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DILEMNAS OF TEACHING:
A SELF-REFLECTIVE ANALYSIS OF TEACHING
IN A THIRD-FOURTH GRADE INFORMAL 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
Steven Roland DeLaop, B.A., M.Ed.

* * * * *

The Ohio State University
1980

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Finally, I wish to acknowledge the third and fourth grade children at Indianola School who were, most certainly, my teachers as well as my students.
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CHAPTER I

THE NATURE OF THE PROBLEM

Background to the Study

Teaching and Classroom Life

The problem of understanding teaching and classroom life has been a persistent one for the educational community, but it is only within this last decade that research theory and methodology have recognized the complexity of this problem. Traditionally, the classroom was treated as the "black box" in the education process. Emphasis was placed upon developing correlations between input and output factors. Teaching methods, teaching attitudes, and curriculum programs were used as indicators of the teaching-learning process, but rarely were these factors examined as they were experienced by teachers and students in practical settings. Medley and Metzel (1963) summarized this traditional perspective in educational research:

The research worker limits himself to the manipulation or studying of antecedents and consequents ... but never once looks into the classroom to see how the teacher actually teaches or the pupil actually learns (p. 247).

Horwitz's (1979) recent review of the research on the psychological effects of the open classroom provided evidence that this basic emphasis dominates classroom research even today. Although several studies were cited that involved direct observation of classroom interaction, the majority reviewed emphasized output measurements through
questionnaires and standardized testing instruments. Horwitz suggested therefore that:

... There is room for more descriptive study of the process of open classroom teaching to provide careful analysis of teacher-pupil interactions and to provide close investigations of the way in which such key concepts as structure, freedom, and authority are actualized in ... classrooms (p. 82).

Several significant directions in educational research are beginning to provide the descriptive analysis of classroom life and teacher-student interaction that Horwitz is encouraging. These different research perspectives all share the basic belief that a close investigation of classroom events is an essential first step if educators are to understand the processes of teaching and learning, and ultimately the processes of education in our schools today. Mehan (1979) has grouped these classroom research perspectives into three general categories, namely, the quantification schemes, conventional field studies, and linguistically informed ethnography. Quantification schemes, in the interaction analysis tradition, code predetermined verbal behaviors of teachers and students during formal lesson times. These inquiries are frequently rooted in the field of social psychology. Conventional field research examines the classroom as a cultural system, considering traditions established over time, and the social components of school learning. More recently, sociolinguistic and ethnomethodological perspectives are uncovering the functions of classroom verbal interaction and the social organization of classroom lessons. All of these perspectives provide important and unique vantage points
for understanding teaching, classroom life, and teacher-student interactions.

Teacher Thinking

What continues to be overlooked, even in many descriptive studies of teacher-student interaction, is the thinking of teachers as they ponder and probe into their own classroom experiences. This neglect is partially attributed to the behaviorist model that has dominated most inquiry perspectives. The insistence upon studying displayed behavior has left little room for exploring the teacher reasoning that lies behind the behavior. What has remained unexamined are the purposes, intentions, and beliefs that teachers attribute to their behavior and their own perceptions of classroom interaction.

Teachers are mistakenly viewed as objects of study, rather than as subjects with purposeful activity, with intentions and actions which are meaningful within the constraints of a specific classroom. Their interactions with specific children are frequently shaped by retrospective events, teaching goals, and expectations for different children. Carew and Lightfoot (1979) have argued that "teachers are the most profound and experienced knowers of the classroom scene, and their perceptions and reasoning should be an integral part of research." They go on to suggest that because "teachers have a unique insider's view into what is going on in the classroom, ... [their] view ... is at least as valid to understanding the educational process as an outside observer's" (p. 21). Bussis, Chittenden, and Amarel (1975) have argued similarly that "the observing and inquiring teacher is an invaluable and virtually untapped source for the development of insightful [teaching] theory."
The importance of teacher thinking as a substantive focus in research is becoming more widely accepted. Recent investigations by McCutcheon (1979a), Yinger (1979), Amarel, Bussis, and Chittenden (1976), and Harland (1977) have provided detailed accounts of how teachers interpret their classroom experiences. Maxine Greene (1973) has spoken powerfully to the central role teacher thinking must play in understanding teaching:

There are no final answers, nor are there directives to govern every teaching situation. If he is to be effective, the teacher cannot function automatically or according to a set of predetermined rules. Teaching is purposeful action ... (p. 69).

Teacher as Researcher

The traditional view of teaching and classroom research has assumed that a principal investigator will study another's classroom. The focus in this study was placed instead on teacher as researcher.

The role of teacher as researcher is not a new one. Action research models were proposed by Shumsky (1958) and Corey (1953) to encourage teachers to study selected aspects of their own classroom experience. More recently, collaborative research models have involved teachers and researchers as partners in the research process (Chittenden and Bussis, 1979; Mehan, 1979). A National Institute of Education task force identified teacher involvement in research as an important direction for future research on teaching (Koehler, 1979). Pring (1978) has argued:

If the teacher is to be intelligent about what he is doing then he must rely on research - careful and systematic observation guided by tentative hypothesis
and inspired by some vision of what it should all add up to. But that research must be his because he alone has access to the appropriate information and data. What others say in the light of their experience is frequently helpful, but it always needs to be put to the test by oneself in one's own situation. What works for one person may not work for another (p. 237).

This view of teacher as researcher suggests that it is practitioners who can build new relationships between educational theory and practice. 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.

Statement of the Problem

The purpose of this study was to examine, systematically and critically, selected aspects of my practice as an elementary school teacher. The more encompassing purpose was to explore the relationships between my educational theory and my classroom teaching experience. This critical analysis was accomplished through three major components.

The first component described the classroom curriculum - its purposes, activity, and organization. Specifically, the goal was to discover the following:

1. What teacher purposes undergirded classroom events and activities? What purposes influenced the organization of events and the school day? What purposes influenced interaction with children?
2. What content and activities were a part of the classroom curriculum? How did the activities relate to teacher purposes? What were the sources, continuities and transformations in curriculum content and activity?

3. How were the activities and classroom events organized for learning? How did the organization relate to teacher purposes?

A second component in the study focused on teacher-student verbal interaction. The purpose of this description was to answer the following:

1. What were the general patterns of teacher-student interaction in the classroom?

2. How were the functions of selecting, setting up, and sustaining activity accomplished through teacher-student interaction?

3. What patterns in teacher thinking influenced teacher-student interaction?

The third component in the study concerned the larger question of the relationships between my explicit educational theory and the classroom teaching experience. Specifically, the goal was to answer the following:

1. What were the relationships between theory and practice?

2. What tensions or dilemmas existed between my idealized perspectives of teaching and the realities of classroom life?

The purpose of this self-study was to contribute new knowledge to our understanding of the ways classrooms work and the ways teaching theory and practice are interrelated. This purpose evolved from the personal and practical interest I had in understanding my teaching practice. Ross Mooney (1975) has suggested:
A good place to think about doing research is in the middle of some activity where I am trying to do something that is important to me. My research is then my attempt to improve my actions in getting the values I want out of my experience (p. 201).

Undergirding this practical and personal interest was the broader concern for teacher theorizing. Theorizing in this sense was viewed as systematic and critical reflections upon practice (Pring, 1978). The study was designed therefore to contribute new knowledge to our understanding of teachers as classroom researchers.

**Organization of the Study**

Chapter II examines the explicit theory that influenced and guided my understanding of teaching, children's learning, and the classroom curriculum. The chapter also details the theoretical perspectives that directed my thinking about classroom and teaching research.

Chapter III describes the research procedures used. Emphasis is given to my teaching and educational background, the school and classroom setting, and the range of teacher-researcher data gathering techniques.

Global features of the classroom experience are reported in Chapter IV. This description includes the beginning of the school year, and the purposes, activity and organization of the classroom curriculum.

Chapter V provides a finer-grained picture of the classroom verbal interaction. The description examines how activities were selected, set up, and sustained through teacher-student interaction.
The relationships between teaching theory and practice are discussed in Chapter VI. These findings are grounded in the descriptive data presented in Chapters IV and V.

Chapter VII provides self-reflections on the teaching experience, and discusses conclusions and implications from the study for how we understand teaching, classroom life, and teaching research.
CHAPTER II

REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

Introduction

The purpose of this literature review is twofold. The first is to examine the explicit theory base that guided my thinking about teaching and learning in a classroom setting. This explicit educational theory is viewed as practical in nature:

Practical theories do not set out primarily to describe the world or to predict its future, but to tell us what we ought to be doing in it. They give recommendations for practice. (Moore, 1978, p. 11).

In addition to this practical perspective, educational theory is also viewed as a guide to thought, "a screen, a way to think about fundamental problems, a way to reach a decision" (Zais, 1976, p. 88). My understanding of three interrelated fields will be examined in this review, namely, informal education, curriculum theory, and learning theory.

A second purpose of the review is to explore the theoretical perspectives that directed my thinking about classroom research. Because of the relatively unique role of teacher as researcher in this study, it seemed reasonable to elaborate upon these theoretical underpinnings. The review will examine substantive and methodological perspectives from quantification schemes, classroom field studies, and constitutive ethnography that have influenced my understanding of classroom research.
Educational Theory

Open Education

The theoretical perspectives that influenced my thinking about teaching and learning in a classroom setting were derived primarily from the field of informal or open education, terms used interchangeably throughout the report. Some attention to a definition is appropriate given the fact that open education frequently means different things to practitioners, evaluators, and researchers. Interpretations range from an emphasis on architectural features, to a focus on pedagogic or curriculum features, to views on how children learn.

Horwitz (1979) has suggested that educators generally agree that informal education refers "to a style of teaching involving flexibility of space, student choice of activity, richness of learning materials, integration of curriculum areas, and more individual or small group than large group instruction" (p. 72). These methodological features provide a beginning framework for understanding my view of open education, although they provide only a generalized and static perspective. Bussis, Chittenden, and Amarel (1976) have emphasized that open education refers primarily to a philosophical and theoretical position:

... a set of shared ideas about the human capacity to learn, about the nature of human resources for learning, and about the kinds of environments that facilitate and encourage the realization of those learning resources (p. 21).

This position stresses the importance of personalized, active, and life-like learning experiences for children (Perrone, 1972; Barth, 1972; Weber, 1971; McKenzie, 1975). Each child and teacher speaks from his
or her unique perspective, reflecting a particular history, a private construction of the world, and a personal set of beliefs and values (Wolfson, 1977). Knowledge is personally constructed, not received, and involves intentionality and choice of action (MacDonald, 1974; Perrone, 1974). The focus for teachers who embrace this perspective is to develop facilitating environments for children which open up possibilities for unique responses (Bussis and Chittenden, 1975), and which value and support self-discipline, self-directions, and creativity as expressions of choice in the curriculum making process (MacDonald, 1974). Curriculum decision-making within this framework is typically viewed as an interactive venture, with both teachers and students creating the curriculum together. Wolfson (1977, p. 87) suggests that for "each [teacher and student] it is an individual, creative process based on their own perception of the world and their own willingness to risk in reaching out as active learners."

I see the open classroom approach (an inadequate label) with its opportunity for active choice and responsibility as the appropriate environment for pursuing this joint activity (Wolfson, 1977, p. 88).

Bussis and Chittenden (1970) provided one of the early analytic conceptualizations of open education. They postulated a double classification scheme that accounted for the interactive nature of decision making in the open classroom, and for the active role of both the teacher and the child in the teaching/learning process.
Double Classification Scheme Based on Extent to Which (1) the Individual Teacher and (2) the Individual Child is an Active Contributor to Decisions Regarding the Content and Process of Learning.

The Chittenden-Bussis scheme provided a generalized and theoretical perspective on the role of teacher and students in joint curriculum decision making. However, there is little empirical evidence that examines how these processes occur through classroom interaction. Several studies that have examined this process (Berlak et al., 1975; Hirabayashi, 1972) will be reviewed subsequently.

Bussis and Chittenden "tentatively proposed" and elaborated on eight characteristics of the open classroom teacher. Their analysis
recognized the differences between preactive behaviors (activities when children were not present) and interactive behaviors (behaviors with children in the classroom), and ideas related to the teacher's internal frame of reference. The characteristics include: provisioning for learning; diagnosis of learning events: reflective evaluations of diagnostic information; the guidance and extension of learning; humaneness, openness, and warmth; seeking opportunities for professional growth: self-perception of the teacher; and, assumptions about children and the process of learning (Bussis and Chittenden, 1970). The characteristics were hypothesized behaviors which defined the contribution of open classroom teachers to curriculum decision making.

Barth (1972) examined the theoretical position of open education by identifying the assumptions about learning (i.e., "the process where by a person becomes educated"), and the assumptions about knowledge (i.e., the nature of that which is learned) that seemed to reflect the position of most open educators. He tested thirty-four assumptions through his own observation and interviewing with advisors and practitioners in the field. Although a complete listing of these assumptions is beyond the scope of this review, several key assumptions will be identified that reflect my idealized perspective of learning and knowledge:
Assumption 4: Confidence in self is closely related to the capacity for learning and for making important choices affecting one's learning.

Assumption 5: Active exploration in a rich environment, offering a wide array of manipulative materials, facilitates children's learning.

Assumption 7: Children have both the competence and the right to make significant decisions concerning their own learning.

Assumption 8: Children will be likely to learn if they are given considerable choice in the selection of the materials they wish to work with and in the choice of questions they wish to pursue with respect to those materials.

Assumption 14: Children learn and develop intellectually at their own rate and in their own style.

Assumption 26: Knowledge is a function of one's personal integration of experience and therefore does not fall neatly into separate categories or "disciplines" (Barth, 1972, p. 21-45).

Walberg and Thomas (1971, 1975), expanding upon the work of Barth (1972) and Bussis and Chittenden (1979), developed a 50 item scale for assessing the degree of "openness" in classrooms. The items identified the essential pedagogical and curricular features of open classrooms and were designed with "two parallel forms, one for teacher self-rating and one for observer rating" (Horwitz, 1979). The instrument delineated the general characteristics of open education, although the emphasis was primarily methodological rather than theoretical.

The following summarizes the major assumptions that guided my thinking about open education:

1) The child needs to be viewed as an active, purposeful learner. Knowledge does not come to him ready made, as a copy; rather the child constructs knowledge through his interaction with the world.
2) Children will learn best when they are involved in genuine, authentic experiences, i.e., doing real things, rather than treating learning as simply preparation for later experiences.

3) Children will learn best in a rich environment of people, ideas, and materials, and in an environment that values the aesthetic experiences of life in a vital, central way.

4) The teacher's role rests upon informed observation of children's ongoing interests, supporting and extending their activity, and interacting with children as an authentic learner himself.

5) The classroom is viewed as a social and moral community as well as a place for individual, self-expression. This social interaction with peers and adults is essential for the child's learning.

6) Decision making, choices, and accepting responsibility are seen as the crux of the educational process.

These assumptions are generally shared by open education analysts (Barth, 1972; Rathbone, 1970; Bussis and Chittenden, 1970), advisors and advocates (Hawkins, 1974; King, 1974; Perrone, 1974), reporters and observers (Plowden Report, 1967; Silberman, 1970; Featherstone, 1971), and practitioners (McKenzie and Kernig, 1975; Marshall, 1966).

Curriculum Theory

Curriculum theorists have provided another vantage point for understanding informal education and my own educational theory. This section will briefly examine three of these perspectives.

Bernstein (1975) hypothesized a sociological framework that places an analysis of open education within the broader question of how society organizes, transmits, and evaluates educational knowledge. He suggested
that the informal school pedagogy, viewed within a particular cultural context, is identified by six characteristics:

1. Where the control of the teacher is implicit rather than explicit.
2. Where, ideally, the teacher arranges the context which the child is expected to rearrange and explore.
3. Where within this arranged context, the child apparently has wide powers over what he selects, over how he structures, and over the time-scale of his activities.
4. Where the child apparently regulates his own movements and social relationships.
5. Where there is a reduced emphasis upon the transmission and acquisition of specific skills.
6. Where the criteria for evaluating the pedagogy are multiple and diffuse and not so easily measured (Bernstein, 1975, p. 116).

The significant features of this kind of pedagogy, which Bernstein referred to as an invisible pedagogy, are the characteristics of weak classifications and weak frames. Classification refers to the boundaries between subject matter; in this case, weak classification suggests an integrated curricular focus. Framing refers to the strength of the boundaries made between school knowledge and a child's knowledge, and the control pupils and teachers have over this knowledge. Weak framing suggests an interactive view of teaching and learning, similar to the one that Wolfson (1977) has identified. Within the context of the informal classroom, the everyday, common sense knowledge of the child is valued by teachers, as is the child's power to make, to select, and to organize his learning experiences in school. Traditional school settings are typically characterized by strong classifications and strong framing (a collection code in Bernstein's terminology). Recognizing the abstract nature of his analysis, Bernstein suggested that empirical evidence is required to explicate the educational realities inherent in the integrated code (weak classification and weak framing):
We ... have next to no first-hand knowledge of the day-by-day encounters realized by various types of integrated codes (1975, p. 112).

Bernstein suggested further that the informal classroom must be analyzed from a sociological perspective that considers the cultural context as well as the nature of the pedagogy and the classification and framing of educational knowledge in schools.

MacDonald (1975) offered another curricular perspective on open education. His work examined the nature of educational knowledge and inquiry into educational or curricular phenomenon as they shed light on open education. He suggested that any educational knowledge ought to be examined in terms of the human interests that undergird it. Drawing upon the work of Habermas (1971), MacDonald argued that all knowledge was grounded in three fundamental cognitive human interests:

1) a technical cognitive interest in control
2) a practical cognitive interest in consensus or understanding, and
3) a critical cognitive interest in emancipation or liberation (1975, p. 287).

He suggested further that these basic cognitive interests "may be seen as the basic sources of value differences in curriculum" (p. 289). Most forms of knowledge in education today are undergirded by the cognitive interest in control. Habermas characterized this perspective as the monologic understanding of meaning; that is "the abstraction of fact from value and the creation of theory explaining facts in an empirical-analytic fashion" (MacDonald, 1975, p. 286). The guiding interest in this perspective is to find predictable order and precision in human events, and to manage and control educational phenomenon.
The practical cognitive interest in consensus or understanding has historically undergirded the knowledge base of the arts. Habermas referred to this perspective as the hermeneutic understanding of meaning, that is "meaning arising in the context of different cultural life expressions such as ordinary language, human actions, and non-verbal expressions" (MacDonald, 1975, p. 286).

In a speculative essay on open education MacDonald (1975a) suggested that open education, as a form of knowledge, was undergirded by the critical cognitive interest in emancipation or liberation. This, he argued, was manifested in three distinct areas of concern: one, the interest in liberating man from oppressive societal structures (i.e., social reform); two, the interest in freeing or liberating the mind (i.e., intellectual freedom); and three, the interest in human growth and fulfilling potential.

Similar to the work of Bernstein (1975) and Bussis and Chittenden (1970), MacDonald recognized the tentativeness and hypothetical nature of his analysis:

... It seems clear that we cannot project an ideal universal of open education (a kind of eternal verity, exemplified in various forms through history); nor can we project a definite particular as representing open education so that there is only one right model. It is a general idea somewhere between the universal and the particular that must be pursued if we are to give any meaningful definition to the term (MacDonald, 1975a, p. 56).

This perspective seemed especially helpful in understanding my efforts to act upon generalized principles of human potentiality within the particular limitations of one classroom. The curricular direction that grew out of this cognitive interest in liberation was one
that involved students in curriculum decision making. MacDonald emphasized how little is known about this kind of process in curriculum development.

A third curriculum perspective that influenced my understanding of informal education evolved in a general way from the writings of David Hawkins (1974) and from the work of language learning theorists (e.g., Rosen and Rosen, 1973; Barnes, 1976).

Hawkins described curriculum development as an interactive process between authentic, learning teachers, and purposeful, self-directing students, combined with engagement into the human condition or the natural or physical environment. The interaction is viewed metaphorically as a triangle, with the teacher and the students interacting through engaging subject matter. In an essay entitled "I-Thou-It," Hawkins (1974) responded to an issue raised several decades earlier by John Dewey when he examined the role of subject matter in the progressive school curriculum (Dewey, 1959). The perspective raised questions about the processes and conditions in individual classrooms that support and encourage this kind of interaction, and the role of subject matter as a substantive focus in teacher/student interaction. The idealized conception suggested that this triangular engagement forms the basis for meaningful classroom interaction.

Rosen and Rosen (1973) provided descriptive examples from British primary school classrooms where this kind of interaction was taking place, that is, teachers and students engaging through joint attention to the complexities, issues, and structure of their environment. Mallet and Newsome (1977) provided additional descriptive interpretations of these
processes in a variety of curricular settings, from children and teachers exploring new environments to teacher-directed lessons. The emphasis in these reports was frequently upon the way language (oral and written) was used by students to give meaning to their experiences, and the role of the teacher in supporting and extending these explorations. Neither of these reports dwells on the issue of open education. What was emphasized were the potentialities for meaningful student inquiry into engaging subject matter where conditions and teachers support these efforts. They provided strong illustrations of Hawkin's conceptualization of an I-Thou-It curricular process and a descriptive framework for what I valued in my interaction with children. The following principles emerged as representative of this perspective:

Exploring the environment must include the verbal exploration of the environment, and the teacher needs to do this alongside the children" (Rosen and Rosen, 1973, p. 56).

[The teacher's] focus is on what the children are doing and what interests them. The strange thing is that by this very concentration on the business in hand almost everything she says is encouraging the children to use language in a motivated fashion. Her contributions always prompt them to make decisions and choices (Rosen and Rosen, 1973, p. 38).

The open classroom not only welcomes the children and their own ways of thinking and feeling, but it also creates a life of its own. It creates a context for living... This context is created by the shared experiences, and they may be provided by the teacher with the materials, the books, the apparatus, or they may be provided by the children (Rosen and Rosen, 1973, p. 31).
It is only those affairs which create real preoccupations which can make [students] reach out for the language to express new understandings, new questions, and new perceptions. This is the language of curiosity. It may express itself as a set of observations or be explicitly speculative but it is always the result of the child's own probing into the working of the world (Rosen and Rosen, 1973, p. 28).

Learning Theory

Learning theorists have provided similar perspectives for understanding my educational theory base. This section will briefly explore the work of Piaget, humanistic psychologists, and language learning theorists as they influenced my thinking about teaching and learning.

The work of Jean Piaget is frequently cited as one theoretical underpinning for open education (e.g., McKenzie and Kernig, 1975). Although his research and theory on human development do not purport to provide prescriptions for classroom action, his general perspectives on how human beings develop and learn have been used by educators as both guide and rationale for varying types of classroom experiences. To suggest that Piaget provides a theoretical undergirding for open education is, in effect, to draw implications from his general theoretical schemes to the problems surrounding classroom teaching and learning.

Piaget (1971) views the growth of human intelligence as embedded in a process of reaction and interaction with the social and physical environment. Through the processes of assimilation (fitting experiences to existing schemes or knowledge) and accommodation (adapting, changing, accounting for variability), the self-regulating system acts upon the world. Knowledge for Piaget is always rooted in one's action on the world. Even the young infant begins to build up an internal model of the world in his head.
The child actively constructs his own sense of reality, and does not make a copy of the world as perceived by others.

In the sensori motor state (first two years), knowledge is practical. The schemata developed are action schemes, e.g., grasping, sucking. Toward the end of this stage the child begins to construct symbolic schemes through play and language. The pre-operational stage (ages 2 to 7) is marked by rapid language development. Thought is no longer "restricted to immediate perceptual and motor events" (Wadsworth, 1971, p. 88). The concrete operational stage (ages 7 to 11) sees the growth of language, and the development of thinking processes that are tied to concrete, real materials, e.g., seriation, grouping, classifying, one-to-one correspondence. During the formal operation stage, children acquire the same kinds of abilities for logical thinking that are characteristic of most adults.

Insight into how knowledge develops, and the recognition of stages of development has implied for open educators that classroom environments ought to foster children's learning through engaging, purposeful experiences, that accept their personal, immediate response, and yet provide time and further experience to expand their world views.

In the open classroom, children learn while dealing with real-life problems. The teacher leads the child to activities that follow his interest and demand his involvement. The student, therefore, collaborates with the teacher in selecting the what and how of his education (Carew and Lightfoot, 1979, p. 38).

Piaget's developmental theory has implied further that the classroom social environment, of give and take between children, and children
and teachers, is an essential aspect of a child's learning. In a sense, school becomes important because of the multiple reference points that are provided for children to check out their own learning. These interactional facets of learning apply to cognitive development as well as social and moral development.

A Piagetian framework on children's learning encouraged teachers to value and build upon the learning competencies children bring to school, rather than viewing children as deficient learners, or simply "empty vessels" to be filled with knowledge. The theoretical perspective provided an empirical framework that supported the general beliefs systems of open educators.

Humanistic psychology provided another support system for informal education. The works of Rogers (1969), Maslow (1962), Combs (1962), and Moustakas (1959) are most frequently cited. Central to this perspective on learning was the emphasis on the potential for all learners to develop and grow in accordance with their own nature. The basic tendency of the individual, according to these theorists, is to become himself. Learning experiences must relate, therefore, to a child's own potentialities, with the substance of learning coming primarily from a person's own choices, preferences, and ways of working.

Implications for classroom practice from humanistic psychologists often emphasized "understanding and correcting the environmental focus or condition that impede growth" (Moustakas, 1959). In maintaining faith in a child's potential for growth, teachers were challenged to continually examine the condition that impinged upon the child.
The humanistic educator becomes a facilitator ... and sets in motion the relationships that promote trust, cooperation, and acceptance. Such a teacher should be nonjudgmental and nondirective, allowing each child to make his own decisions, evaluations, and discoveries. The all-important element in this mode of education is not teaching, but the creation of a "learning environment" where children are free to explore, discover, and express themselves (Carew and Lightfoot, 1979, p. 31).

Although the position is stated in its ideal terms, the principles of choice and decision making are perceived as key factors in a child's learning. The challenge for open classroom teachers becomes one of setting in motion those conditions that foster responsible decision making from children. The humanistic position has been criticized for being "more like an attitude ... than a systematic theory" (Carew and Lightfoot, 1979), although it does provide one significant screen for thinking about classroom teaching and learning.

Recent research and theory from the field of language learning provided a third theoretical undergirding for informal education and my understanding of teaching and learning. Although a complete review of this literature is beyond the scope of this chapter, several significant points will be identified.

Research in oral language acquisition and language development in the decade of the 1970's has emphasized the notion that language is best acquired in contexts that are meaningful to the child (Halliday, 1975; Brown, 1973). From the very beginning, children are learning to express meanings. The supportive parental feedback in this early language effort "to mean," (Halliday, 1975) reinforces the child's growing repertoire of language uses. The complex, rule governed linguistic
system is acquired tacitly as children "concentrate on the wholeness of communication - conveying a message and fulfilling a purpose" (King, 1975, p. 295).

Several implications for educators have emerged from these insights into acquiring language. Cazden (1969) suggested that teachers, "to foster further language growth, should follow the example of parents and talk with children about topics of mutual interest." The traditional focus in school is to study about language, rather than to provide a range of purposes for using language in meaningful ways. Insights from language learning theory suggested that less attention might be given to the form and structure of language, and more attention given to the functions or uses of language in order to take advantage of the child's natural tendencies to communicate meaning to other people. These theoretical perspectives were consistent with the emphasis in informal education on providing meaningful and purposeful choices for children in the curricular process.

One of our most important functions in school is to extend language development, to give children the opportunity to use and explore their language, and we do this by linking into their own personal natural language; the language they use in their everyday lives (McKenzie and Kernig, 1975, p. 107).

Psycholinguistic theory provided an additional perspective on language learning and reading development that influenced by thinking about classroom teaching (Smith, 1971; Goodman, 1957). The emphasis within this field was on the constructive, theory building powers of learners as they engaged in meaningful language tasks. Reading, as one concern of psycholinguists (Smith, 1971), was viewed as a "fusion of
language and thought," an interactive process between the child and the
text (McKenzie, 1977). The reading process, according to these theor­
ists, involves guessing, predicting, and calculated risk taking to get
at meaning (Smith, 1971; Goodman, 1967), and needs to be experienced
within the larger framework of purposeful communication. This
perspective was consistent with the broader principles of informal
education that stressed the active, constructive nature of personal
knowing.

A final theoretical perspective from language theorists that
influenced my thinking about classroom teaching emerged from recent
research and theory on written discourse (Moffett, 1968; Britton, 1975;
Graves, 1973, 1977). Several strands from this research were provid­
ing important recommendations for teaching practice.

The first strand concerned the emphasis these theorists were
giving to the writing process itself. The pre-composing experiences
that allowed children to represent their thinking through varying
media (talk, art, drama and so forth) were being viewed as significant

A second strand concerned the role of the teacher. The shift from
teacher as "examiner" to teacher as "trusted adult" was seen as a basis
for establishing a positive context for writing (Britton, 1975).

A third strand considered the role of expressive and personal
language in the learning process. Expressive narratives of real world
experiences were seen as the basis for extended writing development
A fourth strand from language learning theorists emphasized the role of writing in clarifying one's thinking (Britton, 1970). Written language was seen as a reflective tool for thinking critically and constructively about one's own and other's experiences. Writing in its broadest sense was viewed as an essential mode for learning.

**Summary**

This section has reviewed the major contributions to my emerging educational theory. Perspectives from the field of open education, curriculum theory, and learning theory were examined. Major principles within each field were interrelated. They provided practical recommendations and reflective screens for thinking about my practice as an elementary school teacher.

**Classroom Research**

Three major theoretical perspectives guided my thinking about classroom and teaching research. Each perspective assumed that first hand observation of classroom events and teacher-student interaction was an essential step towards understanding the processes of education in our schools. Each perspective held different interpretations on the role of teacher thinking in understanding classrooms.

These research perspectives, as delineated by Mehan, included the classroom quantification schemes, conventional field studies, and constitutive ethnography (Mehan, 1979). It was assumed in this study that classroom life, teacher-student interaction, and the teacher's thinking must be studied from a variety of vantage points. Stubbs and Delamont have argued similarly that "no single technique or theory can capture the complexity of classroom life" (Stubbs and Delamont, 1976).
The following review will examine these three perspectives, with an emphasis on how each perspective has contributed to an understanding of teaching in general and open classroom teaching in particular. 

**Quantification Schemes**

Quantification schemes for observing classroom life are best represented through the work of Flanders' interaction analysis (1970), although this system is only one of a wide range of schemes in this area. Simon and Boyer's (1968 and 1970) *Mirrors for Behavior* describe seventy-nine different systems. The primary purpose of interaction analysis is to objectively describe certain dimensions of a teacher's verbal behavior and a teacher's interaction with students. Specifically, the observation systems attempt to "capture the verbal behavior of teachers and pupils that is directly related to the social-emotional climate of the classroom" (Amidon and Hough, 1967, p. 2). The underlying social psychological theory suggests that "teaching styles and patterns of verbal behavior ... create a social-emotional climate in ... classrooms that has a direct effect on the attitudes and behavior of students" (Amidon and Hough, 1967, p. 119). Flanders developed ten categories of teacher and pupil talk in order to "reduce the stream of classroom behavior to small-scale units suitable for tabulation and computation" (Delamont and Hamilton, 1976, p. 6). Seven categories of teacher talk are used (accepts feelings, praises or encourages, accepts or uses ideas of pupils, asks questions, lecturing, giving directions, and criticizing or justifying authority) and two categories of pupil talk (pupil talk-response, and pupil talk-initiation). A tenth category is for silence or confusion.
Delamont and Hamilton (1976) suggested that the strength of the interaction analysis system was that, in addition to being somewhat "reliable and easy to learn ... they can be used to study large numbers of classrooms and readily generate a wealth of numerical data suitable for statistical analysis" (p. 8). The categories seem to be based on the assumption that teaching is conceptualized in a singular way, i.e., through the formal lecture and student response format. Silberman (1970) emphasized this same limitation with the scheme:

The greatest strength of the interaction analysis is also its greatest weakness. The simplicity that makes it possible for almost anyone to analyze his own or someone else's teaching ... encourages a one-dimensional and in some ways distorted view of what teaching is all about (p. 456).

The categories, in relying upon observable behavior, make no effort to account for the different intentions that may lie behind the same behavior.

Resnick's (1972) study of teacher behavior in informal classrooms followed the basic methodological orientation of the Flanders' interaction analysis scheme although the data in this study also included actual teacher talk as well as the tabulations of pre-determined teacher behaviors. Her categories were developed after a two week observation period in these informal classroom settings. Resnick argued that the "quantitative data on teacher behavior can be used to suggest some of the critical characteristics of informal styles of teaching." The willingness of teachers to let extended interactions with individuals or small groups be interrupted by child initiations for brief interactions was interpreted by the researcher as an important strategy for
classroom management in the informal setting. Resnick noted, too, that the instructional functions seemed to have been met by the teachers through the high use of questions directed from the teacher to the child.

Eberle's (1978) recent study on teacher-student verbal interaction in informal classrooms used a coding scheme that was similar to Resnick's. She expanded the teacher/student interaction types to four categories, namely substantive, self-reference, procedural, and behavioral. Her findings revealed that some children received little or no attention from the teacher, and that an "inordinate amount of time [was] given to procedural matters." It was noted, too, that communication patterns were controlled more by the teachers than by the students.

Brandt (1973) studied two British informal classrooms during a three week period using the PROSE observational instrument (i.e., Personal Record of School Experience, developed by Medley, Schluck, and Ames, 1968). He also used anecdotal notes of ongoing activities. His purpose was to provide a more thorough portrait of the informal classroom than was provided by the Resnick study. In addition to coding teacher behavior, the PROSE instrumentation was designed to code the behavior of selected children in the classroom. Brandt noted that there were significant teacher and class differences in his study, dispelling the "simplistic notion that there is only one instructional pattern that characterizes [informal] school teaching" (1975, p. 122). General teacher expectancies were apparent in directions given and the behavior reinforced in both classrooms:
1. Children were generally expected to have something to do.

2. Children were generally expected to finish something already started before starting something else.

3. Children were expected to have something tangible to show or tell to account for time spent.

4. Children were expected to take care of materials being used and return items to their proper place and condition after using them.

5. Children were expected to participate in group discussion and permit others to talk (Brandt, 1975).

Brandt also found that "for approximately half of each school day, children were involved in projects and activities of their own choosing while their teachers provided general supervisory and tutorial assistance" (1975, p. 123). And, students interacted or were involved with an adult 29% of the time during a school day and with peers 20% of the time. They were involved with "appropriate tasks" 28% of the time and were "distracted, responded to internal stimuli or worked on inappropriate tasks 22% of the time" (Brandt, 1975, p. 124).

Although admittedly a starting point for understanding teacher behaviors in classroom settings, the quantitative schemes fail to account for teacher intentions and for the teachers' perceptions of classroom interaction. It is possible to suggest too that any category system, even if generated from the classroom settings, may eventually limit the researcher's understanding of classroom events as they invite a "static representation" (Delamont and Hamilton, 1976) of what is
ultimately a dynamic, changing social phenomenon. Conventional field studies of classroom environments address some of the limitations that are inherent in the quantification schemes.

Conventional Field Studies

Conventional field studies of classroom life are best represented by the work of Smith and Geoffrey (1968), Jackson (1968) and Rist (1973). Drawing upon the research methodologies of cultural anthropologists, many of these classroom studies are based upon a naturalistic and a phenomenological perspective of human behavior (Jilson, 1977).

The naturalistic perspective suggests that research into human behavior must be undertaken in the natural settings in which the behaviors occur; i.e., if we want to understand the social and educational realities of classroom life, then the researcher must gather data within these social settings. Both Jackson (1968) and Smith and Geoffrey (1968) operated upon this perspective through their roles as observers or participant/observers in classrooms. The naturalistic perspective also implies a holistic frame of reference that attempts to consider multiple, interactive dimensions of the classroom reality, not simply pre-determined, isolated phenomenon as is derived from most quantitative schemes. LaBelle (1972) suggested that within this perspective the classroom can be viewed as a "socio-cultural system in which small groups of people are engaged in habitual activities leading to the achievement of specific goals." LaBelle argued that a classroom could be analysed as a subcultural system:
... The classroom contains people, material objects, a system in operation, and a tradition established over time. Students and teachers come together in a classroom to achieve goals. They use certain materials ... to achieve these goals. The system revolves around teaching and learning through teacher - or student - designated experiences which are expected to enable children to achieve the desired ends. The tradition evolves or develops as a result of student and teacher coming together regularly in an attempt to fulfill the purposes of the system. Such a tradition includes expected behavior patterns based on the values and attitudes of the members and provides the group with a predictable set of circumstances which will be in operation each time the group meets and carries on activities (p. 531).

Wilson (1977) suggested a second perspective that appears to underlie field research in the social sciences, namely, the phenomenological perspective. The basic premise here is that:

... The social scientist cannot understand human behavior without understanding the framework within which the subjects interpret their thoughts, feelings, and actions (Wilson, 1977, p. 249).

The implication from this perspective is that the classroom must be studied from the vantage points of the participants, attempting to identify the meanings and interpretations students and teachers give to classroom behaviors and goals. Magoon (1977), in a review of educational research that is consistent with this naturalistic/phenomenological perspective emphasized that:

... Much behavior must be understood as purposive: i.e., aimed toward some end. In other words, much important complex behavior like teaching and learning might be best understood as being constructed purposively by the subjects [both teachers and pupils] themselves, and cannot adequately be studied without accounting for meaning and purpose (p. 652).
The phenomenological position assumes that human beings are constantly shaping and creating their worlds through interactions with others. Knowledge of reality is viewed, not as ready made, easily measured, or simply out there waiting to be taken in, but as "the product of an active, theory building, imagining mind" (Bussis, Chittenden and Amarel, 1976). It is constructed through interaction with the world. These naturalistic/phenomenological perspectives, then, suggest an alternative methodology for classroom research that provide a helpful, analytic framework for studying the complexity of the teaching/learning process. The descriptive, field based research attempts to uncover the meanings and interpretations of teachers and students involved in this setting, rather than measuring or describing the classroom from outside criteria that may provide little insight into the nature and processes of education for its participants.

Jackson (1968) explored life in elementary classrooms through a two year observation period, as well as teacher interviews and student attitude surveys. He identified three conditions of the school social experience for children that form part of what he called the hidden curriculum, namely the effects of social crowding, the praise and external evaluation, and the condition of unequal power. Jackson noted that teaching, as an opportunistic process, is qualitatively different from the processes prescribed by the "engineering point of view," i.e., a conception of teaching that builds on a rational means-ends model of curriculum planning. He stated:
Given the complexity of his work, the teacher must learn to tolerate a high degree of uncertainty and ambiguity. He must be content with doing not what he knows is right, but what he thinks or feels is the most appropriate action in a particular situation. In short, he must play it by ear (Jackson, 1968, p. 167).

Four themes emerged from his interviews with teachers: immediacy, informality, autonomy, and individuality. The immediacy of classroom events was utilized by teachers for interpreting their own effectiveness and student response. The teachers often referred to their own style of working with children as one of informality. The importance of professional autonomy emerged as a significant issue when teachers focused upon their relationship to their own superiors. And finally, teachers focused upon the individuality of students when they pondered their own satisfactions from their work.

Smith and Geoffrey (1968) also used extensive field based techniques in the roles of observer and participant/observer to study teacher decision-making and interaction within one classroom in an urban school. Smith functioned as an observer, and Geoffrey, the classroom teacher, was a participant/observer in the study. They focused upon the complexity of the teacher decision-making process, and hypothesized several teaching models from the descriptive data.

They explored the role of textbooks in the teacher's decision making about the classroom, noting that their use simplified the preparation required of the teacher, and "provided procedural clarity for the students" (Yinger, 1977). Although presenting several advantages to textbook teaching, Smith and Geoffrey also raised questions about the efficacy of textbooks in providing meaningful contact with student purposes. The most
significant contribution of the Smith and Geoffrey study was methodological, namely that a fuller and more insightful picture of classroom life was provided when researchers and teachers collaborated in the research process.

Carew and Lightfoot (1979) combined classroom observation techniques with intensive teacher interviewing in order to present a portrait of the teachers' classroom interactions that accounted for the teacher's perceptions, purposes, and beliefs. The research team studied four first grade classrooms, examining the differential treatment teachers give to different students in their classroom, and providing a "multidimensional and authentic depiction of teachers and teaching" (Carew and Lightfoot, 1979, p. 232). The researchers also worked to identify how they personally interpreted the information about the classroom and the teachers, recognizing explicitly that their "own training, cultural and personal predilections" strongly effect the research inquiry. The study provided sensitive accounts of each teacher, and was an important contribution towards understanding the complexity of the teaching experience.

There are very few conventional field studies that have looked at informal classrooms, although advocates of informal education have frequently cited the importance of descriptive, ethnographic inquiry into these settings. Perrone (1975) has suggested that documentation of informal classroom practice is a necessary direction if open educators are to expand their understanding of goals and practice. Perrone writes:

Such documentations have the potential of enlarging our understanding of learning, space, materials, growth-over-time, language acquisition, teacher roles, support mechanisms, and the like. This literature can extend our understanding of what many of the earlier progressives only speculated about. It has the capacity to link discussion of theory and practice more closely as well as to sustain an intellectual vitality in open education (Perrone, 1975).
Berlak et al. (1975) provided an important beginning perspective on how British informal primary school teachers actually think about their emerging curriculum. In a participant observation study of twenty-two teachers, these researchers suggested that efforts "to describe or to abstract about the English [informal] schools, have distorted their reality" (Berlak, 1975, p. 239). Although the descriptive literature was attributing certain beliefs and commitments to the informal classroom teacher (e.g., children will make their own choices about what they should learn), Berlak and colleagues found that the teachers rarely acted according to a "single philosophical orientation." The apparent contradictions or inconsistencies in the teacher's response to these abstracted beliefs was explained by suggesting that teachers were "drawn to some degree towards both poles of a dilemma" (Berlak, 1975, p. 229). There "appeared to coexist a simultaneous pull in two directions -- toward the teacher making learning decisions and toward the children making learning decisions" (p. 227). One of the teachers in the study stated: "I think [children] need freedom but also guidance" (p. 228). The statement indicated that she was aware of both ends of the dilemma.

Berlak used the following chart to represent the range of possibilities the researchers perceived for curricular decision making in the classrooms observed:
### Table of Decision Making

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type of Decision</th>
<th>Teacher Decides</th>
<th>Joint T/C Decides Negotiating</th>
<th>Child Decides</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Whether or not</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>When it should be learned</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How it should be learned</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What should be learned</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


One teacher in the study resolved the tension/conflict by "making almost all the decisions in whether or not, and most of the decisions about what, when, and how in the basics -- reading, writing, and math -- while leaving most decisions in the non-basics to the children" (Berlak et al., 1975, p. 228). The researchers concluded:

Although we found important variations in the patterns of resolution, the generalization that children in informal classrooms control their schooling -- even when qualifications are added -- is, we are convinced, a gross distortion of the complexity which obtains in the classrooms we observed (p. 231).

Berlak and Berlak (1975) identified fourteen dilemmas in the schooling process. Each of these dilemmas was related to social, economic, and political tensions in our society at large. The dilemmas identified were: childhood unique versus childhood continuous; developing in children shared norms and values versus developing subgroup consciousness; whole child versus child as student; each child unique versus children having shared characteristics; equality of opportunity versus equality of result; self-reliance of the
disadvantaged versus special consideration for those in need; equal protection of law versus ad hoc application of rules; civil liberties versus school in loco parentis; learning as social versus learning as individual; public knowledge versus personal knowledge; teacher makes learning decisions for children versus child makes learning decisions; intrinsic motivation versus extrinsic motivation; molecular versus holistic learning; teacher sets standards for growth and development versus children set own standards (1975, p. 9).

A perspective on schooling dilemmas provided an important contribution to understanding informal education, and the practice and thinking of informal teachers. The implication from this research was the need for additional studies that explored how informal teachers resolved these persisting dilemmas in their own settings, through their planning and interaction with children. Berlak and Berlak (1975) have stated that "little is known about what dilemmas teachers face ... or the array of possible resolutions to the dilemmas" (p. 40). They suggested further that the resolution of basic dilemmas might be a characteristic of all classroom situations, although it seemed reasonable to speculate that they might manifest themselves in more distinctive ways in the curricular work of open classroom teachers.

Vincent Rogers (1973), at a research conference on open education, called for research in informal education that studies what, in fact, happens in classrooms, and "why the happenings don't always fit into our prefixed designs." Rogers suggested that there may be more value in simply observing what happens in classrooms than in setting up
experimental or quasi-experimental designs. Spodek (1973), in summary comments at the same conference, suggested that ethnographic studies may provide a more thorough understanding of the interaction of teachers and students in the open classroom setting. He and his colleagues attempted short term field work in informal classrooms. Their data was examined in terms of "goals, organization, dialogue, and the relations between these elements:"

In our analysis of our observations and the ensuing discussions with teachers, we found important differences in the goals the teachers set for their classrooms. While their long range goals were similar, the differences in short term goals seemed more a reflection of the teachers' personal style and system of belief than her adherence to a program. These short term goals seemed more important in determining classroom climate (Spodek, 1973, p. 88).

Spodek and his associates eventually decided to focus observational studies upon specific variables within the classroom (e.g., the decision making process), because they found that the "classroom culture [was] too large an entity to study with the limited resources ... they had at hand" (Spodek, 1973, p. 89).

One of these studies (Hirabayashi, 1972) proposed a theoretical model for the analysis of teacher decision making in the open classroom. Hirabayashi proposed four structural components in the model:

1. the period of decisions (preactive and interactive teaching)
2. the focus of activity
3. interactive phenomena (how materials, space, time, and human resources are used)
4. and patterns of decisions (Hirabayashi, 1972).
He also theorized three levels of decision making that affect each of the structural components:

1. policy decisions (long range purposes and goals)
2. technical decisions (short range goals, methods used for instruction) and
3. institutional (maintenance of standards, roles and rituals of the educational institutions) (Hirabayashi, 1972, op. 3-4).

Hirabayashi found a tension/conflict in teacher decision making similar to the dilemma conceptualizations from the Berlak study (Berlak et al., 1975):

Long and short range goals did not necessarily reflect what actually occurred during the interactive period. ... some preactive plans were not consistent [with the philosophy of the approach] and there were others which did follow through with the basic ideas (Hirabayashi, 1972, pp. 15-16).

Mitchell's (1978) participant observation study in an informal classroom focused on how achievement was given meaning to the participants in the classroom, through their interactions and negotiations. Through extensive observations and interviewing of the teacher and students in a fourth-fifth grade, she expanded a narrow technological view of achievement to one that illuminated the meanings ascribed by classroom participants as they engaged in activity.

Bussis, Chittenden, and Amarel (1976) studied the thinking of sixty open classroom teachers through intensive teacher interviews. They organized the teacher's understandings of curriculum and children's learning from two perspectives: surface curriculum, and the organizing content or priorities of curriculum.
Surface curriculum (the what) referred to the organization of the classroom, the activities engaged in, materials used, and the themes, topics, or units that provided substantive points of inquiry for the teacher and the children. It included "the variety of encounters a teacher plans and provides for children - experiences that are actively encouraged, as well as those that are optional or perhaps merely tolerated" (Bussis, Chittenden, and Amarel, 1976, p. 50).

Organizing content of curriculum (the why) referred on the other hand to the teacher's rationale, purposes, or learning priorities for children that guided teacher decision making about classroom organization, activities, materials, themes, and ensuing interactions. This level was concerned with "what ... the teacher wants children to know, do, feel, think, or care about ... [and] ... what qualities of learning ... the teacher values and [tries] to promote" (Bussis, Chittenden, and Amarel, 1976, p. 50). These researchers were also interested in the connections the teachers perceived between the surface curriculum and their organizing priorities.

Seventeen organizing priorities or teacher purposes were identified in the study, "11 having a cognitive emphasis and 6 having more of a personal/social emphasis" (Bussis et al., 1976). These priorities were then organized according to their "comprehensiveness." Some priorities were narrow in scope (e.g., an emphasis on grade level facts and skills, or the concern for good school behavior). Others were more comprehensive in nature (e.g., a "concern that children think through what they are doing," or the emphasis on children accepting their feelings and
"Comprehensiveness" referred to the "extent to which a teacher evidenced concern for engaging the totality of children's cognitive and/or emotional resources" within a curricular priority (Bussis et al., 1976).

The teachers' understandings of curriculum fell into four groupings. Group one (12% of the teachers) had "grade level facts and skills" as a dominant priority with "little evidence of experimentation or change in the surface curriculum." Group two (22% of the teachers) had "grade level facts and skills" as a dominant priority, but in addition had "much evidence of change and experimentation with the surface curriculum." Group three (39%) had "grade level facts and skills as an expressed, but not the dominant priority." Curricular priorities were more comprehensive in scope, with evidence of a "potentially rich surface curriculum." Group four (27%) provided "little evidence of preoccupation with grade level facts and skills." Comprehensive priorities were dominant with "evidence of a potentially rich surface curriculum."

Bussis, Chittenden, and Amarel (1976) assumed throughout their research that personal meanings, beliefs, and human intention were significant determiners of human behavior and "the environments people create." They also recognized that the most important educational variation existed "at the level of the individual practitioner - not at the level of instructional materials, packaged programs, or the like" (1976, p. 1). Their study provided insight into the varying ways open classroom teachers interpreted their teaching role, curriculum
priorities, and the learning of children. The research did not provide descriptive accounts of classroom life or teacher-student interaction beyond the self-reporting of these 60 teachers through the interviewing process.

Conventional field studies have provided contextually rich and descriptive accounts of classroom life and teacher thinking, although there are only a few studies that have tackled the complexity of the open classroom. Field studies usually focus upon smaller populations of classrooms, with case studies a common research emphasis (e.g., Smith and Goeffrey, 1968; Rist, 1973). Generalizability is limited therefore, but this is often offset by the more comprehensive description of classroom life and teacher thinking that an indepth study can provide.

The major difficulties with field studies frequently rest at the data analysis level. As research reports are translated from comprehensive field notes, "the criteria used to include certain instances [of behavior] and not others" (Mehan, 1978, p. 4) is rarely made explicit. Because of this problem in analysis, Mehan (1979) suggests that "it is difficult to determine the representativeness of the events described and therefore, the generality of the findings derived from them." A second limitation that Mehan cites is the fact that field notes are rarely preserved for alternative interpretations. One is asked therefore "to accept the summary findings the field researchers have abstracted" (Mehan, 1978), rather than having the opportunity to reinterpret the findings with one's own understanding of the data.
Constitutive ethnography, as defined by Mehan (1979), has attempted to deal with some of these apparent limitations in conventional field work.

**Constitutive Ethnography**

Constitutive ethnography, as a field of inquiry, attempts to study "the social structuring activities that assemble social structures in educational settings" (Mehan, 1978, p. 5). The perspective is based upon the assumption that all social facts in education (e.g., classroom organization, curriculum programs, teacher styles, etc.) are social accomplishments structured through the interactional work of students and teachers, or administrators and teachers.

McDermott (1976), referring to his work as "context analysis," examined the underlying rules that the teacher and students used to hold each other accountable for successful social interaction in a first grade classroom. Mehan (1979) explored how the organization of a classroom lesson was achieved through the "integration of academic knowledge and interactional skills." The study was designed as a close collaboration with the classroom teacher, although his analysis and lesson organizational schemes provided minimal insight into the teacher's thinking about these same events.

Both studies used methodological procedures that are characteristic of constitutive ethnography. They include an "emphasis on retrievability of data, exhaustiveness of data treatment, convergence between researchers' and participants' perspectives on events, and analysis at the interactional level" (Mehan, 1978, p. 5).
Retrievability of data is possible when researchers use audio and video tapes to record classroom phenomenon. Although the audio-visual recordings are able to preserve only a partial reality of classroom life, they do serve the purpose of providing an external memory of events that is different from and more retrievable than conventional field notes or quantification coding schemes. Delamont and Hamilton (1976) caution against using the audio-visual techniques for only post hoc analysis though, as "much of the (usually implicit) contextual data normally made available to the on-site observer may be lost" (p. 14).

Most studies emphasize the audio-visual recordings of classroom events along with the researcher's physical presence in the classroom setting.

The emphasis on exhaustive data treatment in a constitutive analysis suggests that the recorded classroom events will be examined for a range of interpretations, rather than seeking "only the evidence that supports the researcher's orienting hypothesis or domain assumptions" (Mehan, 1978, p. 6). This perspective, in examining the "entire course of interaction among participants" (Mehan, 1979) is countering the difficulty with conventional field work when only the dominant patterns of behavior are analyzed or only the patterns that support the researcher's initial hypotheses.

Constitutive ethnography also attempts to account for the structure in events that will converge with the participants orienting structure (Mehan, 1978; Mehan and Wood, 1975). In other words, the attempt is made to "make contact with the 'locally situated' meanings and purposes of the participants in the events including:
the purposes they are trying to accomplish in a particular event (such as a lesson),
their definitions of who they are as social persons in the event and
their expectations for how they and others should and will act in such events (Erickson, 1978, p. 6).

This perspective is consistent with the phenomenological orientation that guides conventional field studies, and is typically missing from the quantification coding schemes that guide the interaction analysis systems.

The final methodological feature of constitutive ethnography is the emphasis that is placed upon analysis at the interactional level:

Since the organization of events is socially constructed, researchers attempt to locate this structuring in the words or gestures of the participants (Mehan, 1978, p. 6).

The assumption is made that classroom interaction is rooted in contextually based discourse. That is, it is primarily through the verbal interactions of teachers and students that meanings are communicated about curriculum purpose and curriculum decision making. Curricular decisions are not acted upon by the teacher in isolation from the students. The decisions ultimately are interactional phenomenon, and, as such, need to be examined as they are given meaning in classroom settings by the teacher and the students working together, making sense of each other, and communicating with each other through language. Constitutive ethnography, therefore, attempts to illuminate the meanings of curricular events as they are established through the interactional work of teachers and students. While quantification schemes for classroom research often assume apriori the social structures that
undergird the educational process, constitutive analysis studies how
the structuring of a social reality is accomplished in the first place.
The classroom reality is viewed therefore as continuously evolving
and dynamic, created through the interaction of the teacher and the
students.

Summary

Three theoretical perspectives for studying classroom life and
teaching were reviewed. Studies were identified within each perspec­
tive that have contributed to an understanding of classroom life and
the thinking of open classroom teachers.

Exploring teacher thinking is a relatively new field in educational
research, although the direction is perceived by some researchers
(Bussis, Chittenden and Amarel, 1976; Clark and Yinger, 1977) as a
natural and logical outgrowth of the research on teacher behavior.

The shift from the concern for describing teaching behavior to a
concern for understanding the thinking behind the behavior is under­
girded by a different set of assumptions about how researchers can
increase their understanding of teaching in classroom settings. This
research perspective assumes that "what teachers do is affected by what
they think" (Clark and Yinger, 1977), and that "much behavior must be
understood as purposive; i.e., aimed toward some end" (Magoon, 1977).
This perspective assumes further that classroom life is created through
the interaction of the teacher and students, and is a dynamic evolving
reality.
These assumptions imply that what may be a sensible or justifiable teaching act in one setting may be inappropriate in another setting. All classrooms combine their own set of contextual factors, material resources, human energies, and curricular priorities. They are characterized by multi-dimensionality, and unpredictability (Doyle, 1977). Jackson (1968) has further characterized classroom life as involving a "high degree of uncertainty" and immediacy in the demands made upon teachers. What emerges from these descriptions is the recognition that more insight is needed into how individual teachers think about their own complex task of teaching. Clark and Yinger (1977) have suggested:

...if research is to be put into practice - if the general care is to be applied in particular situations - then we must know more about how teachers exercise judgments, make decisions, define appropriateness, and express their thoughts in action" (op. 279-280).

The present study was designed with this purpose in mind. It was intended to illuminate my teaching experience in a third-fourth grade informal classroom and the purposes, decisions, and understandings that were a part of that experience. The study was designed further to utilize several vantage points in the investigation. Methodological and theoretical perspectives from quantification schemes, conventional field studies, and constitutive ethnography were combined to provide a multi-dimensional view of classroom life and teacher thinking.
CHAPTER III
PROCEDURES OF THE STUDY

Introduction

The purpose of this study was to examine selected aspects of my experience as an elementary school teacher, exploring specifically the organization of curriculum events, classroom activity, teacher-student interactional patterns, and teacher purposes and dilemmas that undergirded these processes.

The study was methodologically consonant with the "action research model" proposed almost three decades ago by Corey (1953) and Shumsky (1958). Action research emphasized the important role for teachers in studying their own classroom situations. Shumsky (1958) had stated:

The action researcher does not see himself as an observer but rather as a participant. Operating in his own class the teacher does not stand by while things are happening; he is an integral part of the situation. What happens immines on the action researcher as a person. Researching means that the teacher's way of teaching, his relations with pupils and subject matter, and his field situation are in transition (p. 4).

Action research models frequently emphasized teachers conducting experimental research in their own classrooms. This study was designed to be descriptive and exploratory in nature. No variables were manipulated for inquiry purposes; rather, the normal, everyday routine of classroom life and my own response to it were documented through teacher-researcher data gathering procedures.
The study was organized into two phases. The first phase involved the teaching experience in a third-fourth grade elementary classroom during 1978-79. The teaching responsibilities were undertaken with a commitment to document at least part of that experience. Although I viewed myself as a teacher-researcher, the most systematic kinds of data gathering were those that were a regular part of my work as a teacher.

The second phase of this study began the following year (1979-80) when I resumed my graduate studies at Ohio State University. The major focus during this stage was in analyzing the data that I had accumulated during the teaching year.

The Teacher-Researcher

Because the primary focus within this study was my experience as an elementary school teacher, it seemed important to describe my background within the field of education.

My undergraduate education at Carleton College, a small private college in Minnesota, was liberal arts based with no specific attention given to teaching or education as a profession. My reading of Jonathan Kozol's *Death at an Early Age* (1968), and Herbert Kohl's *Thirty-six Children* (1967) was a foreshadowing during this period that I might later be involved in elementary teaching. I was emotionally and intellectually moved by both of these early romantic critiques of American schooling.

A year following graduation from Carleton, I began a Master of Divinity program at Yale University. I enrolled that first fall in a seminar entitled "The World of Public Education." The seminar's purpose was to look critically at the American school system, and to provide a forum for reflecting on our various Divinity School field experiences in schools.
throughout New Haven. I was assigned to work in a counseling office and reading center of an inner city high school, and later in the year, through my own choice, in an elementary school.

Influential readings during that period included George Dennison's *The Lives of Children* (1969), A.S. Neil's *Summerhill* (1960), and John Holt's *How Children Fail* (1964). What I was beginning to build from these different readings, and the seminar and field experiences, was a commitment for the significant role schooling played in American society, and a personal vision of a more humane, child-centered school as a basis for improving society.

Charles Silberman's *Crisis in the Classroom* (1970) was especially influential during this period. A section in this volume describing the University of North Dakota's New School for Behavioral Studies in Education prompted the important decision to leave Yale Divinity School that spring in order to pursue this emerging commitment to teaching as a profession. The New School was significant to me because of its strong and unique commitment to teaching undergraduate and graduate students in teacher education in the same way it would have them teach. The New School's statement of purpose emphasized:

> The New School has as its major task the preparation of a new kind of elementary teacher. It strives to educate students to acquire the qualities of mind and behavior which will assist them in nurturing the creative tendencies in the young, and in introducing a more individualized mode of instruction into the schools of North Dakota (quoted in Silberman, 1970, p. 473).

Silberman had stressed in *Crisis in the Classroom* that these were "two of the qualities most strikingly absent in most American public
schools" (1970, p. 474). The decision to attend the New School seemed like a natural and logical next step for me from the initial criticism of teaching and public education that was a part of the Divinity School experience.

I attended the New School for one year as an undergraduate (1971-72), working as a student teacher in the Grand Forks, North Dakota public schools, and attending workshops, seminars, and discussion groups at the University. The following year I entered the New School's Internship program, a fifteen month Master's degree program that combined two summer sessions with full time teaching responsibilities during the academic year. I was assigned to a 6th grade classroom in Devils Lake, North Dakota (pop. 8,500), and proceeded to teach and live in this rural community for three additional years after the internship was completed.

I taught sixth graders that first year, fifth graders for two years and then third graders for one year. The school's population ranged from solid middle to upper middle class. Family professional backgrounds included farming, business, law, teaching, and medicine. The classroom racial make up during those four years was predominantly white except for one or two Native American children each year.

During the North Dakota elementary teaching experience I developed a close professional relationship with faculty at the New School. It was this contact that prompted my first involvement as a teacher educator, primarily through the University of North Dakota's summer workshops. I began to work with pre-service and in-service teachers, and used my
classroom experiences as the basis for whatever "expertise" I had to offer others. A small private college in North Dakota asked me to teach a reading methods course during the winter of 1975, and I was used regularly as a staff consultant for the International Center for Educational Development conducting "open classroom" workshops in different cities throughout the midwest.

The work of teaching children and teaching teachers intensified my growing awareness of the multiple, unanswered questions I had about children's learning, curriculum, and the role of the teacher. I was unfamiliar with the theoretical and research oriented literature in the field of education, and after five years was also ready for a change from the North Dakota setting.

I enrolled in the autumn of 1976 in a Ph.D. program in Early and Middle Childhood Education at The Ohio State University. In addition to my graduate studies, I assisted and then later directed an undergraduate teacher education program (EPIC - Educational Program for Teaching in Informal Classrooms). EPIC was a three quarter program for juniors and seniors that provided extensive field experiences in informal classrooms in the Columbus area. The program, similar to the New School in some respects, worked to model for undergraduates ways they might work with children as classroom teachers. Within EPIC I taught methods courses (reading, language arts, mathematics, and social studies), and supervised student teachers in the schools.

After two years of graduate course work, I completed my comprehensive examinations and was admitted as a doctoral candidate. I recognized at
this stage that the most important way for me to act upon my knowledge of teaching was to return to the elementary classroom. I knew of available teaching positions at an elementary school in the Columbus Public School System because of my student teacher supervisory role from the EPIC program. I resigned my Graduate Teaching Associateship during the summer and signed a contract to teach for one year in the Columbus Public School System.

I entered the school year with what I felt were informed purposes about the teacher's role, children's learning, and curriculum development. I also entered with a commitment to document part of my teaching experience. I recognized that how teachers think about their teaching, the kinds of purposes that guide their action, and their reasoning for curricular organization or teacher-student interaction patterns were frequently hidden to the classroom researcher. This present study was designed to describe these dimensions of the teaching experience.

The School

Indianola Informal School was the only alternative for Informal Education in the Columbus Public School System. The school, opened as an alternative school in 1975, accommodated kindergarten through sixth grade children. It was located several blocks from The Ohio State University campus and was surrounded by older private homes, sorority and fraternity houses, homes rented to students, duplexes, and apartment complexes. This local area involved a transient population of many single parent families and university students. The school itself was an old building, built in 1908 as the original junior high school in Columbus.
Although designed as an alternative school for children throughout the city, Indianola also drew from the neighborhood. Student enrollment was approximately 440 in 1978-79 of which 200 were registered through the Columbus Plan. The Columbus Plan, a program that allowed parents to select an alternative school, was designed to foster racial balance. The remaining students in the school were from the neighborhood families.

The student body represented a diverse cross section of social, economic, and racial elements within the Columbus area. Neighborhood children were frequently from lower income families, both white and black. Children bused on the Columbus Plan were generally from families of middle or higher income levels.

The school had sixteen classrooms, all of which were multi-age level groups. There were eight kindergarten-first-second grade classrooms on the first floor and lower level of the school, and four third-fourth grade classrooms, and four fourth-fifth-sixth grade classrooms on the second floor. The classroom teachers were assisted by the Columbus Arts Impact Team, a group of four teachers with expertise in dance, drama, music, and visual art. The team members worked with individual teachers, although not on a regular or scheduled basis.

The official philosophy of Indianola Informal was stated in a handbook presented to parents and school visitors. Several excerpts from this statement follow:

The philosophy of the informal classroom is built primarily and fundamentally on a firm knowledge of child development and the best we know about how
children learn. The informal classroom is structured to meet each individual child's needs -- cognitive, physical, emotional, and social -- at each successive stage of his or her development.

The informal classroom is arranged in centers of interest for learning, but the various areas of the curriculum are not segregated by either time or space. The program provides a fully integrated curriculum in which there is a free flow between the subject areas, thereby reflecting the reality of the interrelatedness of all human knowledge.

The informal learning environment is rich and full of opportunities for exploration, manipulation, and first-hand experience. Its philosophy emphasizes problem solving, autonomy, and independent thinking by providing alternatives and real, practical experiences as well as adult guidance and social interaction. Its atmosphere is warm and accepting, aesthetically pleasing and stimulating. Informal learning builds on the child's own interests and abilities through involvement with many types of materials and activities, resulting in intellectual growth. Informal education seeks to build on strengths as well as to eliminate weaknesses; to stretch as well as to motivate.

Although the statement was descriptive in tone, the philosophy pointed more toward a vision of what was desired. It was not necessarily a statement of what was taking place at any given point in time. Two incidents, one general school knowledge, the second a personal impression, were suggestive to me of this gap between the "informal" ideal and the classroom realities at Indianola.

The first incident involved a particularly creative and enthusiastic teacher who resigned her teaching position during the middle of the 1977-78 school year. She had found the misbehavior of children a discouraging and draining ordeal as she struggled to provide "firsthand experiences" and "opportunities for discoveries."
Secondly, the Indianola principal had invited me during the spring of the 1977-78 school year to lead several Monday afternoon staff meetings on the topic "helping children evaluate their school experiences." It was my intention to explore, with the teachers, the kinds of questions and appropriate settings for stimulating reflective, evaluative thinking from children. Both sessions deviated from this topic and focused instead on behavior problems in the classroom. It was my "impression" that the teachers' concerns for control and management were major, serious, and emotionally draining issues for them.

I selected Indianola Elementary for my return to classroom teaching for several reasons. (1) I was familiar, to some degree, with the principal and school staff because of my work with EPIC. I was confident therefore that I would have administrative and teacher support for my classroom teaching decisions. (2) Because the school was located within walking distance of the university, I felt that I would be able to utilize educational colleagues for teaching and research assistance on a regular basis. (3) I recognized that the multi-cultural, social, and economic make up of the Indianola student body would present a different kind of challenge to me from the North Dakota teaching experience, one that would be professionally essential if I planned to work with teachers in urban school settings.

**The Children**

During the school year, there were 34 children who, at one time or another, were members of my classroom.¹ There were never more than

¹All of the children's names have been changed throughout this report to protect the privacy of the participants.
32 children at one time. During the spring of the school year, there were 27 children, 24 of whom had started the year together.

Seventeen of these children (63%) were from the neighborhood, and ten (37%) were on the Columbus Plan. Twenty of the children (74%) were third graders, and seven (26%) were fourth graders. Six members of the classroom (22%) were black, and twenty-one (78%) were white.

Using the number of students receiving free hot lunch as a general indicator of socio-economic background, the classroom had thirteen students (48%) from lower income families. Twelve of these students (92%) were from neighborhood families. Thirteen children (48%) were also from single parent households. Eleven of these children (84%) were from neighborhood families.

The classroom represented a rich cross section of American society. There were children from families with professional backgrounds whose parents were involved in law, teaching, business, pharmacy, research, and journalism. There were families whose parents were involved in manual labor professions and clerical services. There was a third group whose parents, one or both, were unemployed. One child's father was in a maximum security prison in Ohio. This combination of neighborhood children, and children bused from throughout Columbus provided a range of social, economic, and racial factors, usually not present in American neighborhood schools.

**Data Gathering**

Data gathering was accomplished during phase one of the study. Seven documentation procedures were used.
Field Notes

Field notes were my written reflections on the teaching experience. They were kept throughout the year, although not on a daily basis. These written observations were recorded in my personal journal, and in separate notebooks designed specifically for the teaching experience. The field notes included maps of the classroom environment, my observations of individual children, puzzling questions about my role or curriculum directions, descriptions of classroom interaction, and my personal response to the teaching experience. The field notes were usually written at the end of a school day, or in the evening at home.

Anecdotal Records

Closely related to the field notes were the anecdotal records I kept on each child in the classroom. These written observations were kept on a more systematic basis than the field notes, as I viewed them as a constructive framework for enlarging my understanding of the children. I found them helpful during parent-teacher conferences, from the standpoint of jogging my memory about how a specific child was responding to the classroom, and in allowing me to be more specific with parents about patterns and changes in a child's classroom behavior. The anecdotal records included observations of a child's behavior, my questions about a child's needs and classroom response, my perception of a child's strengths and vulnerabilities, comments on what I felt were significant activities and incidents for the child, and so forth. The records frequently revealed more about my thinking than they did about a child's response to the classroom.
Daily Plans

The daily lesson plans consisted of my notes about what activities would take place each day. The plans identified the schedule of classroom events, specific activities, activity goals for individual children, and materials and resources to be used. The plans were written on a daily basis, and were kept on a clipboard for easy referral during the school day. They were used primarily as a "memory jogger" (McCutchen, 1979a) for my thinking about curriculum organization and activity.

The daily plans documented over time the transformation and continuities in curricular direction and organization. Plans for one day were not an accurate record of what actually took place that day. The daily plans listed possibilities for activity, with individual days frequently focusing on only a part of those activities.

Portfolios of Children's Work

Extensive portfolios of children's work were collected throughout the year. These portfolios included children's writing, art work, project work, math assignments, and spelling and handwriting exercises. The portfolios were used in parent-teacher conferences during the year to discuss a particular child's work efforts and progress. The portfolios provided documentation of the diverse range of student response to the classroom curriculum. The children's work was most productively represented in this study through the examples of children's writing.

Audio Taped Reflections

During a two week period in the spring of the school year, I set up a cassette recorder in my desk area, and used the tape recorder for
thinking aloud about activity, planning, student response, and my teaching experience. I used this documentation procedure in the early morning before the children arrived, during the morning recess, over the noon hour, and after school. The audio tapes were then transcribed. Reflections were taped during the days of May 7, 8, 9, 11, 14, 15, and 22.

**Video Taped Recordings**

Audio-video tape recordings of teacher-student interaction were made during the period of May 10 to June 1, 1979. During this period twelve 30 to 35 minute tapes of classroom events were recorded. I wore a small Sony microphone attached to my shirt collar with a thirty foot extension cord. The microphone recorded all of my talk during these events, and most student talk when students were within two to four feet of me. The extension cord allowed me to move about the room in a reasonably normal fashion, with only a few minor restrictions in use of classroom space.

The children were informed that the purpose of the video tape equipment was to help me learn more about my teaching. They were also informed that they would not be viewing any of the tapes, and therefore should try to ignore the equipment as much as possible. Most of the children were able to do this as they became accustomed to seeing the equipment in the classroom. There were a few obvious exceptions revealed on the recordings.

The camera was operated, on an alternating basis, by two interested sixth graders from the classroom across the hall. Their instructions
were simply to keep the camera on me, following my movement throughout the room. The camera was set up on a tripod along the blackboard wall in the rug area, and through a 180° rotation could be used to view almost all of the room. Large group meetings were generally not recorded because of the technical problems in hearing individual children seated away from the microphone. I usually started the tape when we recorded an event, and then let the sixth graders focus and rotate the camera on their own. They usually informed me when the tape ran out.

The actual recording process involved multiple sound and video problems. Four recordings (from May 25, 29 and June 1) had inadequate sound reproduction because of radio interference and a loose microphone connection.

Selections from five recordings were eventually used for descriptive and analysis purposes. Each of these tapes had sections with clear audio and video reproductions. These recordings included:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Event/Activity</th>
<th>Time</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>May 11 (Friday)</td>
<td>Work time: activity</td>
<td>9:25-9:45</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>May 11 (Friday)</td>
<td>Reading discussion group</td>
<td>1:10-1:30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>May 24 (Thursday)</td>
<td>Work time: planning, activity</td>
<td>9:10-9:45</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>May 24 (Thursday)</td>
<td>Writing time: planning, activity</td>
<td>11:00-11:35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>May 31 (Thursday)</td>
<td>Work time: planning, activity</td>
<td>9:20-9:55</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Three recordings (from May 10, 24, and 31) had adequate sound and video reproduction but were not used for descriptive purposes because of the practical concern for limiting the data.

Teacher Interview

The Teacher Interview from the North Dakota Evaluation Study (1972) was administered to me in June, 1979. The interview was conducted by a
Graduate Teaching Associate in Education who was not familiar with my classroom, or my research and teaching interests. The purpose was to encourage me to be as explicit as possible about the classroom and my teaching experience. The interview focused upon teacher goals, perception of classroom activity, classroom organization, student decision making, and the degree of individualization in the classroom. The teacher interview was tape recorded, and then later transcribed.

Summary

The range of data sources, the time frame for data gathering, and the relationship of the data sources to the teaching or research role are represented in Figure 1.

Figure 1. Data Gathering in Phase One

Data sources identified on the left hand side of the scale were a natural and regular part of teacher record keeping. These included daily planning, written notes on individual children, and samples of children's work. Sources listed to the right side of the scale were related more to the research concern for having retrievable data about the teaching experience and classroom life. The taped reflection, teacher interview, and video recordings of classroom interaction were
not used for ongoing teaching purposes or concerns. These data sources were only used for data analysis when the teaching year was completed.

Field notes are listed in the center of the scale because they served two functions for me during the course of the teaching year. As written reflections they frequently helped me re-think my understanding of what I was doing as a teacher on a daily basis. They were also written with longer term research purposes in mind, in an effort to provide documentation for my thinking and experiences throughout the school year.

**Data Analysis**

The purpose of this study was to examine my experience as an elementary teacher. This broad purpose was operationalized through three descriptive components. The first component described teacher purposes, the curriculum organization, and the curriculum activity. All seven data sources were utilized for this descriptive analysis. The second component described the interaction of classroom participants (teacher and students) as they chose, set up, and sustained themselves with activity. The primary data source for this description was the video taped recordings. A third component described the tensions or dilemmas that emerged from the teaching experience itself. These dilemmas were revealed in the taped reflections, the anecdotal records, the teacher interview, and the field notes.

The relationship of the data sources to these descriptive components is illustrated in Figure 2.
The analysis of the teaching experience was an ongoing process during the teaching year (phase one). The major theme that emerged from this analysis was a conceptualization of teaching as encountering tensions or dilemmas. The more systematic analysis in phase two organized and categorized these various tensions as they were revealed in the taped reflections, anecdotal records, teacher interview, and field notes.

All seven data sources were used for analyzing the major events or scenes that organized the classroom (cf. Frake, 1964). Phases within these events were discovered from participant anticipations of subsequent phases or events. These major events were then contrasted in terms of curricular activity, and teacher purposes. Curricular activity was sorted and categorized through taxonomic relationships. Teacher purposes were organized as comprehensive and narrow in scope.
Teacher-student interaction was analyzed through the retrievable data of video taped recordings. Recorded events were transcribed into written protocols. Organizing concepts from discourse analysis (Sinclair and Coulthard, 1975) were used as heuristic devices for the initial coding of the interactional sequences. Each sequence was examined for the primary function it served for classroom participants within the larger event or activity. Repeated viewing of the video tapes and repeated categorizing of the written protocols provided additional meanings to the processes of interaction that were interpreted from the initial viewing. Exploratory, interpretive schemes were modified or expanded as additional sequences of interaction were considered. Quantitative data on the function of interactional sequences were used to suggest broad characteristics of teacher-student interactional patterns and teacher behavior. Descriptive categories were intended to reflect the activities or interaction in the classroom rather than "to test any theoretical position concerning appropriate or inappropriate teacher behavior" (Resnick, 1972).

Summary

A self-reflective, descriptive approach was used to explore teaching and classroom life in an informal third-fourth grade classroom. The period of study included the teaching and data gathering stage (1978-79), and a follow-up year for analyzing and reporting the teaching experience (1979-80).

Seven data gathering procedures were used to describe the purpose, activity, and organization of curricular events, patterns of teacher-student interaction, and the tensions or dilemmas that undergirded the teaching experience. The analysis was accomplished through sorting and
categorizing the classroom and teaching experience into a framework that described the organization and purposes of the curricular events and teacher-student interaction.
CHAPTER IV

THE CLASSROOM CURRICULUM: PURPOSES, ACTIVITY, AND ORGANIZATION

Introduction

The purpose of this chapter and Chapter V is to describe my classroom teaching experience at Indianola Elementary School. Global features of the classroom experience are reported in this chapter. These features include the beginning of the school year (Fall, 1973), the organization of curricular events and activities during the Spring (1979), and the curriculum purpoises that undergirded these events and activities.

Chapter V provides a finer-grained description of the classroom verbal interaction. This description focuses specifically on teacher-student interaction during one curricular event from the Spring of the school year. The emphasis within both the global and the fine-grained descriptive analyses is on understanding the relationship between my emerging educational theory (as delineated in Chapter II) and my practice as a classroom teacher.

Although I entered the teaching year with what I felt were well formulated educational purposes, the experience itself was characterized by constant tensions and conflicts between my best purposes and classroom practice. The teaching was more difficult and more perplexing than any I had previously anticipated or experienced as an educator.

The work of relating educational theory to practice, and relating practice to theory, eventually led to the conceptualization of the teaching experience in terms of "a set of persisting dilemmas" (Berlak et al., 1973). The dilemmas were revealed partially by the kinds of questions and
observations I raised as I reflected on purposes and practice during the
teaching year. They were illuminated further through the descriptive
analysis undertaken when the teaching year was completed.

Although the teaching dilemmas are seen as one major finding in this
study, they will be defined and discussed in detail in Chapter VI. The
purpose of that discussion will be to examine the tensions and conflicts
that arose between my idealized perspective of classroom teaching and what
in fact occurred during the 1978-79 school year.

Beginning the School Year

The beginning of the school year is the most difficult part of the
teaching experience for me to describe. Although from a practical standpoint,
this difficulty relates in part to the early scarcity of data sources, the
substantive reasons for the difficulty rested with the teaching experience
itself. Although I viewed myself as a teacher-researcher, I found the
problems of re-entry into classroom teaching, after two reflective years at
the university, discouraging, and at times, personally painful.

Teacher Uncertainty

Field notes from the fall emphasized my uncertainty about how to
organize the class, my questions about the kind of curriculum that would be
appropriate for this group of children, and tensions about how the physical
environment should be arranged.

9-28 I have found the teaching experience to be so unlike
what I had anticipated that I seriously question the
pedagogical framework from which I have operated the
last two years. I have always found it personally
comforting to talk about or acknowledge the ambiguity
of life in general and teaching in particular. But
the talk has most recently been conducted at a safe
distance for me, within a university community that
values this kind of personal and professional reflec-
tion. As I now experience the ambiguity, and complex-
ity of teaching, I can find no refuge in the fact
that, theoretically, these elements are perhaps given.
There are constant streams of content and subject matter puzzles, questions of appropriate resources, unhappy children, dealing with optimal organization, the heuristic moment and where we go from there, behavior control, misbehavior.... The list could be endless.

I was also overwhelmed by the immediate and daily problems of how to manage the behavior of 31 children. Although there were multiple incidents of fighting, stolen materials, disinterest in school activities, and inattentive or uncooperative behavior, to suggest that the difficulties or complexities of the Fall were entirely student produced would not only be inappropriate but also unfair to the students. Classroom behavior was a jointly produced, interactional phenomenon between students and myself. True, students did fight, bicker, and frequently threaten each other. Many showed little interest in school activity, and were even less willing to have a go at something. Some were openly hostile to me and other staff, others withdrawn, and uncommunicative. But my behavior throughout this period also influenced the classroom interaction and group morale. I was frequently inconsistent and ambiguous about my expectations for appropriate behavior and school activity. I over-reacted to certain incidents of misbehavior, and did not respond or act upon other areas of need. I became irritable because of the constant and simultaneous demands for my attention. I changed the physical environment almost every two weeks, and used blocks of time in varying ways. I was also so preoccupied with getting organized that there was frequently little energy left over for the more substantive component of the curriculum.

Field notes revealed some of these complex and diverse responses to the fall experience:
9-7 I have just completed my first day at Indianola. Curriculum-wise the day accomplished nothing. My plans seemed to be awful. For one who believes in over-planning, I was incredibility under-planned. I stayed calm for most of the day, although I had to raise my voice occasionally as there are individuals who seem so unresponsive to adult direction. Most of the children were such awful listeners. I really didn't have much for them to do. Or were they simply restless? Were my expectations made clear?

9-10 I have completely underestimated the complexity of the teaching task. I'm beginning to panic as I realize the class is not going to tick real smoothly this year. Fights, stolen pencils, loud voices, bickering, never enough time for each child, idle activities; the chaos goes on and on. The difficulty is that I feel totally unprepared. The classroom arrangement is poor, and I'm missing the kind of equipment, resources, and books that I grew to rely upon in Devils Lake [previous elementary teaching experience].

9-11 Ricky retold an entire story to me during the last few minutes of silent reading when I ought to have been modeling some kind of reading. I had been encouraging everyone to read silently, and then find myself actively listening to one child talk aloud about a book. The tension obviously revolves around the numbers aspect of teaching.

9-25 It is the start of the third week and I still don't feel as if anything is really moving. I find it a full time job simply to survive each day, let alone attempt teaching. My day begins with a rug planning session. Groups are announced and individual expectations laid out. I have been meeting at this time with small groups, usually math groups, while most people work independently. After recess we plan again, and then work for another 45 minutes before clean-up and sharing. I have been reading to them after lunch before silent reading. Silent reading is still noisy time, with often very little reading going on. It's frustrating for me to deal with that.

9-26 Multiple problems in terms of behavior. The children simply don't listen. They don't seem to care. Are my expectations made clear enough? Can anyone cope with this group?
10-8 Friday and Thursday were very depressing days for me last week. I don't seem to be making any progress, and I don't feel particularly good about anything I've planned for the group. I'm completely baffled about what kind of curriculum concerns I ought to tackle. I really can't legitimately individualize the points of inquiry because I simply don't have the time. I suppose I ought to tackle some aspect of the community, but my own knowledge is so lacking in that area I hesitate to move.

10-23 Last week was a better one for me. I was exhausted when the weekend rolled around, but I felt the class was beginning to respond to my direction somewhat. I'm also beginning to appreciate smaller gains, rather than looking for huge chunks of significant learning.

10-30 I had a great deal of trouble today getting their attention in group settings. It seems like its getting worse in some ways. I wonder what kind of patience is needed by me, or whether anger is necessary. Some of the children seem to not have the ability to control themselves in the group setting. Leslie, Ricky, Monica find this kind of control impossible, I think.

I am overwhelmed by this issue of control. It seems my head continually wonders where Edward or Ken are.

My teaching concerns, as revealed in these field notes, ranged from basic organizational issues, to problems of control, to questions about substantive points of inquiry. Confounding these personal tensions and conflicts was the fact that the children were responding to classroom activity in diverse and complex ways. There were several major working styles that dominated the Fall, although an individual child's response would frequently change from day to day or activity to activity.
Working Styles

There were some children who were positive "self-directors." These children were able to concentrate on their own activity for extended periods of time. They used materials and human resources in the room in constructive ways, and solved interpersonal problems in quiet, behind the scene ways. Self-directors generally worked out of my immediate awareness.

There were other children who were task oriented, although they rarely initiated activity or worked on a project of their own choosing for an extended period of time. These individuals required much more teacher contact during a work activity, and preferred to work on well-defined, discrete kinds of curricular activity.

"Perpetual motion" was the dominant working pattern of another group of children. These individuals were less task oriented and more interested in friends and peer problems. They would start activities and then be up and out of their work space to survey other activities and people. Some of these children in "perpetual motion" were playful and in good spirits about the classroom. Others were moody and disinterested.

A fourth working pattern was one that involved constant talking. "Talkers" were less interested in classroom tasks and more interested in interpersonal relationships. Some of these talkers were a quiet sort. They worked in a table or desk area and carried on continual conversation with their peers without disturbing other individuals in the room. Others were noisy, "loud talkers." These individuals were generally disruptive of the larger classroom noise level, although not always intentionally. They simply functioned in a boisterous way as they worked with their peers.

A final working pattern involved individuals who were conflict-oriented. These children responded to activity by complaining about peers,
fighting with others, refusing to make a choice for activity, threatening others, and so forth. Their primary attention was on themselves or their relationships with other children. It was rarely placed on their own efforts with a curricular task. It was this particular pattern that was the most troublesome for me to deal with during the beginning of the school year.

Although individual children had a dominant working style, students frequently responded to classroom activity through combinations of styles. The patterns therefore were fluid and varied from day to day. They represented a diverse and complex student response to curricular activity, and were a perplexing component for me as I worked to organize the school day in a way that would be consonant with my teaching purposes.

Classroom Organization

Toward the end of the Fall period, I organized the classroom around four major events, namely, work time, writing time, reading time, and math time. A fifth major event, the rug time, was used for transitions between the other four. The purpose of the rug time included sharing work, discussing, reading aloud, evaluating work efforts, and introducing new ideas or activities within a major event.

The major events organized the day from a temporal perspective (Mehan, 1978; Erickson and Schultz, 1977), and provided a framework from which we, the classroom participants, could begin to inform and hold each other accountable for different curricular purposes throughout the school day (cf. McDermott, 1976).

Each of the major events was segmented into phases. Each phase was characterized by different interactional sequences between myself and the
students (Mehan, 1979) and by different uses of the classroom space and positioning of participants (cf. Bremme and Erickson, 1977; Florio, 1978).

Each phase also provided for a different procedural and academic purpose within the larger event. In a study of a K-1 classroom, Florio (1978) described a work time event as made up of three phases: getting ready, focused time, and wind up. Mehan (1979) found a similar organization in whole group lessons in a first, second, and third grade classroom. The lessons were segmented into opening, instructional and closing phases, with each phase serving a different interactional function for the participants within the larger event. A similar hierarchical arrangement existed for each of the events in my third-fourth grade classroom. Figure 3 summarizes these major curricular features that organized the school day.

A description of the school day as organized around four major events is misleading in some ways because typical days invariably involved interruptions from the planned routine (Jackson, 1968; Smith and Geoffrey, 1968). My classroom was no exception. Physical education periods, field trips, work with the arts teachers and special school assemblies were unaccounted for in the description, but were regular, although not major, events within the classroom routine.

The classroom description is also misleading because it implies an organizational routine and educational framework that may have little to do with what the students and I actually experienced. Beyond the schedule interruptions, which could be anticipated to some degree, each classroom event was characterized by wandering attention spans, children having trouble getting along with other children, misplaced materials, interruptions from children in other classrooms, trips to the bathroom or drinking
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Events</th>
<th>Phases</th>
<th>Major Purposes and Activity</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Work Time</td>
<td>Setting up</td>
<td>Greeting; children choosing activity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(8:30-10:10)</td>
<td>Opening</td>
<td>Assembling; teacher directions, informing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Choosing</td>
<td>Teacher-child negotiation for activity choice</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Activity</td>
<td>Representational work: themes, projects, student interests; math/language study</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(10:10-10:25)</td>
<td>Morning Recess</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(10:30-10:50)</td>
<td>Closing</td>
<td>Assembling; sharing and evaluation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Writing Time</td>
<td>Opening ( Choosing)*</td>
<td>Assembling; teacher directions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(10:50-11:45)</td>
<td>Activity</td>
<td>Teacher-child negotiation for activity choice</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Closing</td>
<td>Written response: themes, personal experiences, language study</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Assembling; sharing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(11:45-12:45)</td>
<td>Lunch/Lunch Recess</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reading Time</td>
<td>Opening</td>
<td>Assembling; teacher reading; teacher directions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(12:50-1:50)</td>
<td>Activity ( Closing)*</td>
<td>Reading, conferences, group discussions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Assembling; sharing and evaluation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(1:50-2:10)</td>
<td>Afternoon Recess</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Math Time</td>
<td>Opening (Instructional)*</td>
<td>Assembling; teacher directions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(2:15-3:00)</td>
<td>Activity</td>
<td>Group lesson; introducing new material</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Math response: computation, geometry and measurement</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Closing</td>
<td>Assembling; collecting papers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(3:00-3:15)</td>
<td>Clean Up and Dismissal</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Phases in parentheses are optional within the event.

Figure 3. Organization of the School Day
fountain, inadequate teacher response and so forth. The list is intention­
ally negative in nature to make the point that multiple incidents inter­
fered with the idealized or hypothetical purpose of a particular classroom
curricular event. Doyle (1977) has suggested that classroom realities are
characterized by unpredictability, simultaneity, multidimensionality, and
immediacy. It is these features which make any general description of a
classroom curriculum highly suspect.

The concept of orchestration, that is, a day arranged so that the
events fit in part the interests and energy levels of the children and the
teacher, is a helpful one for understanding the ebb and flow of classroom
life. The work time event was placed first in the day on the assumo­tion
that the children's involvement in independent activities would be most
successful when they were rested and eager to work. Naturally, as the day
unfolded, the students and I tired. Choices, then, were limited. Learning
tasks for the children became more discrete in nature, with more immediate
feedback from me possible. This orchestration was arrived at in the Fall
when I struggled to match the fluctuating energies and interests of the
children with the emerging curricular organization.

Classroom Stability

The classroom was continually changing during this period as the stu­
dents and I worked to hold each other accountable for different school and
personal purposes. The organizational routine that was created in the late
Fall gradually provided the group with "a predictable set of circumstances"
that worked as a stabilizing influence on the classroom social system
(cf. LaBelle, 1972). Children began to anticipate and create expectations
for what would occur at certain times in the day. They were able to predict
appropriate behavior and work procedures for different curricular events
and phases within these events. As the organization became routine, and as my behavior became more consistent, they gradually began to understand the implicit rules that encompassed the larger classroom organization and curriculum events.

The major classroom descriptions in this study focus upon the curriculum and student-teacher interactional patterns from the Spring of the school year. It seems essential to recognize that the working relationships, the curricular organizations, and the learning activities of that Spring period were critically rooted in and effected by the difficult and complex patterns of interaction that characterized the school beginning. There was no definite point at which classroom morale suddenly improved, or at which children's activity was suddenly reflecting more care and effort. Changes, when they did occur, were frequently gradual and subtle, marked by some progress and then possible retreat. The overall shift revealed significant differences between the Fall and the Spring of the school year, although the Spring period never provided a model of the ideal. The latter period continued to reveal a complex range of student behavior and elements of teacher uncertainty which dominated the Fall. In addition to the organizational routine, the Spring was affected by several important strands:

1. More trusting working agreements between myself and the students were gradually established over the course of the year. Trust, in this sense, referred to the quality of relationships between classroom participants as it was achieved through interaction (McDermott, 1977).
2. A classroom arrangement was eventually utilized in the late Fall that was more appropriate for the working pattern of this group of children. This arrangement included desks for each student, and my attention to appropriate working spaces for specific individuals as a way to anticipate and thus avoid interactional problems (see Figure 4).

3. My own style of interaction gradually became firmer and more consistent both in terms of behavioral expectations and activity purposes. I developed a clearer understanding of how I could balance the day to meet multiple educational and managerial purposes. I also developed a better sense of what student behaviors occasionally could be ignored.

4. The curriculum themes during the Winter and the Spring provided a substantive focus that involved more of the students in worthwhile ways. The range of experience was broader and my input more thoughtful and systematic. Curricular themes from the Fall had too often been piecemeal and erratic and had rarely involved more than small groups or interested individuals.

5. The composition of the classroom shifted over the course of the year, as neighborhood families moved in and out of the area, and as children were placed in other schools. The departure of several children in particular seemed to influence the overall morale of the classroom. Three of these children had difficult, conflict-type relationships with other students in the room and received an inordinate amount of negative attention from me. Their departure alleviated some of the group tension of that Fall period.
Figure 4. Diagram of the Classroom
6. As the year progressed, I began to appreciate the smaller successes that were operating within the larger scheme of things. I was never completely satisfied with the quality of relationships among students or the nature of the curricular inquiry. But all the children, on different occasions, made important statements about themselves and their relationship to others through their school activities or interactional patterns. The ability to see and appreciate these statements from each child was a critical shift in my thinking as I worked through the difficult school beginning.

The discussion so far has briefly described the beginning of the school year. The Fall was characterized by a complex range of student behavior and by uncertainty and inconsistency in my response to the children, activity, and the environment. An organizational structure gradually evolved during this period that contributed to a more stable classroom social system. The following sections will examine this structure (see Figure 3). Four curriculum events will be described. Subheadings within each event describe the curriculum purposes, the activity and content, and the organization of these events through time. The purpose will be to provide a global, surface description of the classroom experience that explores the relationship between my educational theory and teaching practice.

Work Time

Curriculum Purposes

The primary purpose of the morning work time was to encourage a sustained, involved, and reflective response from the children as they engaged in activities of their own choosing. The subject matter focus,
the points of inquiry that guided the activities, were generally related to the fields of literature, social science, science, and the arts. There were usually no general requirements or bits of work assigned to everyone during this activity. The activity focus, in idealized terms, was placed upon the kind of caring and quality thinking that individuals would put into their own efforts as they represented ideas or solved problems.

The activities frequently were practical in nature. Children used oral and written language, and different kinds of materials and media to make personal statements about their home and classroom experiences. Within most of these practical activities the expectation was that children would be thinking through problems and reflecting on what they were encountering. The purpose of the activities was to encourage practical and reflective problem solving.

The work time purpose was drawn from a Piagetian perspective of the learning process which stressed the active, constructive nature of knowing through interaction with the environment (Piaget, 1971). Teacher purposes were influenced by the Froebelian notion of drawing from children statements of their own knowledge (Froebel, 1970). This focus on "drawing out" was accomplished in part by providing classroom experiences, the materials and media for children to make these personal statements.

**Curriculum Content and Activity**

There were five kinds of themes that influenced work time choices. These included: long term current themes, enduring past themes, short term special themes, short term and enduring student themes, and short term math and language work.
Current Theme. The current thematic focus was generally considered the primary point of inquiry within the work time period. If asked to explain what they were studying the students would have responded by naming the theme, even when there were other unrelated activities going on simultaneously.

During the Winter period, January through March, the theme revolved around an historical focus with two significant strands: pioneer life and crafts, and biographies of famous people. Input for the theme included field trips to the Ohio Historical Society and to a pioneer craft exhibit, reading aloud from informational books and biographies, and classroom visitors who demonstrated quilting and soap making. Activities in the classroom included carding, spinning, and weaving wool; quilting; drying and preserving foods; making candles; building model log cabins; constructing timelines of famous people; building models of the telegraph and the Wright Brothers' "Flyer"; and reading. Many of the experiences in and outside the classroom were represented by the children through writing and artwork. The writing was both informational and expressive. Several examples follow:

Anne: In our Great-Grandmother's and Great Grandfather's times, they couldn't just go to J.C. Pennys to buy some clothes. They had to weave it. First they had to shear a sheep. The wool that they sheared from the sheep was called wool in the grease because it was very greasy. To clean the wool you would have to do a thing called carding. Carding is when you take two carding brushes and out the wool in the grease on one of the brushes and rub them both together going one way. Now you are ready to spin...²

Lynn represented her learning about maple sugar through a story of a pioneer girl. Her book was patterned after DePaola's Charlie Needs a Cloak. Illustrations accompanied each step in the process she described.

²In the samples of children's writing, spelling has been corrected for purposes of readability.
Lynn: Mary wanted some maple sugar candy but her mother said she would have to make it herself and the book will show you how to go through all the steps in the pioneer days.

First she had to drill a hole in the tree. Then she hanged the bucket on the spile.

Then you pick up the rocks out of the fire. Of course use sticks because the rock is too hot to handle with your hands. Then you put the hot rock into the pot of syrup and watch it evaporate. Then you stir it up with a spoon until it starts to get sandy. Then you pour it out of the pot or you can put it in a mold.

Mary invited her friend Jess over to her house to have some maple candy.

Surprise!

Dan made a model log cabin and wrote a brief description to accompany his displayed work.

Dan: This is a log cabin in the woods. Steve took us to the Ohio Historical Society because we were studying famous people. I am making a log cabin. One of the notches was a square notch. They use lime and animal hair and mud to keep together the logs.

During the Spring period, May through June, the current theme was African folktales and Africa. Input for the theme included reading African folktales, seeing the animated film version of Gerald McDermott's *Anansi the Spider*, guest speakers who had visited Africa, slides and movies of African animals and the land, and records of African music. A mother of one of the students showed slides from her Peace Corp experience in Tanzania. She also modeled an African school lesson for the children, teaching them to count to ten in Swahili. Another visitor showed slides of animals from the East African game reserves. The folktales were read to the children over a several week period. The purpose was to build a broad literary base from which varying motifs and themes could be compared, and then used in their own work.
Activity for the work time that grew from this theme included writing folktales, retelling African tales through the techniques of cut out film animation, finding facts about Africa through the use of a social studies textbook, making maps, and designing and constructing African masks.

For those children whom I felt could handle the textbook work the fourth grade Noble and Noble social studies book People and the Land (1974) was utilized. Chapters on Ghana, Nigeria, and Egypt were selected. The purpose was to provide informational reading, emphasizing the retrieval of facts through skimming selected passages to answer questions. This was the group's first experience with a textbook assignment. I simply wanted specific children to give the readings and chapter questions a try.

Past Themes. Choices for the work time activity also emerged from linkages the students made to past themes in the classroom (astronomy, mapping, animals, and history). When film animation was introduced as a technique for representing African folktales some of the children used that technique to respond to what was presumably a more enduring interest of theirs. For example, some children used the film animation process to represent former themes such as the solar system, dinosaurs, sharks, and whales. Past themes were rarely completed in any final sense, as strands of past work continued to influence choices in the present work time throughout the year.

Special Themes. A third source of activity for the work time event revolved around special themes or projects that were short-term in nature. Extensions from children's literature fell into this category. Books read to the entire class were frequently responded to through art and writing.
Another example was the production of a thank you book for the staff who had instructed the class in gymnastics at a community recreation center. This group project was short term in nature, and was worked on during May, 1979.

Math/Language Study. A fourth source for work time activity included unfinished work from the math and writing times.

Students rarely chose spelling or handwriting tasks on their own. When these activities were a part of the work time, it was because I had made the decision for a specific child to complete one of these tasks. Activities also evolved from the unfinished computation worksheets of the afternoon math time. Many children expected to see their teacher-corrected math sheet the first thing in the morning. Some students then chose to finish this math during the work time. I occasionally made this decision for other students.

There were other activities that evolved from the writing and math times which influenced work time choices. Work from geometry and measurement tasks, although originally presented to the class within the math time, was continued by some children during the work time. The same pattern occurred for writing activities. Pen pal letters, stories, and folktales which were started within a writing time were frequently continued by the children during the work time period.

Student Themes. The fifth source of activity for the work time period grew from the students' own interests. At varying times throughout the year, different children acted upon their own interests and materials during the work time period. Super hero cartoon drawings, electronics, mathematical puzzles, and model boats are examples of the kind of activities that related more to the interests of individual students than to the
class themes or projects. The interests were short term in nature for some children, and enduring for others. One child made an effort to relate most of his work time activity to his interest in electronics. Students sometimes represented their topics of interest in ways that the entire class had represented work with current themes, through oral and written language and the use of different kinds of materials and media.

**Curriculum Organization**

An analysis of the work time event revealed five phases: setting up, opening, choosing, activity, and closing. The phases were sequentially organized but were not mutually exclusive, e.g., the choosing and the activity phases were frequently overlapping in time. Each phase served a different function within the larger work time events for both myself and the students.

**Setting Up Phase.** The setting up phase began when the first child or group of children arrived at 8:30 A.M. I frequently stayed at my desk area to greet the children individually or in small groups as they arrived. The process of greeting children was important to me for two reasons. First, the morning provided a natural time for children to share personal stories and experiences with me without the pressure of so many other people, or the expectation to be involved with school work. Pinnell (1975), in an observational study of language use in informal classroom settings, had observed that there was little personal talk between teacher and student. She also noted that students frequently perceived the teacher as someone to talk with about school work rather than personal experiences. Thus, making myself available for this informal interaction when the children arrived was designed to encourage personal
language use. Some of the children shared family events, stories about pets, television shows, and personal items brought from home. These personal interactions were worthwhile but brief, and difficult to sustain as other children arrived.

A second reason for being available during arrival time was to encourage some children to get involved immediately in their work time activity. Although choices encompassed a wider range of activity than would be normally considered during the work time period, my underlying purpose was to establish a classroom environment that emphasized purposeful involvement whenever they were in the classroom. I encouraged children to continue unfinished project work, art responses to our current themes, and unfinished math work. I often asked children: "Do you know what you want to do during our work time this morning?" If I made contact with a few individuals and helped them make decisions within the work time activity framework, then the planning process for our work time was usually more efficient. The setting up phase, in essence, was one of anticipating the ensuing work time.

If the children became responsibly involved in their activity, the setting up phase was allowed to continue beyond the official start of the school day (8:50 A.M.). There were some days when the informal activity continued until 9:20 or 9:30 A.M. The decision on whether or not children were "responsibly" involved was based upon my diagnosis of the relative noise level (was it productive, workable, or distracting?), the cooperation amongst children (were they sharing materials, and ideas? were they respecting each other's work space?), and the number involved in activity (were children wandering? were some children simply waiting for the rug time?).
Usually between 9:00 and 9:10 A.M. the lights were turned off as a signal for quiet. I frequently said: "Thank you for listening. I'd like all of you to meet on the rug now. Make sure you check the lunch chart." This teacher utterance marked the transition from the setting up phase to the opening.

In summary, the primary purpose of the setting up phase was to provide a natural beginning to the school day. During this time I attempted to make personal contact with each of the children in the classroom, and encouraged some of them to start on their morning activity.

**Opening Phase.** The opening phase began with the group assembling in the rug area. Children sat on the rug, on the low book cases that bordered two sides of the rug, and on a few chairs brought to the open space side of the area where I always sat. As the children assembled we took the lunch count and attendance. If there were announcements about the day, they were made after the lunch count was completed. Occasionally children would use this time to share items brought from home or personal experiences with the entire group.

The primary purpose for the opening was to provide explicit teacher directions and expectations for the work time. Other purposes included teacher input into the current classroom theme and student sharing. Teacher input frequently included reading a short selection from an informational book or piece of literature that fit the theme. During the African folk-tale unit, the tales were occasionally read during this phase. I also planned for student sharing of current work-in-progress as a way to review
initial directions, and as a way to provide a group reflection on a child's efforts. My expectation was that the sharing would help children get ideas from each other about work choices and work procedures. There was much evidence that this in fact happened. An unusual art technique pointed out in the sharing time was later used by other children in their own efforts. This sharing of ideas was encouraged and supported.

My directions typically emphasized the major points of inquiry for the ensuing work time activity. The focus was usually on several aspects of the current thematic focus or some activity related to a special project. Work procedures and materials to be used were reviewed. I also reminded individual students about specific teacher expectations for the use of their work time. These kinds of teacher decisions were based upon previous student progress with specific activities, and my knowledge of the working patterns of the students.

The following transcript from a video taped sequence (May 24, 1979) illustrates this opening phase in the work time. It begins with my directions to the entire group assembled in the rug area. Background information is included alongside the transcript. (See Appendix A for explanation of transcript symbols used in this chapter and Chapter V.)

T: Your attention should be on me and the things you're going to be working on this morning. My reminder is, if you're waiting to film....

Although many of the students could work on their art work for the animation, only one group could film at a time.
... One of the best ways you could use your time this morning would be to get a good start on that representation of something from Thompson Rec...

... Your ideas, you decide what you want to share, and then during our writing time today we'll talk a little bit about the kinda letters we could write to Ann or Mr. Miller....

... And some of you - we've got two good letters - Anne's finished hers, Alice you finish yours - where you talked about things you liked, things that were hard for you, ah, and you thanked them for their work. And even made the comment ah "Do you get paid for this? I sure hope so, you deserve it." Something like that, which is a good comment cause you're telling them you appreciate their work.

Alice: Uh, can we share them now? Can I share mine?

T: Let's wait. We'll share end of the morning or after recess.

For the most of the spring the entire class had gone to the Thompson Recreation Center once a week for gymnastics lessons and team game activities. As a think you to the Thompson Rec. staff we were putting together a booklet of art work and letters.

The purpose in mentioning the letters was not so much to provide a positive teacher evaluation for these students, although the utterance accomplishes that, but to identify the content within the letters that might help other students focus their thinking as they start their own art work or their letters.

Alice's question is very appropriate, given my tendency to use children's sharing as a way to stimulate additional understanding of activities and procedures for the group. In this case, because I had previously summarized the content of the letters, I postponed her sharing.
T: I want to encourage lots of work with the water colors, not with the markers. The markers are for posters or for small detail work. They’re not for large pictures. Use, use crayons, use watercolors, use chalk, use construction paper for collage, use tissue paper. Ah, there's a whole pile of old marbelizing. You can take out bits of those, and cut those up. But don't spend time with markers. There are other ways to get a really good picture.

Alice: If you have to do ___ for a little thing like ___.

T: That's right, for some detail.

T: Okay, there are some people who I haven't seen any progress with the textbook work and it's a reminder. Ah, Thea, Duncan. Have you started it, Duncan?

Duncan: Mm.

T: Okay.

T: Jay just making progress, Billy you - you've made some progress. You need to make more. Toni, I've seen some today. Now you keep going with that. Everyone else who I expect it from, except Lynn you too, you're kinda in the middle of one and you can handle that.

The emphasis throughout the year was on mixing media in the art work. The purpose was to encourage a more reflective, slower paced response to the task at hand, and frequently a more aesthetically pleasing result than would normally be achieved through the use of simply one medium (e.g., only crayons).
T: Now we've had lots of good writing in the morning. I want that to continue. The film animation and our Thompson Rec. work. Now there may be a few other things. Let's think hard about how we can best use our time.

T: What are your plans so we can have a good work time?

The decision to video tape the work time event was based on the initial premise that the event began when children were assembled in the rug area for teacher directions. The subsequent analysis of the classroom interaction suggested that the work time opening, choosing, and activity were tied in important ways to previous interaction. My comment to Toni (T: I've seen some today. Now you keep going with that.) provided evidence of activity initiation before the opening phase. This reflexive tying of classroom meaning across phases suggested caution in any attempt to classify classroom events or routines as separate segments within a school day. It appeared as if participants experienced these phases as anticipations of the larger events within a classroom. There was also evidence to suggest that because certain phases or events anticipated other events (Frake, 1964), participants were able to hold each other accountable for working agreements across the day. My rejection of Alice's bid to share her letter (T: Let's wait. We'll share at the end of the morning.) was understood on the grounds that work time activity was normally followed by opportunities to share activity efforts.
In summary, the primary purpose of the opening phase was to provide teacher directions and information about the ensuing work time. Activity choices were provided for children within a structured curricular framework that drew upon the current theme, a special project, past themes, student interests, and unfinished math and language work. My question "What are your plans so we can have a good work time?" marked the transition from the opening to the choosing phase of the work time.

Choosing Phase. The purpose of the choosing phase was for me and the students to come to some agreement about appropriate work time activity. The major focus in the negotiation process was on what learning activity would be selected. Only a few interactions also dealt with how the activity would be undertaken. The range of activity choices emerged from the curricular framework discussed earlier.

My reasoning in having an explicit negotiation process for activity choice was to encourage a verbal and personal commitment to the task selected. It was a technique for monitoring the decision making process. I was trying to prevent students from wandering around all morning without identifying any task as their own, or from starting one thing, then skipping it to go on to another without any committed follow through on any one task. Both kinds of behaviors were very common at the beginning of the school year. The explicit negotiation process was one strategy used to deal with that kind of behavior.

The students bid for my attention primarily through hand raising. Some called out my name in order to speed up the process for themselves.
The students rarely were called upon randomly. I frequently selected those that I felt were the better self directors to get started first, or those students I knew were committed to some particular activity.

The following transcript continues from the same work time event, May 24, 1979. It begins with the utterance that marked the transition to the choosing phase.

T: What are your plans so we can have a good work time? Susan?
Susan: Thompson Rec.

T: Okay. Are you just getting started today? You know where the paper is then?
Susan: (acknowledgment)

T: Terry?
Terry: 

T: Okay, and you're working, what you started on this morning.

Duncan: Steve, can we get started? We are going to follow the space ship around.

T: Yah, I'll be with you in a minute. Just be real careful with the camera that high.

T: Lynn?
Lynn: Thompson Rec.

T: Alright, go to work. Alice?
Alice: 

As I acknowledged or approved of work time choices the children proceeded to get on with the tasks. Some children worked actively to get my attention through raising their hands or moving closer to me. Others simply waited for me to call on them.

Duncan and Derek used the setting up time to get the camera ready for filming. They were using the techniques of animation to respond to a previous class theme: planets and space. Their art work involved a representation of all of planets, a large black background, and a spaceship.
T: (nods) Diane?
Diane: _____
T: Alright. Tricia?
Tricia: _____
T: Okay. Barb?
Barb: Thompson Rec.
T: Did you, how about your film animation?
Barb: Should I start on that first?
T: Maybe you ought to get that finished. Yah.
T: Toni?
Toni: _____
T: Textbook? And the textbook? First finish up that chapter you're working on.
Toni: I already did it.
T: The second one?
Toni: No.
T: Do you want to do the second one? Get caught up. Do the second one. I'll help you a little bit this morning.

Although it was difficult to monitor, as a general policy I tried to encourage the students to finish major projects before beginning another. By responding to Barb's suggestion with the question, "How about your film animation?", Barb was able to interpret this general teacher expectation.

I was much more directive with Toni, even when I asked the question "Do you want to do the second one?" I wanted her to continue what she started on during the early morning time. The choice of activity therefore was really a teacher choice.
T: (eye contact with Nancy)

Nancy: Line design.

T: Alright, go to work. Are you doing the pounding at all?

Nancy: Yah.

T: Then you, ah, can't do it in here cause I, it would be too noisy.

Dan: Go out in the hall.

T: If you're going to begin to pound you can move out in the hall, only you out there, Nancy. I don't want anyone else working with you there.

T: Holly?

Holly: Thompson Rec.

T: Okay. Anne?

Anne: 

T: (acknowledgement)

Toni: Steve, I only got a few more to go.

T: Okay, finish those up, and then you can work on that. Denise?

Denise: 

T: Do you know what we're doing for that? Tell me.

The line design work was carried over from a math time focus of the afternoon. It referred to a technique of using angles and straight lines to design geometric shapes with curves. Nancy was interested in taking the technique a step further and representing the straight line curves with string and nails on a board, rather than simply paper and pencil. The idea was her own although she could have seen the three dimensional representations in another setting.

I suggested the hallway as a place to work because I was concerned about controlling activity that would produce extra noise in the room. I also worried about the potentially distracting traffic in the hallway.

I repeated the directions for Denise in the hope that she would have a better understanding of what she was going to do. Denise would frequently not listen well to teacher directions in group situations. I also wanted her to state her ideas beforehand so she had a better sense of purpose.
Denise: _____ tell 'em, Mr. Miller and ...

T and Mitch: Ann

T: Yah, how much you liked going. Yah, and things you liked to do. What might you do a picture of for them?

Denise: (no response)

T: What was your favorite thing of the things we did there?

Denise: That thing we jumped on.

T: The tramp? Do you think you could do a picture of the tramp showing someone jumping?

Denise: Uh huh.

T: Yah, okay, and the materials I talked about using would be crayons, maybe some chalk, doing some painting. You've done some good painting this year, Denise. Okay, are you going to work in this spot over here?

Denise: (acknowledge)

T: Now before you do it, is everything done for the film animation that you need?

Denise: Yes.

T: So you're already to film, alright, okay, you can go to work.

Toni: Steve, I don't ____
T:  Billy?

Billy: ____

T:  Jay? At the end of the morning what you finish, I want to see it in the tub, okay. With the textbook assignment.

Jay:  (acknowledgement)

Barb:  Hey, Steve, where's the folder for this?

T:  I'm not sure. You'll just have to put it on my desk right now.

T:  Kent and Ricky, I know what you're doing. You can go to work now. We've talked about it.

Kent and Ricky:  (Acknowledgement)

T:  Dan?

Mitch:  Line designs.

Dan:  I'm going to do film animation and then I'm going to do Thompson.

T:  And you're finishing up your titles. Okay. Marty?

Marty:  Steve, I'm going to work on Thompson.

Jay had put off doing the textbook work for several weeks. Because he was capable of responding to this task in a competent manner, I directed his choice for this particular work time.

Kent and Ricky had begun working on their animated folktale during the setting up phase of the morning. It was a re-telling of the story "Why the Sun and the Moon Live in the Sky."

Titles referred to the title introduction for the film. Dan was coloring each letter in the title a different color. I assumed he was going to cut each letter out, so he could animate the introduction, too.
T: Alright, I - before you start it, how about your film animation, what's your next step for that?

Marty: ______ whales and sharks.

T: Maybe you should do that.

Marty: But I can't make the sharks very good.

T: Then you need to think about your background picture, right?

Marty: ______ blue, I guess.

T: So it would be a sea, underwater.

Marty: ______ make some sunken ______ something like that.

T: Yah, that would be nice. You have good ideas. Can you work on those?

Marty: Yah.

T: What's - what's one problem you have working, Marty?

Marty: The only problem is I can't, I can't get the shark like I get the whale.

T: Okay, what's a way to handle that problem?

Marty: Probably look in a book and try to trace it.

T: Try to find something, yah, maybe not -

I tried to be more explicit about activity choice with Marty because I felt he didn't listen well during the planning time, or focus in a concentrated way on his own tasks when he was working. I was trying to get him to be specific about his own plans for the morning. He demonstrated he understood what he wanted his animation to show. Whales and sharks came from his own stated interests, although he was eager to use the techniques involved in animation. My question, "What's one problem you have working, Marty?" was designed to help him be aware of his tendency to talk to others and not focus on his own task. He responded in terms of his own work, and later in the interaction I simply told him my own concern.
Marty: I already know where a whale book is. It's got lots of blue whales in it.

T: Can you find one? Now I'm going to - another problem you sometimes have is ah, you, you find you like to watch what other people are doing rather than working. Can you work on that problem today?

Marty: Yah.

T: Okay.

Mitch: Steve, I know what I can get to, if you don't mind, I'd like to get a line design and over the line nails everywhere and wire follow everywhere and I'll show it as a line design color.

T: Instead of wire, what Nancy's going to use is some kind of string.

Mitch: String, yah string, kind of a colored string.

T: Okay is that -

Mitch: All that skinny string you've got up there, that big roll.

T: Is that, is that something you think you'll really stick with?

Mitch: Yah, I'm going to do it.

I saved Mitch for near the end of the choosing process, even though he had interrupted me earlier to state his work choice. He was a child who had joined the classroom only a month ago from a room across the hall. He was switched from the other room late in the year because he had not been able to get along with his classmates. He was expressing an interest in the same activity that Nancy had selected, the nail and string line design, although he had not worked through the two dimensional pencil and paper representation yet. I tried to control his work space, and help him be explicit about the activity he had chosen. My hope was that through personally engaging activity he would find less time to develop problems with his new classmates.
T: So today you want to work at your desk and get a line design while you -

Mitch: Make the line design first, color it, and then nail and ...

T: And think about a board and nails, and then, alright, I would use - you can use any of that paper for your pattern.

Mitch: May I be excused to do it?

T: Yah, you can.

T: Thea, did you finish the math? First show me the math. Let me see if you need help on it. Pull your chair over here.

Thea: (acknowledgement)

T: Hey Marty, Marty turn the light out.

Marty: (turns lights off)

Classroom: (stops talking to listen)

T: Alright, my request is that we use indoor voices. We've had people yelling across the room for markers. There's no need for that. We have a lot of people working in that area, almost too many unless you can use really good control. Jay, you need to work at your things. I know it's tempting, you need to turn around and look at your own work, alright? Let's concentrate now. Thanks, Marty, turn the lights on.

I had directed Thea to the math assignment first thing in the morning. My feeling was that she functioned more productively in the room when the tasks she engaged in were discrete and school oriented. I wanted to follow up on her progress from the early morning work.

This was a natural interruption. With most of the choosing of activity behind us I was trying to establish a more productive working tone. The group usually needed ten to fifteen minutes to find the materials and space they needed, and to get settled down into activity. If I were frustrated or disappointed with the activity at this point, I might have called them all back to the rug and talked out the problems. The term "indoor voices" was used frequently to help distinguish between a productive working tone and the talk that can take place outside the classroom.

This reminder to the entire group marked the transition into the activity phase of the morning work.
Although some negotiation for choice will continue during this phase, the primary teacher focus will now be upon the kind of activity the children are involved with from both a procedural and a substantive standpoint.

The transcripts from the choosing phase revealed that I frequently called on the better "self-directors" first. This allowed me additional time to discuss or direct choices for children who needed more teacher input. I also hoped that some of the children who had a difficult time making a choice would get ideas from those choosing before them. Although this was beneficial for some, there were difficulties involved with this process. I was keeping in the rug area many of the children who needed more time for their activity. Rather than helping them use their time in a productive way I was asking them to be overly patient in waiting for teacher attention. I was also eliminating the opportunity some of them needed for simply observing and learning from what others were doing. In my concern for order and control the negotiation process may have closed this opportunity for some. Observing of course still went on during the work activity. What became crucial was whether or not some of the children could make the best decisions about activity when they did not have time to watch others at work or enough time to explore available materials themselves. When choosing was difficult for children this may have been the problem.

In summary, the choosing phase revealed decision-making about activity choices, appropriate work spaces, and work processes. My decisions varied from individual to individual depending upon the
students' previous work efforts and working styles. The choosing process was frequently tied to the setting up phase of the morning (T: You can go to work now. We've talked about it.), and overlapped the activity phase as more children selected their morning activity. Managerial concerns interrupted the choosing process as some children began to set up their own activity while others were still selecting. The overall purpose of the choosing phase was for each student to select an appropriate activity for the subsequent activity time.

Activity Phase. The three initial phases of the work time - the setting up, the opening, and the choosing - were classroom accomplishments that anticipated the activity phase. The purpose of this phase was to provide the time and support for students to become involved and absorbed with their selected tasks. The specific activities varied from day to day, depending upon the thematic emphasis, and the influences of the different kinds of curriculum input or student interests.

Within the variation in activity, there were common patterns of student-teacher interaction that occurred throughout the year. I rarely planned for small group work. I needed to be available to help individual students as questions and problems arose in the course of activity. Interactions were frequent, either teacher or student initiated, and served multiple functions. Brief managerial interactions were common. These interactions focused upon supplying materials or giving instructions on how to do something. Behavioral interactions were also a part of the activity, that is, interactions designed to monitor inappropriate behavior or action within the classroom. Extended substantive interactions
were the dominant type. These interactions focused upon the content of the work tasks, and ideas about process. The purpose of Chapter V will be to examine these work time interactional sequences in greater detail.

During the May 24 work time nine children were involved with a special theme activity, the thank you book for the recreation staff. Their work utilized multiple materials and media to represent different aspects of that experience. Seven children were involved with film animation; four were relating their efforts to the current theme of African folktales and three were linking their efforts to past themes. Two boys were actually filming while others were at different stages with their art work, ranging from background pictures on large sheets of paper to the cut out characters or titles. Three children were working on the social studies textbook by answering the chapter questions on African countries, and one child was continuing her work with an original folktale. Three children were involved with math activities. One was finishing her computation worksheet from the previous day, and two children were involved with representing geometric line designs. Three children were absent on this particular work day.

The activity phase of the work time lasted from 40 to 70 minutes and was normally completed by recess time at 10:10 A.M.

Closing Phase. After recess, the class met again in the rug area for the closing phase of the work time. The closing consisted of a reflective evaluation of the work efforts and children sharing their finished work or their work-in-progress. If the work time had been
particularly productive, the activity phase might be extended up to 30 minutes. I based the decision to extend activity on how well I felt the group would continue to sustain themselves with their morning tasks. Students frequently provided feedback by telling me they needed more time with their work.

The evaluation focus within the closing phase was brief. I usually asked the students for their reactions to the morning work time. Items discussed included positive experiences, problems, and suggestions on how we could improve the activity. Most of the closing phase was used for sharing work-in-progress and finished work. The sharing and evaluation time lasted from 15 minutes to 30 minutes. A major purpose for sharing work-in-progress was to allow the children to get ideas from each other about their own work efforts. This same strategy was used in the opening phase discussed earlier. The sharing also encouraged explicit thinking from the children about their own efforts. It was a time for the students and me to provide information about the topic at hand, and to discuss procedural matters in relationship to the work. The sharing, in summary, was a way to honor the efforts of everyone in the classroom, a procedure for informing each other about our work efforts, and a technique for using the group to extend thinking on a curricular activity.

This section has described, in some detail, the global features of the classroom work time. Sources for curriculum activity were identified, and the organization and curriculum purposes were described. The structure of the work time event was designed explicitly to balance my educational purposes with the equally pressing concerns for management and control. Predictable phases within this event provided a framework from
which the students and I informed and held each other accountable for various academic and behavioral concerns. The discussion will now turn to the second major event in the school day, namely, the writing time. This section will describe the curriculum purposes for this event, the children's response through writing samples, and the organization of this event through time.

Writing Time

Curriculum Purposes

Writing was viewed as an important way for students to represent their experiences and ideas and as an important part of the learning process itself (cf. Moffett, 1968; Britton, 1970). The event was designed to encourage a wide range of purposes for using written language, with strong emphasis placed on the kind of writing that was self-reflective, honest, and related to real world experiences. Personal and expressive writing was valued in the children's informational or practical written endeavors and in the writing that served more poetic or story purposes (cf. Britton, 1970). Purposes for writing varied, depending upon the instigation (child initiated, teacher assigned, teacher suggested), the audience (teacher, self, friend, others), the form (journal, story, letter, reports), and the topic (classroom theme, literature, personal experiences, or language practice).

The writing time was also designed to provide a structured and focused activity. The purpose in that structure was to help control potential behavioral problems which had dominated the morning long work time activities in the Fall.
Curriculum Content and Activity

Content and activities for the writing time were related to four curricular categories. These categories included: personal themes, classroom themes or projects, literature, and language study (spelling and handwriting).

The purposes for writing were frequently overlapping in each group. Within each kind of writing task there existed a wide variation in different children's ability to use written language for personal purposes. On some occasions there were children who were willing to dictate their ideas to me as a way to overcome their mechanical difficulties. In other situations children struggled through false starts and incomplete statements. The examples of children's writing that follow are not representative of this range in response. They represent primarily the efforts of those children who were beginning or were able to use written language for personal and expressive purposes.

Personal Themes. The personal themes in writing evolved from journals, pen pal letters, evaluations, and stories or books the children created on their own. The writing was personal in the sense that what the children decided to write was generally not discussed beforehand with me. It grew primarily from their own experiences and thinking about what they wanted to communicate to themselves or to others. The audiences within this category varied from journal entries addressed specifically to me, to stories written for the classroom to enjoy, to letters for a far away peer audience, to reflections for oneself.

A. Journals. Journal entries revealed a range in the use of personal expressive language to reflect upon experiences. Some of the
children wrote several times each week in their journals. They used them to reflect upon school activities, family experiences, questions, problems, and personal thoughts:

Nancy (3-28): Steve, could you talk to the people who keep hitting me? Who are Diane, Lynn, Anne, and Alice. Those four are bugging me, and could I be there when you talk to all of them if you do. I think it will help. Wish me luck.

Nancy (5-10): I hope our film animations go well. Is that how you spell animation? [anamachin] I didn’t think so or I thought so. Steve, do you have to meet with us six times a day (I counted). For one reason I’m sort of getting sick of your stories all the time except for the chapter books you read us before quiet reading. I’ll have your report card tomorrow.

Nancy (5-16): I can’t wait for our trip to New York tomorrow. We’ll get there about 10 o’clock. The person we’re seeing is my Grandma. She’s a nice person. The nice thing about her is she gives you presents when ever you go.

The journals were used by some children to communicate work time interests with me, or to discuss current progress:

Susan (3-26): Can you put Diane, Lynn and I in the animal group? Today I decided what I am going to study. I am going to study bunnies and horses.

Matt (5-8): The pond I want to work on, it needs wood to put it on with plaster of paris to hold the water in the pond and some little wood to put on the sides of the pond too.

I frequently responded to some journal entries as a way to extend their written response or simply to share some ideas of my own.

Ricky (5-16): My Dog
   My dog is black and white and ...
I wrote back in Ricky's journal:

You need to finish your description, Ricky. My dog is large, like a St. Bernard, but he's all white. His fur is long and I have to brush him a lot in the summer. He never barks, and is very friendly. What is your dog like?

Ricky (continued 5-17):

...has brown eyes and loves kids! And his favorite thing is play ball.

I wrote back again:

My dog doesn't play any games, Ricky. He is very lazy. During the summer he sleeps all the time.

The journals frequently touched on personal feelings in reflective, expressive ways. Topics included school events, home experiences, and friends:

Anne (3-6): Today I am very tired. I had to do very hard math. I cried. I didn't mean to but I did. Yesterday was a very bad day. I fell down the steps twice. It has been very weird. My mom read a magazine that said all these things about not going in alleys and if someone follows you you should run as fast as you possibly can and let someone know and run to the nearest house and pound on the door even if it doesn't say blocked parent.

Journals were also used for reporting events that had taken place and for sharing information learned in or out of school. When the writing was informational in function, children frequently used personal and expressive language (cf. Britton, 1970; Rosen and Rosen, 1973).

Alice (4-9): Passover is coming up. That is a Jewish holiday. It celebrates when Moses led the Jews out of Egypt. The symbols of passover are the Matzoh, the shank bone, the egg, the parsley, the horse radish, and the salt water and this other stuff but I don't know what it's called. The Matzoh
symbolizes when the Jews only had a little time to get out of Egypt so they did not have time to raise the bread, so they just had Matzoh. The shank bone represents when God told Moses to go tell the Jews to mark their doors with lambs blood so God could kill the first born boy Egyptian and would passover the Jews houses and they also used the lamb for a sacrifice. I am not sure what the egg means but it has something to do with the world. The parsley represents the festival of spring. The bell just rang. I will tell you some more later.

3. Books and Stories. In addition to the journal writing, students also used original stories or chapter books as a way to deal with personal themes. Work on stories or books frequently extended through several days, and was often accompanied by illustrations.

Holly's narrative, based on a real experience, was put into a book form with pictures.

Holly: A Baby Being Born at My House

My mommy's friend had a baby at my house. Chad the oldest brother and Machie the sister. Chad sat on my lap. When Kathy was breaking the water sac. Kathy had to get on her hands and knees to break the water sac. Then it broke the water sac. Then Kathy rolled over on her back and started to push and push very hard and harder. First the head came. Kathy did not have to do much work now but it was still hard - Then the baby was born. The name of the baby is Adam Scott. Then everybody left for a while for Steve. Steve, Kathy, Chad, Machie, and Adam. Jenny showed Chad and I the water sac. Adam looked wet and all wrinkled. The umbilical cord was wrapped around Adam's head twice. Then Abby and Jenny cut it, then put a plastic clip on it. In a few days the umbilical cord starts to rot. It looks like tar in a few other days. Take off the plastic clip and you have a b___ b___.

Naturally not all the children would write about their own experiences, although many of the stories were loosely autobiographical.
Denise (1-8): Monilia went in her yard. A girl came to
play with Monilia.
Yes, you can play with me.
Do you like to play?
Yes I do.
Do you like to play very much?
Do you want to play in my yard?
Yes I do.

Some children wrote for several weeks on the same story, attempting
to organize their writing into chapters, and using the literary langu­
age and conventions of folktales or fairy tales. The following example
is the first chapter of an eight chapter story.

Anne (10-16): The Golden Pen
First Chapter

Long, long ago there lived a man and a woman.
They had a beautiful child. Her name was Zandra.
She had long brown hair. They were very poor.
She was an only child but she worked very hard.
They were gone most of the time. She washed
the dishes and swept the floor when her mother
and father had gone to town.
They live near the deep, dark woods. One day
Zandra was walking in the woods, and she saw
something sticking in the ground. She tried to
pull it out but she couldn't. So she called her
mother but she couldn't pull it out. Then she
called her father who was the strongest wood
chopper in the woods but not even he could pull
it out so then they all tried but they couldn't
even move it. So they told the King, and he
called the townspeople and they first asked the
strongest man and woman to try because surely
both of them could pull it out. So all the towns­
people watched as they pulled and tugged but they
just couldn't pull it out so all the townspeople
tried over and over again but they just couldn't.
Then Zandra thought she might try again so she
went over to the thing and she put both hands on
it. And pulled as hard as she could. It started
to move. Then it made a sound, but she still
pulled.
The examples above represent different kinds of personal writing that emerged within a story or book form. Combined with journal entries, evaluation efforts, and pen pal letters, they revealed the important role of expressive, personal writing within the writing time activity.

Classroom Themes or Projects. A second category for writing emerged from current classroom themes and special projects. During the Spring the major theme was African folktales. Although the writing or retelling of folktales was encouraged during the work time period, there were several writing times that focused specifically on African tales. Some children borrowed heavily on their knowledge of folktales to write authentic and original tales. Leslie used Anansi the spider as a main character, but developed a theme that was her own.

Leslie: Anansi Adopts a Baby Spider

Anansi came home from work. Anansi had no son so he decided to adopt a baby spider. So he did. He adopts a baby spider. He was a boy. He call him Chiwawa.
The years passed by and Chiwawa grew up. Anansi loved Chiwawa and Chiwawa loved he. But it was time to leave home and leave Anansi too. Chiwawa leave home and went to get a job. And Chiwawa got a job. The years passed by. Chiwawa went to live with Anansi and Chiwawa did. Anansi was so happy to see Chiwawa his son. Anansi kiss Chiwawa and Chiwawa kiss Anansi too. Have you come home, Chiwawa. Yes Anansi. Have you got a job, Chiwawa. I do. Good Chiwawa, said Anansi his father. Do you know you are adopted now. I did yes. Anansi said, I love you Chiwawa, even if you are adopted, Chiwawa. I love you too, father, even if I'm adopted.

The range of response to folktale writing, as with all activities in the classroom, was wide. The more mature responses used the basic
motifs of African tales to fashion their own stories. The following stories by Alice and Ricky are contrasted to illustrate the difficulty in generalizing about the written response in the classroom from any one kind of topic or form.

Alice: Once upon a time there was a man. His name was Anansi. He was a great artist. One day Anansi was trying to make a octopus. He tried and tried all day and night. But he just couldn't make it right. So he took it to the God of all things. The God of all things said you don't have to make an octopus. You can make up your own name for it. When you think of one you shall bring it to me. So he went home and he thought and thought. Finally he came up with a SPIDER! So he went back to the God of all things. The God of all things took it and said I'd hate to be a spider! And Anansi said I'd hate to be one too!! Many years passed. Anansi grew old. He decided that he was the best artist in the world so he decided that he should rule the world. He told his best friend Nothing. Nothing did not like this idea so he told the God of all things. When the God of all things heard that he turned Anansi into a Spider. And that's how SPIDERS came to be!!

Ricky used the same character although his response was simpler in nature.

Anansi, the Spider Man

Once upon a time there was a man named Anansi. Anansi was a good man. And Anansi was very strong. He was the best man in town. Hi, it's time to go. The end.

The written response during the African folktale study followed a narrative, story format. Previous themes (e.g., animals, astronomy, and history) encouraged more informative writing, through reports or descriptions of special projects. In addition to the current classroom theme,
there were writing activities that related to special projects or themes. The thank you letters to the gymnastics recreation staff were examples during the Spring of a special writing task that was teacher initiated, yet had nothing to do with the current theme. The letters, in addition to thanking the staff who had worked with us, also described the children's art work.

**Literature.** Written response to literature was a regular component of the writing curriculum and drew from both books I had read to the class and books children were reading on their own. There was a conscious effort on my part not to overdo this kind of activity as I did not want the children to expect writing as a follow-up to every book read. Some pieces of literature however lent themselves to a more thoughtful written response than others.

The story *The Pinballs,* by Betsy Byers, was read to the entire class in the Spring. After several discussions about the book, the children were asked to respond in writing to some aspect of the book. Discussions focused upon character development, the meaning of the title, and what it would be like to live in a foster home.

**Anne:** *Carlie and How She Felt*

Carlie's not like anyone. She was at her own pace, thinking her own way about herself. She used a lot of words that made people angry and insulted and she just didn't care. She has had three fathers and the third one was giving her a rough time. She felt unwanted. Her exact words were: we are
exactly like Pinballs. But at the end she was more ___ of her surroundings and she changed.

Susan: I feel like a pinball when my Mom tells me to do one thing, then she tells me to do another thing. But I am not done with the other thing she told me to do. Like for instance, I came home from school my mom told me that my dog had made a mess in my room. So I went up in my room and started to clean up my dog's mess and my mom told me to come downstairs and help her with supper. So I went downstairs to help my mom with supper then when I am not looking my mom went upstairs. Then my mom tells me to finish cleaning up my dog's mess.

Language Study: Spelling and Handwriting. The fourth focus during the writing time revolved around language study tasks, primarily spelling and handwriting work. The categories discussed above - personal, thematic, and literature derived writing - generally emphasized language in use, exploring various topics, themes, ideas, and communicating with different audiences. The spelling/handwriting work, on the other hand, frequently focused on practicing the skills of language.

Spelling and handwriting tasks were not considered major components of the writing time although they were usually a part of each week's focus. I generally felt that the opportunities for spelling and handwriting practice were tied more to the purposeful writing that emerged from personal themes, projects, or literature. Some children, however, viewed the discrete spelling and handwriting exercises as important aspects of their school work. These tasks were generally less threatening, if potentially tedious, and were more manageable for these individuals. I used the discrete tasks for other children when negotiations for a wider range of
activity choice would break down. There were also days when the entire class appeared to function better if the nature of the activity was more individually focused, and less interactional and open ended. My purpose was to give this area appropriate but not over emphasis.

Curriculum Organization

The organizational phasing within the writing time was frequently simpler than the work time event. There were generally three phases: the opening, the activity, and the closing.

Opening Phase. The opening of the writing time began when the sharing from the work time closing phase was completed. The opening involved directions for activity and some student questions or sharing. There was no explicit negotiation for activity similar to the process that characterized the work time, although with some individuals negotiating did take place. My purpose was to speed up the planning process even though I risked losing contact with a few children.

I perceived the group need at this stage to be one of getting on with the writing activity. I also recognized that there were individuals who would need additional teacher input as far as activity was concerned. They were individuals who either would do nothing related to the writing tasks or would distract other children from their own involvement. I was frequently more directive with these individuals during the beginning of the writing activity. My decision making covered both writing choice and work space concerns.

The primary purpose of the opening was to provide teacher instructions for the activity phase. The writing tasks were drawn from the
current classroom theme, personal themes (journals, stories, and evaluations), special projects, and spelling and handwriting work. For some of the children the writing was an extension of their morning work time activity.

**Activity Phase.** During the activity phase of the writing time I assisted individual students with managerial and substantive concerns. Whenever possible I held individual writing conferences when children could read or proofread their writing with me. It was normally within this kind of conference that writing mechanics and ideas were examined. This was an ideal. In reality, many of the extended interactions with one child were interrupted for spelling or managerial concerns with other children. From the May 24 writing time is the following interaction:

T:  Let me look -  

Nancy:  Go ahead.  

T:  A word?  

Dan:  Team hand ball.  

T:  Is that your guess on team?  

Dan:  Uh huh. Shoot!  

T:  You're pretty close. You had all the right letters.  

Dan:  Not in the right place.  

T:  Just your "a" needs to be right around there, okay?  

Nancy:  This is as far as I've got.

Nancy: (reading) Dear Ann and Mr. Miller, Thank you very much for the wonderful time at Thompson Rec. I think you were the best... I really like the tram and the balance beam and -

T: Okay

Alice: How do you spell again? a-g-a-i-n?

T: a-g-a-i-n yah.

T: (speaking to Nancy) Can-can I make spelling corrections?

Nancy: Yah.

T: Right on there?

Nancy: I'm going to write it over, yah.

T: Okay, you want to capitalize M for Mr.

Nancy: Oh yah.

T: Capitalize the beginning Thank you.... Very is an "e"... much for my wonderful time at -

Nancy: Oh yah, Thompson.

T: Matt, do you want to work, ah, do you want to work on your journal if you've finished up?

Matt: Can you copy it?

T: Tonight, but I won't - I won't have time today.

Alice interrupted to check her prediction for spelling "again."

Before I made any corrections on children's writing I generally asked for their permission to do so. Some preferred that I list the misspelling in their personalized spellers, so they could make the corrections on their own. Not all of the children had the patience or interest to recopy corrected writing, and certainly not all writing needed to be spelling or punctuation perfect. As a general rule, we attempted to tighten up any kind of writing that went beyond our own classroom (e.g., letters, reports displayed in the hallway, or books written for the library). The letters to the Thompson Rec staff fit into that category.

In addition to giving my attention to Nancy, I was aware that Matt had finished his own task. Because Matt's spelling was highly erratic, I frequently recopied the entire piece of writing for him, making necessary corrections in punctuation, spelling and letter formation. He then recopied the corrected copy in his best handwriting.
T: Thomnson Rec... Here, watch me, Nancy. I think you were the best...you have put beast okay?

Nancy: (laughs)

T: You were the beast gymnastics teachers. Lots of times if you have these two letters together ea it makes a ...

Nancy: Vowel.

T: Long e sound, so you'd have beast but just one e can be best. And you don't want to tell them they are a bunch of beasts do you?

Nancy: No.

T: Gymnastics is a hard word. Just take off your k and you're okay.

Nancy: Alright. Teachers ...

T: Teachers e-a I ever had. I really like the tramp.

Nancy: Tramp and the balance beam.

T: And the balance beam.

Nancy: Beam.

T: Okay, add a little bit more and then I want you to describe what's going to be in your picture a little bit.

Nancy: Oh yah.

T: Okay, and then you're in good shape.
T: What's - how are you using it?

Holly: Ah, before she could say a word ...

T: Oh word. Is this your guess there?

Holly: Yah.

T: Okay. You working on a story?

Holly: Yah.

The writing time was designed for both procedural and substantive purposes. It provided a range of purposes for writing, opportunities for teacher-student interaction about ideas and mechanics, and the opportunities for daily writing practice. The basic premise undergirding this substantive focus was that children learned to write by engaging in purposeful writing.

The more focused activity also helped control some of the potential interactional problems. There was a limited range of student activity choices compared to work time, and more children expected to work in their own seating space. The activity was characterized by students talking to each other about their written work and personal matters, and coming to me for assistance or sharing. It was not a quiet time but I encouraged children not to exceed a noise level that was comfortable for working.

Some students also worked on art activities that related to their writing efforts, e.g., book illustrations. I generally supported this
decision recognizing the value of art representations for building ideas for the written response. I intervened in this process only when the actual writing was neglected over a several day period.

The writing time activity phase lasted from 25 to 45 minutes. The length depended upon my own feeling for the level of involvement from the children. If we cleaned up a few minutes before lunch, we would again meet in the rug area for sharing stories, reading aloud, playing group games, or sharing personal experiences. Lunch time and lunch recess lasted from 11:45 to 12:45.

The discussion in this section has examined the writing time event. The purpose has been to situate this event within the larger organization of the classroom day. Curriculum purposes were seen as both comprehensive and narrow as I attempted to achieve equilibrium between my educational concerns and the various demands, needs, and responses from the children. The emphasis on personal writing was a conscious attempt to involve children in a jointly produced curriculum, one that provided linkages between the children's experiences, and appropriate classroom activity.

The next section will describe the third major event of the school day, namely the reading time. The section is organized in a similar way to the work time and writing time discussions. Global features of this event are described, with specific attention given to the curriculum purposes, content and activities, and the predictable phases that organized this event through time.
Reading Time

Curriculum Purpose

The purpose of the reading time was to provide opportunities for wide reading, exposure to good literature, and opportunities for talking about books read with me and other students. The emphasis throughout the year was upon learning to read through reading, rather than upon isolating the multiple skills of reading in practice situations. Reading was viewed as an interactive process between the child and the text that involved guessing, predicting, and calculated risk taking to get at the meaning (cf. Smith, 1971; Goodman, 1967). The child's own experiences, his interests, and his emerging sense of story were recognized as essential starting points for becoming engaged in reading. The reading time event therefore was designed to encourage daily opportunities for interacting with books.

Curriculum Content and Activities

The children generally selected their own reading material during the reading time. Books, magazines, and controlled vocabulary readers were selected from the classroom library, the school library, and home. I provided additional reading input throughout the year that varied from individual to individual. For some I assigned books for small group discussion purposes when multiple copies were available. Multiple copies of fantasy, realistic fiction, historical fiction, and biographies were used in this way throughout the year. I also used vocabulary
controlled readers with less mature readers on an individual basis and in small groups. They were frequently given the opportunity to read selections of their own choosing each day, too.

Teacher-student reading conferences were designed to discuss books read, to assess reading interests, to gain insight into the child's level of understanding and word attack strategies, and to plan additional reading. I usually met with each child every week and a half, although for several of the children, I tried to meet briefly with them at least every other day.

Group conferences were used for various purposes. When multiple copies of books were available, a small group would meet two or three times during the reading to discuss the story, to share favorite parts, and to clarify everyone's understanding of the story. Frequently mutual friendship patterns were used for grouping purposes even when the books being read were all different. The purpose was to use the natural groupings in the classroom as a basis for sharing books with each other. I also developed groups around similar instructional reading levels using multiple copies of a book or a reading series. These groups might meet regularly with me for three or four weeks and then be disbanded, or split into smaller groups. Each reading time typically included several individual conferences and at least one group conference. I usually met with groups in the rug area.
Curriculum Organization

The children referred to the reading time event as quiet reading time. Within the event there were predictable phases similar to the writing time organization, namely, the opening, the activity, and the closing.

Opening Phase. The opening phase began when the children returned to the classroom after the lunch recess. They gathered, again, in the rug area. I began the reading time by reading from a chapter book to the entire group. I generally read one chapter each day, and tried to select books that would not only be challenging for the group, but would also stimulate discussion and interest. During the May video taping I was reading Madeleine L'Engle's A Wrinkle in Time. Previous fantasy that I had read to the class included The Lion, The Witch and the Wardrobe by C.S. Lewis, Tuck Everlasting by Natalie Babbitt, and Stranger Came Ashore by Molly Hunter. The most recent book we had completed was The Pinballs by Betsy Byers. Follow-up response to The Pinballs included group discussion, individual writing, and a viewing of the film version of the story. When I finished reading each day, there were frequently responses from some of the children about the story - questions, explanations, or anticipations of future events in the story. After the oral reading was completed I announced who I was going to meet during the quiet reading time, both individuals and group conferences. Everyone was then asked to find their own books and get started with their own reading. This marked the transition to the activity phase of the reading time.

Activity Phase. The activity phase was characterized by children reading books of their choosing or meeting with me in groups or individually.
Spaces for reading included most areas in the room, I controlled their reading space choice only when I felt they were distracting others. The activity phase lasted from 40 to 50 minutes. The children were expected to read quietly on their own for at least half of that time. There was a mutual understanding that after 20 to 25 minutes of sustained reading they, if desired, could choose to work quietly at their own desk on their journals, cross word puzzles, or word search puzzles. Listening to stories with the head sets and tape recorder was also considered a possible activity after the initial quiet reading. My purpose in providing these alternatives was simply to recognize that some children might not be able to sustain themselves the entire time with their own reading. I wanted the longer reading time so that I could meet with more individuals and groups, however, I did not want those children to become too restless who had difficulty managing 40 minutes. Over half of the children were usually able to sustain themselves with their reading for the entire reading time.

The following transcript from May 11, 1979, illustrates the kind of group interaction that occurred during the activity phase of the reading time.

T: What I'd like to do -

Ricky: Could I read my own part right now?

T: Okay, what we're going to do with a group of four, you two read the same book, but these two are reading something different so let's start by
T: having you two tell Mitch and me and Marty a little bit about the story you read, okay?

Ricky: Okay.

Kent: I didn't read the whole thing.

T: Okay, Ricky, you said you finished it. Could you tell us about the story?

Ricky: Okay, see, it's like this, see, see, it's -

T: Tell us the title.

Kent: Macaroon.

Ricky: Okay, it's called Macaroon.

T: And it's by Julia Cunningham, okay.

Ricky: See, but you can't - the very best part I like is in the middle of the book 58, page 58.

T: Okay before you get to your best part, could you give us an idea what the story is.

Ricky: See, it's like - about - this um raccoon.

Kent: Who wants to adopt a child so he can, so he can stay in the house during the winter so he can stay warm.

but both wanted to give it a try. They frequently read books to each other during the reading time. For *Macaroon* they reconstructed some of the text meaning from the pictures, and also used bits and pieces of the written narrative to make sense of the story. There were important features of the story they failed to understand, but as the transcript revealed they made an important effort with a very challenging book.
Ricky: And also so he walks in the
house and they get on the
porch and she says what are
you doing on my porch to
the, to Macaroon and that
__ his eyes and stuff, and
so they came, went up to his
house and they both made real
good friends.

T: What was the girl like?

Ricky: What was the girl like?
She was - she was pretty
nice and stuff.

T: Why do you think - why would
you describe her as nice?

Ricky: Cause she always takes up
on, like when she, she
liked raccoon real well.
And here's, good, I like
the part when ... "What
kind? what kind?" And
see, see, um, see um she
said "Okay Macaroon, I'll
play your games." And she
started - that was just his
way of getting upstairs
and getting - okay I'll
play your games and she
went up with him. I
thought that was pretty
neat. And this is nice
too, cause um cause he was
like in the bathtub and
he -

Initial teacher questions were
designed to explore Ricky's
understanding of the changes in
the girl, Erika, in her atti-
tudes towards Macaroon, her
family, or herself. Ricky did
not tune into this character
development, perhaps because of
his over reliance on the pic-
tures for meaning rather than
the written text. This suggested
to me that on one level the
story was simply too difficult
for him. He posed some thought-
ful responses of his own to
these questions.

Rather than describing Erika as
disagreeable, Ricky suggested
she was nice because she played
with Macaroon. He also empha-
sized later how she stood up for
Macaroon against the hounds.
Both of these qualities - playing
with someone and standing up for
someone - were the focusing fea-
tures for his understanding of
the child. The pictures in the
text generally reinforced this
interpretation.

Ricky started reading. The text
read: But, come on, you old
macaroon. I'll play your silly
game. Ricky read: Okay,
Macaroon, I'll play your games.

Ricky was looking at a page which
showed Macaroon in the bath tub.
Kent: She stuffed his cookies by the toothbrush.

T: What did he put by the toothbrush?

Kent: I forgot, I think cookies.

Mitch: Cookies?

Kent: Oh, he stole some cookies. There's the toothbrush and there's the cookies.

Mitch: Raccoons get hungry, usually raccoons like sweet stuff.

T: Ricky, do you think that the raccoon or the little girl learned anything?

Ricky: Yah, I learned like the raccoon and her learned like they can't always be friends forever. Sometimes they have to become not friends.

T: Okay, is that what happened in this story?

Ricky: I-I-it's kinda what happened but it ain't what happened. See -

Mitch: ______

T: Be a good listener now.

Ricky: And they're like friends, and friends always have to take after friends so I think that's what they learned.

T: Yah, okay.
Mitch: Helping people, like help.

T: That might be a part of it. Kent, how much of the story did you read?

Kent: Ah, I'm on page 31.

Ricky: Can I share my best, can I share my best page now?

T: Okay, can we listen to each other read now? Tell us why you picked out this part.

Ricky: Cause I thought it was nice, this picture right here. I thought it was nice and stuff. Cause she was taking up for him and she was being a real pal to the raccoon cause look, see - These dogs was attacking Macaroon and his fox here and at the end she says, she says, (reading) "Nobody's going to hurt Macaroon, she shouted, not caring for anything or anybody except...I messed up on this word right here.

T: Um, I can't see it, turn it sideways for me Ricky.

Ricky: See it starts right there.

T: (reading) "except the courageous"

Ricky: courageous

T: Yah courageous, do you know what that word means?

Ricky: Yah, I think its a like a small little animal.

T: No.
Marty: It's wild or something like wild.

T: No, if someone is courageous, or if an animal is courageous, he has courage. What does it mean to have courage?

Kent: They're tough.

Marty: And they're not afraid of any animals.

Kent: Like brave.

T: Someone who has courage or is courageous is brave, yah. Keep going, Ricky.

Ricky: (reading) "little animal whose right ear was scareflet with blood. Nobody, nobody, no..."

T: She's shouting that isn't she.

Ricky: (reading) "She kicked her way through the dogs I seizing" I missed this word. I missed two words on this page. (reading) "Around the stomach and tucked him over her head" (reading) "Now kill me if you want to but you'll never get Macaroon."

T: Okay, so she's really protecting him.
My teacher role in the group conference was multi-dimensional. On one level I wanted to enjoy the story along with Ricky and Kent, encouraging their personal reactions and thoughts. My purpose was to encourage the children to become personally involved in their reading, not only learning how to read, but developing a desire to read. On another level I attempted to explore the kind of interpretation the boys made of this story compared to my adult perceptions. The questions exploring the changes in story characters were designed for these purposes. A third level of involvement was managerial in nature. I encouraged taking turns, listening to each other, and moving along so that all would get an opportunity to read and share thoughts about their books. The longer the group met the more aware I became of the clock, wanting to honor each of their responses, but also recognizing that I had additional conferences planned.

The children's response to the reading time was broad, and varied from individual to individual. Some children became absorbed in their selected books for the entire event; others flipped through several books, reading pictures or captions. Although the event was called a quiet reading time, the classroom was rarely silent. There were children who read aloud to themselves or talked about their reading with friends, sharing pictures, jokes, or puzzles. At times there were individuals who were uncooperative about getting their books and others who would sleep after ten or fifteen minutes of reading.

The overall purpose of the reading time was to encourage wide reading and enjoyment of books. It was designed so that children would be given opportunities to read books of their own choosing and be encouraged to try new books I selected.
Closing Phase. The closing phase of the reading time began with my utterance to the entire group asking them to put their books away and to meet in the rug area. Occasionally the closing phase would be used for evaluating the reading time or for sharing books read. Evaluation was initiated by asking for reactions to our reading time, e.g., Did we have a good reading time today? Why do you think so or why don't you think so? Who needs help finding a good book? For this latter question, I usually recorded names on my clipboard and then thought about possible titles for those children after school.

Frequently the evaluation or sharing of books was neglected, not because it was not valued, but because the entire group was ready for an outdoor recess break. Although the school had no regularly scheduled afternoon recess, I generally found it helpful to take the entire class outside in the middle of the afternoon. My hope was that the students and I would be more eager and better able to tackle the ensuing math time work if we obtained some fresh air, played some outdoor games or simply ran around. Overall, the break proved helpful.

Researchers (e.g., Mehan, 1978; Erickson, 1978) who have examined the structure of classroom events frequently treat each event as having separate and distinguishing boundaries between other events in the day. Mehan (1978) has stated, "Recess is recess." What teachers and students actually experience may suggest that more fluid boundaries between these events exist. Recess, as a minor event during the day, influenced the reading time closing and the subsequent math time in critical ways. Before going outside the students and I normally discussed the importance of limiting the recess play to the outdoors. We discouraged the tendency to bring the
The transition between the classroom and the playground frequently created straggler problems - individuals ignoring the whistle to come in and individuals dawdling by the drinking fountain or in the lavatory before returning to the room. Each of these problems would ultimately affect the ensuing math time and needed to be worked on in a conscious matter throughout the year.

The discussion in this section has described the third major event of the school day, namely, the reading time. Global features of this event were identified as well as a more microscopic look at a group conference time. The following section will briefly describe the final event of the school day, the math time. Curriculum activity and organization are again identified with specific attention given to the tensions between the comprehensive and narrow curriculum purposes that undergirded this event.

**Math Time**

**Curriculum Purposes**

Mathematical thinking was a part of the work time activity. Considerations for distance, size, shape, and scale were regularly a part of the practical reasoning that children used when they designed models and represented ideas. This math work was incidental and varied from student to student and from project to project.

The purpose of the math time was to provide a structured introduction to the hierarchy of concepts within the field of mathematics. The math
time was designed in such a way that teacher expectations for activity were as clear and specific as possible (cf. McDermott, 1977). The end result was to provide fewer choices in activity for children, more discrete tasks for children to perform, and more immediate teacher feedback on those tasks.

**Curriculum Content and Activity**

The math time curricular focus was drawn from four basic areas: computation practice with whole numbers, fractions, and decimals; geometry and measurement activities; games and puzzles; and math-in-the-world activities.

The primary curricular focus was computation practice. Work in addition, subtraction, multiplication, and division were each stressed on different occasions. During the Spring the computation emphasis was on one and two-digit multiplication.

Geometry and measurement activities drew from a range of math concepts. Building paper and straw models of solid shapes, measuring acute, obtuse, and right angles, and using linear metric units were all a part of the Spring curricular focus. The line design work combined several of these areas.

Math games and puzzles were frequently used as follow-up activities when the primary task was completed. Block trading games, commercial number fact games, chess and checkers, tangram puzzles, and assorted teacher made games were a part of this focus.

Math-in-the-world activities were designed to relate math concepts to real world usage. Menus, grocery ads, catalogs, and math story problems were frequently correlated with the computation emphasis. Representing or graphing information was also considered in this curricular category.
Curriculum Organization

The math time was generally divided into three phases - the opening, the activity, and the closing - although there was frequently an additional instructional phase between the opening and the activity.

**Opening Phase.** The opening phase began after the afternoon recess when the entire group gathered in the rug area. The purpose of the opening was to provide teacher direction for the ensuing activity. New material was also presented at this time and familiar math concepts were reviewed. The blackboard was normally used for this introduction when the students and I solved review or new problems together.

**Activity Phase.** The activity phase of the math time was initiated when worksheet assignments were given to some of the children. I generally developed follow-up practice with two levels of difficulty in mind. The students who were able to handle the more difficult problems were given their work first and asked to return to their seats to work on the assignment. They were encouraged to help each other if they ran into difficulty while I was unavailable to help. When they finished their problems, they could bring out the math games and puzzles or work with geometry and measurement activities. During the Spring the follow-up math activities revolved around line designs from our work with angles and practicing multiplication facts through times tables or flash cards.

The group that stayed in the rug area frequently received more instruction. They used the blackboard for practice problems or were asked to use more concrete, manipulative materials to represent the problems being tackled. Dienes blocks, macaroni pieces, the abacus, and cuisenaire rods were used both individually and in this smaller group situation to help solve the computation problems.
Of the four major events during the day the math time was the most teacher directed. The children were rarely given an initial choice about their activity. Although they worked in a variety of places in the room, e.g., their own desks, tables, rug spaces, the decision about what they were going to do rested with me.

The dominant role for my decision making about activity in the math time emerged during the Fall when the class, as a whole, demonstrated an inability to cope responsibly with choices in the afternoon. Interactional problems seemed to dominate the last hour of the day rather than any kind of sustained attention to a curricular focus. My purpose in providing a highly structured closing to the school day was to attempt to alleviate some of these potentially disruptive behaviors. The emphasis was placed upon the kind of discrete school tasks with which all of the students could be successful. I wanted to establish the kind of working tone which suggested we simply had no time for disruptions, that we had a great deal to accomplish in a short amount of time, and that we had better get on with it. Overall, that kind of curricular structure seemed to help us get through the afternoons. Afternoons were never easy for these students, but that time became more productive for learning as the year progressed.

The structure in both the event and the math activities gradually provided a predictable framework from which working agreements were established between the students and me. The working agreements concerned appropriate and inappropriate behavior and expectations for work procedures. Although the math time activity was not always consonant with my comprehensive educational purposes, it did work to stabilize the classroom social system. Educational purposes were narrowed to accommodate concerns for control and
management. As behavioral problems decreased over the course of the year, the math time structure allowed me to shift my awareness to more comprehensive purposes.

Summary

The purpose of this chapter has been to describe the beginning of the school year (Fall, 1978) and the global features of the classroom curriculum during the Spring (1979). The discussion was organized around the four major events that made up the school day. Each event was designed for different academic and procedural purposes, and was segmented into phases that served more specific purposes. Curriculum content and activity evolved from integrated themes, enduring strands from previous themes, children's personal statements, short term projects, and math and language work. The structure of these events and activities provided a framework from which the students and I informed and held each other accountable for various purposes throughout the school day. Curriculum purposes were both broad in scope (i.e., concerned with educational goals) and narrow in function (i.e., concerned with control and management) as I attempted to achieve balance in an evolving, dynamic and complex social system of conflicts, demands, interruptions, needs, and uncertainties.

The purpose of Chapter V will be to provide a finer-grained analysis of the classroom teaching experience. The discussion will focus specifically on teacher-student interactional patterns during the work time event, examining in a more microscopic way the kinds of working agreements we achieved as we selected, set up, and sustained classroom activity.
CHAPTER V
TEACHER-STUDENT INTERACTION:
CHOOSING, SETTING UP, AND SUSTAINING ACTIVITY

Introduction

The purpose of this chapter is to describe the teacher-student interaction that produced the event characterized in Chapter IV as work time. Specifically, the description will examine how the students and I decided what activities to pursue during the choosing phase and how these activities were jointly sustained during the activity phase. Transcripts from three video taped work time events will be utilized for these descriptive purposes (May 11, May 24, and May 31, 1979).

Phases within the work time event were comprised of teacher-student interactional sequences. An interactional sequence was defined as a verbal transaction between me and a student to accomplish procedural or academic purposes. The boundaries for an interactional sequence were most frequently determined by changes in participants. As I shifted my attention to different students, new interactional sequences were established. Sequences were comprised of teacher and student verbal utterances and non-verbal behavior. An utterance was defined as "everything said by one sneaker before another began to sneak" (Sinclair and Coulthard, 1975, n. 21). Brief interactional sequences were viewed as transactions with three or fewer utterances. Extended sequences were viewed as transactions with four or more utterances.

Each interactional sequence as defined above was examined in terms of the primary function it served within the event. Six functional categories
emerged from the data (cf. Hough and Duncan, 1970; Eberle, 1978; Resnick, 1972). These included negotiating, substantive, managerial, self-referential, behavioral, and delaying functions.

Negotiating interactions had as their primary function a concern for the child's choice of activity during the work time. They involved the interactional sequences that dealt directly with what activity would be selected by the child. The decision was usually, although not always, a negotiated one between me and the child.

Managerial interactions served the function of setting up the conditions for sustained activity. They involved interactions that dealt directly with supplying the appropriate materials, checking material resources to make sure they were ready for use, and giving preliminary directions or instructions for a specific task. The interactions were frequently procedural in nature (cf. Hough and Duncan, 1970), and were viewed as preparation for the actual task.

Substantive interactions served the function of facilitating or sustaining engagement in the subject matter and curricular activity. They frequently involved both student initiated interactions for assistance with an activity, and teacher initiated interactions that informed, probed, or evaluated the work efforts. The primary concern in a substantive interaction was not the choosing, or the setting up of an activity, but the attention given to sustaining involvement in the activity.

Behavioral interactions served the function of monitoring appropriate and inappropriate behavioral actions in the work time event. They had as their primary concern the redirecting of behavior.
In self-referential interaction participants attended to themselves or their relationships to others in the classroom, rather than to the curricular activity at hand. These sequences had as their primary concern the interpersonal relationships of classroom members.

Delaying interactions had as their primary function the immediate postponement or delay of the interaction. The sequences were brief in nature and embedded in more extended sequences.

Table 1 summarizes the number and function of interactional sequences from parts of three work time events (May 11, May 24, and May 31). The negotiating sequences from the May 11 recording are not included in this table because of sound difficulties during the choosing phase. None of the tapes recorded the complete work time activity. The video tape recording time of 35 minutes always ended before the morning work time was completed. Thus the numbers and percentages of different sequences are misleading if used to represent the entire work time activity. They provide a tentative framework for viewing the diverse range of interactions that were a component of each event. The analysis is exhaustive (cf. Mehan, 1979) in the sense that the entire course of the video-taped interaction is examined.
### TABLE 1

**INTERACTIONAL SEQUENCES**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Function</th>
<th>Number</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
<th>Brief</th>
<th>Extended</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Negotiation</td>
<td>47</td>
<td>29.7%</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Substantive</td>
<td>47</td>
<td>29.7%</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Managerial</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>24%</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Behavioral</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>5.6%</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Self-Referential</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>4.4%</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Delay</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>6.3%</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Totals</strong></td>
<td><strong>153</strong></td>
<td><strong>100%</strong></td>
<td><strong>89</strong></td>
<td><strong>69</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Interactional sequences were initiated by both students and myself, and were followed by responses to that initiation (cf. Bellack et al., 1966). Within some sequences there was a teacher follow-up or evaluation to the initial two part initiation and response (cf. Sinclair and Coulthard, 1975). The organization of the sequence into initiation, reply, and evaluation follows the work of Mehan (1979), and is generically based upon the work of Sinclair and Coulthard (1975) and Bellack et al., (1966). Sinclair and Coulthard (1975) have stated:

"A typical exchange in the classroom consists of an initiation by the teacher, followed by a response from the pupil, followed by feedback, to the pupil's response from the teacher..." (p. 21).
Mehan (1979) has characterized these three part sequences as follows:

\[
\begin{array}{ccc}
T & \text{initiation} & S & \text{reply} & T & \text{evaluation} \\
\end{array}
\]

This organization of the sequences represents a feature of discourse referred to as co-occurrence relationships (Gumperz, 1964), and adjacency pairs (Sacks et al., 1974). Mehan (1979) has noted:

The three-part initiation-reply-evaluation sequence contains two coupled adjacency pairs. The initiation-reply is the first adjacency pair. When completed, this pair becomes the first part of a second adjacency pair. The second part of this pair is an act that positively evaluates the completion of the initiation-reply pair" (p. 54).

Initiation utterances generally performed one of three functions: elicitation, informative, or directive. The function of the elicitation was to exchange information about the activity, subject matter, and work procedures. The function of the informative was to pass on information, ideas, or opinions about the subject matter or activity procedures. The function of the directive was for respondents to take procedural or behavioral action.

The discussion so far has introduced functional categories that will be used to code teacher-student verbal interaction in the work time event. The descriptive system is not intended to test a particular theoretical position concerning classroom discourse or informal education. The categories are viewed as heuristic devices for describing, in an in-depth way, the complex flow of classroom interaction.
This chapter is organized into two major sections. The first section will examine how the students and I made decisions about what activity would be selected during a work time event. The discussion will explore specifically the organization of the negotiating sequences as they are revealed through teacher-student verbal interaction.

The second section will examine how the students and I set up and sustained activity during the work time. Substantive, managerial, behavioral, self-referential and delaying sequences will be described in this section. The broad purpose of this microscopic analysis will be to explore how work time was produced through the interaction of classroom participants.

Choosing Activity: Negotiating Interactions

Two separate days of video taped work time interaction (May 24 and May 31, 1979) had 47 teacher-student interactional sequences whose primary function could be characterized as negotiating for choice. Of these negotiating sequences 83% took place within the choosing phase of the work time period, while 17% of these sequences took place during the activity phase. 68% of the sequences were brief interactions, either three part interactions (initiation, response, and evaluation) or two part interactions (initiation and response). 32% of the interactions were extended in nature, i.e., involving additional teacher checking or probing, and student responses.

Table 2 summarizes the breakdown of brief and extended interactions across phases of the work time.
TABLE 2
NEGOTIATING SEQUENCES
(May 24, May 31, 1979)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Phases</th>
<th>Choosing</th>
<th>Activity</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Brief</td>
<td>Extended</td>
<td>Brief</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of Sequences</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>8</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Percentage</td>
<td>83</td>
<td>17</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The negotiated decision making for activity choice was initiated through teacher elicitations (65.9%), student elicitations (10.6%), teacher directives (10.6%), and teacher informatives (6.4%). The three remaining sequences (6.4%) were characterized as breakdowns in the negotiating process.

Teacher Elicitations

The most frequent negotiating sequence (65.9%) involved my elicitation for choice, a student response, and then my follow up. The follow up involved three strategies: accepting the child's choice, rejecting the choice with suggestions for alternate activity, and probing for additional information about the activity. The sections that follow will examine each of these organizing strategies.
Accepting Choice. Of all negotiation sequences 44.6% were brief interactions where I accepted the child's choice of activity. The choices in these cases were drawn from the curricular framework discussed in the previous chapter. The elicitation was frequently in the form of a nomination to speak (Sinclair and Coulthard, 1975). The nomination was tied to the utterance that asked for activity choice (T: What are your plans so we can have a good work time?) and was accomplished through calling the child's name and through non-verbal means such as nodding the head or establishing eye contact.

The following are representative examples of negotiated sequences that were organized in this manner:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Initiation</th>
<th>Reply</th>
<th>Evaluation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| 3-31 T: Holly?      | Holly: I'm going to work on my Thompson Rec. | T: Okay, and you've got your paper?  
                           |                                            | Okay.                        |
| 2-31 T: Tricia what are you going to work on? | Tricia: ______ | T: Say it louder, writing a folktale?  
                           |                                            | O.K., you can go to work.  |
| 4-24 T: Dan?        | Dan: I'm going to do film animation, and then I'm going to do Thompson. | T: And you're finishing up your titles?  
                           |                                            | Okay.                        |
The negotiating sequence where I accepted the child's choice is depicted in Figure 5.

Initiation                 Reply                 Evaluation

T elicit: what          S reply          T evaluation: accepts

Figure 5. Negotiating Sequence Teacher Elicitation: Accepting Choice

Rejecting Choice: Suggesting Alternatives. An extended negotiating sequence was utilized when the student response was not initially accepted. My evaluation suggested alternative choices, probed further into what the choice was about, and frequently checked past progress with an activity so as to better evaluate the present choice. The checking and suggesting were frequently accomplished in the same utterance. The function of the checking strategy was to enable me to ascertain what the child had represented so far or whether there were any problems preventing successful progress with the activity (cf. Sinclair and Coulthard, 1975). The function of the probing strategy was to extend or clarify the child's thinking about the work activity, and to provide additional information about the activity. (Both of these strategies will be elaborated upon in the section Setting Up and Sustaining Activity).
Of the negotiating sequences 5.2% involved me rejecting the child's choice, and then suggesting or directing the child to an alternative activity. The rejections were accomplished through the strategy of checking on past progress with an unfinished task, and for some sequences probing into possible directions for the alternative activity. Representative examples follow.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Initiation</th>
<th>Renly</th>
<th>Evaluation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
The sequence with Marty involved checking and probing strategies to provide additional information about his progress with the film animation.

The extended sequence is more difficult to represent schematically than the basic three part sequence. The first adjacency pair of teacher initiation and student reply was followed by additional elicitations that checked, probed, or suggested alternative activities. The checking, probing, and suggesting strategies elicited additional student response which in turn created additional co-occurrence relationships within the extended sequence. The interaction continued until I positively evaluated the activity choice (see Figure 6).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Initiation</th>
<th>Reply</th>
<th>Evaluation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Marty: ___ make some sunken ___ something like that</td>
<td>T: Yah that would be nice. You have good ideas. Can you work on those?</td>
<td>Marty: Yah</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The sequence with Marty involved checking and probing strategies to provide additional information about his progress with the film animation.

The extended sequence is more difficult to represent schematically than the basic three part sequence. The first adjacency pair of teacher initiation and student reply was followed by additional elicitations that checked, probed, or suggested alternative activities. The checking, probing, and suggesting strategies elicited additional student response which in turn created additional co-occurrence relationships within the extended sequence. The interaction continued until I positively evaluated the activity choice (see Figure 5).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Initiation</th>
<th>Reply</th>
<th>Evaluation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>T elicit.</td>
<td>S reply</td>
<td>T evaluation: checking probing suggesting</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Figure 6. Negotiating Sequence Teacher Elicitation: Rejecting Choice
Accepting Decisions: Checking, Probing. I also used checking and probing strategies in elicitation sequences when the child's activity choice was accepted. The strategies served two related functions: one was to help me find out more about the child's choice; a second function was to help the child become more aware of what the activity involved. These negotiating sequences were extended in nature and accounted for 14.5% of the total number of negotiations for activity. An example follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Initiation</th>
<th>Reply</th>
<th>Evaluation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>19-24</td>
<td>T: Denise?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Denise:</td>
<td>T: Do you know what we're doing for that? Tell me.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Tell' em Mr. Miller and ... (pause)</td>
<td>T: Ann, yah, how much you liked going. Yah, and things you liked to do. What might you do a picture of for them?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Denise: (no response)</td>
<td>T: What was your favorite thing of the things we did there?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Denise: That thing we jumped on.</td>
<td>T: The tramp? Do you think you could do a picture of the tramp showing someone jumping?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Denise: Uh huh.</td>
<td>T: Yah, okay.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The probing with Denise was designed to help her be more explicit about how she would tackle her work choice. In the following interactional sequence the probing was designed more for helping me understand the students choice.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Initiation</th>
<th>Reply</th>
<th>Evaluation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>21-31</td>
<td>T: Jay, so what are you going to work on?</td>
<td>Jay: Our film.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>T: I need (pause) to know what the idea is.</td>
<td>Jay: I'll show it to you (he leaves)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

This interactional sequence was left uncompleted at this stage, as I attended to other children and Jay returned to his desk, presumably to get materials of some kind that related to his film idea. The sequence was continued several minutes later, with Jay responding to the probe into what the idea was.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Initiation</th>
<th>Reply</th>
<th>Evaluation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>41-31</td>
<td>Jay: Steve, we'll tell you our idea. We might be using another tape cause this could be kind of a long film, but it's going to be good funny and science fiction and stuff. Here's the starting of it: (he reads from his story) Then we're going to have, like on this, we're going to have later on ___ look</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
out his window cause
he couldn't sleep -
cause he can't and then
he, the, you see ___
for a second, for about
three seconds maybe and
then there little green
men jump out, and you
tell him the rest
(pointing to Billy)

Billy: And they have
these little belts
around here like ____ with
strings attached ____ and
when they land and start
raiding everybody ____

T: Are you - you're
going to be writing?
So it's a story you're
writing and then you're
going to animate it?

Billy: Yah

Jay: But we're thinking
about animating it but
we're going to write it
first?

T: How can you write
it in a way that you
both can be involved
in the writing?

Jay: Well, I'm going to
write the part I said and
he's going to...

T: You're going to add
that part? That's fine.
Okay. It seems like
you've really thought
it out well, alright.
Let's get it down on
paper, and then you'll
be ready to animate.

Jay: I think it's better
to think it out before you
make it.

T: Oh, yah, I think
that helps too.
This extended negotiating sequence accomplished several teacher purposes. Through the probing process I found out the nature of the activity (writing), the topic to be represented in writing (a "science fiction" story), and how the activity would be jointly produced (each child would write a different section). The extended interaction took place because the activity choice had grown more from the student's own interests rather than from the current curricular focus in the classroom.

A final example of a negotiating sequence that used checking, probing, and informing strategies follows. The activity choice was accepted in this sequence but my probing strategies attempted to provide additional information about the task and to address the concern of how and where the activity would take place.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Initiation</th>
<th>Reply</th>
<th>Evaluation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>27-24</td>
<td>T: (non-verbal nomination)</td>
<td>Mitch: Steve, I know what I can get to, if you don't mind. I'd like to get a line design and over the line marks everywhere and wire follow everywhere, and I'll show it as a line design color.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>T: Instead of wire what Nancy's going to use is some kind of string.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Mitch: String, yah string, kind of a colored string.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>T: Okay is that -</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Mitch: All that skinny string you've got up there, that big roll.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>T: Is that, is that something you think you'll really stick with</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Initiation</td>
<td>Reply</td>
<td>Evaluation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>------------</td>
<td>-------</td>
<td>------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mitch: Yah, I'm going to do it.</td>
<td>T: So today you want to work at your desk and get a line design while you -</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Mitch: Make the line design first, color it. and then nail and ...</td>
<td>T: And think about a board and nails, and then, alright, I would use - you can use any of that paper for your pattern.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Mitch: May I be excused to do it?</td>
<td>T: Yah, you can.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The organization of the above negotiating sequences followed the same pattern as the extended sequences when the activity choice was rejected. Checking, probing, and informing strategies provided additional adjacency pairs of teacher elicitation and student response. The organization is represented in Figure 7.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Initiation</th>
<th>Reply</th>
<th>Evaluation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>T elicitation: what</td>
<td>S reply</td>
<td>T checking: what probing: how, where informing: how, where</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>S reply</td>
<td>T accepts</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Figure 7. Negotiating Sequence Teacher Elicitation: Accepting Choice with Checking and Probing
The discussion to this point has described the most frequent pattern of teacher-student decision making about activity choice, namely, teacher elicitation for choice. These negotiating sequences were organized around three follow-up strategies: accepting the child's choice (44.6%), rejecting the choice with suggestions for alternate activity (6.2%), and probing for additional information (14.5%). The discussion will now examine those sequences that involved no teacher elicitation for choice. Three kinds of sequences were identified in this area: teacher informatives, teacher directives, and student elicitations. Each sequence will be discussed separately.

**Teacher Informing**

Three of the negotiating sequences (6.4%) were initiated through teacher informatives. In all of these sequences I acknowledged a previous agreement between me and the child by informing him/her that I knew what the activity choice would be. The child's response in each of these sequences was simply to acknowledge the utterance and then get on with the activity.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Initiation</th>
<th>Response</th>
<th>Evaluation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>5-31</td>
<td>T: You two are going to film. I'll help you get set up in about 10 minutes. You get your art work there. I'll want - I want to help you with the camera before you start.</td>
<td>Tricia and Alice: (acknowledgement)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>23-24</td>
<td>T: Kent and Ricky, I know what you're doing. You can go to work now. We've talked about it.</td>
<td>Kent and Ricky: (acknowledgement)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The sequence is a two part interaction with no evaluation component. It is represented in Figure 8.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Initiation</th>
<th>Response</th>
<th>Evaluation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>T informing: what</td>
<td>S acknowledgement</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Figure 8. Negotiating Sequences Teacher Informing

The acknowledging of previous agreements during the choosing phase of the work time was accomplished because of interaction and activity during the setting up phase. The sequences illustrated how working agreements between the students and me provided predictable frameworks for subsequent work time decision making.

Teacher Directing

Five of the negotiating sequences (10.6%) were initiated through teacher directives. In each of these interactions I made the decision for the child about what activity would be undertaken and, in some cases, made the decision about where and how the task would be done. The reasons for using directives were usually related to my concerns for control and management, my perceptions of the working styles of individual children, and my understanding of their previous progress with a task. Several examples of a teacher directive sequence follow:
The sequences were organized in a similar way to the teacher informing sequence. There were two parts to the interaction, and no evaluation component. It is represented in Figure 9.

**Figure 9. Negotiating Sequence Teacher Directing**

Another example of a teacher directive sequence follows with a discussion of my thinking for directing this child's activity.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Initiation</th>
<th>Reply</th>
<th>Evaluation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| 35-31      | T: Here, Monica  
This is the spelling you missed. I wrote the words. I printed them and then I put them in cursive. I want you to copy, print em, and copy in cursive. Let's read through them.  
Monica: _____ | |

The surface reason for directing Monica to the spelling/handwriting task was simply that she was absent the previous day, and needed to make up the work. On a deeper level, I was attempting to cope with a larger problem of classroom control. Monica's father had walked with her to school in the morning, and had angrily accused other girls in the room of picking on Monica after school. He had spoken with me during the setting up phase that morning and was encouraged by me to share his concerns with the principal. I did not want him to speak directly to Monica's classmates at that time, although a group conference outside the classroom was considered a possible follow-up to the conflict. In directing Monica's activity, I was trying to provide a discrete task that she could manage in her own seat, without amplifying the present tension between her and several of the other girls. A reading of the complete morning transcript from May 31 revealed that the conflict created several interactional problems over the course of the morning. References will be made to this conflict in subsequent sections of this chapter.
Student Elicitation

Student initiated negotiations were accomplished during the choosing phase of the work time event when students found an appropriate juncture to initiate their own concerns for activity, rather than waiting to be called upon by me. The general teacher elicitation for work choice was still on the floor in these situations. Examples of student initiated sequences during the choosing phase follow:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Initiation</th>
<th>Reply</th>
<th>Evaluation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>8-24</td>
<td>Duncan: Steve, can we get started? We are going to follow the space ship around.</td>
<td>T: Yah, I'll be with you in a minute. Just be real careful with the camera that high.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18-24</td>
<td>Toni: Steve, I only got a few more to go.</td>
<td>T: Okay, finish those up and then you can work on that.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

My reply in each of these sequences accepted the child's work choice, and then informed the child about procedural concerns. In both of these interactions the students found appropriate points to initiate the negotiating process rather than waiting for me to call on them.

Student initiations during the activity phase of the work time frequently negotiated for procedural concerns. The choice for activity had been previously agreed upon, but now students were concerned with how much of their time needed to be committed to a specific task. The major concern was still what would be done.
Jay: I feel it's time to do the titles now, cause it's gonna take up time to glue all those letters on to the paper.

T: Um, let's go - let's see - you got up to question five? You finish two. I know you can do six and seven, and then you'll have time to do the titles Jay.

Jay: Seven? I have to do five.

T: I thought you did five.

Jay: No.

T: Let's try to finish.

Jay, not completely satisfied with this negotiation, later in the work time initiated a longer range procedural concern:

Jay: Do I have to do the next chapter?

T: Eventually.

Jay: Do I have to do it today?

T: No you don't Jay. You've made good progress today. Finish that one up. You're in good shape.
The student initiated sequences were organized in several ways. One pattern involved a brief two part sequence (see Figure 10).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Initiation</th>
<th>Reply</th>
<th>Evaluation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>S elicitation</td>
<td>T reply: accepts informs directs</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Figure 10. Negotiating Sequence Student Elicitation

The more complex pattern involved additional teacher elicitation and evaluation in response to the child's elicitation. The sequence is represented in Figure 11.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Initiation</th>
<th>Reply</th>
<th>Evaluation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>S elicitation</td>
<td>T reply: informs directs elicits S reply</td>
<td>T evaluation</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Figure 11. Negotiating Sequence Student Elicitation: Teacher Elicits

The discussion has identified three negotiating sequences that involved no teacher elicitation for activity choice. These sequences included teacher informing (6.4%), teacher directing (10.6%), and student elicitation (10.6%). A final section will describe what appears
to be an anomalous case in the work time choosing, i.e., the negotiating sequences where the child made no choice.

Breakdowns

Breakdowns in the negotiating process occurred when a child made no choice in a teacher elicitation sequence or provided no response to a teacher directive or informative. There were three interactional sequences from these two video-taped work time periods that appeared to break down in this manner. Two of these sequences involved the same child.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Initiation</th>
<th>Reply</th>
<th>Evaluation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>T: Derek, what do you want to do?</td>
<td>Derek: I don't know yet.</td>
<td>T: Tell, tell me before you leave so I know what you're going to work on.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Derek, tell me what you're going to work on.</td>
<td>T: You missed our spelling. I can give you that if you're not going to continue with the film animation. You're in the middle. You had made the dinosaurs, and you needed to do a background, and finish one of your dinosaurs. And if you can't do that I'll give you that spelling that you missed when you were absent Tuesday. What's your choice now?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>47-31</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
With a response from the child of "I don't know" I attempted to inform the child about choice possibilities, in this specific case identifying a work-in-progress project (the animated dinosaur film) and a discrete spelling task from a day Derek was absent. The interaction was left uncompleted when other children began asking for my attention. It resumed several minutes later.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Initiation</th>
<th>Reply</th>
<th>Evaluation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>50-31 T: Derek?</td>
<td>Derek: I don't know.</td>
<td>T: So then it's my decision then. You're going to work on the spelling.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Derek: Yah.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>T: Okay, let's do that. Come on.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The spelling task was selected for him because directions for activity could be discrete and explicit. I also assumed that Derek would eventually want to finish his film animation on his own if not pressured too much to do it. The breakdown in negotiation appeared to be partly resolved through my directive for a specific activity. The resolution was only temporary though as the negotiating interaction continued later in the same work time event.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Initiation</th>
<th>Reply</th>
<th>Evaluation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>68-31 T: Derek, what can I help you with now?</td>
<td>Derek: (no response)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| T: What choice were you going to make then? I was trying to help you with a choice,
The negotiating process was opened up again, although Derek still did not respond. Again this sequence was interrupted by other children's questions. The sequence was resumed in a similar fashion to the earlier pair (47-31, 50-31).

Initiation | Reply | Evaluation
---|---|---
72-31 | T: Derek, did you decide? | Derek: (no response)

T: Okay, then I'm going to ask - then it's my choice. So you copy the words first in your best printing. Okay. And then you're going to use some of them in sentences. Pick out the ones that you know. First copy them. You can do that, okay? You - I know you can do that.

Derek: (no response)
The organization of the negotiating sequences that broke down followed the pattern of an extended teacher elicitation sequence. When students provided no response or the response they "didn't know" to the elicitation for choice, I frequently informed them of possible alternatives, directed them to specific tasks, or tried to elicit more response. My directive to Derek in this particular work time was not acknowledged by him. The sequence is represented in Figure 12.

### Table

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Initiation</th>
<th>Reply</th>
<th>Evaluation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>T</strong> elicitation: what</td>
<td><strong>S</strong> no response</td>
<td><strong>T</strong> informing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td><strong>directing</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td><strong>eliciting</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>S</strong> reply</td>
<td></td>
<td><strong>T</strong> evaluating</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td><strong>directing</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Summary**

The purpose of this section has been to describe how the students and I made decisions about activity choice. Negotiating sequences in the choosing and activity phases of the work time event were examined. Teacher elicitation sequences were the most frequent patterns in this
process of negotiation. They comprised 72.3% of all the negotiating sequences (counting the teacher elicitation sequences that were characterized as breakdowns), and were organized into three patterns according to the follow-up to the student response. Choosing was also accomplished through teacher informing and directing. For the students only one initiation pattern emerged, namely student elicitations. Table 3 summarizes the kinds of negotiating sequences discussed in this section.

**TABLE 3**

**NEGOTIATED DECISION MAKING**

(May 24, May 31, 1979)
The following section will describe how the students and I, once activity was selected, set up and sustained involvement. Three work time events are utilized for this description (May 11, 24, and 31). Subheadings in this section focus on the substantive, managerial, behavioral, self-referential, and delaying sequences.

**Setting Up and Sustaining Activity**

The organizing features of initiation, response, and evaluation (Mehan, 1979) were helpful heuristic devices for examining the negotiating sequences in the work time event. They were less helpful in organizing the substantive, managerial, and other sequences that characterized the activity phase of the work time. Initiation strategies emerged within these sequences that required greater differentiation than simply elicited information, directed behavior, or provided information.

These interactional sequences were frequently more conversational in tone than they were lesson like, although distinctive questioning strategies did dominate in each kind of sequence. To suggest they were more conversational is not to imply that they represented the kind of dialogue one might hear in a home. They were distinctly school oriented as they focused on tasks or activities. But within these sequences I was rarely asking questions of students where specific, known responses were expected. The questions were predominately real questions; that is, they were "information seeking" questions, in contrast to "known information" questions which typically dominate most lesson talk (cf. Mehan, 1979a). My purpose was frequently to find out what ideas the students wanted to represent, and then to help them explore ways to act on their ideas. This underlying purpose meant that both the students and I had to provide information or
raise questions about the problem under discussion. Of course this process varied depending upon the activity. Math computation tasks, spelling work, and the textbook assignment posed constraints within the task itself on how something could be approached. My intervention in these situations frequently followed more conventional "lesson" patterns (cf. Mehan, 1979a) through the elicitation of known questions, and the positive or negative evaluation of student responses. Learning activities that offered a wider range of response for the students, frequently encouraged a more sustained dialogue between the students and me on how the task could be accomplished. These activities included art representation, the children's writing, and projects of their own choosing.

Tough (1977) used the term dialogue strategies to refer to the "different ways of commenting and questioning" that teachers employ when responding to children's activity. This perspective provided a constructive heuristic framework for organizing the interactional sequences within the work time event. Seven dialogue strategies emerged from an analysis of the teacher-student verbal interaction. These included:

1. **Checking strategies**: Checking referred to the orienting strategies that initiated the interaction (cf. Tough, 1977). Checking served the dual purpose of inviting the child to respond or talk about the work, and of helping me to find out if there were problems preventing successful progress with the work. The checking strategy was information seeking, and served the pedagogical purpose of focusing the child's thinking on a particular topic or activity.

2. **Probing strategies**: Probing was designed to extend or clarify the child's interpretation of the experience. They were also information
seeking for me. Probing frequently served to give me deeper insight into the child's thinking about the activity. Some probes were designed to help the child focus on a specific feature of the experience. Probing strategies were frequently revealed through product and process elicitations (cf. Mehan, 1979).

3. **Informing strategies:** The purpose of the informing strategies was to provide information or ideas about the activity or experience. Informatives were revealed in the form of elicitation when suggestions were made to the children about procedural or process considerations for the activity.

4. **Directing strategies:** The function of directing strategies was for respondents to take procedural or behavioral action. Directing strategies occurred more frequently at the end of an interactional sequence than at the beginning. They served the function, in some cases, of concluding the interaction.

5. **Restating strategies:** Restating strategies were used to sustain the child's interpretation and involvement with activity. Frequently the utterances were a thinking-out-loud strategy designed to encourage more response from the child.

6. **Assistance strategies:** Assistance strategies were used by children to elicit help from me about work time activity. They were frequently used to initiate interactions and were realized through questions, (e.g., "will you help me"), statements ("this is confusing"), and imperatives ("come and look at this").

7. **Evaluating strategies:** Evaluating strategies served several purposes within the interaction. They frequently judged or appraised a
person's work efforts, thinking, or behavior. On other occasions they were simply acknowledgements that someone was ready to proceed with the task. Evaluating strategies also served the function of encouraging the child to respond.

The discussion to this point has introduced seven dialogue strategies that will be used to describe interactional sequence in the work time event. They are presented as hueristic devices to reflect classroom interaction, and are not intended to represent a theoretical position regarding appropriate or inappropriate teacher behavior. The major focus in this section will be on the substantive and managerial interactions within the work time event. Behavioral, self-referential, and delaying sequences will be described briefly at the end of the chapter.

**Substantive Interactions**

Interactions designed to facilitate or sustain involvement in the subject matter or task at hand were the most dominant type during the work activity. They were frequently extended interactions (35 of 47 sequences) and were initiated by both students and me.

Teacher initiated interactions served one of two major functions: one, they checked current progress with an activity, and then elicited or added information about the activity; or two, they provided directions about the activity, and then additional information.

Student initiated interactions also served one of two major functions: one, they elicited help or assistance from me about the activity
or subject matter; or two, they informed me about current progress with the activity or subject matter. The sequences are represented in Figure 13.

**Organization Strategies**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Teacher initiation</th>
<th>Strategies</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>checking —— probing —— T evaluation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>restating</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>informing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>directive —— informing —— (T evaluation)*</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>elicitation: assistance —— T evaluation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student initiation</td>
<td>informing —— (T evaluation)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Strategies in parenthesis are optional within the interaction.*

**Figure 13. Substantive Sequences**

Each of the teacher initiated and the student initiated sequences will be illustrated with examples from the video-taped work time events.

**Teacher initiation:** checking, probing, informing. The function of checking was defined earlier as the attempt to determine what the child had represented in his or her work or whether there were any problems preventing successful progress with the activity (cf. Sinclair and Coulthard, 1975). When checking was used to initiate interactions it was revealed in utterances that encouraged the child to begin sneaking about the work efforts. Examples follow:

5-11 T: What's going to happen? What's your story?
15-11 T: Okay, what's going to happen there?
42-24 T: Alright, go ahead, tell me about your picture.

30-24 T: Let me see, how have you done on these? Tell me what you've done. Explain me your process.

48-24 T: How're you coming on that?

85-31 T: Mitch, why don't you show me your start. Oh, you picked some colors. What are you trying to show?

The student response to the initiation was followed by my probing, informing, or evaluating. Probing was often revealed in the kind of elicitation that encouraged the student to think about activity processes or procedures, and to extend or clarify his/her own thinking about the work activity. Informing passed on information or ideas about the subject matter or activity.

The following example illustrates a teacher initiated substantive interaction where checking, probing, and informing strategies were used. Terry was working on an animated folktale, one she had written, and was puzzled about how she should animate the story. Her original folktale was about a girl who had found a magic stick.

8-11 T: What's going to happen? What's your story? Checking

Terry: I don't know ... I can't make it up ___

T: I thought you were going to use your ... were you going to use the idea from your own story? Probing

Terry: Yah.

T: But you weren't sure what would move? Can you think of one of the folktales I read to you ... would you like to try to ... (pause) Informing: Suggesting

Terry: I know what I'm going to do.

T: What? Probing
Terry: I could make a hut and trees by it and stuff.

T: Yah, an African hut...

Terry: And she comes home with a stick behind her.

T: Okay. Is that part of your story? She had found a magic stick. Okay. So the girl comes in carrying the stick. Then what happens?

Terry: She just goes in the house.

T: Okay, what was going to happen in your story with the stick? What made the stick magic?

Terry: It's just sorta magic for.

T: Well, what did the stick do?

Terry: It's going to get bigger and bigger and it came up to her.

T: It what?

Terry: It kept on hitting over the head and chased her.

T: Okay, do you want the stick to do that?

Terry: Yah.

T: So the stick will start beating her and then she runs off the picture.

Terry: At the end like see I was run - the little girl - the girl running and the stick will be behind her, and she be running and she be like in the house, and then he be out there saying the end.

T: Okay, okay.

My initial questions served the function of checking Terry's thinking or problem at this stage. They served the additional function of
getting Terry to focus her own attention on the activity. After Terry made a decision on how she was going to proceed (Terry: I know what I'm going to do.), subsequent utterances served the function of re-stating or probing her thinking on the task. Probing statements were designed to expand her sense of story narrative (T: Then what happens? What did the stick do?). The evaluation was more an acknowledgement that she was ready to proceed than a teacher appraisal or judgment of the work or ideas.

A second example of a teacher initiated substantive interaction follows. The intervention was initially a managerial one, designed to check the film equipment in the animation area. Alice and Tricia were arguing about the appropriate background for their film titles.

65-31 T: Let me ... (checking the camera focus) Checking
Alice: On top of this
Tricia: No Alice ___
Alice: She always never listens to my idea
T: Let her explain her idea, okay? Checking
Alice: There (positioning the title and background)
T: What would be your reason for that, Alice? ___
Alice: I think it looks better.
T: Why do you think it looks better? Probing
Alice: ___ yah, but look at it.
Tricia: I've been looking at it ___
Alice: You didn't look at that
Tricia: (looks through camera lens)

Alice: She's going to say it's stupid cause it's my idea.

T: What do you think, Tricia?

Tricia: ______

T: Yah, I agree. I think it looks better too. Now look at it like this.

Tricia: Yah, I think I like it with that.

T: Yah, I'll tell you why I like it. It's because you can't tell there are mountains with the titles, and this gives a solid color so that our eyes will only look at the print rather than trying to wonder what's behind it. Let me, let me look at your focus before you do any film.

T: Just a second, Mark and I'll look at what you're doing.

T: The other thing you could do, if you want no background, you could zoom it in close on just the title.

Alice: (shakes her head no)

T: Alright, you need to trigger it. Not with this because of -- check it again. You kicked it.

The extended interaction sustained the work activity through probing into the children's thinking about activity procedures. My suggestions were rejected, but they served the function of providing additional information about the task. I also evaluated specific procedural decisions made by the girls (T: Yah, I agree. I think it looks better, too), and closed the interaction by providing directives for procedural action.
Of the substantive interactions, thirteen sequences (27.6%) were dominated by teacher checking and probing strategies. There were five sequences (12.7%) that were organized primarily through teacher directing and informing. They are discussed in the following section.

Teacher Initiation: Informing, Directing. In each of the teacher informing or teacher directing sequences there was less attention given to checking or probing strategies that elicited the child's thinking about the task, and greater attention given to directing or informing the child about procedural considerations. In the example that follows Mitch was using a line design book to get ideas for his own work.

47-24

T: (observing)

Mitch: I got one

T: Oh, that's too complicated. You need to start with a simpler one, and then build up to the hard ones. Do you have a pencil?

Mitch: _____

T: Do you know - have you ever done a simpler one?

Mitch: I've did ah --

T: Some like this?

Mitch: Like that.

T: Alright, you try this which is, you do a line, and then a line, and then you do a line design in each angle. Can you try that one? Where's your pencil?

Mitch: Oh, that's kinda nice.

T: Do you have a pencil?

Mitch: I don't know.
T: (Goes to look for a pencil in the teacher's desk.)

Mitch: Steve, I've got my own.

The primary function of the interaction was to sustain involvement with the activity. I directed and informed Mitch about work processes, and on several occasions used checking strategies to find out information about his previous experience with the task (T: Have you ever done a simpler one?), and his perception of potential problems (T: Can you try that one?). The overall tone of the interaction is one of informing and directing, rather than information seeking. A few minutes later the interaction was continued with additional teacher informing, directing, and, in this case, demonstrating.

50-24 T: Alright, here's the big important lines on this. This one, straight across, straight across. You go straight down, straight down. Then show me you can do a line design. Then I'll be back, alright?

Mitch: Like this?

T: Yah, that'll be fine. Okay, cross it, make it like a cross.

Student Initiation: Eliciting Assistance. Substantive interactional sequences were also initiated by the students. The most frequent initiation was designed to elicit assistance from me. Of the substantive interactions, 44.6% were accomplished for this purpose. The initiations were designed to check work in progress, get advice, get help on work procedures, or to ask a question about subject matter. My responses frequently informed, directed, checked, and probed. Billy initiated the following interaction with a question about the textbook assignment:
33-24  Billy: Steve, see ___. I'm not sure if this answer here is right, cause West Komasai (Kumasi) ...

T: What was the question?

Billy: It was what is the capital of Ghana and what part of the country is it in?

T: Okay

Billy: It's west -- I wasn't sure if it's Komasai (Kumasi) or Ashanti.

T: Kumasi is the capital of Ashanti, and Ashanti is like a section of Ghana. Now the capital of Ghana is not Kumasi. See if - find - it's another city and its along the ocean. That's my clue for you. See if you can find it on the map.

---------------------------------------------

Marty: Steve, I haven't got anything to print with.

---------------------------------------------

T: Check the map in the book.

Billy: (acknowledgement)

The activity was sustained in this example by checking to make sure I understood the nature of the difficulty. Information and directions were provided, and brief evaluating comments to encourage the child's involvement.

**Student Initiation:** Informing. Students also initiated substantive interactions for the purpose of informing me about their activity. These sequences accounted for 12.7% of the substantive interactions. Students informed me about work ideas, work efforts, or answers to previous questions. The interactions served the function for some children of encouraging me to take note of their efforts, thus they served a
secondary self-referential function as well as a substantive one. In the example that follows Matt informed me about his efforts with the art work for the recreation center thank you book. He had discovered a way to represent "pop up" characters on his representation of a team handball court.

55-24 Matt: Steve, I've got a good idea. I can do it like that. When I want it down you can let it go down. If you want it up like that, it will pop back up. I'm gonna do a whole bunch like that...Do you think that'd be a good idea?

T: Sure, yah, that'll work.

Matt: I didn't even decide to do it. I just ____ and cut it out and just put it right here to see if it would fit and then it popped up.

T: Okay, the thing you'll have to decide now is whether - do you want - it's fine if you want to do that much work, cause it's a lot of work isn't it?

Matt: Yah, but it won't take me that long.

T: Okay, stick with it then. It will look nice. How many - are you going to have one person in each goal and then a couple people out playing?

Matt: I - I'm gonna put another person here ___.

T: Okay, it's going to look nice, yah, yah.

My response to student initiated informatives always included evaluating strategies. The primary function was to support or encourage the child's efforts. In one interaction, the overall emphasis was more to extend than it was to support. Leslie initiated this interaction by showing me her art work.
Summary. Substantive interactions functioned to facilitate or sustain involvement in the work time activities. They were organized through teacher initiations that checked, probed, and evaluated children's work, and through teacher initiations that primarily directed and informed. Substantive interactions were also organized through student elicitation for assistance, and through students informing the teacher about the work activity. I controlled each of the student initiated sequences through the strategies of checking, probing, informing and directing. Teacher evaluations were a potential strategy in all sequences.

Table 4 summarizes the major patterns that organized the substantive interactions.
Although the descriptive analysis of the substantive interactions has treated each sequence separately, I rarely experienced these sequences in isolation. The activity phase involved a rapid round of multiple student demands, various teacher concerns, miscommunication, conflicts, and interruptions. Sequences with one child frequently overlapped sequences with another. Less than a third of the work time sequences were substantive in nature. The work of setting up - managerially and behaviorally - and the work of relating to other people were significant components of each work time activity that often interfered with the more substantive purposes of this event. The final sections in this chapter will describe these interactions.
Managerial Interactions

Managerial interactions functioned to set up the conditions for activity. They were concerned with finding the appropriate materials and work space, giving procedural directions for an activity, checking equipment, and so forth. They frequently were preliminary concerns to the actual activity, although they occurred throughout the work time event. Thirty-eight sequences had as their primary purpose the setting up of conditions for activity. Managerial concerns were regularly a secondary function of other interactional sequences. Managerial sequences were initiated by both me and the students, and 27 of the 38 sequences (71%) were brief interactions. Teacher initiated sequences informed and directed. Student initiated sequences informed or elicited information from the teacher.

A summary of the strategies involved in managerial sequences is represented in Figure 14.

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**Figure 14. Managerial Sequences**
Student Initiation. The primary focus for student initiated sequences frequently was the location or use of material resources. Utterances that initiated these interactions were:

35-24 Mitch: Will this work?  
20-24 Barb: Hey, Steve, where's the folder for this?  
64-31 Nancy: ____ I can't find the crayons.  
63-31 Monica: Steve, I need a pencil.  
27-31 Diane: Steve, that door over there is locked.

The following example of a student initiated managerial interaction illustrates the interruptive nature of these demands. The sequence was initiated during the choosing phase of the May 31 work time. The interaction was more complex than the typical managerial sequence because it involved a miscommunication between me and the student about what materials were needed for activity. Matt asked me for his picture, interpreted to mean his Thompson Rec art work. What he really wanted was his Thompson Rec thank you letter that had been recopied by me the previous evening. The recopying had been done in order to correct spelling errors and cursive letter formation. Matt initiated the interaction when some children were still gathered in the rug area for choosing activity.

17-31 Matt: What did you do with my picture, Steve?  
18-31 (Teacher directions to Toni about her work choice)  
18a-31 Matt: What did you do with my picture?
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Activity Type</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>19-31</td>
<td>(Announcement from the office to send Terry to the music room.)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20-31</td>
<td>T: (to Matt) Shut the door so we don't have all that noise.</td>
<td>Directing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21-31</td>
<td>(Extended interactions with Billy and Jay about their work choice)</td>
<td>Informing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21a-31</td>
<td>T: Matt, it's up there (pointing to the teacher's desk area)</td>
<td>Informing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21-31</td>
<td>(Continued interaction with Billy and Jay)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21b-31</td>
<td>(Teacher directions to ___ to put ___ on the desk)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21-31</td>
<td>(Continued interaction with Billy and Jay)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>22-31</td>
<td>(Negotiating interaction with Dan)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>23-31</td>
<td>(Toni initiates interaction for assistance with math)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>24-31</td>
<td>(Continued interaction with Dan)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25-31</td>
<td>T: Can you find it there, Matt? It's there if you look. I have a folder. It's in that pile. Yah, it's in there, Yah.</td>
<td>Informing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>26-31</td>
<td>(Teacher directions for activity to Leslie)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>27-31</td>
<td>(Managerial interaction: Diane needs key to special work room)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
28-31 (Teacher directions to Kent about his work activity)

29-31 (Teacher directions to Mitch)

30-31 (Tricia and Alice initiate interaction: assistance with camera set up. Teacher delays)

31-31 T: Here, Matt, you're making such a big mess
Matt: Well, I can't find it.
T: Well, you're not looking. You need to show a little patience. I wouldn't tell you it's here if it wasn't. Is that what you want?
Matt: No, that picture that you're suppose to copied
T: The letter?
Matt: Yah.
T: Okay, I'm sorry. We weren't reading each other, were we?
Matt: Did you copy it?
T: Yup, I got it already for you. Okay, and I couldn't figure out what this said, so you think that through again, and I'll help you with the spelling, and then you can get it, okay.
Matt: (acknowledgement)

In his frustration in not finding the letter Matt had spread out and then mixed up several folders of children's work on my desk. And because of my own frustration with the mess, it was inappropriately suggested to him that he had not looked carefully. In fact, Matt had shown patience and perseverance with the task. He had unfortunately
communicated the wrong item to me about what he needed. The miscommunication extended what would have normally been a brief interaction through twelve other interactional sequences. Six of these were negotiating in function, four were managerial, one was substantive, and one was delaying. Although the miscommunication was resolved in this case, the sequence illustrated the pervading influence and complexity of managerial demands during the work time event. Whenever multiple options for activity were made available for different children, the potential for interference through the setting up processes was amplified. Managerial sequences were frequently viewed therefore as interruptions from the most important processes of selecting and sustaining activity.

**Teacher Initiation.** Managerial interactions were teacher initiated when I directed or informed children about materials and work space, and checked resources students were already engaged in. Teacher initiations were also in the form of questions on some occasions. Derek was informed during the negotiation stage to find the Multi-Arithmetic-Base-Blocks to help work through his multiplication problems. I approached him later in the morning when he still had not set up the materials.

18-11  T: Are you going to get the blocks?  Checking

Derek: I don't know what kind of blocks.

T: I'd use the little units. They'll help you get those.  Informing

If a child was working on a writing or mathematics task, I frequently encouraged him or her to find work spaces that would help him focus on the task at hand. The following interaction illustrated this
concern for work space setting up. The decision was partly negotiated by providing a limited framework for the child to choose from.

35-31  T: Toni, come here, please. I don't want you to work with those two because they're doing art. Now you've got math. Where can you work?

37-31  (Teacher directions to Monica for work time)

38-31  T: You can work at my desk or you can work at your own desk.

   Toni: I'll work at your desk.

   T: But you can not -

39-31  (Toni interrupts to inform the teacher about a personal problem she is having with Monica)

Managerial interactions that were initiated by me were designed frequently to set up working arrangements so that behavioral problems could be avoided. The directions to Toni, in addition to providing a better work space for a math computation task than an art table, were anticipating the potential problem that Toni later identified herself (39-31). The tension between Toni and Monica related to the incident surrounding Monica's father coming to school that was discussed earlier. Behavioral Interactions

There were nine interactional sequences whose major function could be characterized as behavioral. There were additional behavioral concerns embedded within other kinds of sequences. All of the behavioral interactions had as their primary concern the redirecting or changing of behavior. They were organized through teacher initiated directives to
the children to take certain behavioral action. Three of these se­quences involved single teacher utterances to change behavior.

59-24 T: Mitch, you need to sit in your seat. You sit in your seat.

55-31 T: Anne, Anne, will you try to concentrate on that?

2-11 T: Mitch, you're not supposed to be there.

The utterance to Anne in the above example was less directive, and more negotiating in nature than the directives to Mitch. Although it accomplished the same purpose, it may be that the indirect utterances involved the child more in this decision making process about appropriate or inappropriate behavior.

The redirecting of behavior sometimes involved more than simply a teacher directive. The directives were combined with personal elicitations and informatives about successful working patterns. In the follow­ing example, Toni, working at my desk, had refused to let Monica get a pencil out of the pencil drawer. Monica had then come to me for assistance.

75-31 T: Toni, if you're going to sit at my desk you have to help me out when people look for pencils. You've got to let 'em get them. Okay, doesn't that make sense?

Toni: (although the tape is inaudible Toni was talking about her problems with Monica, and her father coming to school in the morning.)

T: Yah, that's alright. That's your business.

Toni: (she explains more about the problem with Monica.)

T: Still, if you're at my desk what do you need to do?
Toni: Let 'em get it.
T: Yah, okay.

Rather than a single teacher directive to Toni telling her to let other people use the pencil drawer, the elicitation (T: What do you need to do?) drew her, in part, into the decision making process about appropriate behavior. Even with the elicitation, the sequence was primarily directive in tone.

Self-Referential Interactions

Self-referential interactions included those sequences whose primary function was to communicate about oneself or one's relationship to other people in the classroom. Frequently self-referential interactional sequences were initiated by students as they informed me about relational problems. For example:

T: What Jay?
Jay: They say we're annoying ____. We're working on this so we have to talk a little ____.
T: That's fine. Some of the talk is important. I would, I would, now that you've done some talking, why don't you do some writing?
Jay: That's what we're doing.
T: Yah, yah, okay.

The following example relates to the tension between Toni and Monica that permeated the entire May 31 work time.

Toni: Steve, Monica put my name in telling her father that I kicked her brother. She better be glad I hadn't ____ talking about it plus my mother ____ so she better just watch it.
T: (no response)
My responses to the self-referential initiations that identified relational problems were to simply acknowledge the problem, to postpone action on it, or to ignore the child. There were seven sequences whose primary function could be characterized as self-referential in nature.

**Delay**

Ten interactional sequences had as their primary function the delay or postponement of the interaction. All of these sequences were student initiated for the purpose of informing or eliciting assistance from me. My response was designed to delay the interaction. The following are representative examples:

51-31 Toni: Steve, will you check these?
T: Just a second. I've got to get Derek set up and then I'll come back and look at them.

52a-24 Billy: 
T: Just a second, Billy. Let me check Jay's.

Some student bids for attention were ignored by me rather than responded to with a delay informative. This accomplished the same purpose although ignoring the bid for assistance was not coded as an interactional sequence. I generally responded to children's requests for attention, even when engaged in an extended interaction with another child. Resnick (1972) has suggested that this acceptance of interruptions helps teachers cope with the management function within the classroom. Delay interactions accounted for 6.3% of the interactional sequences in the work time event.
Summary

Decision making about how activity would be set up and sustained during the work time event was accomplished through managerial and substantive interactions. Behavioral, self-referential, and delaying interactions influenced these processes as participants respectively re-directed behavior, focused on themselves, or delayed interaction.

The organization of substantive interactions is summarized in Table 4. Table 5 summarizes the teacher and student dialogue strategies that organized the managerial, behavioral, self-referential, and delaying interactions during the work time event.

**TABLE 5**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>MANAGERIAL, BEHAVIORAL, SELF-REFERENTIAL AND DELAYING INTERACTIONS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Function</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-----------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Initiation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-----------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-----------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of Sequences</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-----------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Percent of Total (42)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-----------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Percent of All Sequences (158)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The purpose of this chapter has been to provide a fine-grained description of the classroom teaching experience. The analysis has explored how the students and I chose, set up, and sustained activity through work time interaction. This microscopic description was situated within the more global curricular framework presented in Chapter IV. Through complex and diverse patterns of teacher-student interaction the students and I worked to balance educational and management concerns. Miscommunication, interruptions, conflicts, and breakdowns in negotiation were experienced as critical features of the classroom reality, and as interferences from the more substantive classroom purposes. Decisions about what to do and how to do things were accomplished daily through the negotiated agreements between the students and me over the course of the work time event.

The organization of the curricular events and the organization of the teacher-student interactional sequences revealed patterns that were both consistent and inconsistent with my explicit educational theory. These tensions between theory and practice were related to my decision-making about global curricular concerns and my interaction with children during the school day. The tensions and conflicts were not always revealed in the displayed behavior of teacher-student interaction or in the surface features of the classroom activity. On the contrary, these tensions were frequently a hidden dimension of the teaching experience as I worked throughout the year to relate educational purpose to practice. The purpose of Chapter VI will be to discuss this hidden dimension. The chapter will describe a set of persisting dilemmas that undergirded the classroom teaching experience.
CHAPTER VI
DILEMMAS OF TEACHING

Introduction

Controversy about teaching methods and appropriate classroom environments for children's learning is frequently beset by gross distinctions between different approaches and different philosophies. Educators and parents speak of progressive education versus traditional education, or child-centered classrooms versus teacher-centered classrooms. On another level, we hear of open versus structure or permissive versus authoritative. The distinctions are familiar ones, and seemingly endless. The debate that surrounds these educational issues regularly dichotomizes rather than exolicates. Sides are taken but with little new understanding about how various methods and philosophies are enacted in real classroom settings.

Bussis and Chittenden (1970) conceptualized curriculum in open education as a process that involved student decision making and teacher decision making, student choice and action and teacher choice and action. Their conceptualization rejected the notion that open classrooms were completely child-centered, or that they even ought to be. Berlak and Berlak (1975), in a study of British informal classrooms, argued similarly that the dichotomy of child decision-making versus teacher decision-making operated within specific classroom settings. In the classrooms they studied teachers experienced a pull towards both ends of this decision-making spectrum. The teachers suggested that, on the one hand, children
needed to make choices about their own learning, yet on the other hand, it was the teacher's responsibility to make many of these choices for them. My teaching experience during the school year 1978-79 was dominated by these same kinds of decision-making tensions.

Although I valued child choice and action in the educational process, I experienced an equally strong pull toward a dominant and controlling teacher role in this process. Although I valued the integrated nature of knowledge, I experienced an equally strong pull to provide discrete subject matter tasks for children. These kinds of tensions were characteristic of multiple dimensions of my classroom experience.

The work of relating theory to practice eventually led to a conceptualization of the teaching experience in terms of "persisting dilemmas" (Berlak et al., 1975). The dilemmas evolved from my decisions about the global features of the classroom curriculum and about classroom interaction. They were revealed from data gathered during the teaching year (1978-79), and from the descriptive analysis undertaken the following year (1979-80).

The purpose of this chapter will be to discuss these teaching dilemmas. Fifteen interrelated dilemmas are organized into three general sets. These sets include the curriculum dilemmas, the teaching dilemmas, and the decision-making dilemmas. The organization of dilemmas into curriculum and decision-making sets utilizes components of the Berlak and Berlak (1975) conceptualization discussed earlier. Seven of these fifteen dilemmas are similar in function to those presented by Berlak and Berlak, although in some cases the terminology is
differently. For example, whereas Berlak and Berlak identified "learning is holistic versus learning is molecular," what emerged from my analysis were the concepts of "an integrated curriculum versus a discrete curriculum." The discussion that follows is rooted in my personal efforts to relate educational theory to practice. It is based nevertheless on the exploratory work of Berlak and Berlak (1975) that examined relationships between teacher beliefs and classroom behaviors.

Although the curriculum dilemmas affected the interactional work in the classroom, the primary derivation of these concepts was my thinking about curriculum development as I reflected upon ongoing activity. Thus, they were predominately preactive in nature (cf. Jackson, 1968). The dilemmas were related to the issues of an integrated versus discrete curriculum, a rich versus stark environment, a real versus contrived curriculum, a personal versus school curriculum, and a content versus process curriculum.

My curriculum purpose was to support children's learning through a provisioned classroom environment that subordinated separate fields of knowledge to an overarching theme. Children's personal interests and abilities were to be utilized for extended inquiry into real world things. The relationship of subject matter, children, and the teacher was metaphorically construed as a triangle (cf. Rosen and Rosen, 1973; Hawkins, 1974), with children and the teacher interacting through engagement with content.
Another set of dilemmas was primarily interactive in nature. These teaching dilemmas emerged from the ongoing interaction in the classroom. The concepts focused on transmission versus discovery, individual versus group needs, learning versus activity, task versus management, action versus reflection and supporting versus extending.

My teaching purpose was to personalize the educational experience for each child, setting in motion conditions necessary for children to discover knowledge for themselves. I also valued the role of social relationships between children and teachers as a critical determiner of classroom learning.

A final set of dilemmas related to realms of curricular decision-making. These dilemmas were concerned with teacher versus child decision-making about choice of activity, use of classroom space, activity processes, and use of time (Berlak et al., 1975).

My idealized perspective was to involve students in curricular decision-making to a relatively strong degree in all of these realms. I wanted children to make choices about what activity they would pursue, to be able to select work processes that matched their own purposes, to use classroom space and materials as it fit their purposes, and to use time in ways that allowed for extended periods of concentration.

The following discussion will examine each of these dilemmas. The purpose will be to uncover a hidden dimension of the classroom
teaching experience, namely, the dynamic interplay between educational theory and teaching practice as it was acted on in one classroom over time.

**Curriculum Dilemmas**

**Integrated Versus Discrete Curriculum**

There were tensions between my idealized perspective of curriculum inquiry as an integrated, thematic process, and the role of discrete, isolated bits of subject matter.

The historical theme in the Winter provided the strongest example of an integrated, thematic inquiry. Focused around the questions "How did the pioneers live?" or "What was life like for famous Americans?", the theme brought together the use of oral and written language, arts and crafts, historical concepts, reading, and math thinking (e.g., in model log cabins, time line scales). Each separate or discrete curriculum element was subordinated to the larger concerns of the theme.

Access points for children to enter into the thematic inquiry were multiple and diffuse. Some entered the historical inquiry through crafts (e.g., quilting), others through their interest in sports (e.g., writing a biography of Jim Thorpe). The reading, listening, writing, and speaking skills of the language arts were acted upon in subsidiary ways as the student's attention was focused upon representing ideas and gaining meaning from different experiences.

The African folktale theme of the Spring was similarly organized although the range of access points for children was less diffuse. Language skills, the arts, and social studies concepts were subordinated
to the larger concern for representing folktales through writing and different media.

The classroom was not uniformly organized around themes or units. On the contrary, there were occasions each day when stronger boundaries between subject matter existed, either for individual students or for the group as a whole. In these cases, access points to the curriculum were usually narrow with the emphasis on discrete bits of subject matter. Handwriting and spelling practice were accomplished explicitly with the recognition that these same skills were being used within the course of a theme. The computation worksheets provided discrete math tasks that were unrelated to the work time themes. They were focused upon primarily during the math time, although finishing the work sheets was a common part of the morning work time activity.

My perspective of the curriculum development process involved a constant recognition of the tension between the degrees of integration and discreteness that characterized the selected activity. The tension existed not only across the curriculum but within a specific unit focus. The textbook used in the African study, although topically related to the theme, provided narrow access to social studies concepts. The format was one of reading and then answering the end of the chapter questions. There were other purposes in my thinking about why the text was used (e.g., experiencing the text format, skimming for information), but the tension existed in terms of how well the activity provided an integrative framework for children's learning.
Discrete tasks were used during the work time event for purposes of control, usually teacher control of activity. The purpose was to provide a clear, manageable activity for students who were not responding in consistent or productive ways to the more open ended, integrated activities. These latter activities, by their very nature, seemed to demand more student initiative and risk taking in the learning process than some children were willing or able to take at different points in time.

The tension between integrated and discrete aspects of the curriculum was also amplified through my questioning about individual student's working and learning styles. Did some children need a logical, sequential approach to their math learning? Would others have profited from a more structured approach to their reading development? Although I generally leaned to the kind of classroom inquiry that cut across fields of knowledge, the different abilities and learning styles of children frequently suggested a more discrete focus. The classroom curriculum was not truly integrated in focus or entirely discrete in nature. Given points in time revealed a pull between both of these curricular perspectives.

Rich Versus Stark Environment

Educators frequently have stressed that children learn best when they are involved in a rich environment of materials, people, and real world things. This premise was a basis for part of my thinking as I started the school year. The art area was supplied with paints, chalk, crayons, multiple kinds of paper, and various collections of usable junk
(e.g., egg cartons, styrofoam trays, cardboard scraps, etc.). The math area held concrete objects for computation (seeds, macaroni pieces, cubic inch blocks, multi-arithmetic base blocks, cuisenaire rods), games (commercial and teacher made), and various measuring devices (balance scales, click wheels, rulers, meter sticks). The science area had a microscope kit, several microscopes, a box of glass lenses and old cameras, a collection of bulbs, batteries, and wires, a lizard terrarium, and plants. There was an area that stored cooking utensils, and another area for a record player and tape recorder. Books were arranged throughout the room but primarily were clustered in the reading center area. There was a classroom loft in one corner, four large rectangular tables, two round tables, and seven student desks.

Changes were made in the classroom environment throughout the year. Although the changes were not dramatic, they were rooted within the dilemma of attempting to find the appropriate balance between the degrees of curricular richness and starkness that the environment ought to provide. The environment changed in part as I became more selective about what materials I wanted to use. Many of the math, science, and art materials were put into storage in my effort to help focus the inquiry during a work time. As a result, choices were limited.

In my efforts to control behavior and encourage a more reflective style of working I consciously was narrowing the environment in other ways. Desks were provided for everyone. The loft and several tables were removed from the room. The choice of simply "messing about with materials" in a center area was eliminated. But as I
narrowed the entry points to the curriculum through providing a less rich environment, I continually felt the tension of not providing enough experiences for some children to explore a wide range of materials.

A close scrutiny of the Spring curriculum was problematic for me for that reason. The kinds of questions the children raised during the work time activity were predominantly procedural ones rather than the kind that wondered about real world things. The materials that were acted upon (e.g., the film animation, the art materials for Thompson Rec., or the discrete schools tasks) offered a range of responses from the children, but did not, as a general rule, open up additional areas of inquiry for them.

The questions I continually raised were: at what point was the "rich environment" distracting for children? Were there some individuals who needed more materials to explore? That tension characterized classroom environment decisions throughout the year.

Real Versus Contrived Curriculum

Closely related to the tensions between an integrated versus discrete curriculum and a rich versus stark environment was my concern for real, purposeful inquiry from children rather than contrived, skill-focused tasks. Art representations of different experiences, field trips, classroom visitors, and personal writing were viewed as exploratory and learning oriented in this real sense. The spelling and handwriting practice, math computation work sheets, and the textbook assignment leaned toward the contrived category.
As I made decisions to provide a more focused activity for children (integrated vs. discrete), within a less provisioned environment (rich vs. stark), the tension of providing real versus contrived activities was amplified. The shift was frequently made for purposes of short term control, although I raised additional questions about the efficacy of contrived tasks to produce more responsible and productive learning behavior on the part of some children.

McCutcheon (1979), in a study of a fourth grade classroom, characterized the kind of contrast between expressive children's writing and art work on the one hand, and spelling and math tasks on the other, as conflicts of interests for the teacher. She suggested further that the two major influences that set up these curricular conflicts were contrasting teacher beliefs and parent desires. This characterization, although helpful, would have been an oversimplification for my experience. The pull or tension between these two features, real versus contrived, operated within the classroom for multiple reasons. There were the influences of varying working styles of children, the need for teacher control of activity, the strengths and vulnerabilities in my subject matter knowledge, and the nature of what was to be learned. All of these factors worked together to build this tension.

Tension existed not only across activities, but within specific activities. Art activities, when they were not given any personal investment or care from the children, would become a contrived undertaking. Spelling exercises, when turned by individual children into an expressive and personal communication through word sentences or stories, would become a
more real, integrative focus. The tension was dynamically integral to all activities and events during the course of a school day.

**Personal Versus School Curriculum**

A personal curriculum viewed children's interests and home or out-of-school experiences as significant starting points for classroom inquiry. A school curriculum, on the other hand, viewed classroom inquiry as something imposed on children through teacher or administrative decision making. The tension between the personal and school curriculum was revealed in several aspects of the classroom organization and interaction.

Individual students who exhibited strong personal interests in specific areas were frequently asked to set aside those interests and participate in a whole class curricular activity. Although this trade off was not always visible through the video-taped interactions, the tension existed below the surface. Jay was directed to the textbook assignment when his worktime efforts continued for several weeks to revolve around his interest in super hero characters. Although I valued the personal interest of children, I was also concerned that the school experience provide something stretching or expanding for them. I was not satisfied when individual students avoided new experiences for extended periods of time. I frequently assigned some types of work to deal with this neglect.

The most persistent issue that surrounded this dilemma concerned the role of talk in the classroom. Educators and linguists (Cazden, 1972; Rosen and Rosen, 1973; Halliday, 1975) have supported the notion that language is best learned when children's attention is on giving and receiving meanings in situations that support multiple purposes for language. The home setting and the role of the caretaker are frequently
cited as models for school learning because of the ease with which most children learn our complicated language system. Although I valued talk in the learning process, and the importance of a supportive social environment, I was faced with the tension of deciding what kinds of talk were or were not purposefully related to school learning. What talk was distracting to school purposes, even when it may have served personal purposes? What kind of interactional talk was helpful?

During the work time activity I frequently raised this concern with students who used talk for interactional and personal purposes, rather than for more instrumental purposes. In these interactions children were encouraged to focus on their own activity and spend less time talking to others. The sequences were behavioral in function and were undergirded by this tension between the children's personal agendas and the school curriculum.

The tension between the personal and school curriculum influenced decisions about classroom organizational issues as well as separate interactional sequences with individual children. The math time was designed explicitly to generate less personal and interactional talk, and more attention to a school oriented learning task. Work time activity, on the other hand, was generally more supportive of personal interests and talk. The writing time was designed to encourage personal, self-reflective writing in the daily journals, letters, stories, and evaluations. Personal statements were also supported in the writing that was more informational in function.

My perspective of curriculum and the ongoing activity was continually influenced by questions about the role of personal talk and interests in school learning.
Content Versus Process Curriculum

A content curriculum emphasized the subject matter that provided the substantive points of inquiry for the children and myself. Process curriculum referred, on the other hand, to the methods of acquiring and utilizing content (Parker and Rubin, 1968). Although I valued the processes of inquiry as significant components within the classroom curriculum, the ideal was to make no distinction between content and processes as they intertwined through real inquiry into the environment.

The tension between content and process was influenced by two related factors - the nature of the curriculum activity, and my knowledge of subject matter and the students.

There were activities within the work time event that were more process oriented than they were content based. Representing folktales through film animation and the art work for Thompson Rec emphasized constructing and creating with materials and media. As I helped the children with these activities, my attention was frequently on the processes of representing ideas rather than upon the investigation of new knowledge. The Thompson Rec booklet revealed thoughtful art work and informative letters. But the curriculum activity did not as a whole provide new knowledge for the children.

The representation of folktales through cut out animation had a similar emphasis. The children needed to reconstruct folktales previously heard or their original stories. The curriculum processes of working with different materials and media, using the camera equipment, and organizing the appropriate sequences and events in the story were generally stressed more than the subject matter of African folktales.
The textbook assignment, on the other hand, was content focused, although the content in this case was very remote from the lives of these children. The processes for acquiring this knowledge were limited to the structured format of the text itself.

My knowledge of the subject matter and of the children's personal point of inquiry also influenced the tension between content and process. Through the constant interruptions for teacher attention I frequently felt poorly informed about what students were trying to represent during a work time activity. My initial probing and checking was designed to fill in this gap. With less information about a child's center of interest my attention frequently focused on the activity processes rather than the substantive points of inquiry. In some cases I was also learning thematic content right along with the children, and was therefore not always ready to help children make connections or generalizations about that content as they engaged in activity.

The tensions between content and processes were reflected in a wide range of curricular activity, although the stronger pull within the classroom seemed to be on activity processes. What was problematic for me as I viewed the Spring curriculum was the lack of science and real world investigation points that might have intertwined these two perspectives.

Teaching Dilemmas

Individual Versus Group Needs

One of the most critical dilemmas I experienced was the continual pull between individual needs and group needs. This tension influenced my decision making about organization and activity choice as well as my decision making during interaction.
The organization of the school day was designed so that the least able self-directors would have a structured and predictable framework for thinking about activity and appropriate behavior. It was also designed so that everyone would be given some opportunity to practice decision making and to act on his/her ideas. I was continually concerned that the more able self-directors were constricted through the structure of the daily events. When some children were willing and able to extend their work time activity, I was faced with the decision of whether or not the rest of the class would be able to handle the extended work time. Would their activity be worthwhile? Would their behavior be distracting or even destructive? The questions were serious ones, and were not easily answered by suggesting that the environment needed more interesting things for the children to do, or that the right organization could respond to both kinds of students. The tension simply characterized the dynamic interplay between varying student response to the classroom setting.

The null between individual and group needs was also experienced when I made decisions to have a whole class activity. It was my hope that there would be opportunities for personalized responses within these large group activities, even if students were engaged with the same task. This was generally true for writing activities and art representations. Students responded to these tasks in personal ways.

The opportunities for personalized responses were less available in the spelling, handwriting, and math work. When large groups responded to these kinds of activities a potential mismatch was created between a specific child's needs and abilities and the nature of the activity. Organizationally I was not yet ready to provide a more individualized math
or spelling program, although moving in that direction would have alleviated some of this mismatch.

The tension between individual and group needs was revealed daily through the constant interruptions for teacher attention. One child, who needed to dictate much of his own writing to me during our writing time, was frequently inhibited in this oral language process because of the interruptions from other students during the dictation. He was reluctant to start again once the story had been interrupted.

Other children used transition times from one event to another to share personal stories and work efforts with me. I faced the dilemma of whether I should give them my full attention or whether I should get on with the task I had asked everyone to do. The dilemma was resolved through multiple factors. I considered what I knew about the child who wanted my attention, the topic, and what others in the group were doing during the transition.

The tension between group and individual needs also meant that some behaviors had to be ignored. Calling attention to misbehavior was distracting to the entire group, and in some ways unfair to those who were cooperating. There was a constant trade-off in this area throughout the year.

The most problematic issue surrounding group versus individual needs was the fact that some children received very little teacher attention during the course of the day. The work time interaction, as revealed on the video tape recordings, suggested that some of the better self-directors were able to sustain themselves very productively during the entire activity phase with virtually no contact from me. This meant that I was poorly informed about their work processes as they worked out of my immediate awareness. It also meant that my interaction in the classroom was focused
on children, who, for various reasons, were less able to sustain themselves for extended periods of time. This pattern was not intentional on my part. It simply evolved as I attended to setting up and sustaining involvement with children who were not able to do so on their own.

**Action Versus Reflection**

Teaching demanded decision making in situations where multiple variables were at work and a great many unknowns operated. I was constantly forced to make tentative guesses about appropriate action. It was essential that I do something. What emerged as a personal problematic tension was the lack of thinking and reflection time each day provided. There were an inordinate number of demands for action; there was less opportunity for sustained teacher reflection about appropriate courses of action.

Two important changes in the classroom curriculum were conceived by me while I was away from the classroom. One was conceived when I attended a four day teacher workshop in late Fall, and the other during the regularly scheduled December break. The first change was an environmental one. It involved setting up the room in a way that remained the rest of the year. The loft and several tables were removed and each child was given his or her own desk. The distribution of seating assignments was also arranged with very few changes from the end of the year.

The second change was a more substantive one. It involved the initiation of the historical theme as a whole class curricular focus that extended through January, February and March. The involvement for the children and myself was more sustained and in-depth with this theme than from any of our previous efforts at thematic inquiry. The range of experiences was broader, and my input was more thoughtful and systematic.
The constant demands for teacher decision making, in both the preactive and interactive settings, frequently meant that new curricular perspectives were difficult to achieve during the course of the school year. Although additional time during the school day may have encouraged more productive reflection my experience suggested that a shift in setting was a critical factor in promoting the kind of reflection that productively informed classroom action.

**Task Versus Management**

The tension between task and management was the most troublesome and persistent dilemma I encountered throughout the year. The tension was revealed in curriculum organizational issues and in interactive teaching situations, i.e., work time, reading groups, and writing conferences. There was a pull in each of these situations to attend to the processes and content of the task itself; there was an equal pull to attend to the setting up and maintenance of these tasks.

The larger organizational issues of task and management were balanced in part through varying opportunities for student choice of activity as the day unfolded. Management concerns were more complex during the work time activity because of the broader range of activities. Some of these tasks (e.g., the film animation) required additional teacher assistance on a procedural level because of the nature of the activity. Frequently management decisions were part of pre-active teaching in an effort to anticipate and avoid interactional problems. When planning the seating arrangements for individual children, I considered such factors as working patterns with other children, ability to get involved, willingness to cooperate with the group, and so forth.
In small group activities the tension between task and management often occurred when individuals lost interest in the task at hand. The tension also became evident through my concern to get on with the task because of other teacher needs during an event. Within individual writing conferences the tension was created when the needs of other students required teacher assistance. The continuous pattern of interruptions, for academic and procedural concerns, influenced the quality of teacher attention to specific children's efforts.

As children began to understand the predictable structures within the school day, more of their work efforts attended to classroom tasks. Gump (1975) noted that in the average elementary school "about 50 percent of class time is spent getting organized." Although no comparable statistics were available for my classroom, the problem of getting organized, at all levels of classroom activity, was experienced as a major one throughout the year.

Transmission Versus Discovery

Transmission (cf. Barnes, 1976) referred to the kind of teaching that emphasized teacher explaining and informing primarily through verbal means. Discovery teaching referred, on the other hand, to the setting up of conditions such that children could discover knowledge on their own. These perspectives paralleled Piaget's distinction between operative and figurative knowing (Piaget, 1971). Operative knowing implied that the learner personally constructed or discovered his own sense of the world; figurative knowing suggested that one's knowledge was a copy of someone else's, thus needed to be transmitted.

The tension or pull between transmission and discovery frequently related to the difficulty I experienced in setting up conditions for discovery.
This was especially apparent in the math interactions, although potentially it was a part of any teacher interaction with an individual student. The dilemma was influenced to a great degree by the additional teaching dilemma of group versus individual needs. If math manipulatives were used for discovery purposes, I needed time to observe how children were using them. Without this observation, my intervention, even when using "discovery" materials, would more than likely not be sensitive to the child's thinking about the problem and the use of materials. The multiple and simultaneous demands for my attention frequently prevented these observation processes.

When children requested help with math problems my response was often aimed at getting them back on track, rather than trying to find out how they were attempting to solve the problem on their own. The later process would have required a more reflective, slower paced response, and simply more time than was normally available. The following substantive interaction with Toni illustrates this pattern. Toni had initiated the interaction. My response did not probe into her own thinking processes about the problem. She was working on two-digit multiplication problems with regrouping.

87-31 Toni: You want to check 'em so far?
T: Should I check this? Seven times four is what?
Toni: 28
T: Plus, do you have anything to add on to that?
Toni: Hmm.
T: Yah, did you add it in?
Toni: 29
T: No, you had - didn't you have four to add in cause remember you went seven times six is 42. You put the 2 there, and you traded the four. So it's 28 plus that 4. Check, check that, alright.

Toni: (acknowledgement)

The last teacher utterance brought closure to the interaction but did not necessarily provide the kind of assistance Toni needed. The longer term perspective for operative knowing was neglected for the more practical concern for simply getting on with the task.

Supporting Versus Extending

Supporting referred to the teaching processes of accepting and valuing children's present activity efforts as significant statements in their own right. Extending referred, on the other hand, to the processes of expecting additional effort or pushing for more elaborated statements from children. In my interactions with individual children I frequently encountered the tension of whether to accept their efforts or to push them further.

One critical influence on this decision was my perception of children's abilities. This perception was confounded by several contextual factors. Children frequently came to school when they were physically ill. In these cases I needed to determine what behavioral signs revealed an inability to be productively involved in an activity. On some occasions the children themselves were not consciously aware that their physical condition prevented them from a focused and concentrated effort. As relationships between the children and me were developed over the course of the year, this kind of tension was easier to resolve. I continually was concerned about those children from whom I may have been expecting too much, and those individuals from whom I was not demanding enough.
The tension between extending and supporting was also influenced by the nature of the activity and my perception of the working style of individual children. There were several sequences from the video-taped work time events that revealed this tension.

My perception of Jay was that he would get easily discouraged when he experienced difficulty with teacher directed tasks (e.g., math sheets, or the textbook assignment). He was frequently a thoughtful and capable worker when he was involved in activities of his own choosing. Interactions with him were influenced by my perception, as I tended to stress the successes with him to keep him going on a task.

1-11  Jay: Is this right now?
  T: Almost, Jay. 15, you traded, carry the one...

56-24  Jay: Well, it must be in Ashanti because this is Ashanti. I'll look.
  T: That's a good guess but it's not right.

Both teacher utterances ("almost," "that's a good guess") were alternative strategies for telling him his answer was wrong. The utterances were tentative in nature and were meant to support his efforts.

Leslie was absent a great deal during the school year (almost 40% of the time). When she did attend school, her personal problems with classmates frequently interfered with her attention to school tasks. My interaction with her, as a result, was consistently directive and pushing in tone, more so than with any other individual in the room:

26-31  T: You need - you're going to work on your Thompson Rec picture, and you're going to work at your seat, and you can get started now.
    Leslie: (acknowledgement)
T: Okay, that's a start. Now you've still got to think about what you're going to have over here. You've used a little corner of the picture.

Leslie: I know. I don't want to do that.

My directions that opened a work time event frequently identified criteria for acceptable work. Directions for the Thompson Rec art work emphasized which materials and media were recommended. My evaluating strategies that concluded negotiating and substantive interactions also set standards for appropriate work efforts, although many of these comments simply acknowledged the child's judgment.

In work that involved constructing and creating, children generally made their own decisions about standards for acceptable work. More discrete activities, like the spelling, math, and textbook work, involved more teacher decision making about the appropriateness of the effort. These tasks were teacher checked and then handed back to the students to correct errors. The major setting for extending children's efforts was work time closing when children shared and discussed their activity efforts with the entire class. Decision making in this situation involved comments and reactions from the children and me.

The pull between supporting and extending influenced my decisions about general activity expectations as well as my responses to individual students. Although below the surface, the dilemma frequently undergirded a wide range of teacher decision making about students and curricular directions.

Learning Versus Activity

Learning referred to the changes in personal meaning that occurred as children encountered and engaged in curricular activity. Activity, on
the other hand, was more a surface concept. It referred to the tasks or experiences that made up the curriculum. Jackson (1968) suggested that elementary school teachers were not as concerned with learning as they were with activity. I experienced a constant tension between these perspectives. Would any activity do? What were the different kinds of learning that might evolve from different activities? Was it enough that children were busy or involved with some activity? What activities would be more valuable for them?

I valued most those activities that related in some way to our curriculum theme, or to enduring interests from the children's experiences. I also valued those activities that revealed some planning and thinking beforehand versus the kind that simply "messed about" with materials. Jay revealed that he understood this teacher goal by stating at the end of his work time planning, "I think it's better to think it out before you make it."

Green (1978), in a critical study of a British informal school, noted the relatively strong emphasis the primary school teachers placed on children being busy. My interaction with the children consistently emphasized this "busyness," even when not all activities were equally valued. There were occasions, when for reasons related to short term control, I let certain activities go on. Denise spent an inordinate amount of time coloring, cutting, pasting, and drawing. I was not always able to see the value in these activities although I did not always re-direct her behavior. The tension characterized much of my decision making about what activities had more learning potential for different children.

The tension was amplified when there were simultaneous demands on my time. If I had less time for careful observation of children's
activity, my interaction would frequently focus on helping them stay "busy" with the activity. Although the ideal perception of good teaching was to use a child's personal point of inquiry as the basis for extended learning, in practice this process rarely took place. The stronger pull seemed to be the concern for "busyness" with activity. The tension characterized much of the interactive work throughout the school year.

Decision-Making Dilemmas

Teacher Versus Child Decision Making: Activity Choice

The tension between teacher and child decision making about activity choice was revealed partially in the complex patterns that organized the negotiating sequences during the work time event. The most frequent pattern of choosing involved my elicitation for activity, a student response, and then my follow-up. The follow-up involved three strategies: accepting the child's choice, rejecting the choice with suggestions for alternate activity, and probing for additional information. Probing was designed to help me find out more about the child's choice, and to help the child become more aware of what the activity choice involved. Curriculum choices made from past themes or student interests were more likely to involve an extended interaction with checking and probing strategies than choices made from the current theme or projects.

Teacher and student decision making about activity choice was also accomplished through the acknowledgement of previous agreements, and through teacher directives. When teacher directives organized the sequence, the focus was frequently on short term management concerns rather
than longer term teaching goals. Even student initiated sequences were, for the most part, teacher controlled as evaluation and directing strategies frequently closed these interactions.

Teacher control was also realized through the nature of the curricular tasks. Some children were directed to specific, discrete tasks within the work time event. At the same time, other children were choosing activity from a wider curricular structure as they demonstrated their ability to direct or control themselves within the work activity.

Decision making in the work time event revealed both teacher and student choices about appropriate activity. Although my ideal was to involve children to a relatively strong degree in these decision making processes, the actual negotiations for choice revealed the stronger pull toward teacher decision making. The decisions were influenced by my perceptions of the child's working style, the child's previous progress with a task, the nature of the curricular activity, my comprehensive educational goals, and short term concerns for control and management.

**Teacher Versus Child Decision Making: Work Processes**

The substantive and negotiating interactions revealed a range of responses to decisions about work processes. These decisions were frequently influenced by the nature of the activity, my knowledge of the subject matter and the child's experience with the task. The dialogue strategies of checking, probing, informing, directing, restating and evaluating were used to sustain involvement in classroom tasks. Decisions about work processes were frequently related to the varying use of these strategies.
When checking and probing were the dominant strategies, the emphasis was on children making decisions about how they were going to do a task. Checking and probing were "information seeking" questions and were more frequently tied to the kind of activity that asked students to act upon their own ideas. The representation of African folktales through cut-out animation, and the art booklet for Thompson Rec both emphasized constructing and creating. The focus during many of these substantive interactions was on encouraging the students to make decisions about these work processes.

Activities that were less concerned with constructing and creating frequently involved more teacher decision making. The textbook assignment, math computation, and the spelling activities had constraints within the tasks that limited the range of child decision making. My intervention was more informing and directing in these cases.

The tension between teacher versus child decision making about work process was also influenced by my perception of a child's previous experience with an activity. The substantive interaction with Mitch about his line design (47-24) was teacher informing and directing because it was Mitch's first experience with the activity. The decision making was also influenced by my perception of Mitch as someone who would function more productively in a classroom setting when activity directions were clear and straightforward. The decision about how to do the task was more a teacher decision in this case than it was a child's decision.

The classroom was characterized by activities that demanded teacher and student decision making about work processes. The pull between these
perspectives was influenced by the nature of the activity and my perception of individual students. The decisions were usually revealed in the range of dialogue strategies that organized substantive and negotiating sequences as I checked and probed into how a child was going to act on his selected activity.

**Teacher Versus Child Decision Making: Work Space**

During the work time event students were generally allowed to make their own decisions about appropriate work spaces. Some children preferred to work at their desks. Others preferred to work in a general work space, e.g., the tables, a rug area, or the back room. Specific activities also influenced appropriate work spaces, for example, the film animation, or certain kinds of art activities.

My decisions about work space were determined by considerations for short term control, the nature of the activity, and a child's working style. Embedded within negotiating and substantive interactions were directions to individual children about appropriate work space. There were also managerial interactions that had as their primary concern the decision as to where someone would set up for activity. The managerial interaction with Toni (36-31) was designed so that a behavioral problem would be avoided. Toni was asked to work at either my desk or her own desk rather than the round table where several children were already set up.

Work spaces were also focused on in behavioral interactions, usually organized through teacher directives to work in a specific place. The tension in these cases was influenced by my perception of student working patterns, and concerns for short term control.
The ideal perspective with a work time event was for students to select their own work spaces. I made teacher decisions on this issue as I worked to avoid interactional problems and to help individual children focus more on their own work tasks. The tension was related to my concern for establishing a productive working tone throughout a work time activity.

**Teacher Versus Child Decision Making: Time**

The decision on how the day was organized was my decision. Within each event there existed some leeway for student decision making about when to do different activities. The widest range of choice existed during the work time event. Students generally made decisions about when to do specific activities depending upon the broader time perspective that surrounded each task. Activities related to the African folktale theme were spread over six to seven weeks. Some children began their animated films on the day the idea was introduced. Others waited several weeks, finishing other activities, and observing the ongoing efforts with the animation. When the textbook was introduced as a resource for learning about Africa, several children began to work right away. Others entered into the activity only after I made the decision for them. Jay was directed to this task when his work time efforts continued for several weeks to revolve around his interests with superhero characters.

The most problematic tension surrounding the use of time was whether or not work time should be extended after the morning recess. The ideal view was to provide extended periods of time for concentrated
inquiry. It was my belief that "time was more important than a time
table" (Rosen and Rosen, 1973). The decision to limit the work time
activity and move into the more structured writing time was based upon
control and management concerns and more comprehensive purposes related
to the writing curriculum. I continued to wonder if enough time had
been provided for thoughtful and caring inquiry during the work time.
The decision about the length of work time was accompanied by this
tension throughout the year.

Summary

My teaching experience during the school year 1978-79 was concept­
ualized in terms of "persisting dilemmas." The dilemmas were not pre­
ented as either/or constructs, but as dynamic concepts for understand­
ing the decision-making tensions that undergirded the classroom experi­
ence. The concepts were acted upon in an evolving classroom social
system that involved multiple demands and needs, conflicts and interrup­
tions, and various purposes and goals.

Fifteen dilemmas were discussed in this chapter. The dilemmas were
interrelated, and loosely grouped into three sets, curriculum, teaching,
and decision making. Curriculum dilemmas were primarily preactive in
nature although they frequently influenced the interactional work in the
classroom. Teaching dilemmas emerged from the ongoing interaction al­
though they in turn influenced decisions about curriculum organization
and activity. Decision-making dilemmas were concerned with decisions
about what, how, where, and when things would be learned in the class­
room. They were primarily interactive in nature.
This self-reflective study has attempted to build a multi-dimensional view of teaching and classroom life. Three descriptive components were utilized in this analysis. The components are depicted as follows in Figure 15.

Figure 15. Classroom Descriptive Components

Chapter IV provided a global, surface description of the classroom experience that accounted for curriculum organization, content and activity, and my purposes for different events and activity throughout a school day. Chapter V provided a finer-grained description of the classroom verbal interaction. The purpose of this descriptive analysis was to explore how the students and I selected, set up, and sustained involvement during a work time event.

The present chapter has described the teaching dilemmas that emerged from the classroom experience. The purpose has been to explore how educational theory was enacted in a third-fourth grade informal classroom.
CHAPTER VII

SELF-REFLECTIONS, CONCLUSIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Self-Reflections

The third-fourth grade teaching experience at Indianola Elementary was a perplexing and difficult one for me. Although the classroom functioned in a smoother, more predictable way during the Spring, gaps between my teaching ideals and classroom practice were dominant throughout the year. The experience was often more discouraging than it was rewarding. I felt knowledgeable and reflective about teaching, but at the same time, not always successful in acting upon my best purposes.

Why was the year so difficult for me? What made it more complex and perplexing than previous experiences as a teacher? Were my educational purposes out of line with what any one teacher can accomplish in a classroom setting? The purpose of the following section will be to examine these issues.

Beginning Teaching

Some of the difficulties I experienced may be related to the general kinds of problems that surround the beginning teacher. Although technically the teaching year was my fifth, the two years away from the classroom and the new school setting forced a complete re-thinking about what was possible for me as a teacher. I frequently felt like I was starting all over again. Smaller details of the teacher's work, taken
for granted after several years of teaching, had to be re-learned through trial and error. I needed to re-think behavioral and academic expectations for students that would be consonant with my beliefs and the needs of this particular group of children. I spent long hours simoly acquainting myself with school materials. The preoccupation with personal coping, classroom organization, and student control are well-known endemic features of first year teaching. These issues were dominant concerns for me throughout the year.

The predictable structures that eventually organized my school day (i.e., the events and the phases within events) may be similar to what Yinger (1979) has identified as teaching routines.

Routines were a mechanism [the teacher] ... used to establish and regulate instructional activities and to simplify the planning process. Routines also served to increase the predictability and to reduce the complexity of the teaching environment (Yinger, 1979, p. 165).

The use of organizational routines may be an important part of beginning teacher efforts to cope with the complexity of the classroom. The problem of course is when organizational routines become ends in themselves, rather than means to accomplish educational goals. The organizational schemes that worked for my classroom were not necessarily optimal ones. When the reading time was shifted to early morning because of special events in the afternoon, several children frequently responded in more enthusiastic and concentrated ways. I questioned then the appropriateness of utilizing an afternoon time for an activity that some children responded to more favorably in the morning. The organizational routines were helpful to me, but needed to be carefully
scrutinized throughout the year in light of more comprehensive goals. The use of routines did decrease the complexity of daily planning, and, in that sense, assisted the beginning teacher in me. But they functioned more importantly as balancing devices between my practical concerns for control and management and my broader concerns for learning. I suspect that this kind of balancing takes place in all classrooms. Organizational routines are used by some teachers to create rigid and inflexible patterns in the classroom; but routines balanced with educational purposes may be an important part of managing the classroom complexity to reach educational goals. This kind of decision making was a difficult and important component of my work throughout the year.

**Curriculum Planning**

The year was a continual struggle in part because of the over-reliance on myself as the primary source for curriculum planning. I valued the perspective of teacher as curriculum-maker through interaction with children's interests, but upon reflection think that I planned too much in isolation. Some of the classroom difficulties in the Fall may have been alleviated had I worked more closely with other teachers, sharing organizational patterns, activities, ideas for themes, and appropriate sequences for math and reading input. The sharing and discussion of ideas did take place informally. Looking back over the year, I am critical of my self-imposed isolation that prevented this group planning on a more regular basis.

It seems essential to me that classroom teachers, who do not follow traditional textbook guidelines, be given opportunities and support for
systematic discussion with other teachers about curricular directions and classroom experiences. This kind of suggestion does not imply that a uniform curriculum is sought throughout a school. It does suggest that process and content goals might be uncovered that provide greater continuity, depth, and support for children's learning than is possible when each teacher plans in isolation from others. Curriculum planning amongst teachers might also encourage an examination of how different decision-making dilemmas are resolved in various classroom settings. This kind of reflection could potentially lead teachers into re-examining their present resolutions to these dilemmas, and into seeing their own classroom situation from new vantage points.

I experienced a second difficulty in my curriculum planning procedures. Although I was familiar with a wide range of curriculum materials, the overall curriculum needed more attention to the structure and sequence in subject matter concepts than I was in fact utilizing. The source of the curriculum was primarily my own thinking. I relied heavily on children's literature, and gradually acquainted myself with materials in the room. When possible I considered the structure in the learner's framework, but was not as adept at recognizing and helping to uncover the structure and sequences within the subject matter itself. Curriculum guides might have provided a more constructive and orderly framework for dealing with this concern.

Elementary teachers are faced with the problem of the generalist. They are expected to know something about a great number of subjects and topics. In relying too much on myself, I may have provided a rather
haphazard, hit and miss curricular experience for the children. I wonder at this stage if this problem is common to most informal school settings. Certainly this concern for curriculum structure needs to be considered with an equally strong appreciation for the learner's capacity to take hold of and to enter into content. Some of the curriculum difficulties I experienced may have been alleviated had I been more sensitive to the sequences, structure, and conceptual continuities that undergirded subject matter.

Parent Relationships

Another difficulty during the school year related to my infrequent communication with the children's parents. Student behavioral problems were perceived primarily as a classroom problem rather than as a parent-student-teacher-school problem. One mother expressed surprise to me in the Spring of the year when she was informed that her daughter was fighting in the classroom and on the playground. This same mother was eager to help solve this problem. The fact that it was discussed in the Spring was my fault. I ought to have been communicating regularly with parents throughout the year. Perhaps not all parents would have responded favorably to this teacher communication, but I suspect most of them would have. Management and control difficulties might have decreased if I had not assumed that the problems were mine alone.

I confronted an additional difficulty in my relationship with the children's parents. Neighborhood families, who selected Indianola School because of its proximity rather than its informal program, frequently were faced with value conflicts between school activity and
their own perception of what schools are for. These value conflicts were less apparent with middle class families who selected Indianola because of the informal school pedagogy. Neighborhood families exhibited more concern during the year that the informal program was not appropriate for their children. I wondered throughout the year whether the practice of informal education was elitist in nature, and at odds with the schooling values of parents from lower class backgrounds. The curriculum adjustment to provide both integrated and discrete experiences was made in part as I attempted to respond to the various social class expectations for school purposes. At this stage I continue to wonder whether one teacher can be responsive to these conflicting parental expectations. This tension undergirded classroom decision making throughout the year.

**Self-Concern**

There were several other factors that contributed to the difficulties I experienced during the teaching year. One of these related to the pressure I put on myself. The role of teacher as researcher made me more self-concerned than was perhaps helpful for a teacher. In some respects I think I was overly conscious of my personal response and purposes for different events and activities. When my attention was on myself, I was less inclined to be sensitive and receptive to what the children were doing. Some of this self-concern and personal pressure evaporated as the year unfolded, although this factor was a critical influence on my perception of classroom life throughout the year.
Social Relationships

The multi-cultural make-up of the classroom population presented a range of student response that had not been part of my previous teaching experiences. This multi-cultural element also created a greater disparity between my knowledge and experiences, and the children's lives, families, interests, and values. Not all of the children were eager to please me, and there were some who were consistently hesitant and reserved in their willingness to build trusting relationships with me.

Although teaching theory and method shaped the classroom reality in important ways, the more critical features of classroom life seemed to be rooted in the social relationships between the children and myself. The relationships evolved over the course of the year and were a difficult part of the experience to document. They were experienced as the primary variable for whether or not learning would take place. Teaching method and theory appeared to play a secondary role. McDermott (1977) has argued similarly that social relations between teachers and students may be the most important factor for classroom learning, not teaching style or teaching philosophy. My experiences during the school year seemed to substantiate this perspective.

This perspective suggested to me that there may be important limits in research efforts that work to develop technical and scientific theories of teaching and classroom instruction. These pursuits run the risk of neglecting the more global, intuitive, and human relational features that appear to undergird classroom life, teaching, and learning.
Expectations

I had higher expectations for the children's work efforts during the Indianola experience than I had in my previous teaching. These higher expectations frequently created conflicts for me as I was less willing to accept poor work, and more dissatisfied when children were not engaged in worthwhile activity. The quality of the children's work improved throughout the year, although this was accompanied by more realistic perspectives on my part for what constituted appropriate work for each child.

Student Perceptions

The ethos of the informal school is a final factor to be discussed that may have contributed to my teaching difficulties. Many of the children, from previous experiences at Indianola, assumed they could do what they wanted to in the classroom. Occasionally their choices were in conflict with what I perceived as appropriate activity. In my previous teaching experiences, opportunities for student choice and action were viewed as a novelty to students. At Indianola the children expected to have a significant voice in decision making.

I experienced this school ethos as both positive and negative. More children responded negatively to teacher suggestions for activity than I had previously experienced, although more children were also able to initiate activity on their own. I needed more understanding throughout the year about how the children perceived the informal school setting. What purposes in activity and events did they see? An
exploration into student thinking about classroom life would have
certainly provided a more complete picture of the classroom experi­
ence.

**Conclusions and Implications**

Although a long range goal of mine was to improve my practice as
an elementary school teacher, that issue was not the primary concern
in this study. The study focused instead upon how I interpreted and
understood my practice from the multiple screens of educational pur­
pose. In traditional classroom research there exist strong inclina­
tions from investigators to prescribe alternative patterns for teach­
ing behavior. The implication is that the prescriptions for alterna­
tive action are better ones. They frequently are. What is neglected
in this kind of interpretation-prescription process is the critical role
for teacher theorizing about the classroom, theorizing that can help
teachers hear for themselves their own guiding assumptions and percep­
tions of classroom practice. Improving practice is important, but if
teaching is viewed as more than mastering a set of techniques, then
sustained teacher growth must be rooted in the kind of inquiry that
increases understanding of how purposes are acted upon in classroom
settings. This study has operated on that premise.

The purpose of the following section will be to examine several
educational issues that emerged from this self-reflective theorizing
about the classroom experience. These issues are related to the
descriptive analysis of teacher thinking and teacher-student interac­
tion presented in Chapters IV, V, and VI.
Teaching Dilemmas

The study has examined what is normally a hidden dimension of the teaching experience, namely the dynamic interplay of educational theory and practice. The work of relating theory to practice was conceptualized in terms of dilemmas. The dilemmas were not apparent in the displayed behavior of teacher-student interaction. They emerged from my thinking about purposes and practice as I acted on concepts and principles from my educational theory. For many of these concepts I experienced a simultaneous pull towards opposite ends of a decision-making spectrum. For example, I valued a richly provisioned environment for children's learning but at the same time experienced a pull to be selective and to limit the environment to help focus children's inquiry.

Although specifically derived from my teaching experience, the conceptualization of teaching dilemmas may be a constructive framework for helping other teachers understand their efforts to act on educational purposes. These decision-making tensions may be especially applicable to the work of open classroom teachers, although it seems reasonable to speculate they might apply to other teachers as well.

It is my contention, as an elementary school teacher and as a teacher educator, that we lack a professional language to talk about the complexity and uncertainty of teaching. The educational community is quick to espouse prescriptions for teaching behavior, but less equipped to assist teachers in a constructive and reflective way to dialogue about their teaching decisions. Most educators agree that teaching is learned through the doing; what is less clear is how the
classroom experience can be reflected upon in ways that contribute to new understandings about teaching and learning. Assumptions are continually made for teachers about their needs for professional growth but we give little attention to the teacher's experience in the classroom and the knowledge producing capacity of that experience. Even less attention is given to the processes of reflection that might help teachers re-examine their practice. It is more than classroom experience that is required for teacher growth. Philip Jackson has stated:

... experience, though it may be the best teacher, is often insufficient to stimulate continued growth. To achieve that end we must not just have experience; we must benefit from it. This means we must reflect on what happens to us, ponder it, and make sense of it ... What is needed, therefore, is both the time and the tools for the teacher to conceptualize his experience, to combine it with personal meaning in a way that alters his way of looking at the world and acting on it (Jackson, 1968).

The conceptualization of teaching dilemmas may be one important tool for helping teachers reflect upon and enlarge their understanding of classroom practice. This perspective has the potential to illuminate dynamic, uncertain and multi-dimensional aspects of a teacher's work. In an era of mistrust and skepticism about public schools, where teachers are increasingly under critical public scrutiny, it is this kind of reflective dialogue that may become increasingly important. An understanding of teaching dilemmas, as a reflective tool for examining classroom teaching, can contribute new insights into teaching and more thoughtful and realistic perspectives on classroom life.
Curriculum Decision-Making

Stubbs and Delamont (1976) have suggested that "we have little basic descriptive information about teacher-pupil dialogue in different teaching situations." The major emphasis in classroom research has focused on formal lesson times, although it is recognized that all classrooms, on some occasions, organize for events other than the formal lesson, events where teachers and students interact to accomplish a wide range of curriculum goals. The literature in informal education consistently stresses student decision making in the curriculum process. The classroom organization that facilitates this process frequently builds around work time periods that emphasize individual or small group inquiry in a provisioned learning environment. As the lesson is the primary focus for the traditional classroom, so might the work time period be viewed for an informal classroom. The implied (and idealized) teacher role in this setting is one of a facilitator of learning, rather than a transmitter of information or knowledge. But it is precisely this kind of generalized and abstract analysis that needs grounding in descriptions of classroom interaction. The present study has attempted to illuminate these decision making processes as they were revealed through teacher-student interaction in three work time periods.

Decision-making about what and how activity is undertaken was seen as a jointly produced accomplishment between the students and myself. Bussis and Chittenden (1970) proposed a hypothetical model for understanding this process in open education. This study provided a more detailed analysis of how this negotiated decision-making actually takes
place. The process revealed a range of negotiating sequences and dialogue strategies that were more complex and particularistic than those suggested by Berlak et al. (1975). The decision-making was influenced by children's working styles and educational goals, activities, and events.

Curriculum decision-making was also influenced by efforts to balance long term comprehensive goals with short term concerns for management and control. The work of achieving equilibrium amidst a dynamic classroom social system of demands, interruptions, conflicts, and multiple purposes emerged as a critical feature of the classroom reality.

An important direction for future research might be to explore how these decision-making processes are accomplished in other settings. The purpose would be to build a broader understanding of how teachers and students jointly produce an evolving and dynamic curriculum. This research direction could potentially unite the concerns of curriculum theorists, classroom ethnographers, and informal educators.

It is my contention that curriculum decision-making in informal education is more complex, methodologically and theoretically, than present educational literature and research typically takes into account. My teaching experience did not provide a model of the "ideal universal of open education" or the "ideal particular" (MacDonald, 1975). It was situated somewhere between. But the critical issue was not whether the classroom was open as delineated by the universal or particular ideal. The emphasis was placed instead on how the "general ideas
of open education" (MacDonald, 1975) were given meaning through classroom teaching. It is this kind of description that can contribute to an enlarged understanding of informal education, an understanding that shifts the educational debate away from labels, slogans, or simple typologies of teaching styles to one of deeper insight into how various methods and philosophies are acted upon in real classroom settings. Vincent Rogers has suggested similarly that research is needed to illuminate why "the happenings" in informal classrooms "don't always fit into our prefixed designs" (Rogers, 1973). This study has provided a beginning glimpse into that phenomenon.

Children's Response and Classroom Effects

The diversity in the children's response to the classroom called for multiple teaching methods and theory. Although educational debates frequently take sides on whether children are growth seeking and motivated to learn or whether they need direction and exterior motivation to learn (cf. Phelps, 1979), my experience suggested that the range of child response in one classroom covered both ends of this spectrum. In fact it was this range of response that contributed in part to decision-making dilemmas.

There were children who were eager to learn, self-directed, and willing to pursue a wide range of topics and interests. There were others who, in the context of the classroom, were unable to motivate themselves. These individuals needed more adult direction and classroom structure to facilitate learning. Some children responded in both ways along this continuum.
The point is simply that discussions about children's learning, appropriate classroom environments, and prescriptions for teaching practice will be more constructively informed if they recognize the complex range of response from children. To speak of "all children" as needing a certain kind of classroom experience is to fail to recognize the unique response to the curriculum that each child exhibits.

After experiencing this range of child response, I find I am less inclined to generalize about appropriate teaching behavior or children's learning. I began to see each child as representing a rich and unique tapestry of strengths and vulnerabilities. Children interacted with me in distinct and personal ways, and, in turn, were strong influences on how I responded to them.

I raise this perspective as a counter balance to movements in education today that are calling for uniform curriculum experiences for all children and uniform prescriptions for teacher behavior. Teaching at its most basic level seemed to involve a sensitivity to the particulars of the learning situation - knowledge about the specific child, the surrounding context, and the point of subject matter inquiry. It was not the generalized prescriptions that guided my actions.

This valuing of diversity in the children's response was paralleled by a similar perspective when I considered the classroom as a whole and its relationship to other classrooms. As a teacher educator I frequently generalized about classroom curriculum from my previous teaching experience. The difficulties I encountered during the 1978-79
school year convinced me, on the other hand, that what is possible in one setting may not be feasible in another.

My classroom organization, activity, and teaching style were effected in significant ways by the unique group of children with whom I worked. The critical influence of this particular group suggests that more serious attention be given to the study of classroom effects (cf. Doyle, 1979). The question needs to be raised "about the extent to which things teachers do in classrooms and how they think about their work are associated with specific classroom demands rather than with the personal competence and desires of teachers or the quality of their preparation" (Doyle, 1979, p. 142).

The actual relationship between classroom effects and teacher thinking was a reciprocal one. My thinking about the classroom profoundly influenced the curriculum experience; and, in turn, the classroom experiences were critical effects on my thinking about what was possible. Exploring these relationships may be an important direction for future research. This line of inquiry has the capacity to enlarge our present understanding of various classroom contexts and their influences on teaching theory and practice.

Classroom realities and teaching styles may not be productively illuminated through dichotomous descriptions of method and philosophy. Classrooms appear to present mixed and multi-dimensional styles as teachers respond to individual children, various activities, and different events in a day. Labeling teaching styles as informal, formal, or mixed for research purposes (cf. Bennett, 1976) may gloss over
critical variables in any one style that profoundly influence class-
room life and children's learning. The uniqueness and variability 
within each classroom suggest that more case studies are needed if 
we wish to increase our knowledge of how method and theory are enacted 
in school settings.

Teacher as Researcher

The meanings of classroom events are not easily accessible to 
educational researchers. These meanings are frequently tied to retro-
spective events, dynamic relationships between classroom participants, 
shared understandings of future events, and multiple teacher purposes. 
If educational research is to build a broader knowledge base of class-
room life and teaching, then classroom teachers must be viewed as full 
partners in the research process. Their thinking about purposes, 
events, and interactions has the capacity to deepen our understanding 
of the complexity of teaching, and broaden our insight into the general 
and the particularistic features of classroom life.

When classroom researchers attend to the real concerns of practi-
tioners they find themselves steeped in theoretically messy and time 
consuming work (Eisner, 1979). The work is typically in conflict with 
the accepted perspectives for theory generation and research; thus the 
concerns and experiences of classroom teachers are systematically 
ignored. Eisner (1979) has stated:

Schools ... tend to be used ... by researchers largely 
to further their careers in the field of education. 
Whether the research that is done has any utility to 
practitioners is a secondary or tertiary consideration. 
What matters most is that what is published impresses 
the reference group that the scholar or researcher 
believes important (p. 278).
A promising direction to close this gap between researchers and public school teachers has been illustrated by this study. More Ph.D. students in education might be encouraged to retain their commitment to teaching by using their own experiences for teaching research.

Researchers who study themselves as teachers would be less inclined to offer simplistic or one-sided interpretations to complex school problems. They would be forced to take personal risks that are not demanded when they simply look in on someone else's teaching. Their stance would shift from one of "presumed superiority of knowledge" (Mehan, 1979) to one of reflective action and transformation in the world. Finally, there is the exciting possibility that researcher-teachers could generate a more relevant and useful understanding of classroom teaching and children's learning than has been developed to date.

A Final Dilemma

Bernice Wolfson (1977) has suggested that learning to teach is "more a direction than a point to achieve" (p. 86). I share this perspective. The process may involve a lifetime of reflective, systematic thought about practice. The notion that university courses train teachers or that acknowledged experts in the field have significant answers, if only teachers had the time or tools to learn them, must be viewed as incomplete perspectives on teacher development. Learning to teach involves more than collecting courses or acquiring someone else's theory. Given the complexity and uncertainty that surround all classroom situations, and the recognition that no two
classrooms or teachers are alike, the primary professional challenge may be for teachers to become students of their own teaching, learning to embue their teaching experiences with personal and educational meaning.

Although I brought to the third-fourth grade teaching experience an informed perspective of what I hoped to accomplish, there were always gaps between my best purposes and the classroom reality. The tensions I experienced between my ideals and practice may be heuristically construed as a final dilemma of the classroom experience. I suspect that all teachers face these personal tensions.

I wondered throughout the difficult teaching year how the educational community can help teachers hold on to their best purposes in the midst of demanding classroom realities. Teachers develop a variety of coping mechanisms to deal with the uncertainties and complexities of classroom life, and perhaps some of these coping strategies contribute to the rigidity and inhumaneness that classroom observers so frequently emphasize. It is my contention that a more reflective and honest look at the uncertainties, complexities, and dilemmas that surround teaching - from teachers, teacher educators, parents, and administrators - has the capacity to enlarge our understanding of teaching and to encourage teachers to re-examine their practice in non-threatening and personally empowering ways. Opportunities for teacher reflection, that examine how dilemmas are resolved in different classroom settings, may be an important direction for pre-service and in-service teacher education. At its most basic level rests the assumption
that thoughtful and constructive discussion about teaching can only begin when all educators recognize and in turn honor the dilemmas that teachers face.

**Recommendations**

Exploring relationships between theory and practice has been a long standing issue for the educational community. The gaps between them are perhaps most visible in the often tenuous relationships that exist between education professors and classroom teachers. Teachers frequently assert that professors are too theoretical, research oriented, and, at best, simply naive about the real world. Education professors, on the other hand, often suggest that teachers are uninformed, resistant to change, but nevertheless interesting objects of study. The two worlds are frequently poles apart, each seemingly operating upon different assumptions about purpose and professional responsibility.

Ross Mooney (1978) has suggested that the theorist is one who asks, "What do I need to understand?" The question of the practitioner, on the other hand, is frequently "What do I need to do?" (Mooney, 1978). Both questions, it seems to me, are critical ones in any attempt to link theory and practice. I have valued classroom practice for giving me opportunities to act upon ideas and to learn directly from personal experiences with children. I have valued the role of theory and research for providing new conceptual tools for thinking about teaching and learning, and for helping me formulate new purposes in my practice. This study, in particular, has attempted to describe my personal efforts
to link these two perspectives. It seems to me that this kind of case study investigation must be viewed as an important part of our larger efforts in this area.

The recommendations I propose focus, primarily, on one way educators might narrow the gaps between theory and practice. I suggest that this problem can be ameliorated if we begin to formulate new working relationships between colleges of education and public school settings.

1. Education professors should be required to return to classroom teaching every three or four years. Their experiences could be utilized for classroom and teaching research, and for re-examining their current understanding of the relationship between theory and practice.

2. Education professors should be required to take over an elementary classroom for one month during a school year. The classroom teacher could use this time for reflecting upon and analyzing their own teaching. The education professor would have the opportunity to put teaching theory into practice and gather data for research purposes on a more limited basis than the entire year.

3. Education professors should be required to assume responsibility for planning and implementing curriculum activity one afternoon every week in an elementary classroom. The regular classroom teacher could use that afternoon for observation and/or reflecting and writing about their own practice.

4. More educational researchers should be required to study classroom life, teaching, and children's learning by becoming teachers, i.e.,
studying their own situations. Video recordings of classroom interaction could provide retrievable data sources for analysis when the teaching experience was completed.

5. Classroom researchers should be required to "test out" the recommendations and prescriptions for teaching practice that appear in their research reports by acting upon those ideas through their own classroom teaching. This follow-up, testing experience should be written for publication.

6. Self-reflective studies of classroom life should be undertaken with close collaboration from other investigators. The combination of an inside and outside perspective might generate a more insightful and broader description of the classroom situation.

7. Education courses for teachers should have fewer requirements for term papers that explore the professors' interests and more attention to assisting teachers in answering their own questions. Action research models that explore teacher efforts to become researchers in their own classrooms might be an important addition to teacher education programs at the university level.

8. Teachers should be encouraged to write about their teaching experiences through daily journals. Colleges of education might serve as clearing houses to disseminate this kind of descriptive literature on teaching, curriculum, and children's learning to wider audiences.

9. Administrators should be required to re-examine their understanding of teaching by returning to the classroom every three or four years. Administrators should also be required to support teacher
research by providing assistance and opportunities for teachers to write about their experiences and children's learning.

10. A perspective on teaching dilemmas, as generated in this study and the work of Berlak and Berlak (1975), might be utilized by groups of teachers for staff development and/or curriculum planning purposes. This perspective might encourage a more thoughtful re-examination of classroom practice and the tensions between ideals and classroom life.

11. Do other teachers face similar kinds of dilemmas to the ones that I encountered? Do teachers face sets of dilemmas not identified in this study? Future research might examine the range and intensity of teaching dilemmas that operate in different classroom situations.

12. Future research might explore the kinds of dilemmas that pre-service teachers face. These could be compared to the dilemmas faced by first year or experienced teachers. The conceptualization of teaching dilemmas might also be utilized at the pre-service level to assist beginning teachers in understanding the complexities and uncertainties that surround the education profession.
APPENDIX A

VIDEO TAPE TRANSCRIPT SYMBOLS
VIDEO TAPE TRANSCRIPT SYMBOLS

T: is an utterance by the teacher; ____: is an unidentified speaker; : ____ is an unidentified utterance.

Comments in parenthesis refer to non-verbal behaviors.

The May 31 work time transcript had 87 interactional sequences. The symbol 3-31 refers to the third sequence on the May 31 transcript.

The May 24 work time transcript had 61 interactional sequences. The symbol 4-24 refers to the fourth sequence on the May 24 transcript.

The May 11 work time transcript had 22 interactional sequences. The symbol 15-11 refers to the fifteenth sequence on the May 11 transcript.
APPENDIX B
SAMPLE ANCEDOTAL RECORDS
Sample Anecdotal Records

Sample records for Lynn with date of entry:

1-29  I worry that Lynn doesn't really concentrate on her own work with all the other activity going on around her. She is a member of the "quilting group" right now.

1-30  I've noticed she's more willing to contribute to group discussions, or ask questions.

1-31  She doesn't always make much progress with her work. Today during a cursive exercise, she only copied one spelling word.

2-5  She is much more talkative in group settings; she also seems to play the clown role with her friends. I find it hard to get her to concentrate on her own tasks. She is drawing the inside view of a log cabin.

2-13  I pushed her and she was able to finish a picture (painting/drawing) and writing of the log cabin we observed. She asked quite a few questions to an astronomy visitor on Monday. It surprised me to hear her address a stranger. Her questions were good ones.

2-20  I've been pushing Lynn in the morning to make progress on some of her fraction sheets. She has worked on a story with Anne that has a pioneer/Indian focus to it. The conversation with someone else seems to help her fluency. The chapter she wrote was longer than is normally the case for her.

3-6  I've been losing track of her lately; she's so quiet.

3-13  Her response to the Maple sugar trip is a book about the "process," written from the pattern "Pele gets a new cloak."

4-5  Lynn has worked carefully on a diorama for our book project fair. She's used the fire rescue scene from Pippi Longstocking.

5-7  Lynn's writing continues to be much more fluent than it was earlier in the year. She completed a folktale and often writes collaboratively with Anne. They worked on a book together that was good. Lynn doesn't hesitate to talk in front of the entire class.

5-16  Lynn and Susan finished filming their folktale this morning, the story of Anansi and his sons. They both worked quite carefully.
Sample Daily Plans

Thursday, May 24, 1979

Announcements: 1. wearing t-shirts for tomorrow
2. tear paper for art work

Reading: "Why Cats ..." or "The Great Minu" or Swahili counting book

Project/Work Time:

1. film animation - Mitch, Matt, Peter, Toni, Leslie, Jay/Billy, Duncan/Derek, Alice/Tricia, Diane/Nancy
2. textbook assignment - Toni, Jay, Billy, Thea, Duncan
3. writing folktales, stories
4. line designs
5. math: multi Janice
*6. response to Thompson Rec Center - pictures and writing, water
colors

Recess 10:10-10:25 A.M.
Sharing/evaluation

Writing time:

1. folktales - retelling
2. journals
3. letters to Ann and Mr. Miller
4. finding compound words

Reading:

Oral reading: A Wrinkle in Time

Reading/conferences:

1. Derek Monster books
2. Denise
3. Monica
4. Kent, Marty, Mitch Rewards, p. 147
Ricky

Word search puzzles
Compound words

Recess

Math time:

1. making 10 flash cards
2. multi problems 4A
3. line designs
APPENDIX D

SAMPLE TRANSCRIPTION FROM AUDIO TAPE REFLECTIONS
Sample Transcription from Audio Taped Reflection

Teacher reflections taped during mid-morning, May 7:

It is 10:15. The kids have gone outside for recess except for Monica who has been sleeping all morning on the rug. She told me early in the morning that she had a sore throat, and I just let her be. The primary focus for the work time, and it was a pretty decent work time, was kids involved with writing folktales, and then at different stages of the film animation, some using a large piece of paper. And what I'm trying to get them to do is sketch out their ideas, with a rough sketch. Not all of them understand that idea of sketching something first before you go to the final thing. And then some are at the stage where they are working with their final background, and some with the characters that they are going to use. The animation is based upon either folktales that I've read, a lot of them dealing with Anansi the Snider, and some of them are based upon stories that they have written themselves, that they are going to animate, which I think is fine, too. I spent some time during the morning with Anne. She had tackled the textbook assignment that I haven't really made explicit to everyone but had mentioned to some and went over her answers to some of the questions. I find that process frustrating because textbook questions are always a little bit ambiguous and it is difficult for me to kind of explain what the answer might be. She is a good enough reader that she can go back and skim pages and find the topic that the question addresses. She has really done o.k. with it. It seems like I spent a lot of the morning helping kids spell words correctly for their writing. All of them who have asked for help have brought me their spelling books where they do their own guess and then often add a comment or two about how theirs is close to standard spelling. It seems as if I gave a lot of words to Marty and to Leslie and Dan who were doing the writing. Derek spent most of his time in the back room. He has been working with a dinosaur mural and he was using the India ink. He dipped a paint brush into it and was outlining his painted dinosaur. Tricia and Alice seemed pretty engrossed with their film animation - both of them working on cut out characters of Anansi the spider. Terry was at the rough draft stage, the rough sketch stage and was consulting with Jay and Holly on how to draw people and spent a lot of time with both Jay and Holly. They are pretty good drawers and so they were quite willing to help. A lot of noise came from those three. Jay was spending his own time writing a Spider man versus Tiger folktale. It really doesn't exhibit any characteristics of a folktale. It simply is kind of a comic book narration. He read it to me and then laughed his head off. He put his head down. As he was reading it to me he laughed and then he put his head down on his desk he was laughing so hard. Monica just got up from her nap.
Children's Books


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