did not anticipate such a depth of understanding of the story from a child at this age level, the occurrence of higher level thinking skills from this child was surprising as well as enlightening.

Martinez also noted the importance of the responses of the parents to the stories read aloud by them. She speculated that the parent's model of thinking and responding to the story may be related to their child's story-related language. In this respect, the parent plays a critical role in aiding the child to discover certain types of meanings within a story. Martinez continued to speculate that the child and the parent appear to share general approaches to stories.
In another study, (Altwerger, Diehl-Faxon and Dockstatder-Anderson, 1985) mother and child read aloud events were recorded over a period of six months in order to monitor interactional strategies. The monitoring period was initiated when the children were twenty-three months old. From analysis of the tapes of one mother and child dyad, the researchers noted that there was a gradual shift from "conversational text" to a text which came closer to approximating the print. A strategy of this mother was to relate the child's personal experience or prior knowledge with the story. The researchers delineate the role of the mother as one who provides access to the written language through reading aloud to the child. The authors state that:

The child's reading of the print itself...is actually preceded by a developing competence in meaningful text construction...achieved through the finely-tuned interactions of read-aloud sessions which have made the strategies for successful reading so naturally and overtly available. (Altwerger, Diehl-Faxon and Dockstatder-Anderson, 1985, p. 483)

The actions of the parent in the read aloud event appear to play a vital role in the child's attempts to construct meanings from the story. In another study, Roser and Martinez (1985) attempted to discern the roles adults serve in book reading dialogs. These researchers analyzed audiotapes of the storytime activity with four
and five year old children and their classroom teacher and of the storytime activity with three to five year old children and their parents. The classroom teachers and the parents both read aloud the same selection of books to their children. Findings from the study indicated that children’s responses were similar in type whether they listened to stories at home or at school.

Roser and Martinez also found that in either environment, school or home, the children tended to respond to the books more like the adult reader than they did like the other children. From analysis of the tapes, the researchers discovered that the adult readers tended to serve as: 1) co-responders, 2) informers/monitors, and 3) directors. The researchers posited that when the adult readers assumed the roles of co-responder and informer/monitor the richness of the responses of the children to the stories read aloud was most evident. They conclude that through these roles, the adult readers seemed to foster breadth of response and to signal to the child that, indeed, many types of responses were possible and appropriate.

These researchers remind adults that if possibilities are to become realities:

It many be crucial that adults extend the roles they have typically assumed during instructional interaction with readers. For if very young
children can respond in broadly divergent ways to literature, given this attention to role extension, certainly even more can be expected from older children. (Roser and Martinez, 1985, p. 489)

Fox (1985) attempted to discover what children learn from listening to stories read aloud when they have been introduced and continually exposed to children's literature from infancy. Five preschool children, with a rich background in listening to stories read aloud, produced for a parent oral monologues in response to the request that the child tell them a story. All oral monologues were audio-taped. From analysis of these tapes, Fox postulated that there is a strong case for the children having been taught a great deal about the conventions of writing and of children's literature by the authors of children's books. She infers that:
"Learning to read must be inextricably tied to what is read, to what is already known and chosen by the reader." (Fox, 1985, p. 383)

Brisset, a first grade classroom teacher, attempted to develop a method to better observe and record student's responses to children's literature read aloud. The children in the study listened to stories read aloud by her in small groups. Each selected book was reread for a total of three times over a period of four months. She audio-taped each read aloud episode, and later
transcribed and analyzed the tapes. She kept notes and records of each read aloud session in a notebook. Using data collected from these sources, she systematically analyzed the responses of her students by categories. She found that the following three broad categories emerged:

1. responses to text
2. responses to story structure
3. specifically directed communication

Additional categories which emerged from her study were: responses to illustration, non-word responses, the offering of personal knowledge and experience, creative language, stating pleasure or displeasure with the book, responses to title page information, comments about physical features of the book and supplying "the end".

Brissey set guidelines for her reading aloud. During the read aloud events, she neither elaborated nor extended the words of the text, nor did she answer direct questions from the children about vocabulary or story details. This form of presentation substantially differed from the more generally accepted presentation which encourages interaction from the children. Brissey stated she believed that the presentation of the read aloud books in this format would reduce her influence on
response patterns of the children.

Brissey also emphasizes the importance of rereading quality children’s literature and stated that after completion of her study, there was significant change in sharing children’s literature with students in her classroom. She stated:

Repeated readings provide a powerful stimulus for language development, comprehension of story structure, identification with characters, gaining insight into themes of literature and creative expression related to a story. (Brissey, 1982, p. 128)

She further speculated that for young children rereading of books may be an essential component in their literacy experiences.

**Student Preferences During Read Aloud Events**

While teacher and parental practices of reading aloud to children have been described and detailed, one study sought to explore another direction in the read aloud literature. What do the children prefer when they listen to stories read aloud?

Mendoza (1985) conducted a survey to elicit elementary school children’s preferences when they listen to stories read aloud. The children who were surveyed ranged in age from five to thirteen. Questions on the survey focused on:
1. desire to be read to
2. preference as to the size of the group
3. home reading environment
4. subjects' practices when reading to others
5. what the children wanted to know about the book before having it read to them
6. attitudes toward being asked questions while or after being read to
7. sustained interest in reading books once they have been read aloud
8. best things about having someone read books aloud

(Mendoza, 1985, p. 522)

From the children's responses on the survey, it was found that ninety-five percent of the primary children and seventy-four percent of intermediate grade children responded positively in that they enjoy the read aloud activity. Franson, as well as other researchers, also found that students enjoy listening to stories read aloud. During the story reading episodes, the primary children seemed to prefer a large group organization, while the intermediate level children preferred a small group situation.

Although the percentage was significantly higher at the primary grade level, over half of all the children responded that they listen to stories read aloud at home. However, the occurrence of this read aloud event was less
than once a week and decreased as the child became older. This decrease in read aloud episodes for children when they reach the intermediate grades concurs with the findings of read aloud research conducted in school classrooms. It is generally accepted that primary teachers read aloud to their students more often than intermediate level teachers.

The mother was the predominant reader, which concurs with findings from prior research studies. (Durkin, 1966, Clark, 1976, Prater, 1985) When the children listened to stories read aloud in the home, all children preferred stories read aloud in group settings. The percentage of children who responded that they read aloud occasionally to other children increased with the age of the child reader. Children who did read aloud to other children allowed the listener to select the book.

Before listening to the story read aloud, the children responded that they most often wanted to hear the author’s name. A majority of the children felt comfortable, both at home and in school, in asking questions while the story was being read aloud. Three-fourths of the primary children and two-thirds of the intermediate children stated that after the story is read aloud to them, they enjoyed talking and discussing the book. Unfortunately, findings by Morrow (1982) indicate
that children, at least nursery school children, are not often given the opportunity for discussion after the story is read aloud.

Children preferred that questions be asked after completion of the story, not during the actual reading of the story. Overwhelmingly, the children responded that after the book is read aloud, they would like the opportunity to look at or read the book for themselves.

**Ethnographic Perspective**

Macroskopically studying the read aloud episodes also offers a way to better understand the possible ramifications of the read aloud event. Researchers who have utilized the ethnographic approach in the study of young children's acquisition of literacy skills have broadened the scope of literacy research to include social and cultural context. "Thick description", a tool of ethnographic research, offers a rich and detailed description of a phenomenon. The ethnographic approach helps to complete and expand the understanding of the nature of reading aloud to children.

In one ethnographic study, Cochran-Smith (1984) describes what adults and children do with print as well as how they were doing it. Her study focused on adults and children who were observed over a period of eighteen
months at a private nursery school in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. In detailing the read aloud events, Cochran-Smith asserts that there were many layers of context which surrounded the read aloud activity, or "rug-time", and which were also interrelated with each other.

Cochran-Smith metaphorically compared these multiple layers of context to concentric circles around a center. The activity of storyreading is the core or the center circle. Encompassing the core circle is the second circle, which is the network of literacy events. The third concentric circle is the general nursery school environment and the fourth concentric circle, which encases the three preceding concentric circles, is the literacy-related beliefs, attitudes and values of the adult community.

From the findings of her investigation, Cochran-Smith concluded that:

1. The organization of time and space at the nursery school was very important in the way that it supported the distinction between the children's experiences with contextualized print and decontextualized print.

2. Rug-time clearly marked the need for a particular set of interpretive and interactional strategies.

3. The material culture of both the nursery school and nursery-school homes supported early uses of reading and writing and pointed to some of the
communities's assumptions about their children's eventual literacy.
(Cochran-Smith, 1984, p. 256)

Cochran-Smith asserted that an analysis of the storyreading events from her study offered an example of Vygotsky's "zone of proximal development" or the potential level of children for learning. The children who listened to the stories read aloud were able to make sense of the story, printed text and illustrations, with the aid of an adult 'mediator-monitor'. This 'mediator-monitor' instructed the children in how to use their prior knowledge in order to understand the story. The guidance of the adult reader occurred as the story unfolds during the read aloud event.

She concluded that: "Mediated storyreadings served as a transition to new language strategies and might well have contributed significantly to the children's later abilities to make sense of texts on their own." (Cochran-Smith, 1984, p. 246) This conclusion parallels the role of the reader described by Martinez (1983).

In an ethnographic investigation of the influence of the home environment on the developing reading skills of first grade children, Kingore (1980) studied six children who exhibited different levels of reading readiness. The majority of the data were collected in the home environment, although other collected data included the
observation of these six children in their school classroom and school library, interviews with the children, classroom teacher and the parents, test results and educational records. Kingore corroborated the findings of other studies in that the home environment is designated as an ongoing influence on a child's development of reading skills. Kingore's other findings included:

1. Children's reading competency and affective dimensions of reading are both positively influenced by being read to frequently.

2. Children, regardless of their level of readiness or subsequent degree of reading competency, unanimously demonstrate positive responses toward someone reading to them.
   (Kingore, 1980, p. 3026A)

The pleasures that children experience while listening to stories read aloud continue to be expressed in the read aloud literature.

Heath (1983) spent five years in conducting her ethnographic study in two working class communities, Roadville (white) and Trackton (black). She compared this data with observational data collected in the homes of townspeople who were described as "mainstreamers". Heath found similarities in literacy events of the mainstream and white working class communities. In both communities, the parents regularly read aloud to their
children. These story reading events usually occurred before naps and at bedtime. Heath's analysis of the language and social interactional aspects of these read aloud events with young children revealed an organizational pattern similar to the reading aloud events described by Ninio and Bruner (1978).

One major difference between the white working class and mainstream homes was that Roadville parents seemed more concerned with helping their children learn to read by attending to and emphasizing the importance of the actual text. They also shared different books, such as workbooks, coloring books and A.B.C. books. While mainstream parents more often went beyond the book, and linked information in the book to the child's real life experiences and asked children for "why?" explanations and affective comments.

Children in the black working class community (Trackton) had different literacy experiences in early childhood from those children in the communities of Roadville or Mainstreamer. Children in Trackton had no special times for reading and no routine activities such as bedtime stories. Thus, the parents of Trackton did not express the routines and patterns of talking and reading aloud with their young children which have been generally described in the research literature in
mainstream school-oriented families.

Heath followed these children to the classroom and described the consequences of discontinuities between the literacy styles, patterns and expectations of home and school in terms of the academic success of students in school. According to Greaney (1986), Snow emphasizes that parents in middle class homes prepare their children for written forms of literacy by providing literature features in oral discourse. "This emphasis of decontextualized language provides the child with important school-related skills." (Heath, 1983, p. 215)

**Beliefs About Reading Aloud to Children**

In recent years, a few spokespeople who advocate the practice of reading aloud to children have received media attention. Most recently, television has aired a commercial which features the actor, Bill Cosby, for the American Library Association. In this commercial, Cosby is reading aloud a book to a group of young children and then extols the values of reading aloud to young children. A more well-known author is Jim Trelease, who wrote *The Read Aloud Handbook*. The introduction of this handbook records the frightening statistics of the present state of literary development of the citizens of the United States. Mr. Trelease tours the country and
speaks about the importance of reading aloud to children. He has been a guest on talk shows and his read aloud handbook has been a best seller.

Other literary people hold strong beliefs on the values of reading aloud to children. William Wharton, national book award winner and the author of *Birdy* and *Dad*, firmly believes in reading aloud to children. During a workshop given by this researcher in October, 1986, Wharton spoke of his days as a teacher. He recalled:

> When I first started teaching, anyone who had children read aloud or read to the children was a no-no of the highest order. And I fought up and down...I called the principal and I called the reading teacher and I could get nowhere. They virtually said you must stop it. And I said I won’t and you’ll have to go to court on this.

Susan Ohanian (1986) has been a classroom teacher for sixteen years. Drawing on those experiences, she asserts that:

> The tragedy of our current educational system is not the children who can’t read. It’s the children who’ve become ‘skilled’ readers but who will never willingly pick up a book for the rest of their lives. The joy of reading was killed for them, no doubt, the day they completed their 748th workbook page. All too often, skill mastery comes at a terrible cost. I know that reading aloud to kids can produce miracles. I don’t use that word lightly... (Ohanian, 1986, p. 53)
The previous quotations are strong statements from educators who indeed support and defend the practice of reading aloud to children. Doake (1985) asserts that all children have the right to listen to stories read aloud. He postulates that: "All children have the right to manage the process of learning to read for themselves from the basis of an inner drive created by the countless hours in the company of their books and a loved parent." (Doake, 1985, p. 21) He also asserts that if a child has not had these literacy experiences in the home, then it is the responsibility of the school to provide the experiences for that child.

**Intangibles of the Read Aloud Activity**

The warm, nurturing environment in which read aloud episodes are experienced by the child in the home can be modeled in the elementary classroom. The shared literacy experiences during the read aloud episodes can create a positive bond between the students and the classroom teacher since the teacher is the transmitter of the story, but also is part of the listening experience of her students. It would be reasonable to suggest that this shared commonality of the read aloud book experience, over the period of a school year, creates a bond between students and classroom teacher much as the
bond is created between the infant and mother in book reading dialogs.

Of a more tangible nature, Combs (1987) found that the procedure in which the classroom teachers modeled reading behaviors with enlarged texts during the read aloud episodes appeared to have many benefits for kindergarten children, especially kindergarten children who were considered below average in their readiness for reading instruction. Combs stated:

By the fourth modeled text, a majority of the children were explaining their reactions and ideas by locating pictures or other story parts. Teachers had shown them how to begin talking about what people do when they read. (Combs, 1987, p. 425)

This modeled approach to the read aloud episodes by classroom teachers parallels in many ways the "labeling" process that Ninio and Bruner describe in their infant and mother dyad. The potential for a classroom teacher to "recreate" that warm and loving environment found in many homes when parents read aloud to their children is a possibility.

It appears from the read aloud research, that the studies which incorporated the classroom teachers in the research design were generally more successful in measuring the positive effects of reading aloud to students. Whether consciously planned for the active
role of the classroom teacher or just assumed that the inclusion of the classroom teacher would be a more manageable research design is speculative, but there appears to be a subtle and complex role, an as yet undefined role, that the classroom teacher plays in the read aloud events in her classroom.

**Summary**

Chapter 2 has presented a review of the read aloud literature with a focus on research design and patterns in read aloud research. The effects of reading aloud to children on language development and acquisition, and on reading achievement, reading interest and reading attitudes were discussed. Factors of the home environment which provide the child with a knowledge of the process of reading was addressed. Parental and teacher styles of reading aloud to children as well as actual classroom and parental read aloud practices were described. A description of selected examples of planned read aloud programs was given. Problems which classroom teachers experience in keeping knowledgeably current in children's literature were presented. A review of the
read aloud research which focused on the microscopic and macroscopic facets of the read aloud episodes was presented. Chapter 3 presents the research design and methodology of this study.
CHAPTER III
DESIGN OF THE STUDY

Introduction

The purpose of this study is to systematically explore and describe the responses of students in a second grade classroom to children’s literature read aloud daily by the classroom teacher. Areas of exploration are children’s responses: 1) during the read aloud event, 2) beyond the read aloud event in the classroom and 3) in the home environment. The study was conducted over a period of an academic school year. The site of the study was a multi-cultural classroom which has an international population of students.

In this chapter the location, the campus and the elementary school is described. The selection of the research site and the procedure for gaining entrance to the school for the implementation of the study is presented. Instruments and forms for data collection are delineated and a time frame for the study is given. The method of analysis and interpretation of the data are defined and limitations which are germane to this study are acknowledged.
Description of the School

This study was conducted at an international, private co-educational day school with classes ranging from prekindergarten through grade twelve. The school is located on a twelve acre campus, adjacent to a park, twenty minutes from the center of Paris. The enrollment of the school is approximately seven hundred and fifty students.

The campus of the school is enclosed by high metal fences and has one central entrance from the street. A uniformed guard is always present at the entrance. The campus is arranged in such a way that all visitors must pass the reception office. Visitors who are permitted entrance are issued identity cards to wear on their clothing. Faculty and staff are issued cards which automatically open the gate.

The campus had previously been bombed by a radical political organization. In consideration of this prior bombing incident as well as the present political climate, security is a primary concern of the school and is maintained on a twenty-four hour basis.

The school is divided into three separate teaching units: Lower School, Middle School and Upper School. Each school is contained in its own set of buildings and is generally autonomous, although some facilities, such
as the auditorium and the cafeteria, are shared. The school is a member of the European Council of International Schools and the National Association of Independent Schools and is accredited by the Middle States Association of Schools and Colleges, an organization based in the United States.

The school was founded in 1946 to meet the needs of citizens of the United States who were residing in Paris after World War II. Today, the school continues to educate children from the United States as well as children from as many as forty different countries. The enrollment of the school reflects an American population of approximately fifty percent with the additional population of fifty percent represented by children from other countries whose parents are based in Paris for either professional or diplomatic purposes.

The present enrollment is open to students of all nationalities who, in the view of the school, can profit from their education being conducted in the English language. The tuition of the school is approximately $10,000 annually. Most of the tuition of the students is paid by international corporations or foreign governments, although there is a small but growing contingency of students whose tuition is paid privately.
There is a strong Parent Faculty Association (P.F.A.) whose elected board members guide and direct numerous opportunities for positive parental involvement in the life of the school. Activities of the Parent Faculty Association include various fund raising events, an annual spring fair and the publication of a monthly newsletter which is circulated to all families affiliated with the school.

The Lower School (elementary school) consists of classes of prekindergarten through grade five. Class size averages between eighteen and twenty students. All grade level classrooms are self-contained with two classes at each grade level. Art, music, French, and physical education are taught by specialist teachers. For instruction in French at grade level, the children are grouped homogeneously according to their level of familiarity with the French language. Although the Lower School library also services the Middle School, it has a large and varied collection of children's literature, especially in the area of picture books.

The faculty of the Lower School is quite stable when compared with the high mobility of faculties of many other international schools. There are few faculty openings at this school as most of the teachers have been employed at the school for several years. For example,
the Director of the Lower School has been employed at the school since 1956.

Selection of Research Site

This school was chosen as the research site for primarily three reasons. First, the researcher had previously taught in the Lower School and was known to most of the faculty and administration. Second, the enrollment of the Lower School reflected a multi-cultural population of students. Third, the Director of the Lower School had offered the researcher a second grade classroom position, the same position which she had resigned three years previously. Having a teaching position in a second grade classroom afforded the researcher the opportunity to conduct her study in a classroom environment in which she was most familiar with the age level of the children as well as the general content of the curricula.

An additional consideration was that the researcher felt the Director of the Lower School cultivated an atmosphere which permitted and encouraged academic freedom. The researcher believed that a classroom teacher at the school had few, if any, restrictions placed on the academic program she provided for her students. Therefore, a children's literature program
with a strong emphasis on the responses of the children
to books read aloud by the classroom teacher would not
likely be perceived or construed as an uncommon event by
the faculty or the parents.

Gaining Entrance

When verbally accepting the second grade teaching
position at the school during a transatlantic telephone
conversation in April of 1965, the Lower School Director
granted permission from the administration to conduct the
research study in a second grade classroom.

In late September, a letter written by the Lower
School Director was addressed and sent to all parents of
children in this classroom. Attached to the letter of
the Lower School Director was a letter written by the
teacher researcher which introduced and described her
study in some detail. (See appendix) In October, a
general Open-House was held for all parents of Lower
School children. During the Open-House the researcher
gave a presentation to the parents of her second grade
children which provided an overview of the study and an
opportunity for the parents to raise questions.

This meeting was attended by parents who represented
all but six of the children. The parents who attended
the meeting gave verbal support to the study and appeared
to be generally interested in a program of children’s literature for their children with two mothers volunteering to help in the study. During February of the school year one of the volunteer mothers moved to Sweden. The other mother did aid in data collection, but she too moved from France. These two situations are included in this section to underscore the high level of turnover that is part of the life of a multi-cultural classroom at an international school.

After the Open-House, the teacher researcher felt she had at least interested the parents in her study of children’s literature and had found active support for her study.

**The Second Grade Children**

The study was conducted in a second grade, self-contained multi-cultural classroom. In late August, the Lower School Director assigned and divided children enrolled in second grade into two class lists. This assignment was based on a balanced classroom for both second grade teachers. The two lists were made with attention to considerations, such as: the number of children from the United States, the number of children who do not speak English as their first language, the number of boys and girls, the number of children who
speak no English, and the number of countries represented.

In September the class list of the teacher researcher was as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Nationality</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Kristian</td>
<td>Netherlands</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ali</td>
<td>United States</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tze Khong</td>
<td>Malaysia</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teresa</td>
<td>Spain</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Caitlin</td>
<td>United States</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Colin</td>
<td>United States</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Greg</td>
<td>United States</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Malla</td>
<td>United States</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Piper</td>
<td>United States</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hamoudi</td>
<td>Lebanon</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rana</td>
<td>Saudia Arabia</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Christophe</td>
<td>Switzerland</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Doris</td>
<td>Kenya</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Maggie</td>
<td>United States</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Oko</td>
<td>Tanzania</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Goncalo</td>
<td>Brazil</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Paul</td>
<td>England</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>John</td>
<td>United States/Venezuela</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>David</td>
<td>England</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Megan</td>
<td>United States</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thomas</td>
<td>France</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yfke</td>
<td>Belgium</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In chapter one it was acknowledged that the enrollment of a multi-cultural class in an international school can change. By the month of January, the enrollment in the classroom, indeed, had changed. Doris, Yfke and Megan had moved and were attending schools in other countries. The following children had moved to
France and became part of this second grade class:

Table 2. New Entrants

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Nationality</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Anthony</td>
<td>United States/China</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Alex</td>
<td>Norway</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Alexis</td>
<td>France</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Julie</td>
<td>United States/Brazil</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In the spring David moved away. At the conclusion of this study, with the occurrence of these turnovers throughout the school year, all the children who were part of this second grade classroom are listed below with dates of entry and departure:
Table 3. Record of Class List During the Year

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Entered</th>
<th>Departed</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Kristian</td>
<td>September</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Ali</td>
<td>&quot;</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Tze Khong</td>
<td>&quot;</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Teresa</td>
<td>&quot;</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Caitlin</td>
<td>&quot;</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Colin</td>
<td>&quot;</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. Greg</td>
<td>&quot;</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. Malla</td>
<td>&quot;</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. Piper</td>
<td>&quot;</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10. Hamoudi</td>
<td>&quot;</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11. Rana</td>
<td>&quot;</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12. Christophe</td>
<td>&quot;</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13. Maggle</td>
<td>&quot;</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14. Oko</td>
<td>&quot;</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15. Goncalo</td>
<td>&quot;</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16. Paul</td>
<td>&quot;</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17. John</td>
<td>&quot;</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18. Thomas</td>
<td>&quot;</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19. Doris</td>
<td>&quot;</td>
<td>November</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20. Megan</td>
<td>&quot;</td>
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<td>21. David</td>
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<td>23. Julie</td>
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<td>25. Alex</td>
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<tr>
<td>26. Alexls</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

The children who participated in the study came from families in which one parent or sometimes both parents held high positions in the government of their own country or were assigned to an embassy or held positions at the upper executive level in the business community. In general terms, the children came from families which represented high middle to high socio-economic status. Many of the children had an au pair or a servant who acted as caregivers in the home.
A majority of the children were transported to and from the school by buses which are leased by the school, although a few of the children in the class were transported by a parent or a chauffeur.

**Instruments for Data Collection**

Two standardized tests were administered to the children. The Gates MacGinitie Reading Test Form B One and Two was administered in a group situation. Second, the Huck Inventory of Children's Literary Background (Revised, Lehr, 1984) was administered with the teacher/researcher reading aloud the questions and multiple choice answers as the student followed the words.

Each planned read aloud event was audio-taped and later transcribed. Since the teacher researcher was the only person who could recognize and identify the voice of each individual child, she transcribed all recorded cassette tapes of the read aloud events. The teacher researcher acknowledges that by making all her own transcriptions, she became aware and continued to acquire a rich reservoir of the literary responses of her children. At the same time, this situation also presented a task, which appeared at times to be overwhelming. The goal was to transcribe tapes of the
read aloud event for the week the following week-end. The teacher researcher was moderately successful in sustaining this goal.

There were ten books which were reread for a total of three times each, in addition to sixty-five other books which were read aloud with audio-taped sessions and later transcribed. A contextual description of the read aloud events and a discussion of read aloud books are presented in chapter four.

A journal was kept which recorded pertinent nonverbal behaviors of the children during the read aloud event as well as verbal and nonverbal responses of the children to the books read aloud that occurred during the school day.

Three read aloud events were video-taped. Although it was initially planned to video-tape five read aloud events, it was clearly evident after viewing the video tapes that the children were not responding to the story as naturally as they were when the read aloud events were only being audio-taped. Since the use of video-tape in recording the responses of the children during read aloud events was not an integral part of the collection of data, the use of video-tape was discontinued after the third session. Miles and Huberman (1982) state:
As qualitative researchers collect data, they revise their frameworks, make them more precise, replace empirically feeble bins with more meaningful ones, reconstrue relationships. The great advantage of qualitative research is that it can change direction easily and refocus data collection. (Miles and Huberman, 1982, p. 29/33)

Samples of the children's writing and their artwork were collected and analyzed throughout the school year. Most of the collected samples of the children's work were returned to the children. To record the children's work, which was given back to them, photocopies and photographs were used.

The children were also given the opportunity to rate the read aloud books. Four rating sheets with the titles of the books read aloud the previous few weeks and a Likert type scale were completed by the children. The connoted significance of the numerals on the Likert Scale were generated by the children during a discussion of the numerals. The meaning of each numeral was stated in the words the children chose. The significance of each numeral was kept constant in each subsequent rating sheet.

Four questionnaires were distributed to the parents throughout the school year. Each questionnaire focused on the children's responses to the stories read aloud in the classroom during a specific time period. The questions on the survey were designed to elicit
Information on the response patterns of the children in their home environment to the books read aloud in the classroom. (See appendix)

Unsolicited comments by the parents about their children's responses to the books read aloud often occurred when talking informally to the parents. These informal conversations occurred in the classroom, a casual meeting in a hallway or a conversation during a field trip. These pertinent comments of the parents, germane to the study, were recorded in the teacher researcher's journal.

Unforeseen Additional Data Collection

In early October, a student teacher from the University of Colorado was assigned by the Lower School Director to this second grade classroom. The student teacher had requested an international placement for her student teaching experience. During the summer of 1985, she had written to the school and had been granted permission in September to complete her student teaching experience in the Lower School.

The student teacher became an additional source for data collection. During the read aloud events, the student teacher took field notes on the nonverbal behaviors of the children. Although there had been no
knowledge until late September that the class was to be assigned a student teacher, the addition of another adult in the classroom afforded an opportunity to further use triangulation measures to cross-check research data.

Procedures for Data Collection

The parent questionnaires, which were designed to elicit information on the responses of the children in their home environment to the books read aloud in the classroom, were distributed to the parents over the course of the academic school year. The questionnaires were distributed in October and December of 1985 and March and June of 1986. The questionnaires were given to the children who placed them in their schoolbags and took them home to their parents. The completed questionnaires were most often returned to school by the children after an interval of a few days.

The Huck Inventory of Children's Literary Background and the Gates MacGinitie Reading Test were administered in late September and in May. The Gates MacGinitie Reading Test Form B One was group administered in the autumn and Form B Two was administered in May. The Huck Inventory of Children's Literary Background was administered individually in October with the teacher researcher reading aloud all questions and multiple
choice answers to avoid the possible problem of children unable to read the print for themselves.

The read aloud episodes were scheduled at 9:00 each morning and "officially" started the school day. These events were audio-taped for future transcriptions. During the read aloud episodes the teacher researcher concentrated on an accurate reading of the text but consciously sought to incorporate as many of the procedures found to be most beneficial (Lamme, 1976, Flood, 1974 and others) for the students in the read aloud events. At the end of the school day, any additional responses by the children that were not recorded on audio-tape, such as comments made about the book during snack or lunch time or other times throughout the day, were included in the journal.

Field notes were recorded in the journal and documented any additional nonverbal responses of the children, the pertinent comments by parents in informal situations and discussions of the responses of their children to the books read aloud and any comments made by other faculty members concerning the responses of the children to the books read aloud.

The data collected by the researcher was also supplemented and complemented by the student teacher, who was placed in the researcher's classroom from early
October until the middle of December. The teacher researcher felt that her student teacher took an active interest in the study and was indeed helpful and resourceful in providing research data which enhanced the initial planned data collection and made the study contextually richer.

**Time Frame for Collection of Data**

The data collection for this study continued for the academic school year. The study was initiated in mid-September of 1985 and was terminated in June of 1986. The specific time frame for the data collection was dependent on the type of information sought. For example, the data collected from the questionnaires distributed to the parents was collected quarterly. Audio-taping the read aloud episodes occurred daily. Instrumentation which employed standardized tests was administered at the initiation and conclusion of the study.

A journal was used to record and document the nonverbal responses of the children to the books read aloud and to document and record verbal responses of the children made throughout the school day. The journal became a reservoir for the field notes. Entries were usually made after the afternoon dismissal of the
children at the end of the school day. Thus, the journal was maintained throughout the period of the study.

**Analysis and Interpretation of Data**

The data collected during this study were differentiated by the need to explore varying avenues of children’s responses to books read aloud in the classroom. Qualitative data analysis has been employed to analyze and interpret the field notes and other observational data recorded by the teacher/researcher and the student teacher during the study. "Thick description" has been adopted to describe the contexts in which the read aloud events occurred and the social context which surrounded the read aloud events.

Test scores from the Ruck Inventory of Children’s Literary Backgrounds, and the Gates-MacGinitie Reading Test are presented. The results of these standardized tests are included to further afford a more complete and detailed understanding of the scope of children’s responses to books read aloud by the classroom teacher. Each facet of data was collected to contextually enhance the framework of describing the responses of second grade students to children’s literature read aloud to them.

The responses of the parents recorded on the questionnaires and the responses of the children on the
rating sheets were analyzed in a wholistic manner with no use of statistical analysis or measurement.

**Limitations**

The following limitations of this study are acknowledged by the teacher researcher.

1. The responses of the parents on the questionnaires may have been influenced in some undetermined way by what the parents may have thought the teacher researcher would want to hear.

During the presentation at the Open-House and during many other opportunities, there was an emphasis placed on the importance of completing the questionnaires in a friendly and open manner. The teacher/researcher stated that she was interested in exploring and describing "what is". It is acknowledged that the parent questionnaires are subject to all limitations of self-report instruments.

2. The wording of the questions on the survey might have presented some difficulty for parents who do not speak English as their first language.

Many of the parents of the children who participated in the study speak languages other than English as their first language. With only a brief conversation or one conference with some parents, it was difficult to assess
the level of fluency in English of each and every parent. Some questions on the survey might have been interpreted in a different manner than the question had been intended to be interpreted.

Although some parents might have wanted to complete the questionnaire, they might not have done so because they felt their proficiency in English was not at an adequate level to present their completed survey to someone who represented an academic institution. Therefore, the responses of the questionnaires may represent only the parents with a more proficient level in English and ultimately may reflect a somewhat inaccurate or limited description of responses of the students in the home to children's literature read aloud in the classroom.

3. Although the teacher researcher consciously made every attempt to remain neutral during the read aloud events, the teacher researcher acknowledges that she may have influenced, in unidentified ways, the responses of her children to stories read aloud.

The teacher researcher selected the books for the audio-taped read aloud sessions. The general enthusiasm which the teacher researcher displayed for the read aloud events might have inadvertently influenced the responses of the children. A student who did not respond positively to a particular read aloud book might be less
inclined to verbalize this response if he or she felt that it was in opposition to the teacher's perceived response to the book. However, this situation would be less likely to occur as the school year progressed. It is accepted that a rapport was built and established between the classroom teacher researcher and the children during the read aloud events over an extended period of time.

4. The selection of the books for the read aloud events was based on the general academic level of the students in the class. Some books might not have challenged all the students; while other books might have been too difficult for some students.

The children in the classroom were, indeed, diverse in their literary backgrounds as well as their own level of reading ability and English language proficiency. It was difficult at times to maintain a balance for all the children during the read aloud events.

5. Keeping the read aloud events as a whole class activity may have impeded and hampered some children in responding to the books read aloud.

The whole class structure was judged the best organizational strategy for the read aloud events in that there was also an effort to create and nurture an environment in the classroom of a community of readers which is described by Hepler (1982). There were doubts
and concerns about the community of readers being established if the children were continually organized into small groups. Thus, it was assumed that a trade-off was achieved. For possibly a less rich reservoir of individual student responses during the read aloud events, an atmosphere in the classroom would be created which generally encouraged children to respond to the books read aloud.

Summary

In this chapter the description of the school, the subjects, the instruments, the procedures for different forms of data collection, the time frame for collection of data, and the general nature of data analysis and interpretation were presented. A description of the enrollment patterns of the second grade students was given and the high degree of mobility of the parent body of this second grade was stressed. The limitations which were germane to this study were presented and explained. Chapter 4 presents an analysis and interpretation of the data collected during the read aloud events as well as a description of the social aspects of context during and beyond the read aloud events.
CHAPTER IV

RESULTS OF STANDARDIZED TESTS AND FRAMEWORK FOR READ ALOUD EVENTS

Introduction

This chapter presents: 1) the results of the standardized tests, 2) a description of classroom and social context within the classroom and 3) a framework for interpretation of the read aloud events. The first section provides the results of the Gates MacGinitie Reading Test, the Huck Inventory of Children’s Literary Background, and the Comprehensive Testing Program II. The second section focuses on the classroom and social context and provides a description of the physical environment of the second grade classroom and the social context and atmosphere in which the read aloud events occur. The third section examines the interrelatedness of the read aloud events within that classroom context. Lastly, the method for analysis which emerged from the intense study of the transcriptions of the read aloud events is described. Aspects of the read aloud events, such as the selection of the read aloud books, the time frame of the read aloud events, and the nonverbal...
responses of the children during the read aloud events are presented.

**Results of Standardized Tests**

In October of 1985 the second grade students at the school were given the Comprehensive Testing Program (CTPII), administered by the classroom teacher researcher. The test administration was part of an agreement with the Educational Records Bureau to establish a set of international norms which would be unique to international schools. Other international schools in Europe have also agreed to participate in establishing a set of international norms. One subtest of the C.T.P.II is entitled, "Listening". Results of this test are reported for the purpose of providing baseline data and are given in a frequency distribution in percentiles.

**Table 4. Frequency Distribution of Scores on Comprehensive Testing Program II**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Score Range</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>90-100</td>
<td>+</td>
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<td>80- 89</td>
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<td>70- 79</td>
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<td>60- 69</td>
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<td>10- 19</td>
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Results of the Comprehensive Testing Program document the wide range of critical listening ability of these students. This wide range of test scores is attributed, in part, to the multi-lingual structure of the classroom. Overall, the test scores indicated that, taken as a group, these students were average in their critical listening skills, although the C.T.P.II manual stated that most of the children should do well on this Listening test.

During the school year, some standardized measurement was introduced to monitor the reading progress of the students. The Gates MacGinitie Reading Test Form B, 1 and 2, was administered to the students in October of 1985 and May of 1986. Although assessing the reading performance of the children was not a major focus of this study, evaluating the children’s level of reading over the course of a school year was deemed beneficial. The following test scores on the Gates MacGinitie Reading Test are presented in a frequency distribution in percentile form for the areas of vocabulary and comprehension.
Table 5. Frequency Distribution of Scores in Percentiles on the Gates MacGinitie Reading Test

**Vocabulary**

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<td>80-89</td>
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<td>70-79</td>
<td>+++</td>
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<td>60-69</td>
<td>+++</td>
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<td>50-59</td>
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<td>40-49</td>
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**Comprehension**

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<th>Spring:</th>
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Results of the Gates MacGinitie Reading Test indicate that over the course of the school year the students as a group increased their reading ability. The range of the scores was reduced as noted by the increased scores on the low end of the spectrum. These test scores reflect a similar pattern found by Cohen in her experimental read aloud study. She noted that students
who scored the lowest on the pretest made the greatest progress throughout the school year when compared to their test scores on the post-test. Certainly, the test scores of the students in this study indicate that the reading progress of the students was not adversely affected.

The Huck Inventory of Children's Literary Background is designed to evaluate the general knowledge level of the students in children's literature which is most often read aloud to children living in the United States. This test was administered to the students in the fall and spring of the school year. The test scores from the Huck Inventory of Children's Literary Background are calculated as the percentage of the correct number of responses on the test and are given in a frequency distribution below.

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<th>Fall:</th>
<th>Spring:</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>90-100</td>
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<td>80-89</td>
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</table>
As a group, the scores of the children increased considerably over the school year. This increase is not unexpected since so many of the books read aloud were covered in the content of the test. Still, the scores on the test do indicate that the children were attending to the story content and were retaining and recalling particular aspects of the text. Once again the most dramatic changes occurred in the scores at the low end of the range, although a noticeable increase also occurred at the high end of the range.

Since it was impossible to keep the class list stable, no statistical analysis of the test scores has been undertaken. The arithmetic calculations on the test scores were included to give a general view of the students reading and literary development over the course of the school year as measured by standardized tests.

**Classroom and Social Context**

A description of the physical aspects of the second grade classroom at the school provides a "window" to the physical environment in which the students spent their school day. This physical description also helps, in part, to understand the ambience or the social context of the classroom.
The second grade classroom is a large, well lighted room on the ground floor of a two-story building. The outside wall of the classroom has windows stretching completely across the wall from the ceiling to below the half way mark to the floor. In the middle of this outside wall is a French double door which opens onto a brick patio. In a corner of the classroom, opposite the windows, is the reading corner. Three large rag rugs lie side by side and are framed on the outside edges of the rag rugs by two wide, white bookcases approximately student waist high.

The floor in the classroom is cement and covered with a plastic tile which is cold in the winter and is hard all the time. The children sat on their pillows during storytime, as well as during Silent Sustained Reading and other quiet reading times throughout the day. Many library books were in the white bookcases and more were displayed on top of the shelves. There are two green plants that sit on top of the bookshelves. The walls are painted a pale white. There are tables instead of desks in the classroom so the children have cubbies and drawers in which to store their school supplies. While the chairs and bookcases are new equipment, all other furniture in the classroom has seen many years of service.
During the summer of 1985 renovations on the building were completed. A fire destroyed a significant part of this building in the winter of the previous school year. The building officially reopened in the fall of 1985. So the building and the classroom have a "new" look about them.

**Social Aspects of Classroom**

Cochran-Smith (1984) argues for research studies that are based on a perception of a context which includes both the immediate verbal and physical environment, in addition to the value system of the adult community. The context of this study includes the physical and social environment of the classroom. The social context in which the read aloud events occur is included to give a complete description of the nature of the children's responses. The read aloud events cannot "stand alone" in any meaningful way. Likewise, the classroom environment in which the children spend their school day needs to be acknowledged.

Thus, two faculty members of the Lower School were asked to, "Describe the classroom." The Lower School Director and the Lower School Guidance Counselor responded to this request in writing within a week of the
request. These two people were the most prepared and experienced in classroom observation and the most familiar with this second grade classroom.

The following two descriptions of the second grade classroom are the verbatim text of these observers.

LOWER SCHOOL DIRECTOR:

The atmosphere of Judy Yocom's classroom (7-8 year olds) is pervaded with work, friendliness, informality, pupil freedom and pupil self-control.

Typically the children gather around Ms. Yocom as she reads to them, or explains some aspect of a theme or question the class is investigating, or gives them directions regarding the activities.

When the class is not occupied in this manner as a whole, Ms. Yocom frequently works with a small sub-group while the others work alone or in tandem. These 'independent' workers have a high degree of freedom: to move about the room, to talk with others, etc. The degree of 'on task' activity of these pupils is very high and their sense of purpose is evident. This sense of purpose is heightened through the teacher's constant encouragement of children to be curious about their world(s).

Judy Yocom characteristically uses positive reinforcement to help children gain (or maintain) self control. The spirit of this permeates the environment, and there is a feeling of mutual respect between pupils and teacher, and among the pupils themselves.

Overall the climate is conducive to helping children form healthy self-images and arrive at the achievements which emerge from such perception.
LOWER SCHOOL GUIDANCE COUNSELOR:

Upon entering Judy Yocom's second grade class, one is instantly aware of a quiet but busy atmosphere. The students are engaged in a learning experience independently, in a small group, or all together. When working with the students her voice is at a pitch which induces a similar quiet voice from the children yet with definite excitement and enthusiasm. As each child is taken from their skill level at entry, there is a great sense of success and little of frustration. Reminders of correct behavior are given gently, but firmly, and students are led to take an interest in their own well being and that of their peers. Hugs are spontaneously given to Judy indicating the degree of trust and feelings of safety and security she creates. It's a warm feeling! The love and depth of knowledge of her job is very evident. Space is well used and attractive, displaying schedules for various groups, student work, photographs of the children and their family members, growth charts, story book characters, etc. As the students are such an integral part of each learning experience, their sense of purpose and importance grow at a fast pace. Inspiration and creativity abound. One can not help but feel good, not only as a student of Judy's, but also as an observer. Her joy and sense of humor have quickly spread throughout the classroom.

These two descriptions offer an "outside" view of the general atmosphere of the second grade classroom. The ambience of this classroom ultimately influences just what occurred during the read aloud events, which was an integral part of the curriculum, not an isolated activity. Therefore, it was important to include descriptions of the atmosphere of this classroom in order that a part of the curriculum, the read aloud events, can
be fully appreciated.

**Settling In**

At 9:00 o'clock the school day officially began. The children collected their pillows from around the classroom, gathered on the rag rugs, and sat facing the teacher. The children did not have assigned places to sit on the rugs so there was a certain amount of jostling by the children to secure an area to lay a pillow, sit down and become comfortable. There was usually a three row arrangement, although the children in the second and third rows maneuvered to gain a good position for observing the illustrations. The children who arrived on the rag rugs first usually formed the first row. This arrangement means that the children who arrived after the first row has been formed step over the children in the first row. The third row was formed by children who step over rows one and two.

During the first weeks of school a few children, who ride the buses that usually arrived on the campus early, placed their pillows in the first row when they entered the classroom. After a few days of this situation, two students complained that it was not fair to save places with pillows on the rug area. A rule was established which did not permit the saving of places with their
pillows on the rugs. As the school year continued, it was noted that more and more children were sitting on the rugs and forming the first row before 9:00 in the morning.

The teacher sat on a student chair and faced the children. During the read aloud events the teacher held the book so the children could see the illustrations. The cassette player which recorded the sessions was placed on the top of one of the bookcase that was nearest to an electrical outlet. During the first read aloud event to be audio-taped, the teacher explained that she would be recording the read aloud events so that she could hear the books read aloud and "learn" more about reading aloud to children. There were no negative comments by the children and a general "Oh" followed the teacher's explanation.

During the first week of the read aloud events, the teacher operated the cassette recorder. After the first week, the child who happened to be seated by the cassette recorder operated the machine. The children had access to this machine during the day and most of the children were familiar with the machine's operating procedures. There was little loss of recorded read aloud events. Throughout the school year, four stories that the researcher audio-taped were not audible because of a loud
hum and two other cassette tapes with recorded stories disappeared.

Selection of Books

The selection of the books for read aloud was based on criteria such as: quality, theme, illustrations, author, particular book characters and availability. The criteria for selection of the books for rereading was based partly on the observed enthusiasm and interest shown by the children in the first reading of the book as well as elements of a story which naturally invites child participation and closer inspection by the reader. A list of all books read aloud appear in the appendix of this study.

Although a few books were purchased by the teacher and some books were brought into the classroom by the children, all other books were obtained from the Lower School library. It was intended to use only library books for the read aloud events. The choice of library books was made in order to read aloud books that were generally available in well-equipped elementary school libraries. Library books which were read aloud in the classroom were also available to the children to borrow from the library on their own initiative at a later time.
Four times throughout the school year the children rated the read aloud books by completing a rating sheets which utilized a Likert type scale. The rating system was based on a scale from one to five. A "1" was designated as "I loved it", "2" was designated as "I liked it.", "3" was "It was o.k.", "4" was "I didn't like it much.", while a "5" was designated as "I didn't like it at all." The children generated the meaning for each number. As was stated earlier in this study, the meaning of the numbers was held constant across all four rating sheets.

The children's responses on the rating sheets were evaluated in a wholistic fashion without the use of statistical analysis. From the results of the responses, it was revealed that the children were overwhelmingly positive about the read aloud books, although there was a noticeable change in the responses of some children with each additional survey. These children responded with less universal positive ratings to the read aloud books.

This change in some children's ratings of the read aloud books was also reflected in the responses of the parents on the questionnaires when asked if they noticed differences in their children's appreciation of the books. Parents noticed that their children were more critical and discerning in their appraisal of the books,
both in the illustrations and the text.

The book, *Pelican*, was reread three times. Three rating sheets corresponded with each reading of the books. The children rated *Pelican* positively on all readings. The rereading of the book did not decrease the children's appreciation of the book, and in a few cases the ratings were higher on the rereading of the book than on the initial reading.

A few children continued to rate all the books with an "I loved it." rating. From the configuration on some of the rating sheets, it appeared that a few children were more involved in making geometric designs from their responses on the sheets than in rating the books.

**Introduction of the Read Aloud Books**

In this study, the sessions in which a book is read aloud to the students by the classroom teacher and in which the session is audio-taped was defined as a read aloud event. The read aloud event began when the children were settled and before the read aloud book was introduced. The read aloud event was concluded when the children no longer responded verbally to the read aloud book. On many occasions, the children continued to respond to the read aloud book long after the book had been read aloud.
During the read aloud events, each read aloud book was introduced by the teacher or by a student in some unique way. The teacher or sometimes a student or students read the title, author, illustrator, dedication and title page of the book. Interesting aspects of a read aloud book, such as end papers in books by Ezra Jack Keats or the end papers in the book, **Everyone Knows What a Dragon Looks Like**, written by Jay Williams and illustrated by Mercer Mayer, were noted. Anecdotes were shared with the children during the introduction of a read aloud book. For example, the introduction of the hardbound copy of **Gorilla** by Anthony Browne started with the teacher telling the children about a conversation she had with the school librarian. She said:

I had a paperback of **Gorilla**, but it was a paperback and half the size of the hardbound book. She (librarian) said, ‘I want to show you something.’ And she brought out and showed me a hardbound book of **Gorilla**. Mr. duAlme had been to England and he had bought several books for the library and one of those books was...

During the introduction of the book, **The Glorious Flight Across the Channel With Louis Blériot** by the Provensens, Colin and Thomas spontaneously shared their knowledge about this book. The coding system for labeling each student’s responses is explained later in this chapter, but for the following sequence of
responses, each student’s utterance is designated as: Colin, "Co.", Thomas, "To." and the classroom teacher, "T." The classroom teacher initiated:

T. This book I found in the library. I've been looking for it for a long, long time.

To. I got it out.

T. (reads title). Now this was the Caldecott last year.

Co. We've had it. My mom's had it a long time and um I read it.

T. Now this is a book that tells about a Frenchman.

Co. It's true.

The books were read aloud without intentional distortion of the text. During the read aloud events, questions were asked by the teacher. These questions were usually open-ended and were generated to focus the attention of the children on a particular aspect of the book or to involve the children in the book in a deeper and more discerning way. Children were free to voice spontaneous responses to the book. The one rule for speaking was that no one interrupt another person when they were speaking. This rule was strictly enforced, although there were many occurrences in which several children responded simultaneously in an enthusiastic manner. Children generally respected the rule, although there was an occasional reminder of the rule voiced by
the teacher or by a child.

Judgmental decisions on the responses of the children were made. On occasion, children responded to the story in a way in which there did not appear to be a connection with the read aloud book. When this situation occurred, the attention of the children was refocused on the book. The occurrences of children's responses which did not appear to have a connection with the read aloud book were not common and declined as the school year progressed.

**Nonverbal Responses**

Since the children sat on their pillows, there was little movement by them away from the reading corner during the read aloud event. Children who arrived late, after 9:00 o'clock, generally sat on the sides of the reading corner. Infrequently, children who were late, tried to maneuver through the seated children. This interruption was usually met with comments from the children, such as: "Hey, you're ruining the story.", "Sit over there.", "Now I can't see." Most children who arrived late for school entered the classroom and unobtrusively joined the children in the reading corner.

Over a four week period, the student teacher recorded the nonverbal responses of the children during
the read aloud events. She recorded general behaviors of the children, such as: smiles, frowns, sucking fingers, open-mouth, rubbing eyes, movement toward reader, mouthing the text with reader, laughs and stretches. More common behaviors for many of the children were: pointing to the book when responding specifically to the text or illustrations and establishing eye contact with the book or the teacher during the actual reading aloud of the text. If the children were sitting close to the teacher, they often touched the read aloud book when they were responding verbally to the story. Children who were sitting further away from the book responded by leaning forward and pointing to the book.

Initially, children physically directed their verbal responses to the book or to the teacher. Few children physically directed their response to the other children, although Yfke was an exception to the general situation. For example, the student teacher recorded that when Yfke talked, "she looks around at the other children." Later in the school year, other children physically turned and faced another child or children when they were directing their responses to a particular child. Some children's eyes wandered around the room during the turning of the pages in the read aloud book. Some children moved closer to another child and leaned their bodies into each other.
When the read aloud event began, the children sat and directed their attention to the read aloud book. If the read aloud event was interrupted with normal school business, children on their own initiative turned off the cassette recorder. After the "business" had been completed, the children turned on the cassette player. Since the teacher did not request that the cassette player be turned off when these interruptions occurred, this situation suggests that the children had definite ideas as to what was and was not appropriate for recording during the read aloud events.

Method of Analysis of Transcriptions

In Chapter Two a method of analysis for the verbal responses of children in first grade to books read aloud was described. In the study by Brissey, the categories of literary responses were: responses to text, responses to plot, responses to character, responses to setting, responses to theme, responses to illustration, communication patterns, non-word responses, personal knowledge and experience, creative language, statements of pleasure and displeasure with the book, responses to title page, responses to physical features, supplying "the end", and non-verbal responses. The responses of the children were quantified and the analysis was based
on the number of responses that occurred in each category.

Initially, Brissey's system of analysis for transcriptions of the books which were reread three times each was to be utilized. In attempting to classify the responses of the children into Brissey's categories, it became apparent that the children's responses in this study were not of a nature that allowed this type of analysis. The responses of the children were fluid and did not readily permit labeling of individual responses to these discrete categories. From the results of an initial analysis of six transcriptions, it was felt that if Brissey's system were implemented, the results of the analysis of the responses of the students would not reflect a clear understanding of the responses of the children. Too many of the responses of the children were ambiguous in nature, which means that the evaluator made frequent "judgment calls". Also, the responses of the students were linked with the responses of other children. Classifying the individual response distorted that child's response. The context in which an individual response is expressed was lost when isolating each child's response.

Another consideration was the preconceived expectations of an adult imposed on children's literary
responses. This type of analysis builds a framework of analysis which consequently limits the scope of how the responses of the children are viewed and evaluated. Imposing an adult system of response analysis to responses made by children who were not abiding by or consciously utilizing adult literary response forms presented a situation which, even at best, distorted the response patterns of the children. Ultimately this distortion is reflected in the findings of the study. With these considerations, it was believed a real danger existed in this form of analysis and so it was rejected.

Consequently, there was a "sifting through" of the thirty transcriptions of the ten books reread three times each and response patterns were discovered. These response patterns emerged from a collective analysis of all thirty transcriptions. Not all response patterns were found in the transcriptions of reading and rereading of each book. The stories did not appear to interest the children in the same manner. In terms of quantity, the transcriptions ranged from four pages for one book to 17 pages for another book. Not all the transcriptions were as rich in the children's depth of response as other transcriptions.

Each read aloud event represents one moment in time. Rosenblatt (1985) writes that:
Recognizing that each reading is an event in time, we cannot limit ourselves to study of reader and text. We must take into account the context, the pressures to which the reader may be subjected, the social tension that may affect the character of the transition. (Rosenblatt, 1985, p. 45)

The collective patterns of the responses of the children to books read aloud three times each have been carefully evaluated and categorized under the following headings:

1. Children's Responses as Literary Linkage
2. Children's Responses as Explanations
3. Children's Responses to Characters
4. Children's Responses Related to their World
5. Children's Responses to Illustrations

Although the responses of the children were analyzed with these five categories, the categories are not seen as discrete or mutually exclusive. Many responses of the children could be labeled and placed in three or four different categories and could support each of these categories. It can readily be discovered that many of the sequences of responses of the children which are quoted from the transcriptions could equally support several categories. These categories are to be used as general guidelines for understanding the response
patterns of these children.

Other noted response patterns did emerge. These patterns permeated the transcriptions and consequently were not of a nature that permitted the labeling into finite categories. These noted patterns which occurred over the period of the study were:

1. There was an increase in child initiated questions.

2. There was an increase in child initiated answers to questions voiced by other children.

3. There was the emergence and continued increase in the amount of children's opinion supported by book information.

4. There was an increase in the children's elaboration of verbal responses.

5. There was the emergence of children's reference to the responses of other children.

6. There was a lengthening of sequences of child to child responses.

7. There was the emergence and continued interest in illustration/text congruency.

The responses of the children to the books which were reread, as well as to all the other books read aloud, were fluid in nature. The children could attend to the illustrations of a book for one moment and in the next moment transfer their attention to some particular characteristics of the text or share a personal experience from their own lives.
Time Frame of Books Reread

Selection of the books which were reread were presented in chapter 3. Collectively the books were read aloud from September of 1985 until June of 1986, although no rereading of a single book was separated by that period of time. Most of the books were reread in the months of March, April and May. The books and the months in which the the books were read aloud are:

Table 6 Titles and Dates of Books Reread

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Title of Book</th>
<th>Month of Read Aloud</th>
<th>Events</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>S. O. N. D. J. F. MR. A. MA. JU.</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>++</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Garden of Abdul Gasaza</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>+</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Blueberries for Sal</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>++</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Everyone Knows What</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>+</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A Dragon Looks Like</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>+</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pelican</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>+</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Arrow to the Sun</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>++</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sam, Bangs and Moonshine</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>+</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Story of Jumping Mouse</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>+</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gorilla</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>+</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stevie</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>+</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Glorious Flight</td>
<td>++</td>
<td>+</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Across the Channel with Louis Blerlot</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>++</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Discussion of Response Patterns

The discussion of the categories of responses of the children was organized collectively with regard to the books which were reread. The titles of the book which were reread are followed by a number in parentheses. This number denotes the first, second or third reading of the book. Each noted category of response is supported with examples found in the transcriptions of the read aloud books. The responses of the children were transcribed as accurately as possible. Some children’s responses were inaudible because several children were speaking at the same time. Punctuation was added to express and reflect the pauses of the children’s voices.

No attempt has been made to alter the children’s words in order to make the meaning of their words conform to more accepted patterns of the English language. Although the syntax of the children’s verbal responses can, at times, make it more difficult to grasp the intended meaning of the responses of the children, these uncommon syntax forms also add to the understanding that these responses are voiced by seven and eight year old children who were often struggling to articulate their responses in a foreign language. The children have varying levels of proficiency in English.
On many occasions, the children referred to female characters as "he" and male characters as "she". This situation occurred with children who are native speakers of English as well as with the children who are non-native speakers of English. On some occasions, when a child used a personal pronoun incorrectly, the "error" was corrected by another child, but more often, a child's use of an incorrect pronoun was accepted without comment by the other children.

Each child's response which is quoted from the transcriptions is attributed to a specific speaker. The name of the child is abbreviated. A capital "T." refers to the voice of the teacher and "St." refers to the student teacher. Three dots at the end of a child's speech means that the child did not complete the sentence, which is usually attributed to the fact that another child initiated a response. The responses of the children are quoted as they occurred sequentially in the transcriptions, unless stated otherwise. Listed below are the names of the children and the abbreviation of their names which is used to identify their responses:
Summary

Chapter 4 presented the results of the standardized tests, a description of the physical aspects of the classroom, and the social context in which the read aloud events were interpreted. Considerations for the selection of the read aloud books and the procedure for analysis of the transcriptions of the read aloud events were presented. A time frame for the read aloud events and the coding system for individual student responses were presented. Overall, Chapter 4 presented the framework for a contextual understanding of the transcriptions of the read aloud events. Chapter 5 presents a discussion of the transcriptions from all the read aloud events.
CHAPTER V

DISCUSSION OF CHILDREN’S RESPONSES DURING THE READ ALOUD EVENTS

Introduction

This chapter presents a description of the responses of the children during the read aloud events, gleaned from the transcriptions. The children’s responses during the read aloud events were part of a group experience in which the children directed their responses to their peers as well as to the teacher. The responses were not limited to isolated, individual responses directed only to the book or to the teacher.

Although chapter 4 detailed the classroom organization of the read aloud events and explained the analysis of the transcriptions, a brief summary is given here. The first section of this chapter presents the categories of children’s responses which emerged from the analysis of the books reread for a total of three times each. The categories which emerged were: 1) children’s responses as literary linkage, 2) children’s responses as explanations, 3) children’s responses to characters 4)
children's responses related to their world, 5)
children's responses to illustrations. Quotes which were
taken from the transcriptions to support some category of
children's responses are identified by the title of the
book followed by a number which designates the particular
reading of that book.

The response patterns of the children which
collectively weave through all the transcriptions were:
1) increase in child initiated questions, 2) increase in
child initiated answers to questions voiced by other
children, 3) emergence and continued increase in amount of
children's opinion supported by book information, 4)
increase in children's elaboration of verbal responses,
5) emergence and continued interest in illustration/text
congruency, 6) lengthening of sequences of child to child
responses, and 7) emergence of children's reference to
responses of other children. These response patterns of
the children are highlighted throughout the chapter.

The next major section of this chapter presents a
discussion of the children's responses during all other
read aloud events; the events in which the books were
read one time. In these instances, the titles of books
mentioned are not followed by a number. A description of
these read aloud events is organized under the broad
headings of: authors, folk tales and poetry. The authors
having a representative body of their works read aloud to the children were: Ezra Jack Keats, Bernard Waber, and Russell Hoban. Folk and fairy tales from around the world was a theme that was particularly emphasized and a description of the children's responses to folk tales is presented. Although poetry was read aloud in conjunction with read aloud books, poetry as a topic is also discussed under a separate heading.

Children's responses are quoted sequentially in order to provide a context in which a single response of the child is verbalized. The syntax of individual children's responses have not been altered to conform to more accepted forms of the English language. All responses of the children are quoted as they have been transcribed from the audio tapes.

**Children's Responses as Literary Linkage**

One category that became prominent across the months of read aloud events was literary links. As stated in the definition of terms section, literary links are defined as children's responses in which a connection is made between an aspect of the read aloud book with some feature of another book. For example, the children linked the author of the read aloud book with other books that author had written. They also linked similarities
in the plot of the read aloud book with the plot of another book. The emergence of literary linkage became more pronounced across the collective time frame when books were being reread and more pronounced across the rereading of a single book.

Thus, children's responses categorized as literary links occurred with more frequency with the books that were reread later in the school year and with more frequency in the second and third read aloud events of any one book. There were single responses without further comment by the other children and there were responses that "triggered" further literary links from other children. Literary linkage was found throughout the transcriptions and did not appear with more frequency in any one particular context.

For example, before the reading of *The Garden of Abdul Gasaza* (2), Colin noticed the name of the author, Chris Van Allsburg, and said:

Co. **Jumanji**

Te. Yea, I saw it on a book over there when there was a pile of books. But it was the same dog. I think it was the boy, but it was the same author and it (The Wreck of the Zeph') was the same author and it was in color.

Co. I read another book that was kind of like that. It was a mystery.

Ma. In **Jumanji** they look like in the book and in **Jumanji** they look like they're real people
and real houses.

In the next reading of The Garden of Abdul Gasaza(3), two children made literary links, but also shared their feelings for other books by Chris Van Allsberg. Embedded in the responses of the children are "layers of meaning". Piper's response indicated that she linked another book by the same author, but she also expressed her opinion that she appreciated a less ambiguous plot.

Pl. Will you read The Wreck of the Zephyr? It's very easy to know what it is. I love that book.

Gr. I love Jumanji.

Prediction was often a part of the children's responses. They applied their prior knowledge about one book to predict an outcome of another book. In the following sequence of responses, Teresa shared a literary link with the class in this manner and predicted what might be in the book. Gorilla, based on what she knew about another book, The Problem with Pulpifer. During the reading of the book Gorilla(1), by Anthony Browne, Teresa said:

Te. Maybe this book is about a girl that like, likes, like in Pulpifer her mom and dad liked a lot of t.v. 's. So they had a lot of pictures of t.v. 's but he liked to read
Children were also sensitive to the actions of characters in the stories and made comparisons on those actions. During this same read aloud event, *Gorilla*(1), Hamoudi compared the action of Hanna in this story, throwing the toy gorilla into the corner, to the action of another character who threw something into the corner. He said:

H. Like the *Princess and the Frog*. She threw the frog on the corner.

Another instance of literary linkage also occurred while the attention of the children was focused on the illustrations of the read aloud book. During the reading of *Stevie*(1), there was some speculation as to the medium John Steptoe used in creating his illustrations. Within the context of this discussion, Paul made a comparison between the medium John Steptoe used to create his illustrations and the medium used by another illustrator. Paul shared:

Al. Crapas.
Co. Maybe like *Arrow to the Sun*. 
Literary links were made when children were discussing particular aspects of characters. Animal characters particularly interested the children. The following sequence of children’s responses started with a personal comment on the pelican in the reading of *Pelican* (1), by Brian Wildsmith. Greg said:

Gr. He’s sort of ugly. A lot ugly.

J. When the baby cracks the egg, they’re wet and then they dry.

Co. It sure looks like the ugly duckling.

During the reading of *Arrow to the Sun* (1), a child had previously been talking about the illustrations in this book. Paul noted the differences between the illustrations in this book and the illustrations of another book by the same artist. The film strip of the book, *Anansi the Spider*, illustrated by Gerald McDermott, had been shown to the class a few weeks before the reading of *Arrow to the Sun* (1). The similarities and differences of the illustrations of these two books were recognized and comparisons were made by the children. Paul commented:

Pa. Because the African folk tales, he draws so much different.
Children also noted similarities in the illustrations of different artists as well as differences in illustrations by the same artist. During the reading of *The Glorious Flight Across the Channel with Louis Bierriot* (2), Teresa commented on the illustrations and made a comparison with the illustrations in another book. She did not remember the title of the book, but described the book. (*The Ox-Cart Man*) She shared:

"Te. I think in these pictures right here and in that one you read about where he goes to town and he sells everything. They really look the same kind of pictures."

Some literary links were embedded within a sequence of responses which focused on another topic. For example, in the reading of *Arrow to the Sun* (3), Thomas started this sequence with a question:

"To. How could he change form?"

"Te. He just did like transform."

"Al. He's probably like Jumping Frog. (mouse)"

Alex cited the character of Jumping Mouse as an example of a character who changed form. Alex has made a comparison of the transformation of the Boy with the experiences of Jumping Mouse in the book, *The Story of Jumping Mouse*. 
Literary links were made back and forth in books. In the reading of *Sam, Bangs and Moonshine* (2), Greg started this sequence of responses with a question:

Gr. Mrs. Yocom, gerbils hop?

T. This isn’t a gerbil.

Al. It looks like Jumping Mouse.

T. Oh, it is. It must not be the kind of gerbils we know.

Gr. It’s an African gerbil.

During the reading of *The Story of Jumping Mouse* (3), the following sequence has a direct connection with the response sequence just quoted from *Sam, Bangs and Moonshine* (2). Paul said:

Pa. He looks like one of the animals, you know, in *Sam, Bangs and Moonshine*. The animal in there looks like half mouse, half kangaroo. And that must be what it was.

Co. It was a gerbil.

Al. It was from Africa.

Literary links appeared when a child asked a general question to clarify the habits of an animal. Children voiced their interest in the habits of snakes and then related the eating habits of snakes to a song. Colin was interrupted but regained the attention of the other children and related a situation his father experienced
while in Africa. In the following sequence two literary links emerged:

Ch. Mrs. Yocom turn to that page where the snake is.
Gr. I know what snakes do, they swallow it and then it goes down to the end of them and they digest it.
J. He had to swallow it because snakes don’t chew.
Gr. Snakes can swallow pigs?
Co. Yea, they can cause in Teresa’s world book or something I saw it showed a pig. And like after they swallowed it whole, they don’t chew it. They press their poison and...
Te. But Mrs. Yocom, how can a snake he has this little mouth, how does he swallow it in one gulp?
T. He doesn’t. It is part in and part out. Slowly goes into the mouth.
Ma. Like the song, "I’m Being Swallowed by a Boa Constrictor." Like it say... An. Oh yea, I know that.
Ma. Gee, he swallowed my knee. (sings)

Thematic literary links were also made during book discussion. During the reading aloud of The Story of Jumping Mouse(3), the book, Annie and the Old One, was mentioned. This following sequence of responses reflected the seriousness with which the children in this discussion measured their conversation. Hamoudl did not appear to be attentive to the topic and consequently his response was not met with approval by the other children.
Christoph initiated this response sequence:

Ch. Old ones.
Te. Oh, that is the same thing as um...
Gr. Annie and the Old One.
Ch. That's because you said that it was translated.
Te. No, that it was from the Indians.
Gr. The old ones.
Ch. Yea, that's what I said because it was written um which language did you say?
J. South America?
T. Pueblo or Navajo?
Ch. Yea, something like that.
H. I like the end page.
Gr. But she wasn't talking about that, she was talking about the Old Ones.
Te. I know WE'RE talking about that.
Ch. We said they use that because it was written in Pueblo or something like that. So that's why they wrote it in another language, but he translated it and, it came out like that.
Pa. Every Indian tribe, instead of saying granddad they say the old ones.
T. In Annie and the Old One they didn't say grandmother, they said...
Al. Old Ones.
Te. So instead that means the big people, like the grandparents.
The children took an active interest in the stories which were translated, retold or adapted. Since most of the children speak more than one language as part of their daily lives, they seemed to appreciate the meanings of words in other languages and would be attentive to vocabulary which was not common to the English language.

In the introduction of any read aloud book throughout the school year, pertinent information on the book was highlighted. A large number of the read aloud books were either Caldecott Medal or Honor winners. Other medals, such as the John Newbery Award as well as general seals, such as "Children's Favorites for 50 Years" were noted. As the school year progressed, the children displayed more of an awareness of the read aloud books which were award winners and scrutinized the jackets or cover of a books for special seals or medals. During the same read aloud event, The Story of Jumping Mouse(3), Tze Khong told the children that the read aloud book and Annie and the One One have won the same medal. His "mistake" was corrected by Colin. (Tze Khong confused the Caldecott Medal with the John Newbery Medal.) Tze Khong said:

Tz. They won the same medal.

Co. No, it didn't.

Tz. Newbery Honor.
Co. But that's a different honor book. That's like the John Newbery Honor book.

Books that were read outside of class or individually in the classroom were mentioned by the children during the read aloud events. The book that Hamoudi described in a reading of Stevle(2) is an example. Although titles of books were sometimes forgotten by the children, they still made literary links with the read aloud book by describing the plot of the story of the other book. Hamoudi shared:

H. I got a book that is kind of like it. His friends come, a little one, like this book. And after he goes away, in the last of the book he comes. And the boy miss him and the last of the book he comes back.

In the following sequence of responses, which was taken from Stevle(3), Maggie made a literary link with another book not read aloud in the classroom. Julie initially shared her interpretation of the story. She said:

Ju. I think this really happened to John Steptoe.
T. Because it sounds so real, doesn't it.
Ma. It's like Laura Ingalls Wilder. She writes about her life. She keeps like a diary and she writes about her life.
Co. That's not really like her whole life. Her whole life has...
Throughout the school year, Colin and Maggie read the Laura Ingalls Wilder books and discussed the stories between themselves. The parents of these two children also documented their children’s interest at home in the Wilder books at home.

As the children were introduced to unfamiliar authors and their books during the year, the children increased their reservoir of knowledge about children’s literature and were able to draw on that knowledge to make the literary links.

**Children’s Responses as Explanations**

The children offered explanations on topics such as the nature of a particular character and the development of a story or the artist’s representation in illustrating a passage of the text. The explanations of the children were interspersed throughout the transcriptions and were couched in various styles of speech. Some children qualified their expressed ideas in phrases, such as "I think" or "Maybe"; while other children were more direct and said "I know why". The multiple rereadings of these books and the periods of time that lapsed between the readings of the book gave the children the opportunity to "mull over" their thoughts about a story.
In general, the children offered more explanations in the read aloud events which were rereadings of the books than in the initial reading of a book. Although explanations were offered in the initial reading of the book, these explanations were usually isolated and there was little elaboration of responses from the other children. Some of the books which were reread, especially *The Story of Jumping Mouse* and *The Glorious Flight Across the Channel with Louis Bleriot*, "drew out" more explanations from the children than the other books which were reread.

In the reading of *The Story of Jumping Mouse*(1), Christoph offered an explanation for the early departure of Jumping Mouse for the far-off land. He explained:

"Ch. If the sun is um out, it would be he had shorter time to go there. Now if he goes earlier, he has longer time until the sun comes down."

This story is a Native American legend. In the text there were vocabulary words which were probably unfamiliar to many children in the class. Direct questions as to the meaning of some of the more uncommon phrases in the text were asked. In the following sequence of responses, the meaning of the phrase, "waiting for the end" was questioned. One child's explanation was followed by other responses from the
children. This elaboration on the initial response of another child was seen throughout the transcriptions in all the categories of response but was more pronounced in the rereading of books, which were introduced later in the school year. The children were responding to the wolf who had lost his sense of smell because of his pride. Tze Khong said:

Tz. Until he dies.

Ch. Cause if he doesn't have a nose that smells, he can't find food.

An. There's food all around him, but he doesn't know it.

In the reading of Arrow to the Sun(2), which is another Native American tale, Christoph offered an explanation of the sign. There was some discussion about this sign. Teresa then extended Christoph's idea. Christoph initially shared:

Ch. Mrs. Yocom, I know why he has that on him. Because he was, because the Lord of the Sun shined it on him so he gets the baby and the baby got that on him and it stays on.

Te. Yea, that sign because that sign might be the sign of the Lord um God of the Sun and it's like only in the Pueblo the nice girl, so he sent his son to earth, like Jesus.

The children attended to the time period of the stories. Illustrations which depicted events of times
past were appreciated. For example, the following book was set in the early 1900's. During the reading of The Glorious Flight Across the Channel with Louis Bleriot(1), Colin explained the appearance of Bleriot's car. Other children elaborated on his explanation. Colin explained:

Co. They just invented cars. That's why that's a real old car. Cause in the olden days you can see they wind it up.

T. Right. You can see the crank.

Te. You have to go like that to make it go. (demonstrates)

To. And there are no keys.

During this same read aloud event, the children were discussing the persevering nature of Bleriot. Colin emphasized the fact that there needed to be many attempts for Bleriot to accomplish his goal. Anthony also offered an explanation for the many planes that Bleriot built. Colin and Anthony explained:

Co. But if, like another guy who said 'I want to do it too,' But if that was his first plane, probably wouldn't work. Probably there might be something wrong. Cause it would be his first time, if it was another guy. He would need a lot of planes.

An. Same planes. Sometimes it had different numbers. Because he built them better.
Anthony also made a general observation about the way the story chronicled the making of Bleriot's many planes. His general comment triggered explanations from the other children. Maggle and Colín's explanations are examples of the children's ability to answer questions succinctly. Few children "rambled". Anthony shared:

An. He stopped at Bleriot seven and we never heard Bleriot Eight.

Co. Cause it would be a long time. It would be like that thick (demonstrates) if telling about everything.

Gr. It only told about eight planes.

Ma. Some books do that. They have lots of information to tell. And if they write all of it, it will probably be really, really thick book. And that would be hard to sew together and publish. So they don't want to sew that many pages.

In January, the author, William Wharton, came to the classroom for a morning visit and discussed his writing and his books with the children. During this visit, he spoke about publication and general book construction. He cited an example of his book, *Scumbler*, which he persuaded his publisher to both sew and glue in its construction.

Wharton's visit and his comments about writing influenced many of the children. The effects of Wharton's visit were evident in the children's comments
which continued to be made months after the visit. The responses of the parents on the questionnaires also noted the effects of Wharton's visit on their children. Wharton’s visit is discussed in more detail in chapter 6. His book, Franky Furbo was read aloud to the children during the last two weeks of school in December.

Some responses of the children reflected the environment in which the children live. For example, the following sequence of responses from the reading of The Glorious Flight Across the Channel with Louis Bleriot(2), was enlightening. Greg and Colin both expressed a particular point of view when referring to the English Channel. Teresa asked:

Te. Why did he say across the channel?
T. Remember he flew...
Gr. Across the English Channel.
Te. What's the English Channel?
Gr. The English Channel is like the 'Sane' except for...the Seine.
Te. Across the Channel like the channel of the...
T. Oh, no.
Co. Part of it's France...
Gr. Half of the water is France's property and half of it is English. So it's the English Channel.
Ma. France, American they call it the English Channel cause between English and it's most English territory.
During the same read aloud event, *The Glorious Flight Across the Channel with Louis Bleriot* (2), the name of the Wright brothers was introduced. Some of children had been reading about the Wright brothers. There was an interest among these children in knowing just who flew the first plane, the Wright brothers or Louis Bleriot. There was a bit of confusion throughout the read aloud event, as the children who had studied the Wright brothers referred to information they had learned in their study. Some of the other children became confused with the introduction of information on the Wright brothers. Alex shared:

Alex. Like people say that the Wright brothers flew in 1903 and in the morning it was 1901 and they went for a drive in their car, but in 1901...

Co. But they don’t have...

Alex. But the Wright brothers flew over France in 1903.

Co. No, the Wright brothers weren’t in France. They flew in Kitty Hawk. And anyway, they don’t have the planes. Papa Bleriot hasn’t invented them.

Ma. They were beginning. Say he invents this plane that doesn’t work, and the next year one that works was 1909 and that one worked with the Wright brother. It was 1903.

Sometimes a question of logic appeared. During the same read aloud event, Alex asked, "How did that guy know
how to pilot?" No child immediately responded and the question appeared to go unanswered. After several other responses, John returned to this previous question, voiced by Alex, and asked:

J. Yea, but if they didn't know how to pilot it, who taught the pilot?

T. Actually, they taught...

P1. Themselves.

Several other children responded, but these responses were directed to other topics. Still the children returned to the topic of the training of the pilot. After the text that Bleriot would pilot his own planes was read aloud, the children responded:

Ma. He doesn't want anyone else to get hurt. Plus he wants to learn.

Tz. See he taught himself now, like Piper said.

Te. He's teaching.

In the transcriptions of the books read later in the school year, there were several occurrences of response patterns in which one child's previous response was referred to by name by another child. These occurrences suggested that, at least, certain children were listening critically to the story being read aloud, and were also listening critically to other children's responses. This
situation indicated that for some children the responses of the other children were deemed important and were valued as an integral part of the read aloud event.

Explanations for the title of a book were seldom offered, but with *The Glorious Flight Across the Channel with Louis Bleriot* and *Pelican*, explanations were given. Teresa offered an explanation for the title of the book *The Glorious Flight Across the Channel with Louis Bleriot*. Tze Khong initiated this sequence of responses. He said:

Tz. Thirty-six minutes.

Pl. It would be like a little bit, it wouldn’t even be an hour.

T. A little over a half hour.

Co. But when he’s on the ground it’s thirty-seven minutes. So it took thirty-seven minutes.

Te. That’s why they call it the glorious flight.

In *Pelican*(i) Megan explained what the hen would do with the egg and Colin offered an explanation of the egg and the title of the book. Megan shared:

Me. Keep it warm.

Co. That’s why it’s called *Pelican* because it’s going to be a pelican.
Children were interested in reasons characters acted as they did and would offer explanations for the character's behavior. These explanations were usually supported with information from the book. In the reading of *Everyone Knows What a Dragon Looks Like*(2), Hamoudi offered an explanation of why he thought the little, fat man turned into a dragon. He said:

H. Yea, because he gave the man, the old man, the dragon, his last bowl of rice and cup of wine and that's why he turned into a dragon.

Children suggested explanations for behaviors of characters that were "unbelievable". Greg's response in the following sequence reflected an understanding of the particular nature of a book character by referring to the vocabulary that the author used to name a character. Children began to explain the nature of characters by using a sense of general storybook knowledge. During the same read aloud event, some of the children offered an explanation on the obese condition of some of the characters in the book. Teresa shared:

Te. The Mandarin and the Chief of the Army and all those people, they are all fat because they eat so much and Han's thin because he doesn't eat almost anything.

Co. He's not real thin.

T. You wouldn't be too heavy if you only had a bowl of rice to eat.
Tz. The wise man isn’t that fat.

Te. I know, but the Mandarin is.

Gr. I think the wise man, he doesn’t eat so much because he’s wise.

In the reading of Blueberries for Sal(3), Piper offered an explanation for the action of the story in light of the habits of people today as well as the growing conditions for plants in different areas of the country. She explained:

Pl. The reason that you don’t do it anymore is that you can buy them in the stores already picked. And if I was somewhere like in Indiana, where they couldn’t grow the stuff because it freezes. So they would be doing this if they lived somewhere where it got really cold and you really couldn’t pick very much. But they wouldn’t do that in California because fruits grow all year around because it’s so hot.

Piper’s explanation was followed by a response made by Collin, which in turn was followed by a question from Hamoudi, who did not appear to understand the necessity of canning or storing fruits for the winter. During the read aloud events, many of the children were introduced to cultural situations and experiences which were new to them. Hamoudi was from Lebanon and was not familiar with a tradition of picking a large amount of berries in summer for canning. Collin initially explained:
Co. But it's not just in Indiana cause in America, in Ohio, we go strawberry pickin. I've never been blueberry pickin, but my mom does.

H. Mrs. Yocom, that's funny because if they eat a lot of blueberries they get sick. And why do they need to take blueberries at home if they eat a lot?

Co. It's for winter.

Te. No, no they have special fruit from summer that they wrap and eat it.

Gr. Through the winter. Because they can't go out and pick them in the winter because they are going to be gone because the leaves won't grow anymore.

Throughout the school year, the children asked for clarification of unfamiliar vocabulary words. In the initial read aloud events, the teacher responded to a child's request for the meaning of a word. As the school year progressed, the children assumed the task of answering questions of vocabulary. In the reading of The Garden of Abdul Gasaza(3), Alex asked for the definition of the word, "bustle", which was used in the story. The children offered verbal explanations, but also demonstrated explanations of words. Children usually demonstrated their response when they appeared to be "groping" for the language to express their ideas. He asked:

Al. What's a bustle?

Te. It's like a piece of material that
makes the dress blow up.

Ma. You put it in back to make it go out and back.

Co. It goes like this. (demonstrates)

Children's Responses to Characters

This discussion focuses on children's responses to characters in the stories. These responses were directed to areas such as: the names of characters, the specific actions of characters, the feelings of characters and surprisingly, to the "need" for particular elements in characters to develop the storyline. The children responded specifically to many different types of characters in the stories. Animal characters especially interested the children. In the following example, Anthony told the other children about the kindness that was seen in the character of Jumping Mouse in the reading of The Story of Jumping Mouse(3). He shared:

An. Well, like on that page because of um her heart. Because he gave all his senses away cause he was so kind. He got them all back cause when you be kind, you, like people give you something back or something like that.

During the same read aloud event, Colin shared with the class his ideas on Jumping Mouse. The sharing of
Colin's thoughts in turn spurred other responses from the children. This sequence of responses as well as other sequences quoted in this study highlight the emergence and continued use of the read aloud book to support a child's point of view. The children either quoted verbatim from the text or paraphrased a passage of text from the book or pointed to specific illustrations to support their own interpretation of the book.

Julie referred to an illustration as depicting the power Magic Frog gave to Jumping Mouse. Maggie amplified Julie's observation and directed her response specifically to the illustration. Colin said:

Co. He got one more power because eagles can fly...

An. He could jump high.

Ch. And then it said he saw the sight above the earth and on the earth and then he turned into an eagle.

Ju. I think when he was jumping up in the air, well, Magic Frog put, well, the sun was shining on him and gave him power.

Ma. You can see that in the illustrations. They have the sun coming into his eyes.

During the same read aloud event, The Story of Jumping Mouse(3), Hamoudi offered his thoughts on the character of Magic Frog. His idea that Jumping Mouse was being tested was scrutinized by the children, although Christoph appeared to interpret Hamoudi's idea in a
different manner than Hamoudi intended.

Although Christoph's response to Hamoudi's idea was somewhat clouded, his response continues to point out the degree to which many of the children listened attentively to the responses of the other children. It was surprising to note that the children appeared to experience little frustration when their responses to a story were misinterpreted. It was also interesting to note that with all the varied syntax structures in the children's speech patterns, the meaning of their words appeared to be readily understood by most of the children. Hamoudi shared:

H. I think that the, um, Magic Frog did like him. You know, the buffalo. He did the buffalo to don't see. He see if the mouse was a good mouse or a bad mouse.

Ch. Yea, but instead if the buffalo would be the frog, the buffalo would see in real. But if they traded sight that they could see and not see. But in real the buffalo can see, the mouse could see because they traded. And if the buffalo can see, they traded the mouse can also see.

In the rereading of the book, *Sam, Bangs and Moonshine*, a large portion of the responses of the children focused on the character of Bangs, the cat. Some children shared the fact that they have cats as pets. During the reading of *Sam, Bangs and Moonshine*(2), the children shared some reasons they thought that Bangs
went to Blue Rock. Tze Khong's responses were often literal in nature. In the following sequence, he took issue with the understanding that Bangs could "talk". Christoph offered an interpretation of how Bangs might have conveyed the knowledge of immediate danger to Thomas. Anthony explained:

An. Bangs knew that Blue Rock was, well, the water would rise...

Ch. That's why he wanted to go with him.

T. To tell him.

To. To warn him.

Tz. Cat's don't speak.

Ch. Maybe to scratch him to say, 'Go back.'

In the reading of *Sam, Bangs and Moonshine* (3), it was Paul who commented on Bang's form of communication with Sam. Paul's response triggered responses from other children. Paul had his own interpretation of the character of Bangs, the cat, and pursued his ideas throughout the reading of the story.

In the next sequence Teresa's response indicated that she was aware of the reader in the story. Teresa stepped "outside" the story in that she expressed the understanding that the text represented a translation of a meow. Paul continued to express the idea that Bangs
was "talking" in the human sense of the word. Tze Khong's point of view was that this "talking" is in the imagination of Samantha.

Pa. But then it's true, he could talk.

Ma. No.

Pa. If you could, was talking to Samantha, or Sam...

Tz. It was his imagination.

Pa. No, it could have been true. You don't know, but she must have said that. Ask him and he told her. And he could real talk.

Te. But like if you put in a story a cat going, meow, meow, you don't know what he really wants to say. So they just put him saying in real human words like that. You can understand what the cat wanted to say.

Al. And it says right there. Heard not talked.

Tz. And probably Sam was imagining.

Ma. And you can see Sam lying, a little bit of Sam's head. I think um lying and it looks like she's imagining some more. And her dad waving his hands.

Gr. And you know it says heard. And she probably imagined that he said Moonshine means flummadiddle and real is the opposite. And she probably thought of it and said no because she didn't think cats knew anything.

Pa. But she didn't know if moonshine was flummadiddle like you said. Because she didn't know why. Why would she ask um...

An. Bangs.

Pa. Bangs what was flummadiddle if she didn't knew what flummadiddle was?
Gr. She knew what flummadiddle was, but she didn’t know what moonshine was.

The quote that Bangs purred, "Moonshine is flummadiddle. Real is the opposite." was read aloud. After this passage of the book was read aloud, the focus of the children’s responses shifted to a different topic. Later, Paul returned to Bang’s system of communication with Sam and restated his interpretation of Bangs. In this sequence Piper restated Teresa’s interpretation and explained the idea in her own words. Paul initiated:

Pa. See. It said ‘said’. He could talk because he said, ‘said’. He said, ‘said’.

An. Nonsense.

Al. He probably said that in cat language.

Pl. Maybe Samantha could understand um Bangs and so he probably said in cat language, but they would need so the people who read the story know what they said. They would have to make it words, actually people words.

For a third time Bang’s form of communication with Sam was broached. This time Tze Khong referred to Paul’s prior responses. Paul’s determination to pursue and support his point of view with information from the book was observable evidence of Paul’s growth over the school year. Paul has a reading disability. His mother stated in the fall that, “Paul hates reading.” Throughout the school year there was a marked change in Paul’s attitude
toward the printed word. Tze Khong initiated:

Tz. Mrs. Yocom, Paul's wrong because it said the father said that cats talking was flummadiddle.

Te. Moonshine.

Ma. Then how would she know what was flummadiddle if Bangs didn't tell her?

Co. She just made it up.

Pa. No.

O. Cats like to be clean but they hate to be wet. Dogs... (reference to an earlier comment)

Pa. She wouldn't know this because Bangs told her. And maybe Bangs could talk because it's a wise cat. And that's why she wouldn't know what happened to Bangs, since he was a wise cat he could talk.

These sequences of response in which the children returned to Bangs "talking" point out the unpredictable nature of the response of the children. At one point the children were discussing the personal traits of a character and in a brief moment, the topic of response shifts to a particular aspect of an illustration or to the sharing of a personal experience. The fluid pattern of children's responses to stories exemplified the ephemeral nature of children's responses during the read aloud events.

Still, the children focused their responses to a particular topic over an extended period of time. In a previously quoted sequence of children's responses,
Christoph, Teresa and Piper all offered different explanations for Bang's system of communication. Christoph suggested that Bangs scratched Thomas to tell him to leave Blue Rock. Teresa addressed the reader's problem in understanding Bangs and explained that the author translated "meow" into people words so that the reader could understand Bangs. Piper made a distinction between the character of Samantha who could understand Bangs and the reader who could not. According to Piper, the author wrote Bang's words in "people" words so that the reader would understand. These explanations were examples of the level in which the children involved themselves in an interpretation of a character.

In the reading of *Arrow to the Sun* (2), children speculated on the relationship of the characters of the Lord of the Sun and the Boy. There was a discussion of the cyclical nature of this Native American tale. Maggie made reference to the text in her response, Colin explained what the Boy was going to do and Oko generalized the character's actions to a theme of the tale.

Ma. His father probably went through the same thing because it said when he came out of the lightning all this color came.

Co. He's going to take like his father's form to earth.
0. It's started all over, from one person to another.

On occasion, children offered advice to a particular character. Thomas gave advice to Sal in the reading of Blueberries for Sal(1). He said:

To. She should just pick a lot. Then she should just eat them.

All. She's only little. She doesn't know any better.

During the same read aloud event, Colin, in a humorous manner, told the class that Sal's mother was speaking to the wrong person. Tze Khong was ready to focus the discussion on the text. He said:

Co. She's not saying it to the right person. She should say, 'Now little bear, run along and eat your own berries.'

Tz. She doesn't know.

Although the absence of a mother figure was briefly mentioned by the children in the reading of Gorilla(2), this absence was discussed once again in the reading of Gorilla(3). The children took issue with Tze Khong's statement that Hanna's mother died and offered alternative explanations. Teresa qualified Tze Khong's statement to a more acceptable form for her and responded, "She might have died." Other children
proposed explanations for this situation. Alex asked:

Al. What about his mother?

Tz. She died.

Te. She might have died. Like in the picture, um when they’re having breakfast. There, it’s only Hanna and the father.

Tz. They might not be married yet.

Al. The father goes to work before Hanna goes to school. She’s going to have to be alone.

Gr. They might have been divorced. And the father could take the child.

During this same read aloud event, Kristian explained how Hanna felt about her birthday gift. He shared:

K. Feels kind of like mad because the father didn’t give her the real one.

Pl. That would be hard to give a real one.

O. And you can’t keep a real gorilla inside. It’s very hard.

The children responded to the character of Louis Bleriot in a rather awed manner. Bleriot’s bravery and perseverance in developing an airplane were mentioned by many of the children. It was reasonable to assume that this story about a Frenchman and his aviation adventures in France had an impact on the children. The following sequence of responses, taken from The Glorious Flight
Across the Channel with Louis Bleriot(3), reflected this thought. Anthony and John responded with perception into the nature of Bleriot and recognized part of Bleriot’s motivation for his aviation adventures. Anthony’s response indicated a discerning level of understanding for this character. Maggie initiated:

Ma. Cause it’s very dangerous to go over the English Channel. You think, oh you just get in a plane and fly over, but there can be storms, waves can come up or...

Pl. Like...

Co. Especially if you’re the first one to fly the English Channel. After a while they found you could fly the Atlantic Ocean. Anyway you could fly all over.

J. But it said he wouldn’t be afraid cause he said, ‘Just what Papa likes.’

T. What Papa likes?

J. The race.

An. And it’s very dangerous and that’s exactly what Papa likes.

Some children expressed an interest in the amount of money Bleriot won for the successful crossing of the English Channel and speculated as to how much money one thousand pounds sterling was at the time of the story. The children generally concurred that the amount was a lot of money, but Anthony placed the amount of the prize money in the perspective of Bleriot’s lifetime. During
the same read aloud event, *The Glorious Flight Across the Channel with Louis Bleriot*\(^{(3)}\), Anthony said:

An. When he built all those planes and they crashed, that was like a lot of money and so he deserved that much.

Children described how characters were feeling and offered reasons the characters acted as they did. During the reading of *Stevie*\(^{(1)}\), the children responded to the character of Robert. Greg asked:

Gr. Stupid, old what?
Co. He doesn’t want to say his name.
Al. But he’s not old yet.
Co. Now he’s missing him.

In the reading of *Everyone Knows What A Dragon Looks Like*\(^{(1)}\), the children talked about some reasons they thought the people did not help the little fat man. In the following sequence of responses the children were "in and out" of the book. Oko responded specifically to the character of the Cloud Dragon in the book, while other children responded to the general nature of dragons. There was confusion about dragons and dinosaurs. Colin conceded that there might be dragons in a distant country such as China, but later reversed his thought and responded, "There weren’t dragons..." Several children
responded:

O. Because they didn’t know that he was the dragon. They didn’t want to believe him. They wouldn’t see him like that.

Gr. Anyway, they couldn’t. They probably didn’t believe him because there was no such thing as a dragon. And they thought that a dragon was a big monster that was a big dragon all the time.

Tz. That is true, you know.

T. Is that true?

Da. Dragons did exist.

Co. In China maybe they did.

O. Of course there was a dragon.

Pl. A long time ago when dinosaurs were alive.

Co. There weren’t dragons, but there were dinosaurs.

At the same time, the children were able to “delve inside” a particular character. During the reading of *Everyone Knows What a Dragon Looks Like* (3), Maggle focused her attention on the people of Wu and Teresa shared with the children the importance of the character of Han in the development of the story. Teresa projected what would have happened to the people of Wu if Han had not been in the city or that he had not been nice.

Maggie and Teresa responded:

Ma. Right there the Mandarin is very happy because he like thinks the boy should deserve that. And he’s proud that he saved the city and was nice to him. And the other ones are mad and um
they think a different way because they think that um they weren’t glad they gave away all the gold because they wanted it for themselves.

Te. It it wasn’t all about, if Han wasn’t there, then they would be dead. If Han wasn’t nice or if he didn’t exist, they would be all dead.

The children were aware of names of characters and voiced their concern when a character did not have a "proper" name. Children referred to the characters in the stories by name and appeared to be uncomfortable with the name of "the Boy" or the general term, pelican. During the reading of *Pelican* (3), Hamoudi said:

H. But it would be nicer if pelican has a name.

Megan also shared her concern for the character with no name in the book, *Arrow to the Sun* (1). She stated:

Me. I wish they would tell the name of the boy.

**Children’s Responses Related to their World**

Although all individual response is personal, some of the responses of the children were personal to the child’s own family or immediate environment or to their own feelings. The responses of the children that
described personal experiences were not found in the same proportion for all the books reread. Some stories, especially *Blueberries for Sal* and *Stevie*, were more successful in "teasing out" this type of response. Children's responses noted as personal knowledge were found in a more balanced proportion in the transcriptions. Personal opinion, generally, appeared in transcriptions of the second and third readings of the books.

Children's responses which conveyed personal experiences were not "triggered" by any one particular aspect of the read aloud book. For some children it was the book itself. During the introduction of the book, *Blueberries for Sal*(1), Teresa shared:

> Te. When I was a really little small girl, I loved that book. And I had it in my room. But right now I can't find it.

For Colin, the action of the story, picking blueberries, initiated his sharing a personal experience. Colin shared:

> Co. When we go strawberry picking, well I pick, I don't pick anything. I just eat, and eat and eat. And I have clothes and they get all stained. And my face. And then the man say, when we go out, should we weigh me. Cause I just ate a lot of strawberries.
There seemed to be a strong bond between the responses of personal experience and prior knowledge. In the following sequence of responses from Blueberries for Sal(3), the children focused on the type of stove illustrated in the end papers of the book. Caitlin shared a personal comment about her cousin, which, in turn, was followed by several other responses. Caitlin shared:

Ca. My cousin has that kind of stove.

Ch. We did also, but we built it down.

Pa. A lot of people have stoves like that. If they live near woods or some place like that.

J. Yea, because you could get lots of wood from the woods.

Co. Ours, the stove in America, is a wood burning stove. It's like that and on the top, we don't use it for cooking. Sometimes we put things there or something, like coffee.

Some responses of children's personal experiences were less associated with the book than were other personal responses of the children. In the reading of the book, Arrow to the Sun(1), which is a Native-American tale, Piper said:

Pl. I used to have a hair cutter that was an American Indian.
In the reading of *Stevie*(3), responses of personal experiences were shared with the class. Anthony’s response was related to the theme of the book. Anthony said:

An. I used to have a friend in my old school. And he used to always beat me up. And then when I left I always thought about him.

During the reading of *Stevie*(2), Julie and Anthony shared with the class their problems with younger brothers and sisters which were similar to the problems of Stevie and Robert. They responded:

Ju. That’s what happened last night. I got nervous the whole time with my sister. This morning I just did it again with her.

An. Well, like sometimes my brother tries to beat me up. And I hit him back and my mom yells at me for doing it.

On the day of a rereading of *Gorilla*, Anthony shared with the children that during his trip to London, he had purchased the book *Gorilla*. In a discussion of the book before the reading of *Gorilla*(2), he said:

An. You know, do we still have those Mr. Min books? Well, my brother bought some of them too. So we have those too. I’m trying to get some of the books that we have in the school so I’ll have time to look at them.

Pa. It’s about the front page. There’s two bottles and one of the bottles, the littlest has a bottle in it. I mean a window. Anthony and I
found a lot when we were looking through it together.

An. But we didn’t have much time during S.S.R.

Paul’s response initially appeared to be unrelated to Anthony’s previous response, but as Paul continued to speak, the connection to Anthony’s response became evident. Children usually linked their responses to the book in more direct ways. The association of children’s responses with the book on occasion could initially be vague or remote, but would generally become clear as the children continued to express themselves. At the end of the read aloud event, Anthony explained the reason he bought the book, Gorilla:

An. Because I actually went to the school library and I learned a lot of it. And I wanted to find out things that I could look at every day. And some people look at it at school and I can’t look here. Here I can have mine at home and I can find more things in the story.

During the reading of Gorilla(3), Julie and Maggie shared their familiarity with Hanna’s relationship to her father. Hanna’s father never seemed to have time for her because he focused his attention and his energy on his job. They shared their personal experiences:

Ju. That’s what my mom always says. (Not now, maybe tomorrow)
Ma. Same as me, and then the next day she says um on Monday she said, 'You can wait to get your new shoes until Wednesday.' Then on Wednesday she said, 'It's too rainy, wait till Friday.' And on Friday Caitlin is coming to spend the night. So we can't do it on Friday.

In the book, Stevie, the occurrence of Stevie moving away is quite a familiar event for most of the children in the class. Children related the experiences of the character, Stevie, to their own personal situation. The idea of moving away was understood by the children in terms of their own experiences with moving. Generally, children in international schools move from one country to another, which is clearly reflected in their responses to the character of Stevie. For example, some of the comments of the children, taken out of sequence from the reading of Stevie(3), were as follows:

Gr. You don't know that they have moved just houses. They might have moved to a different country.

Tz. Right. Going to another country.

Ma. They might be moving across the ocean. So they couldn't come back or else they would need to take a plane.

Children displayed curiosity for vocabulary words which were unfamiliar to them. In the following situation, Piper was concerned about helium and how it is acquired. In the reading of The Glorious Flight Across the English Channel with Louis Blériot(1), Piper asked
this question about helium. One of the children previously suggested that the balloon in the story was filled with helium. Piper asked:

P. Yea, but I was wondering how do you get helium?

T. It comes in tanks.

C. My grandpa has one. Whenever we want to have balloons and we want helium, we can just take it down to his basement. He lives in America and he has all these balloons. And he has a big pump that has helium in.

Children’s responses also conveyed information that was appropriate to the topic but went beyond the context of the read aloud book. Not all the children’s responses of prior knowledge were accurate information. Some responses were tacitly accepted, while other responses of personal knowledge were challenged. In *Arrow to the Sun* (1), children offered background knowledge about the Indian’s houses. Colin shared:

C. This is how they lived. In the mountains, in the side of the mountain.

J. So when they climb up the ladder, the bad guys try and get in. They just throw away the ladders.

C. No, they pull the ladders up after them.

During the read aloud event of *The Story of Jumping Mouse* (3), the spontaneous responses of the children were
related to the story in perhaps more indirect but
certainly more deepening ways. Over many months of read
aloud events, the children responded to the books with
deeper levels of involvement. The children hypothesized
criteria for evaluating the quality of a read aloud book
and then drew conclusions based on information they knew
about the book.

For example, Ali speculated that John Steptoe did
not win the Caldecott Medal because he had not "made up"
the story. Colin also speculated on the reasons Steptoe
did not win. He accredited Steptoe's loss to the lack of
color in the illustrations. Christoph, assisted by
Teresa, refuted Colin's idea with an example of a book
with black and white illustrations which had won the
Caldecott Medal. The following sequences illustrated the
deepening level in which children critically evaluated
and responded to the story based on their prior
knowledge. Ali shared:

Ali. I think I know why John Steptoe won the silver
medal instead of the gold medal. Because the
gold one is probably when you make up the story
and he didn't really make this up.

T. Could be.

Co. I think the Caldecott is for colorful; I think
it's because he didn't put any color into it.

Ch. But I still saw a black and white book that had
the golden one. I saw one but I couldn't
remember the name of it.
Te. It was *Jumanji*. *Jumanji* won the golden Caldecott.

Piper shared with the class her personal knowledge about the English Channel. In the reading of *The Glorious Flight Across the Channel with Louis Blériot*(1), Piper responded:

Pl. Someone in the war, it was some singer and he flew across the English Channel and his plane sunk and he never got to...

T. Glen Miller was his name.

Pl. Yes. And they never found the plane.

The following response by Teresa, which also occurred in *The Glorious Flight Across the Channel with Louis Blériot*(1), was an indication of the country in which this book was being read. Teresa said:

Te. It's a pretty picture and this has to be a real story and it even says. And in those days they wore those same kind of dresses. Well, we know those pretty hats and those thick dresses from France.

In the next sequence, taken from *Everyone Knows What A Dragon Looks Like*(2), Piper responded to the illustration which depicted the Wild Horsemen from the north. Her response triggered several responses from other children. Piper's personal knowledge of wild horses wasn't accepted as correct by all the students.
Children rarely spoke of an author or illustrator's "mistake". When a criticism was expressed, it was usually countered with positive comments from other children. Piper stated:

Pl. It can't be, if the horses are wild their tails sort of stick up a little and their tails aren't sticking up. So they aren't wild horses.

Tz. How do you know?

Ma. Well, the illustrator might not know that or he might have just made a little mistake.

J. Or the illustrator didn't want that way.

Ch. Because he could make wild horses, but if he didn't know that maybe he didn't do it because the picture doesn't have to be like real.

During the reading of The Glorious Flight Across the Channel with Louis Bleriot(3), children commented on just who should have piloted Bleriot's first plane. In the following sequence of responses, the children applied their own logic to the dilemma.

Tz. Yea, but the bird can fit in it cause it's smaller than the cat.

To. Plus you can make it go high.

H. Why did the bird need to sit on it, if the bird knows how to fly?

Te. No, but not how to fly a plane.
Children also offered personal opinions about the stories. Although comments were personal, they were still scrutinized by the other children. For example, in *The Story of Jumping Mouse* (3), children discussed the particular points of view on the transformation of Jumping Mouse from a mouse to an eagle. Within the context of personal response, children still refuted the personal opinion of other children based upon their interpretation of information from the book. Christoph's opinion that it was better that Jumping Mouse became an eagle was not accepted by Anthony who disagreed with Christoph's opinion and supported his interpretation with information from the book. Christoph initiated the following sequence:

Ch. It's better that he is an eagle because instead if he is a mouse he can't see the flowers above. So when he's an eagle he can see down, he can see the Far Off land better, cause if he is down below he only sees earth. He looks up, he sees the under flowers.

Co. And nothing can try and get him because he is too big. They couldn't get him. He could get the snake.

Ch. Right. The opposite.

Gr. I wonder how like the snake...

An. Like see, Christoph says he can see the Far Off better. He didn't need to go anywhere. Remember Magic Frog said it was good that your kindness has brought you to the Far Off land. He didn't need to go anywhere.
Ch. I know, but he can see the land better down below. Knows how it looks like.

Hamoudi shared with the class his opinion that it was good that Jumping Mouse was turned into an eagle, although Hamoudi's opinion was perceived by Colin in an entirely different perspective. In some instances, if a child's response was received differently than intended, the child would elaborate further, but it often proved difficult as the responses of the children moved easily and rapidly from topic to topic. Hamoudi shared:

H. It's good he turned into an eagle because, in, you know, in the forest some time there is so much cats and dogs and they always catch mouses.

O. No, dogs don't catch mouses.

An. Cats do.

Co. Well, he would still know he used to be a mouse, so he wouldn't catch mouses. He would eat other animals, like snakes or something.

Children speculated and hypothesized about what they would do if they were a particular character as well as shared their personal opinions. During the reading of *Everyone Knows What a Dragon Looks Like* (2), Colin shared:

Co. That Mandarin was nicer after the end was done because he gave Han all the food, money and he could buy food with that. He could
have more than one meal per day.

An. I thought he would have turned into a dragon because that a what's that little boy's name again?

Co. Han.

An. Han would, he would have even if it wasn’t a dragon he would help him and that would make a lot of kindness in the dragon's heart, if they have a heart.

Ale. I read that book at S.S.R.

Te. Even if I didn’t believe in the person who said he was a dragon I still would give him some.

Ch. Yea, to see if it was real...

Te. To see if it was real, cause you never know.

During this same read aloud event, Teresa told the class why she thought the fat man came down to the city of Wu. The idea of testing the virtues of a particular character was broached by several children in different read aloud events. Teresa said:

Te. I think that the fat man came down just to, I know that they called him. I think he wanted to, like I think he wanted to see if there was somebody down there that would be a nice person to give him food and be nice to him like that he could change.

Piper offered her opinion about the Great Cloud Dragon in *Everyone Knows What a Dragon Looks Like* (3). During the same read aloud event, other children offered their thoughts on just why the dragon came to the city of
Wu. The children responded:

Pl. Maybe he just when he comes down to earth, he turns into a person, but he’s still the dragon.

O. The called him.

Gr. They prayed. They prayed to the Cloud Dragon and I think I know why he asked them for food and drink cause he said ‘I have traveled a long way and now will you give me some food and something to drink?’

O. He was polite cause he said, ‘Please’. If he wasn’t polite, he would just have said ‘Give me some food.’ When they give him some food, he wouldn’t turn into a dragon.

K. He didn’t want a lot of food. He just asked for a bowl of rice and a cup of wine.

Pl. Not a bowl of rice...

Co. He said, ‘a bowl…

The children speculated on who really did know what a dragon looked like. Colin said that Han knew what a dragon looks like and other children supported Colin’s opinion. Children often offered support from the book to substantiate another child’s opinion. Greg and Anthony responded to Colin’s opinion. They initiated:

Gr. He said he would.

An. He also said, ‘Now I will show you what a dragon looks like.’

Children were aware of the boundaries of personal opinion and were learning to make distinctions between
fact and opinion. They challenged the opinions of children that were worded to be accepted as fact. Colin asserted that a part of the story in Gorilla was a dream. He was challenged by the other children. Anthony offered the idea that the story might be a fantasy. Greg accepted Colin’s idea as only Colin’s idea, not the definitive interpretation of the story. Colin then qualified his opinion and restated his idea with the words, "I think". In the reading of Gorilla(3), Colin stated:

Co. I like that part, my favorite part, is the dream that part that she had when she went out with the gorilla.

An. Well, it wouldn’t be a dream because maybe like, sometimes, stories aren’t true. They can make them up.

Co. But it, I think it is a dream because when she woke up, I don’t think she really threw the gorilla in the corner.

Gr. But you don’t know that it was a dream. You may think, but you don’t know.

The discussion continued with children presenting their opinions of the story and substantiating their opinion with information from the book. The discussion was "lively" and after a heated few moments, Teresa then offered a solution to the disagreement. She said:
I think that if some people think she had a dream and some people she didn’t have a dream, well, we might be able to write a letter to the author.

**Children’s Responses to Illustrations**

The last category of children’s responses to be described in the rereading of books section is response to illustrations. Over the first few months of the read aloud events, the children slowly began to focus their attention on the illustrations and responded specifically to the illustrations. During the next few months, the children “tied” the illustrations with the text and based their responses on the harmony of illustration and text in a picture book. There was insufficient data to infer that a developmental progression of children’s responses from illustration to text/illustration harmony occurred, but it can be stated that these types of children’s responses to illustrations occurred over different periods of time.

During the reading of *Arrow to the Sun* (2), the children made a comparison between Gerald McDermott’s illustrations and the square patterns that a computer can make. While Alexis noted a particular aspect of the illustration, Piper told the children about her drawing
of a sun. Piper's response is one of the few example of children's responses during a read aloud event which was directly linked to their own writing. Alexis first initiated:

Alex. The flames of the sun are about the size of the moon.

Pl. The last time you read this, it was the morning that I was writing my book. So I tried to make my sun like that. And it turned out to look like a regular sun. And it was the one I wrote when everyone wrote their books.

The children attended to the colors the illustrators used, especially when the colors were bold and striking. In the reading of *Stevie* (1), Hamoudi commented on the illustrations of John Steptoe. His personal comment lead to additional comments by the other children. Hamoudi stated:

H. I like all the colors that he puts in his books.

Ch. Yea...

H. And green and every color he puts. Like he puts yellow, after he puts brown over.

Ch. Like on the table.

Ma. He uses, he colors it in paint. It's going to look better when he adds another color.

Te. It's really interesting because, he first does, he puts a color on top of it, then another color. Like right here there was purple, then he put green.
All. It looks like there is a little yellow in it.

Over the school year, the children expressed more and more curiosity about the illustrations in the read aloud books. They asked questions about the illustrators, their style of art, their choices of medium in creating their artwork and made judgements as to the quality of the illustrations in the read aloud books. The children often judged an illustrator's artwork on the accuracy of the illustrator's representation of the words in the text of the story. Hamoudi expressed such a concern in the following sequence of responses. During the reading of Stevie(1), he said:

H. You know the books says like footprints and he puts footprints.

Teresa also noticed the congruence between the text and the illustrations of a book. During the read aloud event, Gorilla(3), Teresa said:

Te. It said that she read books and she drawed pictures of gorillas. And there you can see a picture of a gorilla and she's reading about gorillas.

Ju. It really does match the book.

The children used this text/illustration congruence to evaluate the quality of a book. If a child believed that there was an incongruence, the book was not rated as
highly. For Maggie the lack of text/illustration congruence in Van Allsburg's *The Garden of Abdul Gasaza* was a reason the book did not win the Caldecott award. Maggie expressed her explanation in this manner:

Ma. On that page, I think I know why they didn't give it a Caldecott. Because in *Jumanji*, um, it has, it tells exactly what there is. And in the, it doesn't show a, Alan, reading the sign or a sign. Because in the books we read with Caldecotts, it's exactly.

The children also noticed the format and organization of the read aloud books. During the reading of the book *Stevie*¹, Hamoudi focused his attention on how the text and illustrations have been arranged in the book and commented:

H. I like how, well, you know, he puts the pictures on this side and he puts all the writing on this side. (points in book)

In the reading of *Everyone Knows What A Dragon Looks Like*¹, Piper told the class the reason she liked this book. Mercer Meyer has made fine, detailed illustrations. Since Piper had her head almost "buried" in the book, it was difficult for the children to see the illustrations. This concern was voiced by Thomas. Children were not hesitant to express their dismay when they could not see the illustrations. Piper shared:
Pl. I like it because they make the little people so you can see them.

To. I can't see.

T. If I hold it up, maybe we all can see.

Pl. They make such little people. They make everything so carefully. They make little things like some people don't even know there's little boys in the tree.

To. We can't see.

K. I can.

In the reading of Everyone Knows What a Dragon Looks Like(2), Teresa made a literary link with another book that was read aloud to the class. She noted the similarities in illustrations of the two books and shared:

Te. This book is like The Funny Little Woman because it had the color picture on this side and the picture of the man like running to China. It was exactly the same as it was in The Funny Little Woman.

During the reading of Everyone Knows What a Dragon Looks Like(3), children attended closely to the illustrations. The read aloud book was placed on an opaque projector so that the children could see the illustrations "blown up". Several children focused on the illustrations that depicted the Wild Horsemen of the North descending on the city of Wu. Paul initiated the responses to this illustration and shared:
Pa. You killed tigers for skin.
Gr. You can see that they are rough.
An. Yea...
R. They look ugly.
G. You see how their teeth are.
Pa. Their teeth look like the creature. Look. Where the skeletons are. And you look his teeth like animal.
Te. And the horses are like furious.
R. And you can see they killed tigers so they can get coats.
Co. Those skulls are probably people that he killed.

During the same read aloud event, Everyone Knows What a Dragon Looks Like(3), children discussed just how much information is conveyed in an illustration. In the next sequence of responses, the children disagreed on what can and cannot be inferred from an illustration. Teresa said:

Te. Right there. You can see the dog barking. And the little boy is saying, 'sh, sh, sh.' like that.

Co. That's, no that's Han.
Te. Well, there's a dog in the corner um barking.
Tz. He's black.
Co. It's Han's dog.
Te. No, how do you know?
Co. Because he's right behind him, and Han's telling him to be quiet.

Ch. Yea, but we don't know.

Ma. It might not be.

Te. It might be a friend of Han.

Colin commented on the illustration in *The Glorious Flight Across the Channel with Louis Bleriot*<sup>(1)</sup>. He took the illustrations in which the illustrator depicts the aviation field of Bleriot to accurately reflect all details of the site of Bleriot's testing field. He explained:

Co. It could have filed more. If they had moved the rock, it would just go flying across.

Pl. I'm just glad that we have the airplanes that we have now.

Colin also commented on Bleriot's machine shop. He connected Bleriot's knowledge of mechanics with his ability to design aircrafts. He said:

Co. Mr. Bleriot owns that. That's how he was like a mechanic.

Ch. He is because...

Co. That's why he has the car. He's kind of rich cause they didn't have much, many cars back then.

In the reading of the book, *The Glorious Flight Across the Channel with Louis Bleriot*<sup>(2)</sup>, the children
once again responded to this same illustration. Although the same illustrations were discussed, different information was offered. Piper pointed out:

PI. You see that shop where it says Louis Bleriot?

T. Accessoires autos.
   (reads from illustration)

Ch. Louis Bleriot.

Te. So that where he might have made that.

T. Atelier Bleriot...

Ma. I think it even says that.

Tz. C’est Francaise ca.

During the same read aloud event, Teresa noticed the action in an illustration. Greg also interjected his response along with a bit of humor. The idea of humor seemed to have "crept" into the responses of the children in a hesitant way. She said:

Te. Over there is a horse eating a cabbage. It fell off.

Gr. You can see that wasn’t the only one!

Some children attended to the actual construction of a book. The following sequence of responses noted the keen interest of the children in the book The Glorious Flight Across the Channel with Louis Bleriot(3). Tze Khong called attention to the paper jacket of the book,
which was different than the illustration on the hard cover of the book. Tze Khong said:

Tz. You can just go like this Mrs. Yocom. Just open it wider and wider.

T. Oh, like this.

Te. It’s a newspaper. And where your finger is, there’s a plane.

Ch. That’s even nicer.

Tz. Maybe it tells about Louis Bleriot.

(The teacher reads some of the text on the book cover.)

Al. It’s the fastest flight ever.

To. You shouldn’t pull too hard. Then it could open and then it could rip.

T. That’s right.

Ch. Yea, but on the back is there something? When you open it?

T. That’s plain. (displays)

Al. The pictures go together and there is a picture in the book that goes like that.

J. That’s the one that says 100 prizes across the channel. It looks like that newspaper.

Ma. I’d rather have it not the cover.

T. It does look very nice, doesn’t it.

Ma. Better.

In the reading of *Everyone Knows What a Dragon Looks Like* (2), the children also commented on the style of the
print in the book. Children noticed that the letter "T" was illuminated. Christoph shared:

Ch. Oh, that's funny. That's a 'T'.

T. If you can see here, if you notice, this is the letter 'T'.

Co. China is the biggest, is the second biggest country in the world.

Ma. You told us that in the old days the first letter would be really, really nice.

In the reading of *Sam, Bangs and Moonshine* (3), Alex drew attention to a change in the print of the book, although Greg did not understand Alex's meaning of "spelled". Alex shared:

Al. I like the way, how they spelled 'moonshine', um how they wrote it.

Gr. It's the same way they spell it in any kind of way.

Al. No, how they write it.

During this same read aloud event, *The Glorious Flight Across the Channel with Louis Bleriot* (2), children responded to the perspective of the buildings in an illustration. On some occasions, the children found it easier to demonstrate an answer than to verbalize an answer. Colin used a demonstration technique to answer Paul's question about the buildings in the illustration. Paul shared:
Pa. It looks like it's in Italy. The tower in Italy who bends. It looks like there, cause the church on the where the houses are bending, the monuments are bending.

Ma. You can also see the man raising his hand.

Co. It's like that because the buildings are tall and up here is the airship and the buildings have to be like that.

Pa. Why?

Co. They aren't leaning. Yea, because just like... (demonstrates)

Teresa expressed her thoughts on the technique of the illustrator in the reading of The Glorious Flight Across the Channel with Louis Bleriot(2). She said:

Te. What's good about this author is that he fills in the whole, the whole page cause maybe he didn't want to put more buildings, he put the sky, but he filled in the whole thing.

In the reading of Everyone Knows What a Dragon Looks Like(2), Thomas asked a question concerning the actual mechanics of turning into a dragon. Children were not hesitant when they did not understand some aspect of the story and would ask for clarification. In this sequence of responses Thomas asked:

To. How did he turn into a dragon? (points to illustration)

Te. It shows here. He jumps up like that and he turns.
Co. His face is gone.

Gr. No his face is right there. His face still stayed there, but and his face turns. His big face goes up there, but his face stays right here.

In the reading of *Everyone Knows What a Dragon Looks Like* (3), children scrutinized another page of illustration. The children were confused as to the geographics of the city of Wu and the country of China. Tze Khong directed attention to a particular detail of an illustration:

Tz. You can see that he’s reading from the book.

Te. Chinese book.

T. That’s right, you can tell by the...

Many children answer "writing".

Te. And it even said that it’s from China. The land of China.

An. No.

Te. It says that.

An. Not China. From the city of Wu.

Co. But they’re in China.

The number of responses of the children as well as the "depth" of responses of the children increased over the period of the rereading of the books. This "depth" of response was supported by such noted observations as the increased amount of responses of the children which
referred back to the books, the increased amount of elaboration of children's individual responses and the increase in the amount of children's responses which were linked by a common topic.

Children were particularly attentive to the illustrations in the book, Gorilla and scoured the pages for details that they might have overlooked. In the reading of Gorilla(3), Paul noticed the different shading of color on the railing of the first floor stairway, found on two separate pages of illustrations. Colin offered an insightful explanation of the rationale Browne might have used to paint the railings in this manner. Paul shared:

Pa. The railings not the same color.

An. Oh,...

Te. There, it's kind of blackish, brownish and there it's really, really light brownish.

Co. Maybe the sun's just not shining on it. It's nighttime and she's going to bed and the light is on.

Alexis also focused his response on the precise nature of an illustration. During the reading of Arrow to the Sun(3), he said:

Alex. The artist must be careful because he waited to put a bit more colors because he had, he wanted, to make
a story like to make a power of colors.

Children responded to the unusual illustrations in Wildsmith’s book, *Pelican*. They admired the exactness in which the half pages of illustration perfectly matched the next whole pages of illustrations. Rana and Hamoudi offered explanation on how the illustrator made the illustrations so percise. They explained:

H. Maybe he did a long page and after that he cut it.

R. I think he put two pages and then the cut it and then he put water color on both pages.

Children viewed the read aloud events as a forum for the introduction of new information, not an opportunity to review "old" information. In the following sequence of responses, All focused her attention on an aspect of an illustration previously discussed during the reading of *Gorilla* (1). Her response was not met with approval. Greg explained:

Gr. We said that, All.

All. I can say it again.

Gr. You shouldn’t.

During the reading of *The Garden of Abdul Gasaza* (3), Piper chided Christoph for repeating information already
shared during a previous reading of the book. Christoph responded:

Ch. There’s a rabbit over there at the, turn the page, there’s a rabbit there.

Pl. Everyone knows that.

**Other Read Aloud Events**

A description of the children’s responses to other read aloud books, not previously described as books reread, is presented in this section. The transcripts were made from books read aloud one time. These read aloud events were interspersed throughout the school year with the books that were reread. For analysis and interpretation of these transcripts, a description of the children’s responses was organized with regard to author and theme. The first section presents a description of the children’s responses to read aloud books which introduced the children to a number of an author’s works. These authors were: Russell Hoban, Bernard Waber, and Ezra Jack Keats.

The second section presents a description of the responses of the children to the genre of fairy tale and folk tale books. These tales were read aloud in the winter months and were a major focus of a unit on tales
from around the world. The third section of children's responses encompasses all the other books not previously mentioned and is entitled "Potpourri". A discussion of poetry is the final section of children's responses. Often poems were read aloud in conjunction with the read aloud book. Occasionally, the read aloud event was entirely devoted to poetry.

Russell Hoban

All the books detailing the adventures of a badger named Frances were read aloud in late September and early October of the school year, although Harvey's Hideout was read aloud in January. Piper brought the paperback of Harvey's Hideout from her own personal collection to school to read aloud to the class. Although many of the children were familiar with the character of Frances from previous read aloud experiences with the Frances books, no child was familiar with all the books. Several of the children were not familiar with the character of Frances.

An analysis by sequence of the transcriptions of the Frances books showed that the responses of the children were usually isolated incidents. The children responded to these read aloud books in an individual manner with little response that was directly related to another child's previous response. Responses generally
concerned the characters, especially Frances. Children made comparisons between characters and noted the difference in ages of Gloria and Frances in the stories. Some children attempted to place the books in order by the ages of Frances and Gloria. During the reading of the second book in the Frances series, Colin responded:

Co. Frances looks like Gloria.
T. That's right.
To. They have different toes.
T. How do you think she looks like Gloria, Colin?
Co. Because she is smaller.
T. That's right.
J. Maybe that's when she was younger.

Some children were curious about the value of money in the book, A Bargain for Frances. Many of the children were not familiar with the currency of the United States. Paul was interested in the value of a penny in a Frances book and asked:

Pa. How much money is inside the sugar pot?
T. Megan.
Me. A penny.
Te. You didn't listen.
Pa. How much is that in American money?
Pl. It is one cent.

Pa. Is that a lot of money in American?

Pl. You can buy almost nothing with it.

A majority of the responses of the children were personal in nature. Children related incidents, such as the following story by Megan:

Me. When I was little I used to um look at spinach and say 'Ooooh, I'm not trying that.' And my mom said to me that I had to try it once. So um I tried it and I liked it, least a little bit.

Some children responded with explanations of a character or explanations of vocabulary words which were unfamiliar to other children. Thomas predicted what might happen to Frances. He says:

To. That one, um, Frances stayed awake all night. Maybe like an owl now. He's going to sleep all day and awake all night.

Collin offered an explanation for the word "bargain", a word unfamiliar to Tze Khong, who asked for the meaning of the word. Collin explained:

Co. And sometimes when we go to the market we might think something we want to buy a lot of money and sometimes you could maybe ask the man and he might lower the price a little. Sometimes you can bargain like that, too.
Greg speculated on Frances' habit of eating only bread and jam. He said:

Gr. If she keeps on eating the same food all the time every day and then about a year, or two or then the next year she will probably throw up if she didn't like it anymore.

Although there was evidence that the children were responding to the Frances books in a more critical manner over a period of time, it was clearly evident that these transcripts were the initial attempts of the children at voicing their response in a group situation. The first reading of a Frances book generated four pages of transcription; while later transcripts increased to eight pages.

**Bernard Waber**

All the books about Lyle, the crocodile, were read aloud to the children. From an analysis of the transcripts of the Lyle books, there emerged the beginning of response in which the children were critically listening to the text as well as attending to the illustrations. For example, John offered another solution to the notes of hate that Lyle was receiving from an enemy. He said:
J. When they get the note, she could have just read it, not to him, just throw it away before they know.

T. That's right.

J. He won't be sad.

Explanations of unfamiliar vocabulary words showed the emergence of elaboration of children's response sequences. In the following sequence, Maggie explained the word "arrested":

Ma. That means that the cops would take him to jail.

Co. Or no, they would take him to court to see if he was guilty.

Te. What would he be guilty about?

Tze Khong specifically attended to an illustration and shares his amazement at the contents of a closet. He said:

Tz. Look at all those things falling out of the closet and look how much things are still in there!

Children responded to the character of Lyle, especially when Lyle visited the school of the Primm children. They offered explanations for Lyle's lack of expertise in school. Yfke responded:
Y. Funny to write. It's nothing.

Pl. It's nice.

Te. It's modern painting!

Y. But it is nice.

Me. He is always so busy playing with children, he never colors so that is why he doesn't color very well.

Although there were sequences of responses that were directed from child to child, there were also situations in which the initial topic of the response sequence was interrupted with a response from a child that was on another topic. Hamoudi's response was an example of this situation. The children were responding to the character of Hector P. Valenti. (Valenti was the original owner of Lyle) John shared:

J. I like that.

Co. He didn't want. He thought that it would be just a short visit.

Me. He thought he could come here and say good-by and then he goes.

Co. He wanted to go on stage and...

H. Is this his mother?

Co. And go to fancy restaurants and hotels and stuff.

H. Is this his mother?

T. Yes.
The children discussed why Hector P. Valenti said that a particular crocodile was Lyle’s mother and gave possible reasons for Valenti’s actions. Megan suggested:

Me. Because Lyle could do all those tricks.
Gr. And his mother probably taught him those.
Te. I thought her mother had a dress and brown hair...
Gr. That’s what he thought.

There was an increase in the number of child initiated questions as well as humor during these read aloud events. Greg said:

Gr. They know it’s a crocodile?
T. Well, I don’t know if they do or not.
Ch. No, they don’t. I don’t think.
Co. They said ‘crocodilitis’ though.
Gr. Oh, it makes you look like a crocodile!

Children responded to The House on East 88th Street with personal knowledge and experience about the problems and frustrations of moving a household. Most of the children have experienced moving a household on more than one occasion. Christoph shared:

Ch. But when we came here, we had the same problem. We didn’t know where to put everything and all that.
T. So you know exactly how they are feeling.

Ch. But now we are, now we are getting in the place...

J. It’s the same with me. My mom’s moving furniture and stuff all around.

MANY CHILDREN SPEAK, NOT AUDIBLE

Gr. My mom painted all those cabinets we got.

J. And my mom just moves the beds out the door and into another room.

During the period of time in which the Lyle books were read aloud, the children showed interest in establishing the chronological order of the stories. They tried to place the Lyle books in story order. Maggie suggested:

Ma. I know why this one is the first, because I know why Loretta likes Lyle now. Because he saved her life and that’s why it, Loretta, likes Lyle in the next story.

Children intermittently broached the topic of the proper sequence of the Lyle books. During the same read aloud event in which Maggie responded about Loretta and Lyle’s friendship, Christoph also explained:

Ch. I think it is The House of East 39th Street because it’s the first time they find Lyle.

Pl. And that’s the first time they move into that house too.
Children found commonalities among the Lyle stories. Hamoudi and Teresa offered a comparison of all the Lyle books. They said:

H. And all the books of Lyle, first thing they all don’t like Lyle. And then at the end they all love him. Like, you know, when they give him paper. And after, he got the, when the girl sent he got the the girl, everyone. Every book is like this.

Te. In all the books like ones people don’t like them. At the end he saves their lives.

After the reading of the Lyle books, the children worked together to create an 8 foot cut-out of Lyle. This figure of Lyle was placed on the far wall of the reading corner.

Ezra Jack Keats

Many of the children were familiar with the books by Ezra Jack Keats. The student teacher read The Snowy Day to the children. Piper was so familiar with this Keats’ book she noticed that there was a difference in the story the student teacher read and the story she knew. Piper explained:

P1. In here, that book, and in the other book um he passes some boys that are older than him and they stop and throw a snowball at him.

St. I think you’re right. Did I miss some pages?
All. Yea, you did.

St. Let's go back and see. I think you're right.

All. Oh, you did.

Y. She is right.

On occasion, children shared their feelings about an author or about a story. All shared her thoughts about Ezra Jack Keats:

All. I think the artist, the person who write the book should write more.

T. Why do you think that, All?

All. Because they are like friends. Like some stories or movies. They just stop. And then I say 'Oh, I wish would continue.'

During the read aloud events, differences in how the children perceived an event emerged. The responses of some children reflected a pragmatic bias; while other children were more charitable. For example, the children responded in this manner to Peter relinquishing his chair to his younger sister. Megan stated:

Me. He changed his mind and said, 'Dad, can I, can we paint that little chair pink?'

Pi. Yea, but he had no use for it because he was too big for it.

During another read aloud event, Maggie and the Pirate, Piper responded to the character of Maggie and
Maggie's relationship with her pet cricket. She stated:

Pl. I know why she liked it so much. Because when you have an animal or pet and you get so attached to and then when something happens to them, you're really, really sad.

Children initiated questions which were answered by other children. In answering Teresa's question, Colin referred to the text in which the boy said he only wanted the cage. The following sequence was a question and answer pattern:

Te. I didn't understand. Was it, did he um it the end with was it really the cricket was he the Niki or Niki really dead or it was another cricket?

Co. No, Niki was dead, but he found another cricket, the other boy. The boy I don't know what he'd do with a cage cause a cage isn't much fun. You can only use the cage well to put things, but he it seemed it that Maggie was kind of poor because living in a bus and stuff.

Children responded enthusiastically to the illustrations of Ezra Jack Keats and were aware of a "match up" between the text of the story and the illustrations. Maggie noted the reason she particularly liked the book, *Maggie and the Pirate* and shared:

Ma. I like the book because the words that said that they have on for the writing matches the pictures.
Children responded to the illustrations and proposed explanations by noting details within the illustrations. In this sequence John offered an explanation for the author's use of pink plastic. Piper initially responded:

Piper. You can see that one part of the picture he cut out from a magazine. And there's lots of pictures.

Child. Where?

Piper. Up there by, right behind the airplane.

John. I know why he put a piece of pink plastic. When it goes up to the light it makes like everything pink.

Children were generally more concerned with the illustrations than the stories in the Ezra Jack Keats books. Although the children responded with positive opinions about his illustrations, there was confusion as to how the collages became the flat pages of a published book. The following children voiced their concern:

Me. How come it doesn't look like it is stuck on because usually when something is stuck on, it sticks up like little pipes. It's not so flat like this.

Piper. He takes it to a place and um they copy the book because you know not every book is made by him like that.

Child. But I can't understand if you paste something, you go over with your hand and you feel at the end of where you pasted. You see a little bump where it goes up and then, but I can't understand why it's so flat.
St. By saying copy, does that help you understand better?

Ch. They copy it and then it's on the picture, so it's flat.

Although the children appeared to understand the word, "copy", Maila returned to this topic and highlighted the fact that some children did not understand the meaning of the word "copy", as used by the student teacher in her explanation of the flatness of the book. Maila shared:

Mal. I don't understand why on the first page, when they copy it sometimes it comes all black. And this one came colorful.

T. What do you mean 'all black', Maila?

Mal. When we take copies sometimes it comes so black, but it's not colorful.

Maila understood the word "copy" to mean a photocopy. The differences between Ezra Jack Keats' original artwork and the pages in his picture books were not further pursued by the children, but there was a perplexed expression on many of the faces of the children.
**Folk and Fairy Tales**

While the majority of folk and fairy tales were read aloud in the winter months, there were still other tales that were read throughout the school year. The children appeared to be particularly receptive and enthusiastic to folk tales read aloud. This general interest in folk tales is in agreement with Favat's position on the optimum age children respond to folk and fairy tales.

In December the children were read aloud the story of Snow White. When the book, *Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs* by Randall Jarrell and illustrated by Nancy Eckholm Burkert, was displayed, the children responded:

Me. Oh, I love this story.

Co. I have it.

Co. Did Walt Disney write it?

Throughout the reading aloud of this book, the children continued to compare Jarrell's version of the story of Snow White with either the version published in a book by Walt Disney or the movie produced by Walt Disney. Interestingly enough, the children did not respond with reference to Walt Disney in any other read aloud event. The vividness with which the children responded to Walt Disney's version of the story of Snow White suggested that both the book and movie by Walt
Disney Productions asserted a strong influence on children.

Although humor was clearly evident throughout the transcriptions, it was somewhat more noticeable in the transcriptions from folk tales and fairy tales. In the following sequence of responses, the children were responding to the story of *The Straw Maid*. Teresa stated:

Te. They want to kill her.

Ch. They can eat the carrot for dinner! (part of the straw maid)

Ca. They still don’t even know that it’s straw.

Gr. I thought they would know it was straw, if they saw straw popping out of her. You would think they would know that.

Different versions of the same tale were presented during several read aloud events. In the next sequence of responses, the children made comparisons between the English and the German versions of the story of Rumpelstiltskin. Paul said:

Pa. In Rumpelstiltskin, you know he sung a song all by himself and not with witches and in Duffy and the Dragon, the Devil, he sung a song with, with witches.

Gr. That’s because he wasn’t drunk! 
During a read aloud event in which the story Hansel and Gretel was introduced, the children commented on the fate of the witch. Maggie and Greg responded:

Ma. She's burned.
Gr. She's roasted!

The children particularly attended to the illustrations in the fairy and folk tale books. For example, the illustrations in *Rumpelstiltskin* by Donna Diamond were effective in involving the children in many aspects of the illustrator's artwork. The children were somewhat perplexed as to the nature of the illustrations. Teresa shared:

Te. Um, this book is not like other books because other books, they don't have like real people's faces. They paint just a round face, and two eyes round.

To. You know the part when she was sitting on the hay? That looks like the book that won the Caldecott because the hay looks like it is so hard to do.

Ch. Yea, but maybe they must took a picture of the hay. Because the girl looks real and the little man looks real...

Te. I know but there's people who really, really draw well.

Children continued to respond to the illustrations in this book. In the next sequence of responses, the children focused on the artist's skill and medium in
creating the illustrations. Yet, within the discussion of the illustrations the children deftly quoted the text of the story to substantiate their interpretation of the illustrations. Embedded in the following sequence of responses were literary points of book discussion, such as: the techniques the artist used in creating the illustrations, what the artist has chosen to represent, the paraphrasing of text, explanations for the illustration and the reference to the logical sequence of events in the story. Children were also egalitarian in their acceptance of personal opinion. Although the teacher offered her opinion, it was accorded the same weight, and no more, than any other response received. Maggie initially responded:

Ma. It looks like it had different color pencils because they have light on part of it and different color browns and black.

T. Especially here. They must have white.

Co. Maybe they left it white.

Ma. I think that's just the white paper.

Pa. It doesn't look like it. See, the girl's dress, there's a line going down like that.

Me. Yea, but then they take the black and they could do that.

Pa. No, cause look on the sleeve. It's got those things going down it. And white sleeves but the dress...

Co. But the sun is white.
Gr. That’s the moon.

Ch. Yea, that’s the moon.

J. Because he says you had better do it over, in the morning, you die. That’s why it should be the moon.

Ma. It should be the moon because he said you need to spin it overnight and that was part of night because she wasn’t spinning it.

Co. It could be the morning. Maybe it is just morning and she um because those could be the gold threads.

Ma. They have a picture of the gold threads though.

During the read aloud event in which the book, *Little Red Riding Hood* by Trina Schart Hyman was introduced, the children focused on the illustrations. Teresa noticed that the book Little Red Riding Hood was reading was *Little Red Riding Hood*. Teresa said:

Te. See, Little Red Riding Hood is reading a book. When I got that book she was, in that picture of Little Red Riding Hood, she’s reading that book, exactly this book.

After hearing two different versions of the story of Hansel and Gretel, the children noted similarities and differences of the story. When discussing different versions, the children seemed to accept one version as the authority or the "real" version and the other version as a copy instead of two versions which have equal
weight. Colin responded:

Co. It's supposed to be 'Nibble like a mouse.'

Ma. It doesn't go "Nibble, Nabble Nobble."

Co. It's supposed to go:  
    Nibble, Nibble like a Mouse.  
    Who is nibbling at my house?

Te. She's made that house like that for  
    children to come there and then they eat  
    so much so then they get fat. Then she  
    eats them.

To. Maybe the witch could have not take the  
    magic because she was very hot.

Te. She doesn't have magic. It says in the  
    other book that she is a witch, but like  
    you can see sometimes witches are like  
    mean people.

C. But they don't have, some witches don't  
    have magic.

In two separate read aloud events, Megan and Teresa  
offered explanations on the nature of the similarities in  
different versions of folk and fairy tales. They  
explained:

Me. You know, I think maybe one of those  
    people wrote the story. And then read  
    it to some other people and then those  
    other people liked it, so wrote something  
    like it.

Te. I think um those two authors are friends  
    because they say almost the same thing at  
    the same time and they might have copied  
    each other.
Although particular aspects of folk and fairy tales were discussed among the children, it appeared that these children gained more from "discovering" commonalities of folk and fairy tales. By focusing the read aloud events on the theme of folk and fairy tales from around the world and continuing this theme over a period of several months, a setting was established in which fairy and folk tale motifs were "mulled over" by the children. A period of time, in this situation, several months, gave the children the opportunity to become comfortable with the topic of a folk and fairy tale and to clarify for themselves how a folk or fairy tale comes to be a written book.

In still another read aloud event, Colin explained a folk tale.

Co. It means like the Brothers Grimm went around the world and got some of them and she told it in a different way. But the Brothers Grimm didn't even make them up because they must got them from other people.

T. That's right. The other people were telling them.

Pa. How do they know this folk tale?

Pl. Because of the people that were telling them.

Pa. But how do they know?

Co. You see they make them up.
Children also responded to characters in the tales in a more analytical way. They hypothesized the projection of characters into situations which were “outside” of the story. Megan predicted what troubles the princess in the story of Rumpelstiltskin would have when Rumpelstiltskin was no longer available to turn straw into gold. She responded:

Me. Yea, but really the king thinks the girl is doing it. But really the little man is doing it. So she doesn’t know what to do now. When the king says, ‘Spin this gold to hay’, she’s not going to know what to do because the little man is probably not going to be there.

The distinction of text and illustration blurred when children discussed illustrations. In the next sequence of responses, the children “tied” the illustration to the story. Teresa shared:

Te. It shows really well how they’re poor cause their hair is dirty, like the boy right there is all dirty...

Pl. And there is a rip in the dress...

Te. And they don’t have shoes on.

During the read aloud event of the story, The Man Who Loved Books, children responded with personal opinion and shared their own personal views on the behavior of Colombo who copied a book without permission of the owner.
of that book. They shared:

An. I think Colombo was wrong to do that because he was told not to and if he does that he could get into a lot of trouble.

Co. I think that it was good because um the book because he wrote it down. So Colombo should get it.

J. I think he was selfish because they think there should be only one book in the whole world and don't let anybody else read it.

Maggie brought her paperback book, *The Frog Prince*, from home to share with the class. During the read aloud event in which *The Frog Prince* was read aloud, Colin shared the opinion that if he was the frog prince, he wouldn't have married the princess because she was so mean. Several children responded to the marriage of the frog and the princess. In this following sequence of responses, there was an underlying and tacitly accepted knowledge that in a literary discussion the responses must stay within certain limits. When the children voiced their explanations, they supported their opinion with book information. This type of response suggested that the children understood that response, although personal, is still "tied" to the book. Christoph responded:

Ch. Maybe it was right to marry her because instead he would stay forever a frog.
Nobody could help him.

Gr. Yea, but she already helped him. So he could have run off somewhere else.

Ch. Yea, but it's good that he, that it's good that she had the golden ball because nobody else would have golden ball. Then if the ball would fall she would just let it go.

Pl. Also this is only a fairy tale and usually fairy tales end happily. You know, they usually get married at the end of a fairy tale.

Co. But it would still end happily if the prince went off and married somebody else.

Pa. And turned back into a frog!

Pl. But he didn't know anyone else. He didn't know any other girl except for the sisters, I think, and you didn't see them, so really there was no other choice.

Al. Like if she know he was a prince, I bet she would throw him against wall cause that if she knew that the frog would turn to a prince um I bet she would throw him against the wall to take away the spell.

Children acknowledged particular characteristics of folk and fairy tales. In the following sequence of responses, the children indicated that they understood that the genre of folk and fairy tales have particular motifs which are unique and differentiate the folk tale from other genres in literature. Thomas responded:

To. The fox cannot be real talking.

Co. Maybe it's pretending he is going...
   (makes growling noises)
Gr. It's a fairy tale.

Pl. He really only talks is when you hear him thinking, not talking.

Co. Yea, I know, but it's fairy tale, too.
Lots of animals talk in fairy tales.

Te. Every time there is a step-mother
it always, is like, a really mean person.

Ma. Mean.

Al. Always they say 'happily ever after.'

Pl. Not always, but in lots of folk tales
they do.

Ma. Or fairy tales.

Children also used the words "folk tale and fairy tale" as a vehicle to distance themselves from their responses. Children used the words "folk and fairy tale" to extricate themselves if they were challenged by another child to explain a response. Children appeared to use "only a folk tale" when they were somewhat unsure of how to respond to a question raised about their interpretation of a story. The following sequence of responses focused on the character of the funny little woman from the book, The Funny Little Woman. Christoph explained:

Ch. Because she's very poor and she doesn't have much rice so she has to save it so she like if all of them fall and she doesn't get them then because if she doesn't have any more rice how could she do it?
Te. I know if it is already dirty you can’t eat it.

Ch. Yea, but this is only a folk tale, so...

Co. And she never even got the dumpling!

J. I think it was smart cause if she didn’t go down, she couldn’t be rich and get that magic paddle.

During the read aloud events, the intention was that the story "unfolds", which is to say that the story was read aloud with little or no comments which deliberately influenced a child’s way of interpreting a story. This unwritten rule was generally accepted, but on occasion, a child asked for clarification of a point in the story. In some situations it was difficult to judge when and when not to give information to clarify a point of confusion. With the continued reading of the story, the child’s uncertainty might be resolved. The following sequence of response highlighted this dilemma:

Pl. Is the fool of the world, well, is he um, is he, um...

Gr. No, she won’t tell you.

Pl. Is she um, well, is she is that her son?

T. Her third son.

Pl. But usually the mother’s very nice to her son.

O. Maybe she likes the other brothers better.
During some of the read aloud events, the nature of a magic spell was discussed. Different opinions on just what constituted a magic spell were voiced by the children. The following sequence of responses from the book, *The Fool of the World and the Flying Ship*, focused on the definition of a magic spell:

Co. Oh, yea. He always helped because he always listened...

Gr. Colin, I was talking. You know, you said you shouldn’t tell them because you won’t break a spell, but it did that time.

T. Yes, he was warned...

Gr. But it wasn’t a spell.

Explanations were often given for the actions of the characters or for a general understanding of the tale. During the read aloud event in which the book, *Stone Soup* was read aloud, there was a general uneasiness among the children. Some children appeared to understand the significance of the stone, while other children wore a perplexed facial expression. Teresa explained how the soldiers tricked the townspeople who had also tried to trick the soldiers and Colin attempted to explain the idea of the stone: Teresa responded:

Te. Um, I think the people traded, um tricks to them. And they thought to do a trick to them too.
Co. But the stone, the stone first after they said a little of this and a little of that all the things they said, a little of this and a little of that came to be a lot. So it was wasn't if it was just a little, it would be just a little carrot or something.

The day that the book, *The Month Brothers*, was read aloud the weather was cold with the wind howling at the windows. While this story was being read aloud, a particularly strong gust of wind hit against the windows and made a loud sound. Anthony connected the weather and the howling wind with the book in this way:

To. She sees the fire.
D. She sees the exact same thing.
D. That's the wind.
   (wind howls at classroom door)
Te. Just like the story.
An. That's why you picked out it.

Throughout the read aloud events, the children strove to "make sense" of the story. In voicing their spontaneous responses to the story, other children had the opportunity to hear different interpretations and were consequently exposed to differing levels of interpretation of the books. The following sequence of responses, taken from the reading aloud of the *The Month Brothers*, was one example of this situation.
Ch. Whoever has the stick is the one who is the...

Te. It's like a magic wand.

Al. No.

Ch. Maybe the person whoever has the magic stick, like that is the month that will come.

Co. No, it's January.

Ch. Yea, but if he gives it to brother March it will be March.

During the reading aloud of the folk tale, Salt, the children were concerned about the marriage of the princess. The following sequence of children's responses was not an unusual pattern in terms of the length nor the adherence of the responses of the children to the topic of discussion. It also exemplifies a model of responses which conform to generally accepted boundaries of a "book" discussion. This sequence of responses as well as others sequences quoted in this study, point to children's development over time. When a comparison is made between the isolated, individual responses voiced by the children in the early months of the study and the following sequence of responses made in March, the growth of the children's literary understanding is clearly evident. Interspersed in this discussion are the children's prior knowledge and/or experiences with a marriage ceremony. John explained:
J. I think the father took the gold away and um he used that money for Ivan and the princess to get married.

Co. Well, it doesn't cost that much to get married.

Te. Yes, it does.

Pl. Yes, it does. It cost a lot for the food and the wedding gown and all that other stuff.

Co. I know, but they already had that cause she was going to get married to the other brother.

Ch. He got the rest of the money because he told everything to his father. So his father took the money and spent it on the dresses and...

Co. And they...

Ch. And gave the rest of the money to Ivan.

Te. But that can't be because when he arrived um the oldest brother already brought his papers cause he was going to marry with the princess. She already had her gown. They already reserved the food and everything. So he must have not wasted anything. And his brothers gave him back the gold and the silver.

Co. He probably is the first wife.

**Potpourri**

A description of the responses of the children to all remaining read aloud books is presented in this section. The categories of response which have been discussed so far in this study were also evident in the transcriptions from these books. This last section of
picture books highlights children's response patterns which were not introduced in the other sections, yet, were present in the other transcriptions. Throughout the school year, there was an increase in the amount of time for the introduction of the read aloud book; the children responded more and more to the read aloud books. For example, before the book, Annie and the Old One was read aloud, the children initiated this discussion. Teresa stated:

Te.  It looks like an Indian story.

Alex. I saw it on the sill, but like real, sort of.

T.  It's an excellent book, but in a way it is...

Ma.  Sad.

Gr.  Cause I read it to Miss Yocom

Te.  You can tell by the eyes.

Gr.  We only read part of it, but we could tell that it was going to be a sad story by the way, by the words.

J.  By the title.

T.  Why do you say the title, John?

J.  Cause it says Annie and the Old One, old people die.

The children responded a great deal to this book and critically "made sense" of the story. Alexis explained the metaphor that the author used to explain the
inevitability of death. Alexis expressed himself in this manner:

Ax. The sun comes up so you can’t really stop time. And like you can’t really stop the sun. It’s a bit hot.

The children experienced some confusion concerning the death of the grandmother. This confusion was voiced by Greg. Explanations of how the author chose to write the story were expressed by the children in the next sequence of responses. Greg asked:

Gr. So her grandmother didn’t die?

An. Yes.

Pl. She did, but it doesn’t say in the story because they don’t want it to be sad.

Ma. They didn’t want to make you cry right in the middle of the story.

Some children were familiar with books that were reads aloud, although the children appeared to have a tacit agreement among themselves about sharing information about the plot with other children and, thus, "spoil" the story. On occasion, this tacit agreement was forgotten. During the reading of the book, Miss Nelson is Missing, the following sequence of responses noted such a situation: Colin responded:

Co. Cause there’s no teacher.
Gr. But soon they'll be.

Pl. Mrs. Viola Swamp.

Gr. Don't tell Piper. People get furious.

Although most of the books by Chris Van Allsberg were read aloud to the children, they were not organized by author. *The Garden of Abdul Gasaza* was a reread book and the student teacher read *Jumanji* as a reread book. Van Allsberg's ambiguous story line stimulated the imagination of the children in that the children offered possible explanations to events which occurred in the stories. His stories were also baffling to some children. In the next sequence of responses, Christoph asked who is the "boy" in the book, *The Wreck of the Zephyr*:

Ch. But which one is the boy?

Tz. And he...

Ch. The one who heard the story?

J. No.

T. Megan, can you answer the question of Christoph?

Me. The one who told the story, the boy. And he wouldn't be able to tell the story if he wasn't the boy.

Co. He's old now, because it was a long time ago.

Me. And nobody else was on the boat.
An. And he always um did some sailing when the wind was coming.

During the same read aloud event, children offered explanations and supported their interpretations of the book with information from the book. Anthony explained that the old man needed proof to convince the people and Colin explained:

Co. No, he is the boy, because he limped and the boy had a broken leg and he grew and the boy grew old. Now he is an old man.

An. He wanted the sails cause people didn’t believe him too. So they would really believe him.

As stated earlier in this study, humor was interspersed throughout the transcripts. The following sequence was taken from The Werewolf Family, which Teresa requested to be read aloud to the class. She described the book in this way: "I think this is a good book, but I don’t understand it." In the following sequence of responses, the children focused on one illustration. Tze Khong said:

Tz. Look at the skeleton.
D. Yea, a skeleton is dead.
Gr. It has been there so long.
Me. It’s been there so long, it died!
Tz. Somebody died!
In *Make Way for Ducklings*, the children were discussing why the ducks call on the policeman every day. Magie explained:

Ma. So they would get more peanuts.
Al. He looks like he ate most of the peanuts!
Co. He’s fat.

Authors were increasingly being discussed during the read aloud events. In explaining the motivation of Kellogg in writing his book, *Pinkerton Behave*, Teresa responded:

Te. Pinkerton really, really, existed so that’s the author and so he loves his dog so much that he wrote about him.

Before the reading of *Horton Hatches and Egg*, the following sequence of responses occurred. Later during this same read aloud event, Julie returned to the names of authors. Teresa said:

Te. Is he really a doctor?
Gr. No.
Pa. It’s a name who wrote all the stories, Mrs. Fitt told me his real name, but I forgot it.
Gr. Just like Police Academy, like High Tower and his real name is Bubba Smith.
Te. That’s like William Wharton.
Al. That's his pen name. That name Dr. Seuss, that's his pen name.

Ju. Some of the authors, they don't like the name, and then they make up another one. And that's how Mr. duAime got his name. That's the same way with Dr. Seuss.

During the reading of the book, Mike Mulligan, Colin shared a story about his brother.

Co. I read a book. My brother, he's in kindergarten. He got a book out of the library in America and he had this book. I think it was by the same guy. He got a book out. He liked Mike Mulligan and the Steamshovel, that book, and he kept getting it out of the library. And he wasn't nice to anybody else cause he kept, he didn't want anybody else to take it out, he just wanted it all the time.

Although children responded to literature at a point in time, there were occasions when a child's response was centered in another book experience. For example, Piper responded by relating an incident which happened two years ago. Piper explained her confusion about certain facts in a story. Colin compared her confusion with the general confusion the class experienced during the reading of the book, The Glorious Flight Across the Channel with Louis Bleriot(2) when the aviation adventures of Louis Bleriot and the Wright brothers were compared. During the reading of the book, Anno's Medieval World, Piper responded:
Pl. I got out a book at the library. I don’t really think that this is true, but it said the Vikings had discovered that the world was round before Columbus. When I was in kindergarten, Mrs. Burt told that it was Columbus. Now I’m all confused because I don’t know who it is.

Co. Like the Wright brothers.

Children were developing an understanding of story as well as understanding the vehicles authors use to convey a particular message. Teresa broached this understanding. For example, the following is a sequence of responses, taken from the transcripts of The Ox-Cart Man. Colin stated:

Co. Cause like all that. Like when spring comes again, they’ll have stitched a lot and by fall, the next year, they’ll have lots of stuff to sell again.

Te. Now it’s winter.

Co. See that’s what they’re making to sell.

Te. I know it was winter because outside it’s snowing. Well, it doesn’t have to snow in winter, but it can snow in fall. But usually, they put in books it snows in winter.

The idea of critically evaluating a story developed among the children. For example, Teresa questioned a segment of a story, taken from the book Arthur’s Toothache. She asked:

Te. But how can a turtle have chewing gum if he doesn’t have any teeth, they how
can he chew it?

Al. If it's a snapping turtle, he can chew in his...

An. It's a made up story.

During a read aloud event, *Strega Nona and the Magic Pasta Pot*, the end papers of the book were displayed. Collin shared with the class a story which sounds amazingly like a confession. The children's responses focused on the end papers and Collin shared:

T. Lovely end papers.

Ch. I know.

T. It's not taped on, so I can pull it out so you can see everything.

Tz. That's much better.

Co. I had a book. It's a pirate book. And at our library in America and they were selling lots of books they had in the car park. And they had the papers and they're having a fight. And I wanted to see that so I, it was my book, cause my mom had bought it, and I took it off the shelf and I just kind of unglued it and kind of ripped it off.

Poetry

Poetry was read aloud in conjunction with other read aloud books, but occasionally the read aloud event was solely the reading of poetry. Later in the school year, the children took turns in reading aloud a poem to the
class just before the lunch period each day. Response to 
poetry during the read aloud event was overwhelmingly 
positive. During the reading of the poem, "Jimmy Jet and 
his T.V. Set", Megan responded:

Me. Should I bring my...I've got a book at 
home and it's got the same poems in it, 
but I think I got that poem in there.

During the reading of another poem, "Tube Time", 
which is about children who watch television, Greg shared 
with the class:

Gr. ...Mrs. Yocom, I kept reading it to 
my daddy over and over and now I know 
it by heart.

As the poem was being read aloud, Greg recited the poem 
as it was read aloud.

Before reading "The Longest Nose in the World", 
children responded by predicting what the poem might be 
about. Colin speculated:

Co. I bet she's nosey.

T. She could be.

Ca. I bet she lies.

Since so many of the children did not speak English 
as their first language, particular care in selection of 
poetry was taken. Introducing children to expressions
and vocabulary words that might be unfamiliar to the children who do not speak English as their first language was a primary concern. The following sequence of responses highlighted this concern:

T. Here is another one. "The Duel".

Co. Oh, yea!

T. What is a duel?

Co. Like when two, like in the olden days, they had two people had a pistol. One guy had one and they stand like opposite of each other and shoot. And one would die or get wounded and miss, maybe.

Te. What's calico?

Ma. In Laura Engels Wilder, they say it's like material, fabric and they like have lots of dresses made out of that.

During one poetry read aloud event, the children were surprised that poetry should be read more than once. Before the last poem was read aloud, the teacher shared that she has read the poetry book many times. Christoph seemed particularly surprised. He asked:

Ch. You read it more than once?

T. Oh, yes, for poetry you don't read it once, you read them many times.

Ch. It's a good book?

Me. Yes, when you read poem books like that, they seem like, it seems like it will take a long, long time, but really it takes like that, that, fat, it would probably take like
um four days or something.

Poetry is discussed in more detail in the following chapter which focuses on children's responses outside the read aloud episodes but which were related to the read aloud books.

Summary

This chapter described the responses of the children to the books read aloud throughout the school year. The categories of responses which emerged from an analysis of the transcriptions were described and supported by sequences of responses taken from the transcripts. Patterns of responses which were woven through the response of the children were noted. Chapter 6 focuses on the responses of the children to the read aloud books which occurred beyond the read aloud event, both in the classroom and in the home environment.
CHAPTER VI

CHILDREN'S RESPONSES OUTSIDE
OF THE READ ALOUD EVENTS

Introduction

This chapter presents a description of the responses of the students to children's literature read aloud in the classroom in two different settings: 1) the classroom outside of the read aloud events and 2) in the home environment. Children did continue to respond to the read aloud books in observable behaviors long after the actual events. These observable responses of the children to these books were referred to as "off-the-rug" literary events. For the purpose of this study, these "off-the-rug" occurrences were defined as children's responses which were discernably linked in some manner to the read aloud books.

The first section of this chapter presents the "off-the-rug" responses of the children as they were reflected in their writing, their artwork and their day to day conversation with other children and adults. These responses occurred during a variety of activities, such as Silent Sustained Reading, snacktime or on a field
trip. The second section presents the results from the questionnaires which were sent home to the parents four times throughout the school year. These questionnaires were designed for the parents to record the responses of their children in the home environment.

The following section describes the responses of the children in the "off-the-rug" events which were part of the daily classroom activities. The children's responses are divided and described under the headings of those behaviors which occurred during: silent sustained reading, casual conversation, field trips, Franky Furbo read aloud events, children's writings, and poetry.

**Silent Sustained Reading**

The children actively sought to read the read aloud books on their own during Silent Sustained Reading and during other free moments in the school day. After the first few read aloud events of the school year in which the Frances books were read aloud, the children selected these books for the silent reading period.

For most of the read aloud events, there was only one copy of the read aloud book which was available to the children; therefore, the read aloud books were usually in demand. For example, after the reading of Trina Schart Hyman's book, *The Sleeping Beauty*, Oko
requested that this book be placed on reserve in his name for Silent Sustained Reading the next day. On another occasion, Anthony also sought a read aloud book, *Everyone Knows What a Dragon Looks Like*. A journal entry in March said:

> Anthony asked for the dragon book twice today. Asked if he could read it at S.S.R., and if he could read the book when he finished eating his lunch.

On another occasion, both Teresa and Greg asked to read the book, *Anno’s Medieval World*, for S.S.R. the next day. The book, *Anno’s Medieval World*, had been read aloud that morning. If more than one child requested the read aloud book at the same time, the situation was usually settled in two different ways: 1) some children choose to share the read aloud book by sitting together during Silent Sustained Reading and 2) other children choose to divide the S.S.R. time equally, with each child having the read aloud book for half the period.

Children often selected the same read aloud book for quiet reading several days in a row. Teresa showed a strong interest in the illustrations in the book, *Cinderella*, by Susan Jeffers. After scrutinizing the illustrations, Teresa shared her insights with the teacher. She pointed out the continuity of the dresses of the step-sisters at the ball and at the step-sisters’
house as well as other aspects of the illustrations.

On occasion, children "mirrored" the behaviors that occurred as part of the read aloud events. For example, Malla acted out the role of the reader and designated her stuffed animal as her audience. The journal entry, dated October 29, read:

During S.S.R. time Malla took her stuffed animal that she brings to school and placed it on the bar of the double glass door. She then set her chair facing the stuffed animal and sat down. She was reading, whispering, a book, *Bedtime for Frances*, and looking up at the stuffed animal.

On another occasion, Maggle shared a poetry book with the other children. The following entry from the journal described this episode. Brian Wildsmith was a favorite illustrator with many of the children. Before Maggle shared this poetry book with the children, the children had been introduced to the artwork of Brian Wildsmith. They had participated in an art project in which the art teacher demonstrated and explained to the children the techniques Brian Wildsmith used to create his illustrations. After this demonstration, the children experimented with these techniques. Piper and Teresa displayed a high interest in the illustrations. It was recorded:
During S.S.R. Maggle shared a *Child's Garden of Verses* with me. She showed me a Brian Wildsmith illustration. Children gathered over to Maggle and she held the book up and asked, 'Guess who made these illustrations?' Children responded Brian Wildsmith, especially Piper and Teresa.

During S.S.R. several children wanted to sit close to each other. They read quietly and appeared to enjoy the physical body contact when they were reading quietly. If two or more children requested the read aloud book, they often shared the book by sitting close to each other and reading aloud softly, often taking turns by alternating pages to be read aloud to each other. Children always turned out the lights during S.S.R. In the journal entry, dated March 7, David was asked why he turned out the lights and he responded, "It feels better."

Most read aloud books were acquired from the Lower School library. These read aloud books were displayed in the classroom for several weeks and then were returned to the library for general circulation. Anthony was particularly pleased when the book, *Pelican*, was returned to the library. He said, "Oh, good, then I can sign it out and take it home."

Silent Sustained Reading was scheduled every day for at least a twenty minute block of time. The children were not restricted in their choice of reading material.
On occasion, children would bring their own books from home to read, especially the Laura Ingalls Wilder books.

_Casual Conversations_

Throughout the school year, the children referred to the read aloud books in casual conversation. Over the December vacation, Thomas had an appendectomy. When the children returned to school in January, they were told the reason Thomas was not in school. After the announcement, Teresa and Ali responded:

_Te._ Just like Madeline. He'll have a scar too.

_Ali._ Now all the children will want an operation. Just like in _Madeline_.

_During a lunchtime period, Megan opened her lunchbox and shouted "I smell Turkish caviar." Megan's response was linked with the read aloud books which featured the character, Lyle, the crocodile whose favorite food was Turkish caviar._

_Other faculty members also noted comments made by the children about the read aloud books. In the journal entry, dated April 25, the following occurrence was recorded. Carolyn was the other second grade teacher. The entry stated:_
Carolyn said that she talked to Greg about borrowing the book, *Gorilla*. He told her about the book, pointed out many illustrations and said, 'And be sure to notice...' with authority in his voice.

The librarian expressed positive comments about the children's observed interest in books. During one library period, she was giving a lesson about the construction of a children's book. She gave all the children a picture book and asked the children to find the title page in the book and to show it to her. One child was looking at the end papers. The librarian told the child, "That's not the title page." The child responded: "No, it's the end papers." The librarian turned to the classroom teacher and said, "That's the first time in all my years as a librarian that a child has used the words, 'end papers'. Are you talking about that in class?"

Comments made by the children about the read aloud books occurred naturally as part of a conversation with the teacher or other adult or as part of a conversation among other children. Children's comments were also directed to the entire class, such as Megan's comment about Turkish caviar. The children's literary references made in casual conversation were spontaneous and unpredictable. Without easy access to a pencil and paper
and the large blocks of time to be with the children, this form of children's response could be lost or go unrecognized.

Field Trip to The American Library

In the fall, the children visited The American Library located in Paris. The children's librarian greeted the children at the front door and escorted them on a tour of the facilities, and then acquainted the children with the books in the children's section of the library. After her presentation, she gave the children time to browse in the children's book section of the library.

During this browsing time, Maggle picked up the book, *The Snowy Day*, a book that was previously read aloud in class, and said, "This book didn't win the Caldecott." Maggle and the teacher discussed the reason the book, *The Snowy Day*, which Maggle was holding in her hand, didn't win the Caldecott Award. Maggle explained that the book which was in her classroom did win the award, but the book she was holding didn't win because it didn't have the gold seal. Maggle groped for the language to explain the difference. She seemed to understand that if the book did not display the Caldecott seal, it didn't win the award. That is, a particular
copy of the book wins the award. This incident was enlightening in the fact that children, at least Maggie, appeared not to make the connection beyond the Caldecott seal and the published book. During the browsing time, many other children found books which were read aloud in the classroom and shared their discovery with the other children.

**Franky Furbo Read Aloud Events**

The story of *Franky Furbo* by William Wharton was read aloud to the children during the last two weeks of school just prior to the December vacation. Since the story has not been published, the author provided a photocopy of his manuscript for the read aloud events. The Franky Furbo story was the first read aloud book that was read continuously over several read aloud events. When the book was first introduced to the children, it was explained that the author, William Wharton, would be visiting the class in January to discuss his book and his writing with the children and to answer any questions they might have about Franky Furbo.

The book, *Franky Furbo*, was the most difficult book read aloud to the children during the school year. Thus, many of the responses of the children centered on making sense of the story. Yet, there were situations in which
children challenged the author. Teresa presented such a situation. William Wharton used the word "man" to represent the human race and Teresa objected to the word "man" to connote both men and women. During one of the Franky Furbo read aloud events, the following sequence of responses occurred:

J. You don't spell fox with an M.
Te. Why not a girl?
T. Well now that's a good thought there, Teresa.
Gr. Well now you remember he called everybody a man.
Te. He could have put P for people.
T. That's right.
Te. Because people means boy and girl.

After the last chapter of Franky Furbo was read aloud, many of the children asked questions about the story, such as "I'd like to know how he drives the rocket ship." and "Is this true?" Colin reminded the children that the author was coming to the classroom in January to discuss the book, but the children still continued to ask questions and to speculate if the story was "true". In the following sequence of responses Teresa offered an explanation of how the story just might have been true if one thought in the future. Colin responded:
Co. Mr. Wharton is coming and we're going to ask him questions and he'll tell us about it.

Te. I probably think it's true because you said...

Pa. I don't think it's true.

Co. You could believe.

Ca. I don't think it's true when he drinks the powder and he gets smaller.

T. You have to ask Mr. Wharton how he thought about it.

Ma. I bet it took him about a month to make that book because you need to make a page.

T. He's going to tell us how he wrote the book.

Ch. It's so pretty, so he wrote a book about it.

Te. The chemicals could true in life you know, cause when we're really old it goes higher in time, maybe invent more things. It might invent somethings that might make us smaller.

Several days before the author's visit, the children prepared written questions because one child suggested that they might get too nervous and forget their questions. During a telephone conversation with the classroom teacher, Colin's mother said, "Colin was so excited about today. That's all he talked about last night." William Wharton's visit lasted one hour.

After the visit the children became "reporters" and chronicled the visit of William Wharton for other children in the Lower School. The purpose of their writing was to inform the other children that an author
had visited their class. The following pieces of writing are three examples of how the children described William Wharton's visit. On Colin and Greg's reports there is a reference to "Mrs. Platt's class". Since this classroom was larger, Wharton's visit was held in this room.

Colin

Today our class went into Mrs. Platt's room. I heard Mr. du Aime talk about the books he's published. We all asked questions. He showed us a book that he had written about his father and about how he helped his father not to die. The story I liked best of all was about Franky Furbo. He had a whole box of small Franky Furbo stories. He also said he did not like the books with the cover glued on. He said his uncle was in World War I. He also said every morning his children used to jump on him so that he would tell them a Franky Furbo story.

Figure 1. Colin's piece of writing
Gonzalo. February 1, 1986.
An author and illustrator came to our school.
He talked about a lot of books. He wrote a book about Franky Fairbanks.
He is a fox. He is a very smart fox. Because his dad was a gray-tail fox.

Figure 2. Gonzalo's piece of writing

Greg's piece of writing

Figure 3. Greg's piece of writing
Caitlin wrote a thank-you letter to William Wharton. Later in the school year, Wharton responded with a letter to the children in which he encouraged the children to continue with their own writing. The children were excited when they received his letter. The letters of Caitlin and William Wharton are reproduced here.

Dear Mr. Wharton,

We all thank you for coming. We liked it very, very much. Especially when you explained all the Franky Furbo books you had written.

Love

Caitlin

Figure. 4 Caitlin's letter
Dear Caitlin Dinan and all of Mrs. Yocum's second grade:

Thank you very much for your nice letter. I'm sorry I'm so slow answering it but I've been very busy. Among other things, I'm writing and taping Franky Furbo stories.

I'm glad you enjoyed our little talk. I hope all of you are getting along with your books. It can be much fun writing and is very good to help you with your thinking.

Well, I'd better get back to work now. It's been nice writing a few words to you. I'm writing this on my word processor which makes writing much easier because my hand doesn't get tired. Good bye for now. Love,

[Signature]

Figure 5. Wharton's letter

Some of the parents noted the reactions of their children to Wharton's visit to the class. Caitlin's mother commented that, "Caitlin loved William Wharton's visit and is looking forward to having a Franky Furbo book." Colin's mother reported that, "Dan (Colin's father) said that Colin came home and wrote in his journal for two hours. He didn't come out of his room until suppertime."
Children’s Writing

Generally, the children did not appear to initiate or incorporate directly information from the read aloud books in their own writing, although they responded positively when a suggestion of this nature was presented. During the read aloud event in which the last Lyle book was read aloud, the children wondered if there was another Lyle book. The children particularly responded to the character of Lyle. In the following sequence of responses, one way to read more about Lyle was suggested. Teresa responded:

Te. Maybe there’s another book there um found Mrs. Primm and Lyle and Lyle’s mother all live together.

T. That could be. You know, we could almost make a book like that ourselves, couldn’t we.

Pa. We could make a book of Lyle.

Children responded positively to the suggestion and did write stories about Lyle. Hamoudi’s story, found on the next page, is an example of one child’s story about Lyle.
This story is about Lyle the Crocodile.

Lyle and the flowers.

Hamoudi

Lyle was so sad. He was old and a bit unsure of himself. Ms. Pimm came home. She saw him so sad again.
The children also wrote about another favorite storybook character, Frances. The titles of their stories were "Bedtime for..." which was taken from the book, *Bedtime for Frances*. The following story is an example of the children's writing.
Bedtime for John

By John Vidal

My mom reads a book at night.

When my mom is finish with
the book she

puts us into bed and says us
a good night.

This is the end.

Figure 7 John's story
The children also wrote other authors of children's literature. Unfortunately, William Wharton was the only author who answered the children's letters. Reproduced below are two examples of the children's letters. The first letter was written to Chris Van Allsburg and the second letter was written to Brian Wildsmith.

Dears Mr. Van Allsburg,

Our class has read the books you wrote like The Garden of Abdul Gasazi and Jamanji.

In the book The Garden of Abdul Gasazi we want to know if Fritz was really turned into a duck? Or was he turned into a duck? We also want to know how Fritz got home at the end of the story? We have different ideas, and want to know what you think. Today we read The Wreck of the Zephyr. Tomorrow we are going to read Ben's Dream. We heard you're going to win the award called the Hans Christian Andersen Award. We hope you get it.

Sincerely,
Margaret

Figure 8. Maggie's letter
Dear Mr. Wildsmith

Our class would like to know how you did the pictures. We thought they were done by watercolor pictures. We also wondered how you got the idea to write the book Pelican. We read your book and liked the half pages. How did you do the half pages so they matched? We liked the part where the Pelican ate all the fish. We also wondered why when the Pelican was hatched by the Speckled hen that the Pelican looked different than when Pelican had it's own baby pelican.

Sincerely
Colin

Figure 9. Colin's letter

The children were disappointed that these authors did not answer their letters but during a read aloud event the children responded to this situation by suggesting that there were reasons these authors did not write. In the following sequence of responses, Maggie noted:

Ma. Brian Wildsmith didn't write back or Chris Van Allsburg.
Te. None of them.

Pa. I bet they never got to them. Cause they must have never got to them.

Te. Or maybe it's, it might be they are too occupied doing, still working on their books.

Although the children were disappointed, they were also charitable in their reactions to this situation. On another occasion, the children once again discussed possible reasons the authors had not written to the class. Rana responded:

R. I wonder if he (Van Allsburg) is going to write back or not.

Te. He won't.

Tz. I don't think so.

T. I have my doubts.

Ali. I don't think so cause he has so much books to write.

Co. No, he's probably private.

Poetry

Children slowly acquired the habit of reading poetry. Many of the children who were not native speakers of English found poetry somewhat difficult to read, although they indeed expended the energy and "grappled" with a poem. A journal entry, dated January 14, stated:
I read a poem about stitches today. The children are beginning to read the poetry books that I have displayed on the reading shelf by the reading corner.

As the winter weeks progressed, it became more and more common for children to read aloud a poem to the class. A journal entry, dated January 20, read:

Megan shared a poem in her book about a cat. She drew the cat over the weekend and showed it to the reading group.

Later in the year, the teacher read aloud a poem just before lunchtime each day. After a week of sharing poetry, the children asked if they could read aloud a poem before lunchtime. So many of the children requested to read aloud a poem that a sign-up sheet was made and each child who wanted to read aloud a poem selected a day. One journal entry read:

During lunch Greg and Maggie shared their poetry with us. Both had practiced. Maggie brought a poetry book from home that she said she would keep at school a few days to share with the class. Greg said he had practiced many poems (and he had). I read the t.v. poem and Greg was mouthing the words with me.

After the computer was returned to the classroom, the children each wrote a poem on the computer. Each child’s poem was photocopied and the poems were made into a collection of poetry. All children received one of
these books of collected poetry. Children commented that
now they had their own collection of poetry. This book
of collected poetry became one of the most popular books
to read during S.S.R. and was also read aloud in several
different read aloud events. Reproduced below are three
poems written by the children.

**COCA COLA PEPSI COLA**

**TERESA DE LA HOZ**

*Coca-Cola*

Pepsi-Cola

Smell it. Drink it.

Hear the sound of

*Coca-Cola Pepsi-Cola.*

Try it. Say it.

*Coca-Cola Pepsi-Cola.*

I hate

*Coca-Cola Pepsi-Cola.*

It bubbles your face.
It licks your face.
It chews your bones.

*Coca-Cola Pepsi-Cola.*

It stings you!

---

*Figure 10. Teresa's poem*
THE FLY
PAUL STEAD

Buzz Buzz Buzz
Goes the fly
Round and round the room

Off it goes
Buzzing by.
Will it land on me?

SUPER SECOND
TZE KHONG CHOO

Super Second is
Very fast.
Super Second is a man.

Super Second
There to here
In a second.

Everywhere
Everyone
Wants to be
Super Second
Except for me.

The slow poke
I'm so slow
Because I'm a
SNAIL!

Figure 11. Paul's poem

Figure 12. Tze Khong's poem
In April, International Week was celebrated throughout the Lower School. As part of the activities, a puppeteer visited the library and gave a performance for the children. A journal entry, dated April 23, highlighted another child's response to poetry. The entry read:

During puppet show woman read poem by Shel Silverstein. Anthony said, 'Oh I know that poem.' Anthony, at another time, (during the show), 'That's my favorite author.'

Some children continually displayed an interest in poetry throughout the school year. For Rana, at least, that interest in poetry was exhibited at inappropriate moments. As part of the Halloween party activities, the children participated in choral reading and body movement when they read poems with a Halloween theme. A journal entry recorded two children's reactions to the poems. It read:

The student teacher shared with me that Rana, while in French class, took out the sheet of Halloween poems we used in choral reading and read them. The French teacher told her to put them away. Greg started to read the poems at the reading table during indoor recess. In a few minutes many of the children were at the reading table reading along with Greg and putting expression and movement with the poems.
Influences Beyond the School

An unfortunate aspect of international schools is that they have become targets for terrorism. In the spring of 1986, the school experienced several bomb threats, which were taken seriously by the administration. Previously, the school had been a target of a terrorist organization which had planted a bomb on the school grounds. In this incident two buildings sustained major damage.

On the morning of May 7, the school received a bomb threat. All students were evacuated from the buildings to the soccer field. Even in this environment, the children responded to books. The following journal entry recorded the event. It read:

Neal started reading at 9:00. At 9:15 we evacuated the building for a bomb scare that had been phoned into the police station. We dismissed school from the soccer field. School was closed.

While on the field my children sat on their bookbags and shared their books with other children in the class. They were engrossed in their books and sharing together. We were lucky that the children had many books in their school bags. I thought I might read a story aloud. Teresa said that she had a Brothers Grimm book. I said I would read it. I went to select a story and found that the book to be in Spanish! I told the class that I couldn't read this book!

When the decision was made to close the school for that day, the parents were notified by telephone. Some
children rode home on their regular school buses, while other children were collected by their parents. Piper's mother was the first parent to arrive on the soccer field that day. Her comments were recorded in the journal entry:

Judy, only you could have the children sitting around reading books during a bomb scare. I knew it was your class immediately!

This incident was the first of many such evacuations. From that day until the end of the school year, the children kept a book on their desk and grabbed it each time there was an evacuation drill.

Children's Responses in the Home Environment

Four sets of questionnaires were sent home to the parents in October and December of 1985 and March and June of 1986. During the Open-House Night for the Lower School, it was explained to the parents of children in this second grade that they would receive four questionnaires and that these questionnaires were designed to collect information in an effort to understand: 1) if children respond at home to the books read aloud in the classroom and 2) in what ways do children respond at home to the read aloud books.
A list of read aloud books was attached to each questionnaire. Throughout the school year, there were four families who completed all four questionnaires and three families who did not complete any questionnaires. All of the other families completed three or less of the questionnaires. The questionnaires were analyzed in a wholistic, descriptive manner with no utilization of statistical analysis. (See Appendix)

Although the questionnaires were the most efficient method of acquiring information on the children’s responses in the home environment to the books read aloud in the classroom, they also presented certain inherent problems for the responders. During a conference, one father expressed his reservations for all forms of questionnaires. The Journal entry, dated April 17, recorded this conference. It read:

Mr. Charles mentioned that he had some trouble with the questionnaires. He mentioned that he knows that Malla loves the stories at read aloud time but she doesn’t talk about them at home. Mrs. Charles said she doesn’t ask for that particular book, but books by the same author. ‘I try and get books out of the library and she says, Oh, I’ve read that one.’

Mr. Charles: ‘That’s the trouble with questionnaires. They never let you say what you want to. You answer the questions, but it isn’t what you totally want to say.’
Questionnaire One

The first questionnaire was sent home on October 8. All responders to the questionnaires were the mothers of the children. The rate of return on the questionnaire was ten out of twenty-two, forty-five percent of the parents.

Two mothers of children in the second grade class stated that they did not fill out the questionnaire because their children never talked at home about events which happen at school; so they didn’t know what to write on the questionnaire. This situation was supported by the response of a mother made on the "Comments" section of the first questionnaire. This mother wrote:

David talks very little about what happens at school or about work that he does there. When my husband or I ask him about school and the work he does there his general reply is ‘Fine’.

Another mother also described what her child did when he returned home from school. This family had recently moved to France. The mother wrote:

Kristian has not much time to talk about school. In the 5 weeks we have lived here he already made nice friends here in our domaine and is off to see them as soon as he gets home.

One comment written on the first questionnaire highlighted the problem of articulating and describing
the elusive nature of the responses of a child to the read aloud books. Even when the responses of the child were noted, it was difficult to express and adequately convey the nature of the child’s responses to another person. Caitlin’s mother expressed the difficulty of recording the responses of her daughter to the read aloud books. The mother wrote about her feelings in this manner:

I cannot be specific here, but I know that Caitlin responds at home to the stories read in class in very subtle ways. A comment here; a question there and a look of understanding and similarity about certain issues especially regarding nature and animals, decision making, working out a deal, etc.

On the other hand, the responses of some children to the read aloud books were more direct and exhibited in obvious ways. One mother explained that her son, Colin, often told the family about the read aloud books at the dinner table. Another mother responded that her daughter shares a read aloud story with the family when she has particularly enjoyed the book. The mother wrote:

She’s enjoyed a story so much that she wants to tell us everything that happened or she wants to read it to me or au pair. (Daddy travels a lot or she’d want to read it to him.)

Another response on the questionnaire supported the
comments that other mothers have made in that their sons do not spontaneously respond to the books read aloud in the classroom. This mother explained that her daughter does not initiate 'talk' about the read aloud books, but when her mother specifically asked her daughter about the read aloud books, Yfke does respond. The mother wrote:

Yfke does not tell anything about the stories you read. When asked she showed me a book she had herself, The girl Who Loved Wild Horses. Yfke does not allow me to read a book to her, but she does love you reading in the class.

One question asked the parents if their children have expressed an interest in any particular book or author. Mothers noted several books, especially the Madeline and Frances books. In a negative comment, one mother wrote that her daughter, Maggle, did not like the book, Drummer Hoif. The mother quoted the daughter as saying, "That didn’t deserve the Caldecott."

On the first questionnaire, Megan’s mother explained that her daughter had mentioned the names of authors several times. The mother wrote:

Yes, Megan has mentioned many times that she would like to have some books by Rosemary Wells, Brian Wildsmith and Judy Viorst. I found this particularly interesting because these are not easy names for a 7 year old child to remember!
In a final note written at the bottom of the first questionnaire, Yfke's mother added:

The last library session Yfke got a book which I had to read to her. She allowed me to read a book to her for the first time in two years!

From the parental responses on the first set of questionnaires, it was learned that the children in the class seemed to be divided into two groups. Children who did respond to the books read aloud as reported by their mothers and children who did not respond in an observable manner to the books read aloud in the classroom. The children who did respond at home demonstrated their responses in various ways.

Questionnaire Two

This second questionnaire was sent home on December 13, the last week of school before the December vacation. The rate of return on this questionnaire was fourteen out of twenty-two, or sixty-four percent of the parents. Although most responders were mothers, there were two fathers who completed the questionnaire. One father did not answer the questions on the survey but wrote on the questionnaire that his daughter was unfamiliar with a majority of the books as the family had just moved to France in mid-November.
The parents were asked if their children had talked at home about any of the books read aloud in the classroom. This time there were two "No" responses. Another question of the survey asked, "Has your child requested that you read to him/her any of the books read aloud in the classroom?" Eight parents responded in the affirmative. One mother wrote, "John will ask me to read but he seems more interested in wanting to read to me."

When asked if the parents generally read aloud to their children, all but two parents responded in a positive manner. The two parents who responded that they did not read aloud to their children had previously done so, but now their daughters read on their own. One of the fathers who responded with a "No" reply wrote that now, "She reads to us." The other mother who responded with a "No" wrote that her daughter:

Ylke does a lot of reading herself and acts or tells part of books. She loves fantasy and makes up stories herself.

These responses suggest that children, at least the children whose parents responded to the questionnaire, have experienced read aloud episodes in the home. No data was reported to reveal the extent of these read aloud experiences.
When the parents were asked if their children discussed any of the illustrations or illustrators of books with them, many parents responded in the affirmative. While some responses were just "Yes" answers, other parents added comments with their response. For example, Piper's mother explained:

Definitely, she talks of Caldecott medal winners! Telling me which of our books at home should have won a medal!

All's mother responded with a "No", but elaborated on her answer. She wrote:

No, not on her own, but when I asked her which book had the best illustrations, she said all Ezra Jack Keats books because they have collages and she likes collages because they look nice. Also, she liked Pelican because it was different. It had windows to look through in the book.

From the responses on the second set of questionnaires, it was found that children may not initiate responses to the books read aloud in the classroom on their own, but if parents expressed interest in these books, their children would share their responses in more direct ways. This situation suggested that if parents initiated and expressed an interest in the read aloud books, the children may respond by sharing their responses with family members.
 Asked if their children signed out from the Lower School library any of the read aloud books or other books by the same authors or if the children had requested that any of these books or other books by the same authors be purchased and added to the children's own book collection, an overwhelming number of parents responded in the affirmative. Only two parents responded with "No".

For most of the children, the Lower school library was the main or only source for books printed in English. For this reason, every few weeks, the read aloud books in the classroom were returned to the Lower School library for general circulation. Some children asked if they could take home a read aloud book for the evening because they did not want to wait until the book had been returned to the library. The only other major circulating source for children's books in English is The American Library which is organized on a membership basis and is open to all nationalities. One child in the classroom belonged to The American Library. On the Comments section of the second questionnaire, one mother asked, "Are all the books on the list in the school's library?"

Another question asked if the parents have noted any change in either their children's reading interest in
picture books or books in general or have noted any change in their children's reading habits at home. All of the responses were positive in that the parents wrote that their children do more of a particular activity. For example, parents wrote that their children were "more enthusiastic", "more attentive", "does more independent reading at home", and "even more interested in reading aloud with expression (to family members)".

One mother recorded this change in her daughter's reading behavior. Piper's mother wrote:

Yes, she has always enjoyed looking at her books before I read her good night book. Now we share reading the story. (Piper reads part.) Then she reads to herself until lights out time. She has expanded her interest beyond the plot to the book as a whole. There is an interest in the illustrator and authors as people. In other words the book becomes a vessel, bringing her a story in an entire environment as opposed to a story told by a person without visual aids.

John's mother responded that she noticed a small change in John's reading habits at home. She wrote:

A small change but a change, he use to play right up to bed time with his toys now he likes to have time to read in bed.

At the end of each questionnaire, there was a section called "Comments?". Some parents chose to complete this question while other parents chose to leave it blank. On this section Maggle's mother
commented on the read aloud program in positive terms. She wrote:

Maggie has certainly benefited from the classroom program in reading. She is enthusiastic, capable and confident even when she encounters an unfamiliar word, she plunges right ahead with her word skills to figure it out. The proof is that she loves reading and reads on her own at home as well as in school!

Questionnaire Three

The third questionnaire was sent home on March 17, 1986. The rate of return on this questionnaire was also fourteen out of twenty-two, or sixty-four percent of the parents. Except for one father, all other responders were the mothers of the children.

As noted in other responses on questionnaires one and two, some of the children did not respond in their home environment to the books read aloud in the classroom with observable behaviors or verbal comments which were recorded by the parents. One mother described the behavior of her son in their home in this manner:

Kristian does not often talk about school or about stories in books. I always have to pull out of him what they did that day. So I am sorry I cannot be of much help on the above answers. He does like reading or looking at books very much though in bed before going to sleep, especially about monsters.
On the third questionnaire the parents were asked if their children talked at home about any of the books read aloud in the classroom. All but two parents responded in positive ways. Some of the responses of the parents were a record of specific incidents in which parents noted the behaviors of their children or noted a particular book which the children mentioned. For example, some of the parents recorded that their children had responded in the following ways:

**The Garden of Abdul Gasaza.** He taped the story on his tape deck to amuse the family.

Tze Khong brought the lit. book, *(Ben’s Dream)* home and read it to me.

Yes, when we were walking through the park she was speaking about "Hansel and Gretel."

Yes, after school he recounts the story to both myself and his brother.

Once again, parents acknowledged the elusive nature of children’s responses and recorded their difficulties documenting their children’s literary responses. One father described his daughter’s responses in this manner:

Malla does discuss the books that are read in class. However, this is not something that we can recall happening on a specific date.

Children did mention at home specific read aloud books. For example, one mother recorded that her
daughter enjoyed the book, *Sam, Bangs and Moonshine* because, "*Sam, Bangs and Moonshine* is about a cat and All likes cats. (She calls her goldfish Moonshine.)" It was interesting to discover that this same child responded to this book in another manner. All’s mother stated that All did not like the illustrations in this book. Her mother wrote that, "All did not like the illustrations in *Sam, Bangs and Moonshine* because they were too dark." Children, at least these children, did not necessarily respond only to the books that they liked best.

Another question asked the parents if their children had requested that the parents read aloud to them any of the books read aloud in the classroom. Most of the responses to this question were "No". Overall, these children did not request that the books read aloud in the classroom also be read aloud to them at home. The three books that children did request to be read aloud to them at home were: *The Frog Prince, Sam, Bangs and Moonshine* and *The Traveling Musicians*.

The parents were asked if their children have read aloud to them any of the books read aloud in the classroom. Generally, the responses were mixed with five parents relating specific incidents. Maggie’s mother wrote that her daughter read aloud to her *The Frog Prince*. She recorded:
She read with much interest and real expression—a pleasurable event for us both!

Two girls read aloud *The Sleeping Beauty*. Teresa's mother wrote, "Yes, she read *Sleeping Beauty* to me while I fixed dinner." Tze Khong's mother recorded that her son read aloud the book, *Ben's Dream* and further wrote, "He enjoyed noticing details in the pictures."

When asked if their children discussed any of the illustrations or illustrators of the books with them, a majority of the parents responded in the affirmative. The parents mentioned examples such as, "water colors from the *Pelican*" and "the strange drawings in *Arrow to the Sun*." One mother responded that her son:

John has mentioned how nice the pictures are in the books read in class. He was just telling me the other day how illustrations can tell a story without words.

The books that were mentioned by the parents as having been signed out of the library by their children were: *Jumanji*, *Arrow to the Sun* and *Ben's Dream*.

The children responded to the read aloud books in ways other than by verbal responses. One mother recorded that her son, "Plays with his brother—pretends to be Franky Furbo." Another mother wrote that her daughter dramatized a story and described the episode in this
manner:

She and two others in Brownies recently dramatized *Little Red Cap* by using puppets made by themselves.

When asked if their children commented on the quality of the read aloud books, either negatively or positively, parents overwhelmingly responded with "Yes". Although the responses made by the children as recorded by the parents were generally positive in nature, a few of the children's responses were negative when discussing the book, *Shadow*. One child responded that, "The book *Shadow* is not so interesting."

The parents reported many positive responses of their children to the books read aloud. Examples of these positive responses were:

I have only heard positive comments from John. If he has liked the story he will usually share it with us over the dinner table.

He has commented on many occasions the books read in class in a very positive manner. He thoroughly enjoys them.

When formulating questions on the survey, the understanding that the questionnaires were going to be read by a majority of the parents who do not speak English as their first language was seriously considered and appreciated. Yet, even when this care was
recognized, questions on the surveys were interpreted by the parents in a different manner than intended. For example, question number 9 on the survey read as follows, "Has your child talked with you about their own writing of stories? If so, could you recall a specific time?"

Two parents responded to this question by writing, "Yes, two weeks ago." and "Yes, March 13." Although the question was written to elicit a description of the event in which their children responded to the read aloud books, the word "time" was interpreted in another context by the parents. This situation pointed to the problems which can arise when people who speak many different languages and have different cultural background all interpret the same set of questions.

One mother reported that her son often talked about his own writing. She wrote:

John has often talked about his creative writing book. He brought home his writing book this past weekend and was telling his brother it wasn't easy writing a story. He said, 'You have to think, write and edit. Then it has to be published and I've already got a story published.' He said this to his brother who was giving him a hard time, telling John he was writing too short of sentences.

Some parents reported that a particular author or book had sparked an interest in their children's own writing. The name William Wharton was recorded by two
parents. One parent wrote that, "He has mentioned how he compares to William Wharton in his 'publishing' of his book."

On the last page of each questionnaire there was section marked "Comments". The intent of this section was to provide a place for parents to comment on the responses of their children in a way that hadn't been broached by the previous questions. Several parents responded in this section. One mother noticed that her son had taken an interest in reading aloud to his younger brother, who is in first grade. The family moved to Paris in January, 1986. She wrote:

He likes the selection. It seems to spark his interest - Now he is anxious to read aloud to his brother - I guess imitating the class situation - Also his reading has noticeably improved.

Another mother credited the read aloud events with her son's interest in classifying stories into genres. She wrote that:

Colin is interested now in classifying stories as to fairy tale, folk tale, fiction or nonfiction and so on. We've talked about how you could write a folk or fairy tale - nice that he's becoming aware of all this through your reading.

Parents voiced their enthusiasm and interest in the read aloud events through their responses on the
questionnaires and in casual comments made to the classroom teacher. The parents generally attributed their children's interest in reading and their children's interest in books to the read aloud events in the classroom. Two such parents described their children's interest in reading in the following manner. John's mother wrote that:

I am happy to see John taking the interest he does in books. He seems to like writing stories. I'm impressed with his understanding of the involvement it takes in producing a book. The last book we finished here at home John said, 'Boy does that author know how to write a good book.' He also asked if there was another book by this author and along the same theme. In the past John would just say that's a nice story and let it go. When he tells his brother about books, authors, publishing, illustrations and even how story titles come out in the reading of books, he tells this with a note of authority in his voice.

The response of the other mother in the comments section of the questionnaire recorded her daughter's sharpened interest in reading and described in some detail the literary behaviors of her daughter. She wrote:

Maggle's interest in reading has certainly been sharpened and stimulated by your approach. She spends long periods reading to herself in a highly concentrated manner. She has also become discriminating in the quality of literature and illustrations that she reads (or is read to in class). She will discuss with me why a particular story was especially good i.e. the illustrations
were photos artistically taken; the plot was interesting; the book won the Caldecott, etc. She does love reading!!

**Questionnaire Four**

The fourth and last questionnaire was sent home on June 7, 1986. The rate of return on this questionnaire was once again fourteen out of twenty-two or sixty-four percent of the parents. It is emphasized and restated that although the percentage of responders was the same for questionnaires two, three and four, the responders were not necessarily the same people.

A majority of the parents responded that their children did talk at home about the read aloud books. Most of the titles of the books recorded by the parents were the books which were reread in the classroom. The parents mentioned the books: *Gorilla, Everyone Knows What a Dragon Looks Like, Sam, Bangs and Moonshine* and *The Story of Jumping Mouse*. Some parents reported that their children responded in specific ways to the read aloud books. For example, two mothers wrote that her daughters responded to the read aloud books in these ways:

*Everyone Knows What A Dragon Looks Like.*
She praised the illustrations varied in colors, the fine design and the interesting borders.
Caitlin described to me the story of the Jumping Mouse by Steptoe in great detail. She apparently loved it and was very moved by it.

Only two parents reported that their children did not express an interest in any of the authors or a particular book that was read aloud in the classroom. From the positive responses, one mother wrote that her daughter was very interested in Stone Soup by Marcia Brown. She reported:

Rana was very interested in the story because she got to make stone soup with her class makes. She was really excited to make the soup. She told me it was very good and delicious and how her friend found a stone in a soup.

According to the reports of the parents, children did request that their parents read aloud to them the books that were read aloud in the classroom. Some of the books that were mentioned by the parents were: Gorilla, The Glorious Flight Across the Channel with Louis Bleriot and Miss Nelson Is Back. An insight into at least one child’s selection of books to sign out from the library came into focus. Piper’s mother wrote:

Miss Nelson Is Missing. Piper would have brought more of these books home; however when the books were returned from your room to the library, they were too difficult to find.
When the read aloud books from the library were in the classroom, these books were part of the "private domain" of the children, but once the read aloud books were returned to the library the children were competing with the other children in the Lower School to sign out the read aloud books. Had it been feasible, either financially or logistically, to have had a copy of each read aloud book in the classroom throughout the school year, the children may have responded in a different manner.

Some parents reported that their children had read aloud to them a book or books that were read aloud books in the classroom. One mother wrote that her daughter read aloud to her, "A Bargain for Frances. It was a warm amusing occasion." Another mother wrote that her daughter read aloud both to her younger sister and to the other members of the family. The mother recorded this incident:

Caitlin has read many of the listed books to her sister Delirdre before bed...but mostly she reads to herself. I listened to her read Sam, Bangs and Moonshine. It was a pleasure because of her expression and complete comprehension. She has a good oral style especially with poetry.

Most of the parents reported that their children responded to the illustrations in the read aloud books.
Some responses of the parents noted the titles of the read aloud books, while other parent responses described the way their children reacted to the read aloud books. One mother wrote that her child was particularly interested in *The Pet Show* by Ezra Jack Keats. She wrote:

Yes. All said, "*The Pet Show*. The author makes pictures you can cut out. It is really nice, also there is a dedication. The pictures tell the story, so it is easy to read."

Four parents reported that their children responded to the read aloud books in other ways than were noted by the previous questions. One parent did not respond with a definite "No", but qualified a negative response by writing, "Not to the best of my knowledge." The response of this parent continued to highlight the difficulty of parents in recording the responses of their children in the home environment to the read aloud books. Another mother reported that her daughter responded to the books read aloud in an obvious manner. She wrote:

*Everyone Knows What A Dragon Looks Like.* The boy sweeping the road inspired Piper to think what she could be to earn money in order to buy a horse! *Anno's Medieval World* was acted out in Piper's room during private play time with the help of her dolls and 'friends'.

When asked if their children have responded to the quality of the read aloud books, most of the responses of the parents were "Yes". The parents explained that their children were now more inclined to focus on the illustrations as well as the story. Other parents reported that their children's interest in the illustrations had been sharpened. One mother reported:

She has been very enthusiastic with illustrations and the books read this year and seems to have increased in her critical evaluation of the writing and illustrations. She is especially sensitive to the illustrations-approach taken, how colors are used, uniqueness of approach.

From the responses of the parents, children were equally divided between children who did and children who did not respond to the rereading of books throughout the school year. Of the children who did respond to the rereading of books, there were mixed feelings about the procedure. Some children were most positive about rereading books; while one child reacted negatively to the idea. A positive response from the parent which noted their son's reaction was:

He likes the books that are reread, esp. *The Story of Jumping Mouse, Pelican* and *Everyone Knows What A Dragon Looks Like*.

Another positive response from a parent about their daughter's reaction to the idea of rereading books was:
The Story of Jumping Mouse.  
Blueberries for Sal and Gorilla. She liked the fact that they were reread.

The parents also reported that the children expressed negative responses concerning rereading of books. One mother wrote that her son expressed his dislike for rereading a book in this following way:

He does not like rereads much. 'Because you know what is going to happen!' He prefers the first reading because there you can guess or wonder what is going to happen...

In chapter two a review of the literature on reading aloud to children strongly suggested that reading aloud to children is a most worthwhile activity. The positive effects of reading aloud to children have been documented with statistical analysis as well as with observations of the reading behaviors of children. Thus, one question on the survey asked the parents if they have noticed a change in their children's reading behaviors this school year. The parents overwhelmingly reported that they had noticed changes this year in their children's reading behaviors. The following responses of the parents lend support to the understanding that reading aloud to children is indeed a powerful tool for teachers to employ in their classrooms. Listed below were some of the responses of the parents:
Yes. Every day she reads a book aloud by herself. I think Rana tries to copy you by reading the story out loud and turn the book to show the pictures to the nonexisting listeners. Rana every night before she goes to bed she asks me to read her a story.

Demonstrates an interest in reading on her own. Does not ask for reading to her.

Colin has really become a 'reader' this year and is enjoying it immensely.

...just that Caitlin continues S.S.R.; reading aloud to her sister before bed and reading poetry (writing also). She's just caught the 'bug' that's all. We love it!

Ali has asked her French tutor to please read French books aloud like Le Chaperone Rouge. Our French tutor feels it is 'outdated' to just read, but will on occasion. I find it interesting to note that Ali had no patience for narrative in French all of last year which was her first year in France. Her attitude about reading therefore is much more open and I feel there is a direct connection to the fact that she has learned to love books this year.

Yes, he likes to read a bit more and even enjoys reading to me.

Yes, extremely interested now. She has progressively incremented her interest and motivation in reading.

Yes, an extreme change. He loves to read and shows a lot of enthusiasm, wants to be a published author!! He's written some books at home and he's started to show an interest in poetry.
Yes!!! His motivation is much higher. He is more confident on his reading. He enjoys reading to his brother or to us. He has loved to be read to but fought a little to read aloud because of his difficulties.

Her enthusiasm for reading has definitely increased as has her ability to concentrate on silent reading for long periods of time. Her critical faculties... been developed. She has become sensitive to the particular approach of an author and/or illustrator.

He is very interested in reading story books.

Final comments by the parents were overwhelmingly positive about the read aloud events. Two parents expressed their support of reading aloud to children in the classroom in this way:

Goncalo was very insecure in changing schools, especially coming from a 1st grade with 16 kids, 2 teachers and lots of individual attention. I think your morning reading 'set up' made him very comfortable and relaxed. He commented at home about your 'good ideas' and imagination. He really took an interest in reading and felt confident as the year progressed and he could notice his own progress and improvements. He enjoys talking about the books, authors and illustrators.

Piper became interested in books and reading this year while in your class. She is now very confident and is very pleased with herself. She notices authors, illustrators, medal winners and reads every night to herself. We also now belong to The American Library—this means more to Piper than the Country Club membership.

From the responses of the parents on the four questionnaires given to them throughout the school year,
It was evident that children did respond to the books read aloud in the classroom beyond the immediate environment of the classroom and after, sometimes long after, the read aloud event itself. Parents were supportive and enthusiastic about reading aloud to their children in the classroom and directly attributed this classroom activity to their children's increased interest in reading.

**Summary**

Chapter 6 presented a description of the responses of the children to the books read aloud in the classroom outside of the read aloud events. The observable responses of the children were described as "off-the-rug" events in the classroom. The responses were also evident in the children's writing and in their day to day behaviors. The responses from the questionnaires sent home to the parents documented that children did respond to the books read aloud in the classroom in the home environment.
CHAPTER VII
SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS AND IMPLICATIONS

Nature of the Problem
This study was implemented to explore the nature of the responses of second grade students in a multicultural setting to children's literature read aloud by the classroom teacher. This investigation of children's responses was not limited to the classroom and included the exploration of children's responses to the books read aloud in the classroom in their home environment. The study was conducted over an academic school year.

Procedures
Data collection was guided by the tenets of naturalistic inquiry and, therefore, qualitative research methodology was employed. To explore the responses of the children to the books read aloud in the classroom, research questions were tentatively proposed concentrating on three areas of investigation: 1) children's responses during the read aloud events, 2) children's responses outside of the read aloud events but
centered in the classroom, and 3) children's responses in the home environment.

Forms of data collection included: four sets of questionnaires sent to the parents during the school year, audio tapes of the read aloud events which were later transcribed, and field notes of observations which documented the verbal and nonverbal responses of the children outside of the read aloud events. The time frame for data collection was dependent on the type of information sought. Read aloud events were audio taped throughout the school year, parental questionnaires were sent home in October and December of 1985 and March and June of 1986 and field notes were kept in a journal throughout the study. The following section of this chapter presents the findings of the study which are organized under the three broad areas of the investigation.

Findings

The first set of research questions focused on the responses of the children during the read aloud events and explored the general question:

1. What was the nature of children's responses during the read aloud events?
From an analysis of the transcriptions, there emerged loosely defined categories of children's responses. These responses were: 1) children's responses as literary linkage, 2) children's responses as explanations, 3) children's responses to characters, 4) children's responses related to their world, and 5) children's responses to illustrations. These categories were adopted as guidelines in describing the responses of the children. It was found that children's responses were fluid in nature and that the categories served as general markers in understanding the children's responses. The categories were neither discrete nor mutually exclusive of each other. Each transcription of a read aloud event was contextually constrained and, therefore, represented one captured moment in time.

Children's responses to the books during the read aloud events matured over time. The response patterns of the children which permeated the transcriptions and became noticeable and more prevalent over the course of the school year were:

1. There was an increase in child initiated questions.

2. There was an increase in child initiated answers to questions voiced by other children.

3. There was an emergence and continued increase in the amount of children's opinion supported by book information.
4. There was an increase in children's elaboration of verbal responses.

5. There was the emergence of children's reference to responses of other children.

6. There was a lengthening of sequences of child to child responses.

7. There was the emergence and continued interest in illustration/text congruency.

The responses of the children grew in quantity as well as quality with transcriptions of the read aloud events ranging from a few pages in the autumn to seventeen pages in late spring. Thus, the observation of children's responses to literature read aloud over a long period of time was a necessary factor in providing an adequate environment for children's responses to develop and to be expressed.

The second area of the investigation concentrated on children's responses in the classroom outside of the read aloud events, but still within the social context of the classroom. The following research questions were investigated:

2. In the school environment, do students respond to children's literature read aloud beyond the actual read aloud event? If so, in what ways are the children's responses apparent?

It was found that, indeed, students did respond to children's literature read aloud in the classroom outside
of the read aloud events. The children's responses to the read aloud books were observable in many of the daily activities of the classroom: silent sustained reading, snacktime, a field trip, and in casual conversations. Verbal responses of the children during the school day were expressed in a quick, spontaneous and evanescent manner.

Children's responses to the read aloud books were also evident in their writing, their artwork and their nonverbal behaviors. In their writing, the children did not appear to initiate or incorporate directly information from the read aloud books, although there were incidents, which were observable, of a direct connection between the read aloud books and children's writing and illustrations. When a suggestion was made to directly link the children's writing to a particular read aloud book, the children responded positively.

The children actively sought the read aloud books to read on their own during silent sustained reading and other free moments throughout the school day. On occasion, more than one child wanted to read a particular read aloud book at the same time. These situations were resolved by the children sharing the book in different ways. Children also mirrored behaviors that occurred as part of the read aloud events. During periods of free
reading, children would read aloud to a friend, to other children, or to a favorite stuffed animal brought from home.

The third area of investigation concerned the responses of the children beyond the school environment. The research questions focused on the home environment and asked:

3. Do students continue to respond to children's literature read aloud in the classroom in their home environment? If so, what forms do these responses take?

Children did continue to respond to children's literature, read aloud by the classroom teacher, beyond the school environment. Questionnaires were sent home to the parents four times throughout the school year to collect data in the home environment. The questionnaires were designed to elicit from parents a record of the nature of children's responses to the read aloud books in the home. From the parental responses on the questionnaires and from casual comments made in conversations, it was found that children do respond in the home environment to the books read aloud in the classroom.

From the parental responses, it was found that the children in the second grade class seemed to be divided into two groups: 1) children who do respond to the books
read aloud and 2) children who do not respond, at least in observable ways, to the books read aloud in the classroom. The observable responses of the children were demonstrated in various ways.

The responses of the children were direct and exhibited in obvious ways and/or the children's responses were elusive and ephemeral in nature. Even when the responses of the children were captured and noted, it was difficult for parents to express and adequately convey the nature of their children's responses to another person.

It was revealed that children may not on their own initiate responses to the books read aloud in the classroom, but if parents expressed interest in these read aloud books, children shared their responses in more direct ways. This situation suggested that if parents expressed an interest in the read aloud books, the children may respond by sharing their responses with family members in more observable forms.

Parental responses on the questionnaires were overwhelmingly positive about the activity of reading aloud to their children in the classroom. These responses indicated that the parents believed the activity of reading aloud to their children in the school environment positively influenced their children's
reading habits, their children's interest in and motivation to read children's literature on their own, and their children's ability to critically evaluate the quality of the books their children read. This finding was especially significant for the support of reading aloud to children in the classroom. Parents, at least these parents, believed that reading aloud to their children was beneficial for the growth of their children as independent readers.

From the responses of the parents on the questionnaires, it was evident that the children did respond to the books read aloud in the classroom outside of the immediate environment of the classroom, and after, sometimes long after, the read aloud event itself.

Although the findings in an ethnographic study are by necessity closely connected to the particular setting and constrained by environmental and social contexts in which the study was implemented, a transfer of the findings from this study can be made to similar environments. The following section presents the conclusions reached from this study.

Conclusions

Throughout the school year, the emergence of children's developing skills in maintaining, utilizing
and focusing their attention on the read aloud books was clearly evident. Children’s responses were not limited to the read aloud events and were evident in other activities during the school day.

An atmosphere of acceptance of children’s individual responses was important in creating a nonthreatening, nonjudgmental environment in which children felt safe and comfortable in sharing their responses with others. Children appeared to be initially hesitant in expressing their responses to the read aloud books and appeared to be even more hesitant if they did not agree with other children’s responses. An atmosphere which viewed differences in opinions and points of view as appropriate and acceptable was fundamental to children sharing their responses with others.

In viewing the role of the reader, one aspect of this role was to act as a guide and expand the horizons of children’s initial responses to the read aloud books. One area in which this guidance was given is the asking of open-ended questions which focused the attention of the children into a different avenue than anticipated. This guidance was proffered in an atmosphere which deemed children’s responses important and worthwhile as the story was explored together.
Children's deepening and discerning responses to the books read aloud did not happen spontaneously. A model was needed to initially provide a framework for children to define and express their own responses to the read aloud books. For many children these read aloud events were their first experiences in school situations in which they were encouraged to express their responses to books read aloud to them.

The use of children's literature in read aloud events was central to awakening children's critical and discerning "eye" for quality. These elements of quality included text, illustrations and text/illustration congruity. The selection of appropriate books for the read aloud events was dependent upon such criteria as: knowing the children, their literary needs and interests, their depth of literary understanding, and their background in children's literature. This understanding was needed to select read aloud books which would spark the interest and enthusiasm of the children.

Children did respond to the books beyond the read aloud events in the classroom. Providing children with opportunities to express their responses to the read aloud books in activities such as silent sustained reading and providing an atmosphere in the classroom which was conducive to fostering the expression of
children's responses outside of the read aloud events were vital elements.

Through the responses on the questionnaires and through casual comments made in conversations, parents provided insightful information on aspects of their children's literacy development in the home. The input from the parents helped to broaden the understanding of children's responses to literature across different environments. Parents, at least the parents in this study, were most receptive to recording areas of their children's literacy development and sharing that information with the school.

By the classroom teacher's daily behavior of reading aloud to the children, by the sharing of her enthusiasm for and interest in the read aloud events, and by the behavior of sharing information about particular authors and read aloud books, the classroom teacher displayed concrete examples of the behaviors and habits of a "reader".

Children made connections between their own writing and their identity as an author with authors of the read aloud books. These connections were also made in the home environment and shared with the parents. Children began to speak of themselves as writers of "books".
Children brought to the read aloud activity varying levels of experiences with children's literature. Reading aloud to the children was an introduction to children's literature for some children, the enhancement of interest for other children and the augmentation of knowledge and pleasure in children's literature for other children. Children spoke positively about hearing stories read aloud daily and continued to express positive comments about the books beyond the read aloud events and in the home environment.

The children exhibited positive behaviors about reading in the classroom and in the home environment. These reading behaviors were evident: the increased periods of quiet independent reading, a deepening interest and enjoyment in reading, an increase in the activity of seeking the read aloud books and other books by particular authors and the initiation of literary discussions with peers, the classroom teacher and parents.

The deepening level of children's responses to the read aloud books occurred over the course of the school year and was dependent on an extended period of time for development. Over the school year, this literary development was enhanced as the children acquired and utilized an expanded reservoir from which to draw their
literary responses.

Time and opportunity were needed for children to articulate and express their responses to the read aloud books. Children for whom English was not their first language may need more time to adequately express their responses in a group situation. During the school year, the children increased their interest in other children's responses, verbally referred back to other children's responses, and came to acknowledge the acceptability of different opinions.

Children did not accept the reiteration of information previously shared in earlier read aloud events. Although books were read aloud for three times, each additional reading was perceived as an opportunity to learn something "new" about the book. However, the same topic with a different perspective was explored and in this context was acceptable. Children did not define the rereading of a book as merely an opportunity for review. Children displayed enthusiasm for all the genres of children's literature read aloud and were particularly receptive to poetry, fairy tales and folk tales.

Reading aloud to the children was beneficial for children in varying ways. Parents perceived reading aloud to be a particularly positive activity for their children to experience in the classroom and actively
supported the practice.

Children overwhelmingly responded positively when an author of a read aloud book visited the classroom. Their positive responses were apparent in the classroom and in the home long after the visit. These responses were reflected in their casual conversation as well as their own writing.

The values of rereading children's literature was supported by the children's increased depth and length of responses. Children were receptive to each of the three rereadings of a single book. However, a fourth reading of a book was not met with the same degree of enthusiasm. The rereading of books was initially met with children's responses such as "But we already read that book." The attitude conveyed in this response soon disappeared and was replaced with general enthusiasm as the children experienced interest and pleasure in exploring a read aloud book in more perceptive ways.

Within the limitations of this study, the following conclusions were drawn:

1. **Providing time in the classroom for reading aloud to children, daily, is valuable and important for nurturing children's literacy development.**

2. **During the read aloud events an atmosphere which encourages and supports children's initial literary responses is necessary.**
3. Over an extended period of time, guidance during the read aloud events is necessary in supporting and in deepening children’s responses to the read aloud books.

4. The role of the reader is also one of a model who, at least in the initial read aloud events, models the behaviors which define the parameters of literary responses, in the broadest contexts, to the books read aloud.

5. The selection of books for reading aloud to children which reflects quality of writing and illustrating is essential in stimulating children’s interest in the values of children’s literature.

6. Knowing the children in the classroom, both collectively and individually, is necessary in the selection of read aloud books.

7. Providing opportunities beyond the read aloud events through activities which are part of the school day is necessary for children’s continued expression of literary responses.

8. Parents provide valuable information on their children’s responses to read aloud books in the home environment.

9. The classroom teacher is a strong role model for children in developing and strengthening their reading habits.

10. Children do make connections between the read aloud books and their own writing.

11. Children’s appreciation for and pleasure derived from children’s literature can be enhanced and augmented by reading aloud to them.
12. Children develop and continue to express positive attitudes toward reading when they hear children's literature read aloud, daily, in the classroom.

13. Children's reading behaviors can be positively influenced when they hear children's literature read aloud, daily, in the classroom.

14. When children hear, daily, children's literature read aloud to them, they focus their responses to the books read aloud in more critical, more discerning ways.

15. Children express their verbal responses to children's literature read aloud daily in more deepening ways.

16. Over an extended period of time, children develop a sense of "community" during the read aloud events.

17. Children define the read aloud events as a forum for learning from new experiences, not as a period for review of prior information.

18. Teachers can be reassured that reading aloud to children is a strong tool for developing children's reading interest and is a most beneficial activity in the classroom.

19. Having a visitation by an author of a book or books which have been read aloud in class is a motivating and influential factor on children's literacy development.

20. Children respond positively to many different genres of children's literature, including poetry and folk and fairy tales.

Reassessing the Four Broad Issues

In Chapter 1 it was stated that present read aloud research has left unanswered questions related to:

1. language learning potential
2. methodology
3. home and school contributions
4. cultural perspectives

Each of these four areas has been broached within the context of this study.

The read aloud events created an opportunity for children to expand their language capabilities. It was shown that children increasingly responded to the read aloud books and to their peers over the course of the school year. The read aloud events introduced children to books and to the authors and to an understanding of a "book discussion". The read aloud events provided the children with an increasing reservoir of knowledge of children's literature and a deepening sense of literary development. This experiential base of literacy experiences created a situation in which all the children shared a commonality of experiences. With this
commonality of literary experiences, the children who did not speak English as their first language were more confident in expressing themselves. Second language children were also in a position to hear native speakers of English express themselves in a naturally occurring context of language experiences and were able to interact and actively respond in this environment.

This commonality of literacy experiences during the read aloud events also provided the children with a forum in which to respond to the books outside of the read aloud episodes. For example, the children discussed the books with their peers during snacktime and shared the read aloud books in small groups during S.S.R. Opportunities for these literary, language learning experiences among the children outside of the read aloud events are needed and essential.

An ethnographic style of research and the classroom teacher researcher provided a context in which the children’s responses were "tracked" throughout the school year. Children’s responses to the read aloud books were found to be spontaneous, ephemeral and evanescent. Without a method of research that permitted documentation of the children’s responses in naturally occurring contexts, many of the responses of the children would not have been detected and recorded. Without this broad
stroke in collecting data, the extent to which the children responded to the read aloud books would not have been discovered.

It was found that parents responded positively in providing information on their children’s literacy development in the home environment. This information provided by the parents was critical in describing the responses of the children to the books read aloud. Without the parental input, the classroom teacher’s perception of children’s literacy development would have been distorted and limited at best. A case in point is the understanding of one child, Gonzalo. Gonzalo rarely responded verbally during the read aloud events. He sat quietly and listened to the books read aloud. Unfortunately, Gonzalo’s silence during the read aloud events could have been construed as nonresponse. On the parental questionnaire, his mother responded that Gonzalo enjoyed hearing stories read aloud and "pushed" the family so that he would not be late for school and miss part of the read aloud events. His mother wrote:

Gonzalo was very insecure in changing schools, especially coming from a 1st grade with 16 kids, 2 teachers and lots of individual attention. I think your morning reading ’set up’ made him very comfortable and relaxed. He commented at home about you ‘good ideas’ and imagination. He really took an interest in reading and felt confident as the year progressed and he could notice his own progress and improvements. He enjoys talking about the
books, authors and illustrators.

Without this type of information from the parents, it could have been assumed that Goncalo did not respond to the read aloud books since he seldom if ever responded verbally during the read aloud events. Parents and classroom teachers sharing their knowledge of the children provide a context in which children's literacy development is best understood.

Although the enrollment of the classroom represented children who come from many different countries and speak languages other than English as their mother-tongue, evidence of any one particular culture was not clearly defined in the responses of the children to the books read aloud in the classroom. Many of the children have not lived in their country and have only visited family members in their country during the summer months. For example, Megan, although a citizen of the United States, has not lived there. It would be more accurate to describe the classroom as a representation of children who embody an international community. Although there were incidents in which a child's own culture would directly emerge during their responses, these incidents were difficult to uncover and isolate.
Recommendations for Classroom Teacher Practice

1. Teachers need to provide time, daily, to read aloud to children.

2. Teachers need to be knowledgeable in children’s literature and in the criteria which establishes a children’s book as a piece of literature.

3. Teachers need to know their children, their literary interests, their favorite authors and their special interests. In knowing their children, teachers can select appropriate books for the read aloud events which stimulate, challenge and make enjoyable the activity of reading aloud to children.

4. Teachers need to incorporate rereading children’s literature as part of their read aloud program.

5. Teachers need to show and express their interest and enthusiasm in reading aloud to the children.

6. Teachers need to share their reading interests with their children and display during the
school day their enthusiasm for reading.

7. Teachers need to know the techniques of reading aloud which are most beneficial for the children.

8. Teachers need to express to the children that the children's active participation during the read aloud event is acceptable and appropriate.

9. Teachers need to establish forms of communication with the parents of the children to gain a more complete understanding of the children's literacy development.

10. Teachers need to display prominently the read aloud books.

11. Teachers need to place the read aloud books in an area in which the children have easy access to them.

12. Teachers need to make initial connections between the read aloud books and the children's own writing.
13. Teachers need to "feel" a love of children's literature in order to most effectively introduce children to the pleasures of reading.

14. Teachers need to have easy access to a good source of library books.

**Recommendations for Classroom-Centered Research**

Since this research study was conducted by the classroom teacher/researcher, gaining entrance for implementation of this study did not present a problematic situation. Conversely, a researcher who was not a classroom teacher/researcher would encounter several obstacles in implementing a study in a multi-cultural classroom outside the United States. These obstacles include: gaining entrance in international schools which generally maintain "tight" security, acquiring proper papers to reside in a foreign country for an extended period of time, and permission of the parents to conduct the study.

In light of these factors as well as other factors which present themselves when conducting research in a foreign country, the following recommendations were predicated on the fact that the researcher would be a classroom teacher/researcher.
1. Replications in second grade classrooms at other international schools.

This ethnographic study described the responses of the children in one classroom. What would be the nature of children's responses to books read aloud in another second grade classroom? What similarities and/or differences would be evidenced? Would parents of the children note similarities and/or differences in the responses of their children to the books read aloud in other classrooms? Would there be naturally occurring patterns of children's responses which could be transferable to other multi-cultural second grade classrooms?

2. Replications at other grade levels.

This study was conducted in a second grade classroom. What would be the nature of children's responses to books read aloud in the classroom at more advanced levels? What would be the responses of these children to books other than picture books? Conversely, what would be the responses of children at lower grade levels with picture books?

3. Case studies of selected children in the classroom.
This study explored all children’s responses to the books read aloud in the classroom. Case studies in which selected children’s responses are investigated in detail would yield more information of individual children’s responses over an extended period of time.

4. **Longitudinal studies of children over a period of two or possibly three school years to “track” the developmental progression of children’s responses to literature read aloud in the classroom.**

   This study described the children’s responses to books read aloud over a period of a school year. Would children’s responses deepen, mature and develop over a period of two or three years? Since children usually do not spend more than three years at any one international school, three years would probably be the longest length of time that a study of this nature could be implemented. Will children continue to respond at home to the books read aloud in the classroom?

5. **Studies which explore the role that the classroom teacher plays in influencing the literacy development of her students during the read aloud events?**
The focus of this study was on the responses of the children during the read aloud events. What behaviors, both verbal and nonverbal, of the classroom teacher influence or effect children's responses to the books read aloud? The use of video tapes, as well as audio tapes, could record the behaviors of the classroom teacher. Focusing on the role of the classroom teacher would provide additional information in understanding the social context in which children’s responses are expressed.

6. **Further studies which focus on one particular aspect of children's responses to the read aloud books outside of the read aloud events.**

This study approached the exploration of children's responses of books read aloud in the classroom in a broad, general way and recorded data from many sources. Fine tuning the data collection to one area would increase the knowledge of reading aloud to children in a more concentrated fashion. In what ways are the responses of the children to the books read aloud observable in their writing? A study which explored this area of literacy would add information and make more complete the reading and writing connections children display.
7. **Further investigate children's responses to books read aloud in the classroom in which all read aloud books are permanently available in the classroom.**

In this study the read aloud books were returned to the library periodically throughout the school year. How would the factor of the read aloud books permanently housed in the classroom and always available effect the responses of the children? In what ways would the availability of the read aloud books influence the responses of the children?

8. **Concurrently conducting studies at the same grade levels.**

This study explored the responses of children in one second grade classroom. If studies were conducted concurrently in different second grade classrooms, would there be patterns of similarities and/or significant areas of differences in the nature of children's responses to the read aloud books?

9. **Concurrently conducting studies at different grade levels.**

This study investigated responses of children who were all second grade children. Investigating children's
responses to the same books read aloud to students in different grade levels would yield information that help describe responses over differing points of children’s development and add the factor of social and environmental contexts of the classroom.

10. The implementation of studies which explore read aloud events that are organized into small groups.

This study investigated the responses of the second grade children in as a whole class activity. How would the responses of the children to books read aloud in a small group activity be effected? Would a "community of readers" still be established within the context of all the children in the classroom? How would the responses of the children without the shared activity of the read aloud event influence the responses of the children?

11. Further investigation to explore the responses of second grade children during the read aloud in different classroom environments: traditional, skills and whole language settings.

This study was conducted in a whole language classroom. From a comparison of the responses of the children in the three different environments, what forms
would the responses of the children take in three
different educational settings? What differences and/or
similarities would be evidenced? What forms would the
responses of the children take in their home environment
and what differences and/or similarities would be
evidenced?

12. Further investigation that would focus
   on the values of rereading children's literature
   in the classroom.

This study explored children's responses over a
school year with rereading as one facet of the
investigation. Brissey investigated first grade
children's responses to literature read aloud over a four
month period with the read aloud events centered in small
groups. What would be the findings of a study which
solely concentrated on the values of rereading using an
ethnographic approach and naturalistic inquiry? What
would be the findings if the rereading of the books were
separated by a week, instead of a longer periods as was
generally the case in this study?
APPENDIX A

LIST OF READ ALOUD BOOKS


Arrow to the Sun by Gerald McDermott. Viking, 1974


Cinderella by Charles Perrault. Illustrated by Susan Jeffers. Dial Books Young, 1985


Franky Furbo unpublished manuscript.


Horton Hatches the Egg by Dr. Seuss. Random, 1940.


Little Red Cap by The Brothers Grimm. Translated from German by Elizabethe Crawford. Illustrated by Lizabeth Zwerger. Neugebauer Press, 1983.


Make Way for Ducklings by Robert McCloskey. Viking, 1941.


The Ox-Cart Man by Donald Hall. Illustrated by Barbara Cooney. Viking, 1979.


The Bremen Town Musicians by Jacob Grimm and Wilhelm Grimm. Illustrated by Janina Domanska, 1980.


APPENDIX B

TRANSCRIPTION
ARROW TO THE SUN III

T. Second Grade Werewolf by Daniel Pinkwater and our reread, Arrow to the Sun, a Pueblo Indian tale.

Ch. By Gerald McDermott.

Pl. What's a Pueblo?

T. It is a tribe in...

G. America

T. The United States and it usually in a very arid land.

G. This is one of my second best books.

Te. When did it win the Caldecott?

T. 1975. It was published in 1974 so it was the award in 1975.

Pl. Um it's so hard to make those pictures just when I looked at it the first time that I thought that it would be sooo easy so then I tried it on a piece of paper and it was so hard I couldn't really do it.

T. So you can tell already it is a book of good quality cause the end papers start to let you know how expensive this book might be. Cause it takes money to print this. It cheaper just to put a white sheet of paper on there. It's more expensive to put paper on there that's from the artist.

All. Um he must have really had a good imagination for um the really good ideas of the illustrations. He made that design up in his head.

Te. Does the library buy this book?

Co. It would be a lot to buy if you bought it.
Gr. This is one of my second best books of Indian after um Jumping Mouse.

Pl. At the book fair I saw a paper back book of Arrow to the Sun.

T. Title page....read

H. What's adapted?

T. It's something like retold.

Pa. He wouldn't know the pictures he would just he must have read just the story the folk tale and then drew the pictures how he seen them in his head cause he when they do the folk tale they wouldn't have the pictures to show you.

Tz. Words help make the illustrations.

Pa. Maybe when um that book was made the folk tale was telled you couldn't make photos and that's why they didn't know what photos to make for it.

Ch. What was the other awards in 1976?

T. Do you mean awards or honor books?

Ch. Honor books.

Pa. I would like to find out in 19...who what in 1977 cause that's when I was born.

T. Ashanti to Zulu. African Traditions by Margaret Musgrove. Now remember you will get this page and you can look them up on your own.

Te. We are going to get these pages?

T. Today, if I can get the machine.

Pl. Mrs. Yocom you know like here it's says For Beverly More than Ever. Beverly's not really an Indian name. It's more like Silver Moon or
Chief Thunder Cloud or like Running Wolf or something like that.

Ch. I know.

Al. A dedication. You never read it.

Al. Sometimes books have two dedications.

Co. When did they make the Caldecott. When did they invent it for books?

T. It will say right in here. The first caldecott was 1938. About 50 year ago.

Te. Mrs. Yocom was it the first when they put caldecott's on books?

T. That was 1938.

Pl. I never I noticed I didn't never thought about Caldecott before in my life until I got you for a teacher.

T. And a whole new world opened up

Ch. I didn't either.

Te. The first little ball is the spirit. The father that little ball right there is the spirit that he brought to the world.

H. All the pictures are in orange, yellow and black.

Pl. No.

Ch. Not all of them.

Te. At the end.


Te. See there's colors.

Te. He brought the spirit to that lady so that she could have the son.

Ch. Here it is.

Pa. I just never noticed something I
never noticed. If you look on the page
where the baby is, the mother has no more
the round thing on her. It's the
baby that has it on.

Te. We know. It was the sunlight that
went next to her tummy.

Pl. That made her have a baby.

Te. Oh, I understand why because right here
the boys have a kind of sticks and
this was his and he broke it.

Ch. He didn't. The other boys did.
He wouldn't be crazy.

Tz. Sure does look a long way to the corn.

Te. It is so pretty how the author the
illustrator did these kinds it looks
like computer who made it.

Ch. You mean Gerald McDermott.

T. And you can see...

Ch. It's painted.

To. How did he become...

Te. That's why they call it... on the next
page like that.

To. How could he change form?

Te. He just did like transform.

Ch. He just did like this (shows)

Al. He's probably like Jumping Frog.

Te. But there's a problem this can't be real
because how can you get you're
kind of fat then you get thinner and thinner
and each time you get larger
and larger.

Ch. Stretches.
To. Plus you get smaller.

G. And anyway this is a fairy tale.

Co. Folk tale.

Te. You can tell right here he put an
     arrow to see if he was the same size.

Ch. And also he put himself maybe on the arrow.

J. It is cause you can tell right here you
     can see some of the stuff on the arrow.

T. Good point John.

Ch. Not to turn one more page.

Te. That's my favorite.

T. We know that's the boy because
     what do we see here?

Tz. The sign.

Te. And that's the spirit.

Ch. It has to be that he went on an arrow
     cause how could he have the arrow
     with him now?

Te. That's his father's spirit.

Ch. I know.

Ma. I think I know how he did those. Like
     there is paper with these little
     squares he might have just practiced
     lots and lots of times of that and
     then get it in his head so he could do it
     without the line. But that takes lots of
     practice. Cause it's even hard drawing
     on those little squares.

Te. He wants he says you have to prove that
     means that he is the son well
     he comes out in color like him maybe if
     he passes all of them he is not
     the son of the Lord of God that he might die.
Ch. Or he would just stay how he is.

Tz. It looks like the boy has one eye.

Te. I think it's the way he's turned.

T. What does it mean I will endure these trials.

Ma. I will take a chance to go through these trials.

An. Oh, cause that's...

Te. Lions.

Tz. Tigers.

Te. Lions.

Tz. Tigers.

T. Lions.

Te. They're girls.

An. That's white the white thing is the nose
and the black thing is the eyes.
It's not one eye.

H. The lines look nice.

Ch. Here you can see a serpent. Here you can
see a bee. Here you can see lightning.

Ai. The lions symbol doesn't really make anything.

Tz. It's the teeth.

Ch. I know.

Te. And right here the next page it looks
like he must have cut it out...

T. Cause this is now the kiva of...

    serpents.

Tz. Looks like rattlesnakes.

T. You know that he is successful with this
one and then he goes to the
next...

Gr. One looks like a rattle snake and one looks like a serpent.

Tz. Whenever he goes in one it turns bigger the box turns bigger.

K. In the page of the bees you can see him tasting some honey.

Co. The um a serpent a serpent is a snake it's not one kind of animal, a serpent.

T. It's just another kind of name for a snake.

Alex. The box of lions, well it was colored like you see the others, now turn the page, and now it's black like he was.

T. Yes, look.

Ch. If you look very close you can see his tongue is made like an arrow.

H. Oh maybe he goes in it so he can get the color.

Ma. Yea, mayabe, that's what I'm thinking. It's like he gave his color to the lions and he got one color of it, but it only goes through on the lightning.

Pa. I was thinking about each time he goes in one. He must does give away he gives his color to them the animals. And the animals give their color to him. And then when he passes the light, the colors go to him.

Te. Right here you can see from this page it's green in here it's black and here it's pink. Then it will be orange on the last page.

Al. Whenever he goes through those boxes they get bigger and get a different symbol.
Gr. No, they get smaller.

T. No, ...

Gr. That's the one they just went through. That's probably why they got bigger.

G. He's scared of that one. (lightning)

Many say no.

Te. He isn't.

An. It shocked him.

An. Oh, I see something. It's right there, that's the sign of his father.

T. And you can see it coming in.

Te. That's the colors of that's the power of...the sun.

Alex. It looks like it's a pocket or something.

T. And you can see, how is he going back to earth?

Tz. With an arrow.

Gr. But she meant now you can see the two eyes. And the other time they were white

Tz. It looks exactly like the same bow that the pot maker shot him with.

J. It is, it is the same bow.

T. The arrow maker.

Ch. But he didn't have the colors.

J. You can see right there.

T. And now what does he look like?

J. His father.
Pa. And he looks like an arrow to me.

R. It looks like the arrow...

Tz. I think I know what the father's spirit is. It might be the colors of him.

Te. And his father is all brown now.

To. Turn it the other page. You can see that the father has a different sign than the boy.

T. Exactly.

T. Who just discovered that the father changed colors?

Al. Me.

T. Alex, cause here was the father. Here now is the father.

Te. They just put it in orange because of the sun.

Gr. Turn to the page where the eyes were white or something. Before he went into the kivas.

G. But look his eye is white.

An. It only one eye.

Gr. But you don't know that the other eye isn't going to be black.

An. The white one is the nose..

To. They have the designs.

Pl. Here is the lightning. Here's the bee. Here's the serpent. Here's the lion and here's the woman.

To. The bees.

Pl. And this is like...

Ch. The honey.
Tz. Probably the spirit is the color cause
look when he came down he turned
into all kinds of different colors.

Ch. I know.

Te. The one who looks like a bee is a bee.

All. If you notice all the time when the sun
is littler you can see the
father always brown. Turn to the other page there.

Pa. Where the father throws...

T. Do you mean at the very beginning All?

J. No, he didn’t shoot the son, he shot the symbol.

Co. That’s the arrow. When the son is little the
people are orange.

Co. That’s the arrow.

Alex. The artist must be careful because he waited
to put a bit more colors
because he had he wanted to make a story like
to make a power of colors.

K. When the father is shooting the boy,
the father turns bigger.

T. I like the way people can talk about the
illustration. Then we aren’t spending all
our time trying to leaf through the book.
When you can talk about the illustration
we don’t waste our time turning it back and forth
and back and forth.

R. Where there’s the sun, well
it’s like the first page.

T. What’s interesting and I’ve never quite
seen it before. The people
celebrated his return in the dance of life.
I’ve never quite seen an
entire black page. But the boarder again of
just the colors.

Ch. It’s a very nice boarder.
T. It's completely black.

Te. I knew.

Ch. That's very good.

Ma. In Pennsylvania we learned an Indian dance and I think it was the Dance of Life.

Te. I knew what you just said but I didn't raise up my hand because I didn't think it would be so interesting. And the back it's the same one but it has colors. No right here.

T. Oh, that's interesting too. It matches. Here are the colors of the boy...

Tz. And the other one's the color of the man.

Pa. And there's a little picture of if you turn... There's a half of one of those little things that are on the front cover the spark of one of those lights.

Ch. See there's a spark that goes by the spine and behind.

Tz. See here it goes back here.

T. Oh, you have to open it up and then you can see that.

Pl. Right here. Together there is a picture.

T. It tells a little about him and how's he written Arrow to the Sun, what colors he used. And on this page it tells how he made his art work.

Ch. Oh, that should be very interesting.

Te. Tomorrow the book must go down to the library. So if you have some time today I want you to read about how he created his art.

Ma. If we did like yesterday to see what's inside um from that plastic part I thought I saw something.
T. You did see something. What you did see is the...

Co. Symbol.

T. Now is that the father or the son?

SON

R....it has those colors

T. Just so strikingly beautiful.

Te. Mr. I forgot his name.

T. McDermott

Te. Yea, he made yellow and orange and that wouldn’t go wo well, but when he is in the sun with those colors it looks so good cause all those colors go so well it’s so bright and clean.

Ma. Maybe the people when they were reading through would just say “Oh, this book it’s so black and yellow and orange. It doesn’t look very good. But when the colors came they think it would look great. That’s why they probably gave it the caldecott.

R. It’s like it red and orange and yellow.
APPENDIX C

PARENT QUESTIONNAIRE
1. HAS YOUR CHILD TALKED AT HOME ABOUT ANY OF THESE BOOKS READ ALOUD BY ME? IF SO, CAN YOU DESCRIBE THE EVENT.

2. HAS YOUR CHILD EXPRESSED AN INTEREST IN ANY OF THESE AUTHORS OR A PARTICULAR BOOK THAT WAS READ ALOUD IN THE CLASSROOM? IF SO, WHICH ONES WERE NOTED?

3. HAS YOUR CHILD REQUESTED THAT YOU READ ALOUD TO HIM/HER ANY OF THESE BOOKS READ ALOUD IN THE CLASSROOM? IF SO, COULD YOU NAME THE BOOK OR AUTHOR?

4. HAS YOUR CHILD READ TO YOU ANY OF THESE BOOKS READ ALOUD IN THE CLASSROOM? IF SO, COULD YOU DESCRIBE THE EVENT.
5. HAS YOUR CHILD TALKED ABOUT ANY OF THE ILLUSTRATIONS OR ILLUSTRATORS OF THESE BOOKS WITH YOU?

6. HAS YOUR CHILD SIGNED OUT FROM THE LIBRARY ANY OF THESE BOOKS OR AUTHORS I HAVE READ OR HAS HE/SHE REQUESTED THAT ANY OF THESE BOOKS OR AUTHORS BE PURCHASED AND ADDED TO HIS/HER OWN BOOK COLLECTION?

7. HAS YOUR CHILD RESPONDED TO ANY OF THESE BOOKS IN OTHER WAYS THAN NOTED BY THESE QUESTIONS? FOR EXAMPLE, HAS YOUR CHILD DRAMATIZED ANY OF THE PLOTS, STORIES OR CHARACTERS FROM THE BOOKS?

8. HAS YOUR CHILD COMMENTED ON THE QUALITY OF THESE BOOKS READ ALOUD, EITHER NEGATIVE OR POSITIVE? THE COMMENTS COULD BE DIRECTED TO THE STORY OR THE ILLUSTRATIONS OR BOTH.

9. HAS YOUR CHILD TALKED WITH YOU ABOUT THEIR OWN WRITING OF STORIES? IF SO, COULD YOU RECALL A SPECIFIC TIME AND DESCRIBE IT?
10. **WAS A PARTICULAR AUTHOR OR BOOK SPARKED AN INTEREST IN YOUR CHILD’S OWN WRITING?**

11. **DID YOUR CHILD TALKED ABOUT BOOKS OR AUTHORS READ ALOUD BY ME EARLIER IN THE YEAR?**

12. **HAVE YOU NOTICED A CHANGE IN YOUR CHILD’S READING BEHAVIOR? FOR EXAMPLE, YOUR CHILD MIGHT SHOW INTEREST IN OTHER WAYS. IF SO, CAN YOU DESCRIBE THIS BEHAVIOR?**

13. **HAS YOUR CHILD COMMENTED ON THE BOOKS THAT HAVE BEEN REREAD THIS YEAR? IF SO, COULD YOU DESCRIBE THE COMMENTS?**

14. **COMMENTS:**
APPENDIX D

LETTERS OF INTRODUCTION FOR STUDY
Lower School Office
September 26, 1985

TO PARENTS OF PUPILS IN MRS. YOCOM'S CLASS

Dear Parents,

Attached you will find Mrs. Yocom's description of the children's literature program she is offering this year for pupils of her class. She is undertaking a studied approach to literature for younger children, with the intention of incorporating her observations in a university doctoral thesis.

We feel fortunate to include as a member of our faculty a teacher of Mrs. Yocom's caliber, whose extensive experience in this field makes possible such a rich experience for your children. Your support of her program will be greatly appreciated.

Sincerely,

Director of the Lower School
September 26, 1985

Dear Parents,

I am writing to you this, the first of a series of informative letters, to help you know more about what I am doing in the classroom this year. As some of you already know, I taught second grade at A.S.F. from 1979-1982. I left Paris in 1982 to pursue a doctoral degree in reading education at Ohio State University. During the past three years of study, I became interested in how children respond to children’s literature. The study I am proposing will continue throughout the year. It will explore how children in a multi-cultural environment respond to children’s literature read aloud by me, the classroom teacher. In most primary elementary classrooms, teachers read aloud to their children on a daily basis, yet little or no knowledge exists as to how children respond to this read-aloud literature.

I feel that this study can reveal much about how children look for meaning and link stories to each other. This information can have a direct effect on expanding our knowledge of the reading process and, ultimately, on improving reading instruction.

I am also writing this letter to enlist your aid in my study. It is expected that the children will respond to children’s literature read aloud outside of the classroom where the teacher cannot observe and note their response. I will send home questionnaires, periodically, throughout the school year. These questionnaires will focus on how your child responds at home to the books that I have read aloud in the classroom. I would also truly appreciate any volunteer who would be willing to talk with me two or three times this year about how your child responds to children’s literature read aloud. Questionnaires can give valuable information, but they cannot take the place of a good discussion.

I hope to talk a bit more about my study at the Open House and answer any questions you might have.

Sincerely,

Judy Yocom
BIBLIOGRAPHY


Putnam, L. (1982). A descriptive study of two philosophically different approaches to reading readiness as they were used in six inner city kindergartens. Final report to National Institute of Education. (ERIC document 220807).


