INFORMATION TO USERS

This was produced from a copy of a document sent to us for microfilming. While the most advanced technological means to photograph and reproduce this document have been used, the quality is heavily dependent upon the quality of the material submitted.

The following explanation of techniques is provided to help you understand markings or notations which may appear on this reproduction.

1. The sign or “target” for pages apparently lacking from the document photographed is “Missing Page(s)”. If it was possible to obtain the missing page(s) or section, they are spliced into the film along with adjacent pages. This may have necessitated cutting through an image and duplicating adjacent pages to assure you of complete continuity.

2. When an image on the film is obliterated with a round black mark it is an indication that the film inspector noticed either blurred copy because of movement during exposure, or duplicate copy. Unless we meant to delete copyrighted materials that should not have been filmed, you will find a good image of the page in the adjacent frame.

3. When a map, drawing or chart, etc., is part of the material being photographed the photographer has followed a definite method in “sectioning” the material. It is customary to begin filming at the upper left hand corner of a large sheet and to continue from left to right in equal sections with small overlaps. If necessary, sectioning is continued again—beginning below the first row and continuing on until complete.

4. For any illustrations that cannot be reproduced satisfactorily by xerography, photographic prints can be purchased at additional cost and tipped into your xerographic copy. Requests can be made to our Dissertations Customer Services Department.

5. Some pages in any document may have indistinct print. In all cases we have filmed the best available copy.
HALL, GLORIA JEAN

A DESCRIPTIVE STUDY OF READING IN A FIRST GRADE TRADITIONAL CLASSROOM

The Ohio State University

PH.D. 1980

University Microfilms International 300 N. Zeeb Road, Ann Arbor, MI 48106
PLEASE NOTE:

In all cases this material has been filmed in the best possible way from the available copy. Problems encountered with this document have been identified here with a check mark.

1. Glossy photographs
2. Colored illustrations
3. Photographs with dark background
4. Illustrations are poor copy
5. Print shows through as there is text on both sides of page
6. Indistinct, broken or small print on several pages
7. Tightly bound copy with print lost in spine
8. Computer printout pages with indistinct print
9. Page(s) lacking when material received, and not available from school or author
10. Page(s) seem to be missing in numbering only as text follows
11. Poor carbon copy
12. Not original copy, several pages with blurred type
13. Appendix pages are poor copy
14. Original copy with light type
15. Curling and wrinkled pages
16. Other
A DESCRIPTIVE STUDY OF
READING IN A FIRST GRADE TRADITIONAL CLASSROOM

DISSERTATION

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

By
Gloria Jean Hall, B.S., M.Ed.

* * * * *

The Ohio State University
1980

Reading Committee:
Professor Sharon E. Fox
Professor Martha L. King
Professor James W. Altschuld

Approved By:
Sharon Fox
Advisor
Department of Early and Middle Childhood Education
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The first grade students and their parents who participated in this study were patient and cooperative through many months of data collection. I am especially grateful to the first grade teacher who gave freely of her time to contribute to this project.

I am indebted to my committee members Dr. Martha King and Dr. James Altschuld for their hours of consultation, advice, and encouragement. To the committee chairman, Dr. Sharon Fox, I owe my deepest appreciation for her guidance and constant support.

I am grateful to my father for his help and support while this report was being written. And finally, to my husband and two children, who endured three years of graduate school and a year of work on this study--thank you.
VITA

October 14, 1947 ............................... Born, Sewickley, Pennsylvania

1965-1968 .............................. B.S., Clarion State College
 Clarion, Pennsylvania

1968-1969 .............................. Teacher, Brookville Area Schools
 Brookville, Pennsylvania

1970 ................................. Teacher, West Allegheny Schools
 Imperial, Pennsylvania

1971-1975 .............................. Teacher, Quaker Valley Schools
 Leetsdale, Pennsylvania

 Slippery Rock, Pennsylvania

1976-1979 .............................. Teaching Associate
 The Ohio State University
 Columbus, Ohio

1979-1980 .............................. Educational Consultant
 Indiana State Department of Public
 Instruction
 Indianapolis, Indiana

FIELDS OF STUDY

Major Fields: Reading and Language Arts

  Studies in Reading and Language Arts. Associate Professor
  Sharon E. Fox and Professor Martha L. King

  Studies in English Education. Professor Frank Zidonis

  Studies in Teacher Education. Professor Donald Cruickshank
# TABLE OF CONTENTS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS</td>
<td>ii</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VITA</td>
<td>iii</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LIST OF FIGURES</td>
<td>vii</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LIST OF TABLES</td>
<td>viii</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CHAPTER</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I. THE NATURE OF THE PROBLEM</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Background of the Study</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Importance of Context</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Statement of the Problem</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Approach to the Study</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Present Study</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Purposes of the Study</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Limitations of the Study</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Operational Definitions</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Summary</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>II. RELATED THEORY AND RESEARCH!</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Educational Setting: A Theoretical Framework</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Research in Teacher Behavior</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A Theory of the Reading Process</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Fluent Reader</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Beginning Reader</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conceptions of Reading</td>
<td>27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Context of Reading</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Summary</td>
<td>34</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### III. PROCEDURES OF THE STUDY

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Preliminary Planning</td>
<td>36</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Setting and Population of the Study</td>
<td>38</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Choosing the Sample Children</td>
<td>39</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Time Frame and Organization</td>
<td>42</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Collection of Data</td>
<td>43</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Observation-Record Keeping and Documentation</td>
<td>43</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interviews</td>
<td>45</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Formal Measures</td>
<td>47</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Report of the Data</td>
<td>49</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Analysis of Reading Events</td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Summary</td>
<td>51</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### IV. THE INSTRUCTIONAL SETTING

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The School Setting</td>
<td>52</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Classroom Setting</td>
<td>55</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Teacher</td>
<td>55</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Children</td>
<td>56</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Physical Setting</td>
<td>57</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Two Days in School</td>
<td>58</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The First Day of School</td>
<td>58</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A Typical Day in October</td>
<td>66</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Summary</td>
<td>69</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
# LIST OF FIGURES

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Figure</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.</td>
<td>Mrs. Clark's First Grade Classroom</td>
<td>59</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.</td>
<td>Coloring Clowns on the First Day of School</td>
<td>62</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.</td>
<td>Sample Reading Miscue Inventory Coding Sheet for Amber</td>
<td>81</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.</td>
<td>Sample Reading Miscue Inventory Coding Sheet for Tommy</td>
<td>82</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.</td>
<td>Tommy Writes About Pets</td>
<td>88</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.</td>
<td>Amber Argues Against Cats</td>
<td>89</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
# LIST OF TABLES

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.</td>
<td>Scores and Ranking for the Eight Potential Subjects on the Third Day of School</td>
<td>41</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.</td>
<td>Scores on Concepts About Print Test</td>
<td>76</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.</td>
<td>Number of Readings of Self Selected Books by Two Children from September to March</td>
<td>127</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
CHAPTER I
THE NATURE OF THE PROBLEM

Background of the Study

In an effort to gain insight into the way children learn, researchers are beginning to focus on how children use and extend the knowledge they have acquired. The products of their knowledge, such as answers on tests and workbook items, reveal only limited information. Observations and analyses of the processes involved in children's learning are more revealing than the products of their knowledge.

Process studies which have delved into the question of how children learn language have revealed that the child actively hypothesizes about how language functions, tests out his hypotheses and alters his "guesses" of the rules based on more and more incoming information (Cazden, 1969). This active hypothesizing results in the formation of such overgeneralizations as "two feet" and "I goed" before children consistently produce adult forms.

At the same time that children are abstracting the rules for the way language systems work, they are also learning how to use this language. When to talk, when to be silent, how to talk differently to different people are all part of their developing communicative competence which they learn in a cultural and social context (Fraser, 1977). Hence, they are continuing to hypothesize about
underlying rules, but these are rules for using language in the context of their speech community.

Similarly, recent theories and research in reading have shifted from overt reading behavior to an examination of the underlying processes in which the reader is engaged (Smith, 1971). Goodman (1970) has developed a model of the reading process which describes how a fluent reader uses available language cues, samples from the incoming text and compares this information with previous knowledge in order to make predictions about the upcoming text. The reader is described as an active learner who hypothesizes and predicts in the "psycho-linguistic guessing game of reading."

Much of the research in reading up to this time has attempted to show causality between methods of instruction and the child's performance in reading. For example, Bond and Dykstra (1967) found, through scores on reading achievement tests, that some teachers consistently produced whole classes of students who have higher scores. But what the teacher characteristics were or how they interacted within the context of the classroom was not explored. This type of reading research has examined only pieces of reading in the schools, usually the obvious reading events such as teachers' lessons using certain methods and test results. Investigators have virtually ignored analyses which describe reading events within the classroom in terms of what is meaningful in them to the students and teacher (Griffin, 1977a). The context for reading has just recently come under the scrutiny of researchers.
The important relationship between language use and reading has been described by Griffin (1977b) as a symbiotic relationship. In her words "Facts about the real world, including facts about how language is used in that world, stand in some obvious, but relatively unstudied, relation to reading" (p. 123). Instead of focusing on "pieces" of reading, it becomes necessary to take a more holistic approach to literacy attainment. Reading, as language, must be studied in the cultural and social contexts in which they occur since the meaning of human behavior and experience can only be understood in context (McDermott, 1977; Mishler, 1979). A field study of this kind in reading would describe not only the content or methods of reading, but also would infer appropriate behaviors and knowledge of social rules of its use in the classroom. Knowledge is displayed in interaction; a thorough description of a natural classroom setting will reveal the relationship between this knowledge and the way it is used (Mehan, 1978).

The Importance of Context

Hinley and Ponder (1979) point out that a descriptive study of a classroom should focus on three major questions:

1) What is happening in the classroom?
2) Why are these events occurring?
3) What do these events mean in the context of the classroom?

The question relating to context is actually an integral part of all of these questions. All of human action and experience is dependent upon the context in which it occurred. Studies which focus on the
process of language acquisition and language use must necessarily study language in the context in which it was produced (Cazden, 1970; Labov, 1969). Ethnographic research methodologies enable observers to approach the study of language use in cultural and social contexts in order to discover the inherent rules for producing language in a given context (Sherzer, 1977). The ethnography of speaking, then, analyzes speech events in terms of their setting, participants, and purposes; the context of language influences the language itself.

In the past much research in education has attempted to separate the events being studied from the context in order to create valid generalizations. But if human behavior and learning are influenced by the context, then researchers must begin to examine these complex relationships. Mishler (1979) points researchers in this new direction:

"Neither have the context-stripping methods of our traditional model of science been appropriate to the study of context-dependent phenomena. A number of alternative approaches may be more appropriate including methods drawn from ecological psychology, phenomenological research, sociolinguistics and ethnomethodology" (p. 17).

What features of the context influence the behavior of the people in it? Wilson (1977, p. 247) discusses three forces which may account for this influence. The physical context is described as the physical arrangement of the setting; the psychological context reveals "notions in people's minds about what is expected and allowed;" (p. 247) and the historical context considers the importance of traditions, roles and values.
Another important aspect of context is the social relationships established by the people involved. Rosen and Rosen (1973) describe social context as "the particular world being established, how the people in it talk to one another, the messages they send and how they are received..." (p. 24). It is this view of a "shared life" which seems to constitute the essence of social context.

The classroom is an environment which consists of all these contextual influences. Teachers and pupils' behaviors are influenced by the context of the school and the classroom (Rosen and Rosen, 1973; Kounin and Sherman, 1979; Platt, 1979). How teachers and pupils perceive that environment, how rules and social relationships are established and how language functions in this setting are essential elements of the context of the school and classroom. It is hypothesized that these elements, in turn, affect the kind of literacy which is achieved by individuals (Shuy, 1969). Understanding the dynamic relationships between how teacher and students communicate verbally and how this affects reading is vital to our understanding of a child's transition to literacy (McDermott, 1977).

**Statement of the Problem**

The problem of this study is to provide a description of the context of a classroom focusing on significant elements which influence a child's development in learning to read during the first year of school. The focus of this research will be the children's processes of acquiring literacy in a natural classroom setting. The literacy development of two children will be described within the learning
context of this classroom. The focus of this description will be a particular classroom and teacher with their subsequent activities, climate and interaction.

Approach to the Study

Learning to read is an important part of schooling and a first grade classroom marks the beginning of a child's formal instruction in reading. Even though children have begun the process of literacy acquisition earlier than first grade, in general, most still may be classified as "non-readers" when they are introduced to the structured learning of a first grade classroom. More thorough descriptions of the apparent factors which influence learning to read in the classroom would contribute valuable information to the field of education. Given the particular context of a classroom, then, elements which surface from the data and have seemed to influence a child's development in learning to read during the first year of school will be described.

The primary purpose of naturalistic research is to discover phenomena and develop hypotheses which could be empirically tested. A research study which examines the context of the classroom calls for research methodologies which permit the investigator to deal with emergent questions. The procedure, then, is to enter the classroom with an open mind, allowing impressions to be formed and describing events in order to understand their significance (Guba, 1978, pp. 24-30). If the focus of an investigation is to describe the processes involved, then direct observation (or experience) is recommended as a
primary vehicle for data collection (Guba, 1978; Douglas, 1976; Bogdan and Taylor, 1975; Wilson, 1977; Carini, 1975).

Several significant studies have included descriptions of language learning through direct observation. Ward (1971) described the process of language acquisition for the children in Rosepoint, Louisiana by observing and recording "real-life conditions" under which children actually learned their language. She described the context of language learning by making frequent trips to the town and observing everyday interactions and child-rearing activities in the home.

Similarly, Emig (1969) and then later Graves (1974) studied the composing process of students by directly observing them during their attempts to write. Careful observation is a key to emerging questions which relate to process. Description through observation results in the unity of the observer and the setting, whereas traditional scientific inquiry has forced the separation of the observer from the events being observed (Carini, 1975). In this study, then, it is important that the observer become thoroughly familiar with the setting in order to describe it.

Furthermore, as exemplified by the Ward study, the researchers must immerse themselves in the setting allowing natural, everyday interaction and events to take place in their presence. The recording of these events allows an observer to reflect on the meaning of the events (Carini, 1975). Direct member experience over long periods of time is invaluable in gaining accurate information in order to describe and analyze.
In describing the context of a classroom other sources of information besides the researcher's observations must be relied upon. Interview situations enable the researcher to cross-check his own experiences and perceptions of the events with others who were involved (Douglas, 1976, p. 108). Interview data is not considered as reliable as direct observation, yet interviews often provide the only means for extracting necessary information. Interview data will be cross-checked and accuracy verified against other data. Studies which have made use of interview data are numerous (i.e., Emig, 1969; Graves, 1974; Ward, 1971; Reid, 1966; Delamont, 1976).

A third consideration in descriptive field research is that the researcher reports findings within the context of a larger undisturbed setting. It becomes important for the researcher not to manipulate elements within the setting (classroom) so that a natural, non-contrived environment may be described (Guba, 1978; Douglas, 1976; Bogdan and Taylor, 1975).

Naturalistic inquiry is often carried out using the case study as a framework. Case studies have been used in other fields of inquiry such as medicine, law, psychology, and anthropology to study a variety of problems. The results of case study research yields not a collection of objective data but rather a description of complex phenomena in real-life situations.

Historically, most case studies in education have been limited to problems of maladjustment. More recently, however, case studies have investigated bright and average children in the areas of language
development, writing, and reading (Ward, 1971; Emig, 1971; Torrey, 1973; Graves, 1975). The case study in educational research is recognized as a vehicle for generating new theory or for modifying existing theory. Children's developmental patterns may emerge which could cause educators to reflect on existing theories of learning (Walton, 1972; Wright, 1960).

Researchers in reading have reported a variety of descriptions of literacy acquisitions. In several case studies related to reading data was reported which included interviews with parents and/or the test scores of children being studied (Durkin, 1966; McKenzie, 1974; Torrey, 1969). Others are based entirely on observational records or descriptions of reading behavior (Goodman, 1967; Andrews, 1976).

The Present Study

The present study grew out of a concern for the lack of descriptive research in how children learn to read in a classroom during the first year of school. This study focused on two children who were observed for eight months in one first grade classroom. Samples of their oral reading, writing and reading-related behaviors and interactions were collected from September to April. Neither child was reading prior to first grade and neither was repeating first grade.

The children were observed at least once each week for seven months in reading groups, whole class situations and "free time" activities. The children and the teacher were interviewed periodically and samples of the children's oral and written work were recorded. A few objective measures of reading development were administered over time.
These records and the results of tests given to all of the children in the class were included as a part of the overall data gathering.

Complete descriptions of instructional activities and some interactions were recorded in a notebook by the researcher. Audio tapes recorded verbatim many classroom sessions and events during reading groups and "free time." The researcher avoided interfering with the naturally occurring activities of the classroom. This study was intended to be observational, descriptive and exploratory in nature; the investigator's role was defined only as an observer and recorder of events, not as a participant.

The results of the present study are reported within the following organization: a description of the classroom, instruction and instructional materials; two case studies; an analysis of reading events. A discussion of findings and questions which were raised by the study are included in the final chapter.

Purposes of the Study

The primary purpose of this investigation was to describe the reading development of two children within the context of a particular classroom. The following questions were proposed as a frame to guide the data collection and analysis:

I. Describing the Instructional Setting

1) What are the physical features of this classroom (i.e., desk arrangement, availability of books) which contribute to the learning context?
2) What are the teacher's activities, perceptions and methods which contribute to the social learning context of this classroom?

3) Are the teacher's understandings about the reading process and the function of reading consistent with the teacher's organization of the class for reading instruction?

4) What are the children's understandings about the reading process and the function of reading? Are these understandings consistent with their uses of reading in the classroom?

II. Analyzing Reading Events

1) What are the reading events which occur in this classroom?

2) What do these reading events mean to the children in light of their reading development?

3) How does the teacher structure, intend, and interpret these reading events?

These questions were exploratory and emerged partially from the data as is characteristic of naturalistic inquiry. The over-riding goal of this research was to identify elements within the context which may contribute to reading acquisition and could be tested in future research.

Limitations of the Study

This study has several important limitations which restrict its generalizability. While the study's purpose was to describe the reading
development of children over a period of time, the number of children studied (2) limits its results. The teacher was recommended by the Elementary Education Coordinator as being "exemplary." In addition, these children were enrolled in one classroom which was selected because of its availability and the willingness of the administrators and teacher to cooperate with the research. In every other way the classroom appears to be a "typical" classroom, but results of a study completed in only one classroom cannot easily be generalized to other classrooms.

This study describes the development of two children during the first year of formal instruction in reading. Yet, a limitation of the study is its inability to describe the children's behavior in relation to reading events during their first six years at home. Children's early exposure to the printed word and to parents who read to them and made books available in the home have important effects which may influence their reading development in school.

The nature of naturalistic inquiry requires that observations be made in a natural environment. It is difficult for one observer to take note of many events which are occurring simultaneously in a classroom. Hence, the data is limited to the observations, and personal biases of one observer.

**Operational Definitions**

**Miscue** - while reading, a response which "results from the interaction of the reader with the graphic display" (Goodman, 1969, p. 12).
Traditional classroom - for the purpose of this study, a classroom which has one teacher and one group of children all day. The teacher has a pre-planned curriculum which includes the use of textbooks as a primary means of learning. The children are divided into ability groups for reading instruction.

Significant events - during the data collection and analysis for this study, certain activities or events occurred in this classroom more frequently, received more attention than other events, or seemed to influence the behavior of the participant; these events were termed "significant."

Reading - an act of communication in which the reader gains meaning through the process of reconstructing the author's message via the text.

Summary

Although there is abundant research in the field of reading and learning to read, relatively few studies exist which describe the development of beginning readers. The present study was designed to focus on two emergent readers in a first grade classroom. The study describes them and reading-related events within the contextual framework of the classroom.

Chapter II of this report contains a discussion of related theory and research. Methods and procedures used are described in Chapter III. Chapter IV provides a description of the school, classroom, and teacher while Chapter V describes and analyzes the reading development of the
two children in light of particular reading events which occurred in this classroom. Chapter VI provides findings and questions leading to suggestions for future research.
CHAPTER II

RELATED THEORY AND RESEARCH

The Educational Setting: A Theoretical Framework

Classrooms are places where professionals constantly make decisions which affect the lives of children. The knowledge teachers have about the learning processes and behaviors of students will affect their own decisions and behaviors and, consequently, affect the students.

This knowledge which teachers have in order to make decisions may be called theory. While no one definition of theory is universally accepted, it is generally agreed that theory guides the practice of those who use it. Theory may be used for research in quest of new knowledge or in the carrying out of different activities such as in medicine (diagnosing a disease), engineering (building a bridge), or education (teaching children to read).

Theory, may be seen as having specific functions: 1) to describe, 2) to predict, 3) to explain (Zais, 1976, p. 79). Theoretical knowledge may also be used in two other ways: 4) to interpret, 5) to solve problems (Smith, 1969, pp. 44-45). Theoretical knowledge can be used to help understand and organize experience. For example, a teacher may constantly observe the behavior of children and may be able to classify specific behavior into a theoretical framework in order to interpret behavior. Or, a teacher's theory of the reading
process will affect the methods and materials used in that classroom and, consequently, affect the children's literacy development.

Educational theorists draw on a composite of theories taken from such disciplines as philosophy, psychology, sociology, physiology, linguistics and anthropology. Educators borrow insights and build theory in what Stiles (1974) calls an "eclectic framework" (p. 75). In describing educational theory it is important to consider the behavior of both the students and the teacher for the theory to be worthwhile (Smith, 1969). In Smith's words,

"It is just as important to know the pedagogical situation to which theoretical knowledge is to be applied as it is to know the knowledge itself" (p. 43).

In fact, classroom events which are carefully observed may confirm existing theories or generate new educational theories to show unique relationships which previously existing theory overlooked. The relationships between theory and practice is obviously a crucial one and warrants more attention in educational research.

Research in Teacher Behavior

Research studies which investigated what the teacher does in the classroom have been able to yield very little empirical knowledge concerning the skills or behaviors in teaching which are effective and seem to make a difference in student learning. The teacher's behavior within a particular classroom is complex and has created problems for researchers who have attempted to study the teaching process.

Measuring teacher behavior is a problem. Berliner (1976) states that frequency counts of teacher behavior may not be the only way to
measure an action or characteristic; qualitative observations must also be made which take into account the individual situation in which that action is displayed and the appropriate use of that action. For example, the "Beginning Teacher Evaluation Study," Report Number 5 (1977) emphasizes the fact that researchers must consider the individual situations and students when examining teacher behavior.

As a result of observations of teacher behaviors, some investigators have reported that certain teacher behaviors do have an affect on student achievement. Rosenshine and Furst (1971) reviewed 50 process-product studies which explored relationships between variables of teacher behavior and student achievement. This analysis pointed to five process variables which show a strong positive correlation with student achievement: clarity, variability, enthusiasm, task oriented and/or business-like behaviors, and student opportunity to learn criterion material. Some support was found for six other variables: use of student ideas and general indirectness, use of structuring comments, types of questions (higher vs. lower order), probing and level of difficulty of instruction.

Criticism was found to have a negative correlation with student achievement. Rosenshine and Furst found no significant correlations between the following behaviors and student achievement: nonverbal approval, praise, warmth, ratio of indirect to direct teacher behavior, questions, talk, participation or absence. In addition, Duncan and Biddle (1974) found two broad areas of research which do not appear promising: climate, directiveness, and higher levels of
intellectualization. These teacher behaviors may, however, have an effect on outcomes other than student achievement, or may influence student achievement in complex, indirect ways.

In contrast to prior analyses, Heath and Neilson (1974) who analyzed the same studies as Rosenshine and Furst (1971), conclude that research does not offer an empirical basis for determining which teacher behaviors are most effective. Their summary indicated that major flaws in this research exist in the lack of operational definitions of "teaching" and "achievement." They point to the strong relationship between socio-economic status and achievement and suggest that "techniques" of teaching are not likely to have a strong impact on student achievement.

In calling for new designs and methodologies in research on teaching, Kennedy and Bush (1976) and Dunkin and Biddle (1974) suggest procedures which they consider to be better suited to the nature of the data being collected. Standardized tests, a commonly used variable, often lacks content validity and may not measure the variables in question. Researchers need to consider affective outcomes in relation to the learning process, such as how the learner feels about the instructional situation (Berliner, 1976). In this complex relationship, the individual situation as well as characteristics and perceptions of the learner need to be taken into account. Conclusions in the research reveal that it is fruitful to view the classroom as a social system, and investigators (BETS, Report No. 5, 1977; Dunkin and
Biddle, 1974) are calling for further studies which take various aspects of the classroom into account at the same time.

A Theory of the Reading Process

"When he is only a little over a year old, you can see such a baby sitting on his mother's lap—looking at a picture book (because this is a family that expects even babies to delight in books.) As he looks at the picture, he leans against her body, feels her warmth, her softness and firmness, and traces with his own hands and his own eyes the arms protectively around him...He puts his hand over the mouth to feel the sounds and the breath that comes with them. Then he looks at the book again. At this point, probably, his parent...quite instinctively puts him in the book. She says, 'Oh, there's a mug like Sam's. Is that Sam's mug? And so this baby is in this book; this is this individual baby's book. It is a book about him—no one else" (Berg, 1976, p. 21).

Reading as an act of communication involves a great deal more than decoding a symbol on the printed page. The contextual features which surround the baby's interests and associations with books are vividly described; the message to the child is one of acceptance, sharing and delight. Reading for this baby is a natural experience placed within the context of meaningful communication.

Attention is also centered on getting and receiving meaning when children learn language (Cazden, 1969, 1972). Children sample from the language around them to determine the underlying rules of language use and structure for themselves. The child is an active learner constructing and organizing his own perceptions of the environment.
The Fluent Reader

Reading is an act of communication in which information is transferred from a transmitter to a receiver. This theory of communication and information is the crux of Smith's (1971) theory of the reading process. The task of the receiver is more difficult since "there are discrepancies between the sound (or printed representations) of the language and its meaning that can be bridged only by a contribution from the receiver" (Smith, 1971, p. 13). In order to accomplish this task, the receiver must rely on his own knowledge of the language to extract meaning.

Extracting meaning is accomplished through the reduction of uncertainty (Smith, 1971). Information is duplication in more than one source and this redundancy is a boost to the reader who must examine the sources of information (e.g., visual, orthographic, syntactic, semantic) and make decisions about the upcoming text. The context offers varied sources of information to the reader and these redundant sources require the skilled reader to use less visual information.

Gaining meaning, then is not a simple matter of identifying each visual configuration and then adding up the sum total of the individual phonemes, words or sentences. Meaning in reading depends largely on the reader's "theory of the world in his head" based on his knowledge of language and experience with the world (Smith, 1971; Goodman, 1969).

This knowledge of language and experience enables the reader to predict what the upcoming text will be (Smith, 1975). Since letters
and words do not randomly occur in printed text, the reader's ability to predict helps to limit the incoming visual information which is processed by the brain. A meaningful context in the form of redundant language elements such as visual, orthographic, syntactic and semantic information becomes an essential condition for comprehension.

The function of a theory of the reading process should attempt to predict and explain reading behavior. Goodman (1969) maintains that all responses to graphic displays are caused and are not accidental. Errors made by readers can provide insights into the reading process. In viewing the reading process as an active process of reconstructing the message encoded by the writer, the reader uses his knowledge of language structure and function. This knowledge of language causes the reader to make choices based on three kinds of information available to him: 1) grapho-phonic information (based on graphic and phonological systems of oral language, 2) syntactic information (based on the grammatical structures of the language, 3) semantic information (based on the experiences or conceptual framework of the reader).

Every aspect of reading is a process of categorization in which the identification of letters, words and meanings are processed in much the same way (Smith, 1971). Visual information is picked up from print and held in sensory store where some of the information is lost and some is sent on to the short term memory. In the short term memory, four to five elements (i.e., letters, words, meanings) are
stored until they pass into the long term memory at the rate of one element every five seconds. Through the use of the long term memory, a fluent reader can predict the nature, relevance, and importance of incoming information. These predictions are based largely on the reader's prior literary and concrete experiences which are used as resources to help reconstruct the author's message and make comprehension possible.

Beginning Reading

Goodman (1970) describes the reader as being faced with two tasks: 1) the production of an oral language equivalent of the graphic input, 2) the reconstruction of the meaning of what he is reading (p. 265). It is precisely these two main tasks, and especially the way in which they are carried out in early readers, which form the basis for the two models of reading developed by Goodman (1970). The fluent reader goes directly from the graphic code to the meaning:

```
graphic code -> Meaning
```

This process becomes more complicated for the beginning reader who often first produces the text as an oral code and then decodes to meaning:

```
graphic code -> Recoding -> oral code -> Decoding -> Meaning
```
Several research studies have examined the oral reading miscues of children in order to investigate the development of the reading skills of beginning readers.

Both Biemiller (1970) and Weber (1970) have found that reading requires that only part of the information be supplied by the printed page; much of the information used by beginning readers can be found in their familiarity with the syntax and semantics of their native language.

The reader brings prior knowledge and experiences to the printed page, therefore, he needs to rely only partially on the graphic cues. These sources of redundancy were pointed out by Biemiller (1970) when he analyzed the oral reading errors made by 42 first grade children. Biemiller found that children may pass through three main phases of development which he terms pre non-response, non-response, and post non-response. More specifically, the pre non-response stage is characterized by a predominant use of contextual information which decreases during the non-response stage, but increases significantly during the post non-response stages. That is, in the first two stages about one-third of the graphic substitutions were contextually constrained. This tendency of the beginning reader to use the context of the passage increases; Biemiller found that 83% of the errors of those children who reached the post non-response period were contextually acceptable.

Another study which illustrates the information the reader brings to the printed page was conducted by Weber (1970). She also analyzed
the oral reading errors of first grade children to determine the strategies used by beginning readers. Looking in depth at the mis-
cues on graphic, syntactic, and semantic levels, Weber found that mis-
cues made by better readers more closely resembled the correct responses than slower readers based on graphic similarity scores. She points out, however, that many of these errors approached the correct response in terms of letters and meaning. Weber found a negligible difference between high and low reading groups at the grammatical similarity level (92%-high, 88%-low), and she concluded that both strong and weak readers use the constraints of grammatical context to narrow the possibilities for their responses. Similarly, Weber found that of all errors judged for semantic appropriateness, 67% conformed to the context of the story. Therefore, the researcher proposes that children do indeed transfer their capacity for spoken language to their approach to reading.

A basic premise which has been proposed by psycholinguists is that comprehension precedes the identification of words. This ability of the reader to anticipate or predict what is coming before he actually identifies individual words has been studied by Rode (1974). Rode examined children's ability to decode phrases and clauses to determine the effects of structure on the eye-voice span. Working with 54 children from the third, fourth, and fifth grades, the researcher used a scan box to present sentences consisting of controlled noun and verb phrases. Eye-voice spans (the number of words correctly reported beyond the light-out position) were calculated for three age groups.
Rode's data revealed that the eye-voice span increased with age level and was influenced by syntactic structure. She found that the number of times each age group's eye-voice span terminated at a syntactic boundary was statistically significant. Rode indicated that the syntactic unit (noun or verb phrase) does influence the reading boundary for the children. In addition, she found that older readers tend to extend their boundaries to an entire clause. Rode suggests that this attempt to derive meaning from the text in large units may be due to the reader's "chunking" the words into groups to facilitate interpretation prior to word identification. Thus, this study supports Smith's contention that comprehension precedes the identification of individual words.

Finally, a psycholinguistic view of the reading process maintains that reading is not decoding to sound. Traditionally, phonics instruction provided rules which would "predict" the sound of a word from its spelling. These complicated and irregular rules of phonics only mislead the beginning reader causing him to focus on the letters in the words and ignore the context or meaning of the passage. The reading strategies of children who have been taught to read through a phonic approach were studied by Cohen (1974). Cohen analyzed the oral reading errors made by 50 children during the last eight months of first grade and found that beginning readers pass through three stages characterized by non-response, nonsense errors, and word substitution errors. Using word recognition as her criteria for determining "good" and "poor" readers, Cohen found a high rate of no-response and nonsense errors
which she notes conflicted with other error studies (Weber, 1970; Biemiller, 1970). She attributes this high rate of no-response and nonsense errors to the instructional method (phonics) which stresses letter blending and causes children to read more slowly and make fewer errors that would be associated with reading in phrases.

More specifically, Cohen's data reveals that nonsense errors were rare at first and then gradually increased. An analysis of graphic approximation of these nonsense errors reveals that 73% had at least one half of the letters correct by June. This data indicates, as Cohen points out, that the reader is first focusing on letter-sound attributes and then attempting to formulate words which often took the form of nonsense words. If a child is not using the context of a passage and is focusing on individual letters in a word in an effort to "sound them out," meaning then becomes a secondary byproduct in the reading process and not the primary goal.

These studies support a model of the stages of reading from the beginning developing towards fluent reading. This model is characterized by beginning readers who rely heavily on contextual constraints and may pass through a "non-response" stage in their oral reading. Reliance on graphic information gradually increases while the child continues to use syntactic and semantic information. By the third grade, readers tend to "chunk" information and read to phrase boundaries while by fifth grade the unit of decoding tends to be the clause rather than the phrase. Readers naturally pass through these stages according to their individual development and not necessarily at the grade
levels mentioned. The type (approach) of reading instruction seems to influence children's reading strategies.

This model of the reading process is consistent with Smith (1971) and Goodman's (1970) model which suggests the reader focuses on the printed area, selects information guided by graphic, syntactic and semantic cues, and hypothesizes based on this information. He may regress to gather more information or continue to add meaning to prior meaning and form expectations about incoming information. As these research studies have shown, only a sample of the graphic information is necessary for comprehension. The reader must be fast enough to sample from a minimum of visual information in order to avoid overloading short term memory and must anticipate upcoming information. He relies on a meaningful context, reads to reconstruct the author's message, and goes directly from the print to the meaning rather than decoding to sound.

Conceptions of Reading

Studies of strategies employed by beginning readers have contributed valuable information about the reading process. Other studies have focused on an equally important area while investigating how children think about reading or their conceptions about the written form of language. Children come to school, for the most part, with a firm grasp of their spoken language, but their notions about the relationship between written and spoken language are vague. Also, the teacher begins to use abstract technical terms when talking about written or spoken language, and these terms may hold little or no meaning for the child.
Working in the area of children's conceptions about reading, Reid (1966) conducted a study in which she interviewed five year olds to determine how they learned to read and write and how these notions developed throughout the school year. She set out to discover the general level of concept formation about reading and writing embodied in the "technical vocabulary." Reid's study followed the growth of these concepts and described the role these concepts play in the actual learning of skills. She randomly selected twelve children and interviewed them three times during their first school year. Her interview questions were designed to get students to talk about reading, generally or specifically, as they choose. Reid observed a general lack of any specific expectancies of what reading was going to be like. Reading to these children was a "mysterious activity." She observed that children were not clear whether one "read" the pictures or the other "marks" on the paper or, whether written words contained letters which stood for sounds. Later interviews showed progress toward a clearer understanding of the reading process, but this progress was slow and yielded varying degrees of success. Reid felt that this success was at least partly determined by the child's understanding and ability to use the vocabulary involved (e.g., word, letter, sentence).

John Downing (1969) reached similar conclusions about children's concepts about reading. Downing specifically tested their conceptions of a "word" and a "sound" using a tape recording of twenty-five auditory stimuli of various types. He concluded that children have only
a vague notion of the purpose of written language and of what activities are involved in reading.

Later work by Downing (1976) points out again that all children pass through an important stage of "initial cognitive confusion" in learning to read. This occurs when they do not understand the technical jargon used by the teachers in talking about reading and writing. Downing proposes that progress in learning to read is directly related to the child's understanding of the reading instruction register. He concludes that, "Cognitive confusion, if it persists too long, may prevent the child from understanding the task of learning to read sufficiently well to beat the deadline of the grade one" (p. 764).

Clay (1972) has developed an instrument entitled Sand which reveals information about a child's developing concepts about print. The test examines four main areas: discrimination between pictures and print, the direction of printed material, concepts of what words, letters, etc. are, and visual discrimination of printed material. These concepts move to continually higher levels of difficulty, but the child is able to demonstrate his understandings of the concepts instead of having to discuss them. Even with this demonstrative advantage of the test, Clay found that only about half of her six-year-olds, at the end of the first grade, could correctly show "one word," "one letter," or "the first letter of a word."

Clay (1975) has also studied samples of children's beginning writing in an effort to gain insight into their development. She
maintains that the child's own creative attempts at writing will reveal his gradual awareness of the arbitrary principles and customs used in written English. Clay described the child's ability to write in terms of principles which reveal their awareness of written language. Since the child must pay attention to the detail and direction of print, he will become more aware of letter features, sequences and the vocabulary used in print. Clay sees the child's development in writing in terms of thirteen concepts of principles involved. She considers the urge to write one of the most important resources for a child's written language development.

Awareness of the conventions of written language is particularly characteristic of early readers. Young fluent readers are able to ask the right questions about the nature of written language and they expect print to say something meaningful (Torrey, 1969; Clark, 1976). These children treat written language as a natural alternative to spoken language since they actively engaged in the reconstruction of a message from written language.

The Context of Reading

A child learns to read by drawing conclusions based on similarities, differences and associations about printed language (Smith, 1970). He has already used certain strategies in learning and acquiring oral language such as how to look for significant differences, how to make use of redundancy and how to test hypotheses and receive feedback. These strategies must then be applied to reading and, he must read fast enough to avoid loosing meaning through tunnel vision (Smith, 1976).
In an effort to examine the processes young children go through in gaining meaning, Harste, Burke and Woodward (1979) have examined young children's initial encounters with print in the natural environment. When three to six year olds are shown the official United States Post Office logo, they may identify it with different words, but they all go through the same process to come to its meaning. That is, their responses show a dynamic relationship between the object and how it functions within a particular context. These researchers perceive miscues as "sophisticated cognitive processing strategies which allow children to make sense of their world" (p. 2).

Written language is functional and predictable in terms of its physical context. The context of a print setting makes it predictable and facilitates the process of literacy acquisition in young children.

This process of reading as communication within a contextual setting is seen when a five and half year old reads from his textbook in school:

**TEXT:** (read correctly by Richard)
Hurry Pat the baby has come today.

**COMMENT:** (by Richard)
My mum had one--a little one. I was a thin one--my brother was a fat one--I was a thin one (McKenzie, 1976, p. 5).

Children who are permitted, even encouraged, to find their own meanings in the printed text begin to view reading as a communication process in which they may take an active part. Bettelheim (1976) observes that some teachers choose reading materials which offer no meaning to children ("Come Mar, come-come here, Mark," p. 9) or,
reject a child's attempts to project personal meaning into their reading of primers.

Cognitive processes as well as social structures can be revealed through considering their function within the setting. Griffin (1977) studied reading events in a first grade classroom through the use of audio and video tapes as well as ethnographic reports. In reporting how and when reading occurs in the classroom, Griffin first described reading events on the "etic" level. These reading events could be easily noticed and identified as "reading" by the participants and researcher. But on the second level of analysis, the "emic" level, the researcher categorized these events in terms of what made the events meaningful to the participants and how the events were treated by members of the group. Griffin found that advanced reading behaviors could be found outside the official reading times and that these official reading times included many non-reading activities.

In another study of first grade reading within the context of a classroom, Cherry-Walkinson and Dollaghan (1979) found that the context which promoted various functions of language was a more accurate means of assessing children's oral communicative competence than were formal language tests. Communications of groups composed entirely of first graders were analyzed. The focus was to describe the process of communication whereby the children attempted to carry out their academic tasks and establish interpersonal relationships. Specifically, these researchers analyzed the verbal interaction of the children who were members of three first-grade reading groups.
Their findings revealed that results on formal language tests were not an adequate means of assessing the communicative competencies of the children. In describing the individual child's strategies in requesting information, a description was essential. Children engaged in a variety of strategies to gain information and to communicate; the researchers concluded that it was important for these children to have a variety of contexts and speech situations in which to develop communicative competence.

Torrey (1969) hypothesizes that children learn to read by "Asking the right question" about the relationship between language and print. In her case study of one black child, she reports that the child taught himself to read through watching and memorizing television commercials and recognizing can labels. While the child did not have superior intelligence or verbal ability, he was able to reason very early that print should say something understandable.

While Durkin (1966) also found that early readers were curious about print, her subject, unlike Torrey's, had less exposure to television and more help from parents who were willing to take time in answering their children's questions. None of Durkin's 49 subjects learned to read "all by himself" but were quiet, intelligent children who liked to play alone yet were eager to compete with older siblings. In fact, instruction from older children in the home, along with parents who read to them, were often cited as the reasons these children could already read upon entering first grade.

Margaret Clark (1976) studied 32 children who were early fluent readers and concluded that the researchers have much to learn from
observations of what these young readers do well. She observes that these children did much silent reading, were able to sustain concentration and were inhibited by the school's emphasis on oral reading. They knew what questions to ask about print and were able to predict the sequence of print in order to gain meaning.

Clark's subjects (1976) as well as Torrey's (1969) one child who taught himself to read through watching and memorizing television commercials seemed to be able to determine the relationship between language and print for themselves. On the contrary Durkin (1976) observes that none of her subjects learned to read "all by himself" and points to the influence of parents and older siblings on these early readers' accomplishments. However, direct instruction by adults was rare.

Summary

An examination of the complex events and relationships in a classroom should take the teacher's theoretical knowledge into account. This theory, as well as the teacher's behaviors and methods, should be examined in a holistic approach which views the classroom as a social system. A survey of the existing literature reveals that little is known about effective teacher behaviors.

Reading is an act of communication which can be studied through an examination of what fluent readers do. Beginning readers pass through several stages of development on their way toward fluent reading. The way children think about reading and their reading in relation to writing have been investigated in the research. Such studies
which have contributed valuable information about how children learn to communicate via the printed word.
CHAPTER III

PROCEDURES OF THE STUDY

In this chapter the preliminary planning which took place before the data collection is described first. Then the choice of classroom and subjects is described followed by a report of the collection of the data. Plans for the reporting and analysis of the data are also included.

Preliminary Planning

The purpose of this study was to observe and record the reading event and reading development of two children within the context of a natural classroom setting. It was apparent that a period of at least several months of data collection would be necessary in order to record this literacy development. Furthermore, a classroom which allowed for structured and unstructured instructional events was deemed desirable. A factor which was considered to be desirable but not essential in locating a classroom was the use of a flexible varied approach to the teaching of reading.

Because of the amount of time required for intense observation and recording, it was obvious that the sample children must be located in one classroom only. Furthermore, it also seemed essential that the teacher have at least several years of teaching experience since interview questions would force her to verbalize the theory and rationale behind her teaching strategies.
No pilot study was carried out because it was considered important for the investigator to be present in the classroom on the first day of school in September and then to remain in that classroom during a period of "immersion." This intense observation could allow the researcher to describe the important activities of the first few weeks of school and also to become familiar with the instructional setting in order to choose the sample children who would be followed for the remaining seven months.

The eventual choice of a classroom was made largely after conversations with various curriculum coordinators from different districts within driving distance of the researcher's home. It was assumed that first grade would be a natural place for children who were not readers to begin formal instruction in reading. The criteria for selecting a classroom were made clear to the coordinator:

1) A first grade classroom with an experienced teacher.
2) A classroom which had structured and unstructured times for children.
3) (optional) A classroom which provided an eclectic approach to the teaching of reading.

The classroom which was eventually chosen was indeed flexible enough in its approach to necessitate many days of full-time observation; there were rarely times when the same events were occurring at the same time of day. It was discovered that tape recording sessions would be successful in many of the structured classroom situations. Note taking proved to be useful in other situations especially once
the children and teacher became accustomed to the researcher's presence. Reading was not necessarily confined to official reading times, and the researcher's observation schedule was kept flexible in order to observe children throughout the day.

Setting and Population of the Study

The classroom chosen for the study was a self-contained, traditional classroom in a small town located near Indianapolis, Indiana. The school housed kindergarten through grade five classes and had one principal and 21 teachers.

The teacher of the classroom, recommended by the elementary curriculum coordinator, agreed to participate in the study pending official approval of the superintendent of the school district. Her classroom was scheduled to have 21 children on the first day of school and the researcher met with her three times before the official opening of school on August 27, 1979, to become acquainted with her and to interview her prior to the first day of school.

The classroom teacher agreed to take a student teacher from a nearby university for the first two months of school. Other adults were also present in the classroom from time to time. The teacher encouraged parents to participate in classroom instructional activities on a regular basis. One teenage boy from the local high school also visited the classroom occasionally. Three teacher aides, who were available to help all children in this school regularly, tutored some of the children in this classroom. The records of events which took place in this classroom include interaction with all of these adults.
As a result of frequent adult visitors in the classroom, the teacher and children were not disturbed by the investigator's presence. Because many adults worked in the classroom and because the researcher attended school beginning with the first day, it is possible to assume that the investigator's presence had a minimal effect on everyday classroom procedures and events.

Choosing the Sample Children

Because of the naturalistic and longitudinal nature of this study, it was apparent that data of this type could not be collected for the entire class of twenty-one children. During the first few weeks of school, four to six children were observed more carefully than others, but this number proved to be too many for one observer to watch carefully in a natural classroom setting. Therefore, two children became the focus on the observation and data collection.

On the second and third days of school all children were given the Slosson Oral Reading Test (SORT) (1974). The SORT is an individual reading test based on the child's ability to pronounce words at different levels of difficulty (See Appendix E). A correlation of .96 is reported for this instrument with the Standardized Oral Reading Paragraphs by William S. Gray. A reliability coefficient of .99 exists for a test-retest interval of one week.

Since this is a study which attempts to trace the reading development of two children, it was necessary to insure that the children were not already fluent readers when they entered first grade. Two
children in the class scored higher than 1.0 on the SORT and were eliminated as potential subjects for this study.

At the end of the third day of school the teacher was asked to rank the children according to her perception of their ability and probable success in learning to read. Based on this list (excluding the two "readers"), four children were chosen at random to represent the "strong" group from the top of the teacher's list, and four were chosen to represent the "weak" group from the bottom of the teacher's list.

These eight children (four "strong" and four "weak") were then administered the Slosson Intelligence Test for Children and Adults (1974). The SIT is an individual intelligence test which is easily administered and scored. All questions are read orally to the subjects with no time limits for their responses. The SIT has an overall Pearson-Product Moment correlation with the Stanford-Binet Intelligence Scale of .93. A reliability coefficient for the SIT is .97.

An intelligence test was administered to these children to assure that the subjects chosen were of average intelligence (IQ between 90 and 110 according to the manual for the SIT). By controlling the variable of intelligence, it becomes possible to describe other factors which may contribute to children's literacy development.

In summary, the two children were chosen from the following criteria:
1) were considered by the teacher to have either "strong" or "weak" potential for success in reading on the third day of school.

2) scored within a normal intelligence range on the Slosson Intelligence Test (1974).

3) did not score higher than 1.0 on the Slosson Oral Reading Test (1974).

Table 1 shows scores and ranking for the eight potential subjects. The Standard Error of Measurement was found to be 4.3 for the SIT.

**TABLE 1**

**SCORES AND RANKING FOR THE EIGHT POTENTIAL SUBJECTS ON THE THIRD DAY OF SCHOOL**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Subject</th>
<th>Sex</th>
<th>Teacher Ranking</th>
<th>SORT</th>
<th>SIT</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1*</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>Strong</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>113</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>Strong</td>
<td>.9</td>
<td>133</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>Strong</td>
<td>.1</td>
<td>125</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>Strong</td>
<td>.2</td>
<td>101</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>Weak</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>79</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>Weak</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>135</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>Weak</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>117</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8*</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>Weak</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>95</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Indicates students chosen as subjects.
Of the four children whom the teacher considered "weak" one child had to be selected. The only child who fit all of the criteria previously listed is number eight who is male. Two possibilities existed in the "strong" group (numbers one and four) and the decision was made to choose a female (number one) since a male had to be chosen from the other group and it was considered desirable to include a male and female in the study in order to observe possible sex differences in relation to reading development and events.

**Time Frame and Organization**

Since the beginning of literacy development is a process which takes some time, it was assumed that the optimum time frame for this study would be at least six months since changes in children's literacy acquisition could only be noted over a period of months. It was also deemed important that the investigator be present on the first day of school and that observations should occur frequently during the first few weeks of school.

Necessary arrangements were made during summer vacation, and the researcher met with the classroom teacher three times before the first day of school, once for a formal interview session and twice for informal conversation. Observation began on the children's first day of school, Monday, August 27, 1979, and continued until mid-April, 1980.

The first month of school was a period of intense observation and the researcher worked in the classroom daily, taking notes over the course of the entire school day. School officially started at
8:25 A.M., but during these first days of school observations began at 8:00 A.M. in order to describe the arrival of the first grade children, who were usually accompanied by their mothers.

After the initial "immersion" period when the investigator was present in the classroom for the entire day for four weeks, visits were made to the classroom on the average of two days each week for the next seven months. The schedule for these visits varied. Some were back to back days when something "exciting" was happening; other times several days would span between visits. Observations during visits from October to April also varied in length from one or two hours, to half day or, full day.

**Collection of Data**

**Observation - Record Keeping and Documentation**

Descriptions of classroom events, behaviors, and social interaction were recorded by the investigator in a daily log. These anecdotal records were recorded with as much completeness as possible during the observation, and then were often "filled in" at the end of the day. Records often included sketches of parts of the classroom such as bulletin boards or the children's work with notes about the context of these products. Perceptions and comments by the investigator were recorded on the left hand side of the notebook; all accounts of events and interactions were recorded on the right hand pages. Sample pages of this log of events are included in Appendix A.

A variety of classroom events were tape recorded. Whole class instructional periods, small group discussion, play during "free time"
and library periods were frequently tape recorded at the same time the observer was taking notes. Tapes were often reviewed to produce a more complete record of events.

The cassette tape recorder quickly became a familiar item in the classroom. The tape recorder was placed somewhere in the classroom during all observation times to assure as close to a natural situation as possible when audio taping was desired. Many of the tapes were transcribed to allow for a more careful analysis of the data.

Much of the children's work, especially that of the sample children, was collected. Some of this work was xeroxed and returned to its place of origin (i.e., on the wall or in the children's folders) so that they could enjoy taking their work home the same as if this study were not being conducted. Each sample of the children's work was dated. This collection of the children's work was conducted as unobtrusively as possible to assure its function in a natural classroom setting. It was feared that the children would want to produce work so that it could be added to the collection, an influence which would be undesirable in a descriptive study of this kind.

Photographs added another dimension of record-keeping in this study. Attempts were made to photograph the children during reading events and "free time," but note taking and audio taping proved to be more efficient in terms of time and cost. A letter of introduction and a permission slip was furnished to each child's parents in order to secure the parents' written permission to use these photographs and the children's work in a report of this study. Copies of the letter of introduction and the permission slip are provided in Appendix C.
Interviews

Formal interviews were conducted throughout the eight months of data collection for this study. All interviews were tape recorded and were later transcribed and coded for analysis. A list of questions to be used during the interview was prepared for each interview are provided in Appendix B. These questions were used to generate discussion and were used as a framework only. The questions reflect the researcher's hypotheses as well as hypotheses from related research concerning the influences on the reading development of children. It was discovered that more information from the informants could be obtained when they were permitted to discuss an idea or topic completely rather than answer a list of questions. The investigator made a check at the end of each interview to be sure that all important points had been discussed by the informant. In this way information and perceptions of informant's which may have been overlooked by the researcher could be noted and analyzed.

The classroom teacher was interviewed three times from August to April. The first interview occurred in August prior to the first day of school. The purpose of the interview was to obtain a description of the teacher's procedures for organizing the classroom. The information contained in this interview was cross-checked with the investigator's description of classroom organization for reading instruction later in the school year.

The purpose of the second teacher interview was two-fold: 1) to obtain the teacher's definition of the reading process with the
consequent rationale for the teaching methods and reading environment created in the classroom, 2) to note the teacher's perceptions of the children's reading development over the first few months of school. This interview took place in December, 1979.

The third teacher interview focused on a description of the teacher's judgment of the reading progress of the two subjects of this study. The teacher's observations focused on changes in the reading development for these children over time.

In order to cross check perceptions of the participants in this setting, the subjects of this study, along with a random sample of their peers, were interviewed twice. The first interview of the subjects took place in late September in order to obtain a description of the subjects' concepts about the process and function of reading.

The purpose of the second interview with the subjects, which took place in February, was to obtain a description of the child's perceptions of his or her own reading development and the forces which contributed to their progress in reading. Certain questions focused on the children's perceptions of the reading environment in the classroom and the reading progress of peers which were then crossed checked with two other class members who were selected at random.

Upon completion of the classroom observations, the parents of the subjects were interviewed. The purpose of these interviews was to gain background information on the reading environment in the home as well as to obtain a description of the parents' judgment of their
children's reading progress and the underlying causes. These interviews took place in late April, 1980.

Finally, the teacher's perceptions of the subjects and their performance and development in reading were cross-checked with the perceptions of the kindergarten teacher who taught both of the subjects during the previous school year. This interview took place in September.

**Formal Measures**

Several formal measures were administered to the sample children over the course of this study. These selected instruments added more information and another dimension to a description of the children's reading background and reading development. Each instrument was also administered to a few other children who were randomly selected from the class to prevent the sample children from suspecting that they were the focus of this research. The results of the children's performance on these instruments will be compared between subjects and, in some cases, over time.

**Taking Inventory of Children's Literary Background (Huck, 1966)** assesses children's background in literature by selecting questions from Mother Goose rhymes, poetry, folk tales, fairy tales, fables and modern stories. Questions are multiple choice quiz items which sample the content of sixty widely read books and poems for children. The results of this instrument may be related to the child's reading experiences prior to entering first grade. Whether or not parents
read to children, had books available in the home, and shared enthusiasm for reading may begin to surface with the results of this inventory.

A study which attempted, in part, to describe the reading exposure of primary school children used the Huck Inventory in the collection of data. Chomsky (1972) described the Huck Inventory as "an excellent measure of reading exposure (which) refines the notion of exposure to written materials by incorporating not just the amount read but internalization and retention of the materials as well" (pp. 25-26). No reliability and validity information is reported for this measure.

Subjects were administered Taking Inventory of Children's Literary Background in September, 1979. All questions were read to the children since they could not read at the start of first grade. Results of this inventory will be compared with interview data from subjects and parents in a later discussion of early reading exposure for each of the subjects.

Concepts About Print Test: Sand (Clay, 1972) is a check on the child's significant concepts about printed language. Some of these concepts include left to right progression, use of punctuation, front of the book and the fact that print (not the picture) is read. The test is designed to reflect changes in reading skill during the first year of instruction. If children are not developing in reading, Clay maintains that confusions about these arbitrary conventions of written language could persist.
Scoring of the Concepts About Print Test consists of one point per correct response with a total of twenty-four possible correct answers. The subjects were administered this instrument in September, 1979 and again in April, 1980.

Samples of the subject's oral reading miscues were collected from time to time over the months of data collection. Subjects were asked to read aloud from various materials and were told that they could not be prompted on words they did not know because this reading was for a "special purpose." Upon completion of the oral reading, children were asked to retell what they had read.

The Reading Miscue Inventory (Burke, Goodman, 1971) served as a guide for the analysis of miscues made by children during oral reading. Miscues are counted and coded according to their graphic syntactic and semantic acceptability with regard to expected responses. Developmental strategies used by beginning readers could be revealed through the analysis of their oral reading miscues (Bienmiller, 1970; Weber, 1970; Rodes, 1974).

For the purposes of this study the Reading Miscue Inventory Coding Sheet (Burke, Goodman, 1971, p. 82) was modified. A sample of the Modified Miscue Inventory Coding Sheet can be found in Appendix E.

Report of Data

The ultimate purpose of this research was to identify elements within the context of the classroom which may contribute to reading acquisition. The data was collected through observation, interviews and formal measures in an effort to illuminate possible categories
(resulting in hypotheses) which could be tested through later research.

The first task of this study, however, is to describe as completely as possible the context of the classrooms with respect to the reading environment in which two children learned to read. Thorough descriptions of the two children, focusing on their reading development, have been included. The context of the classroom is described in terms of the physical classroom setting, the instructional materials, and the organization of the class for reading instruction. All contribute to the holistic representation of the classroom environment. Most important, however, is a description of the social climate of the classroom which provided the children the environment for learning. These descriptions are contained in Chapter IV of this report.

Analysis of Reading Events

During the observations which constituted much of the data collection for this study, decisions were constantly being made as to what might be significant in terms of learning to read. Other influences became clearer with the surfacing of categories based on the sorting and classifying of evidence from the observations, interviews, and children's work. The basic analytical task of this study was to identify contributing factors which may influence a child's reading development within the context of a classroom.
Summary

This study attempted to describe the reading development of two children within the context of a particular first grade classroom. The study began on the first day of school in August and lasted until mid-April with the investigator taking the role of observer and recorder of events. Formal interviews and a few formal measures were used as a means of cross-checking and validating the data collection process.

A description of the classroom and the two subjects will be provided (Chapter IV) as a basis for the analysis of reading events in the classroom. The analysis of these events will be accomplished through the sorting and classifying of evidence based on observations, interviews and formal measures which took place within the context of a particular classroom (Chapter V). The findings of this study (Chapter VI) will be produced through the examination of the descriptive data in light of the analysis of reading events which revealed hypotheses about factors and influences which may contribute to the literacy acquisition of these two children who were learning to read.
CHAPTER IV

THE INSTRUCTIONAL SETTING

A complete description of the events which took place in this first grade classroom demands a description of the context of the school and classroom in which this study took place. In addition to a description of the school and classroom, the events of two days in this classroom are included in order to give the reader the feeling of "being there," and to provide a description of readers and reading events in context for later analysis. Accounts of the two sample children's reading development follow in the form of case studies. Finally, the reading events of this classroom, focusing on the two subjects, will be highlighted. These reading events will be discussed in further detail and analyzed in Chapter V of this report.

The School Setting

This study took place in Concord Elementary School\(^1\) in a suburb of Indianapolis, Indiana. The school is one of five elementary buildings in the district in a middle-class predominately white area. The town itself is divided into two parts, a stable area of older homes with "native" residents and an area of newer more expensive homes which houses a more transient population.

\(^1\)All of the proper names in this study have been changed to protect the privacy of the individuals.
Concord Elementary School is located at the edge of the older part of the town, but is situated with newer homes on one side. The building itself was erected in 1961 and is a one story structure which contains traditional self-contained classrooms, a gymnasium, a small cafeteria and a library. The library is a large carpeted area which houses 9000 volumes of children's books. The playground outside of the building has some playground equipment with abundant space for children to play. The building is on a cul-de-sac and bordered by homes or grassy areas.

In many ways this school and classroom represent a "typical" mainstream educational environment in the United States in 1980. The curriculum of the school is structured to result in certain practices in all classrooms. For example, a basal reading program has been adopted by the district, and teachers must begin and end instruction at certain levels so that some consistency will result through a range of grade levels. Consequently, most teachers in this building used the adopted reading series and workbooks in ability groups which practice, for the most part, skills and oral reading as suggested in the teacher's manuals for this reading program.

Reading in all of the classes in the building was a subject to be taught during a certain time period to children who were reading "on the same level." Reading from library books was a weekly activity and occurred when the class visited the library as a group. Teachers read to children only when "time permitted."\(^2\)

\(^2\)These comments are the result of the investigator's observations in various classrooms in this building and conversations with various teachers.
The principal in the building fulfilled the role of "administrator" (as contrasted with that of "instructional leader"). His primary concerns were the smooth operation of the school from discipline on the playground to moving cafeteria tables after lunch. A new teacher, who was hired on the first day of school in August received orientation and support from experienced teachers in the building during the first month of "on the job training." 3

Two school-wide events were held during the year in which all classrooms participated. A science fair and a poetry night were planned and carried out through the cooperative efforts of the staff. According to the teacher's manual for the 1979-80 school year, field trips were limited to one per year for each class.

This school was situated in a white middle class community in the suburbs of a mid-western city where discipline problems would be expected to be minimal. Yet there was a great emphasis on rigid standards of conduct in this elementary school. Much of the Teacher's Handbook for 1979 was devoted to such topics as bus behavior, discipline, normal sequence of disciplinary procedure, probation, suspension and expulsion, and corporal punishment. Lunch time included two "no talking periods" for the children in the cafeteria. Children's walking into the cafeteria or down any hallway was accomplished in single file

3It is interesting to note that this teacher came to the new position with what she called a "total language" approach to reading but quickly adapted her methods and philosophy as a result of pressure from teachers in the building.
with a "no talking" rule in effect. Students' verbal exchange during "no talking times" at lunch resulted in punishments such as standing the children against the cafeteria walls or forfeiting recess privileges.

In general parents in the community were very supportive of this elementary school. Annual parent-teacher conferences were well attended as were the two annual open-house sessions. A comment made to this investigator during an interview seemed to typify the attitude of parents toward the school. In her view, "they're the teachers and they know what they're doing."

**The Classroom Setting**

**The Teacher**

Mrs. Clark, the teacher in this first-grade classroom, was a woman whose teaching career began after she raised three of her own children. After she completed a Bachelor of Science degree, she obtained a Master's Degree while teaching full time and attending classes at night and in the summer.

Much of her teaching experience was gained in an inner-city school system working with primary grade children. A few years ago, upon the strong recommendation of a principal who was acquainted with her teaching ability, she accepted a position at Concord Elementary School. At the start of this study in August of 1979 Mrs. Clark had 12 years of teaching experience.

Mrs. Clark's success in teaching first graders to read was well known in the community. Each year many children were placed in the
room because parents requested that their children be assigned to her room.

She devoted large amounts of personal time to teaching, frequently arriving an hour before school began and staying until four or five o'clock. One way for her to maintain relationships with children who were no longer in her classroom was to invite them to help her after school on a regular basis. During this time various students from hers and other classrooms, corrected papers, cleaned the room and put up bulletin boards.

The Children

When this study began there were 634 students enrolled in Concord Elementary School and 21 who were assigned to Mrs. Clark's first grade classroom. The make-up of the class was 13 girls and 8 boys, 20 white children and one black.

The parents of each child in this classroom were asked to sign a permission slip allowing their children to become the subjects of this research. A copy of the permission form is included in Appendix C.

The children in this classroom seemed to represent an average range of abilities. One or two could read when they came to school and were clearly bright children, a few seemed to have more difficulties than others. Most of the children were happy to come to school and eventually developed strong feelings of admiration for Mrs. Clark.

In this classroom typical management problems were talking during quiet or work times, misbehaving in the form of kicking, punching or
wasting time and not completing the assigned work. These were problems which the teacher pointed out occasionally and were not so troublesome as to interfere or influence the normal social and academic occurrences in the classroom.

The Physical Setting

Mrs. Clark's first grade classroom was a large room with an entry to both the hallway and to the parking lot/playground area. Windows composed one entire wall of the room with three feet of shelves underneath, making the room well lit with sunlight. Five large green plants hung in the windows.

Each child was assigned a desk with an unattached chair. The desks were rearranged periodically throughout the school year, but were never in straight rows all facing the front of the room. A small semi-circle of chairs could be found in one corner surrounding a tall cushioned stool for the teacher. It was in this corner that formal reading groups met.

A feature of the classroom which attracted the children was the tree house. Built by Mrs. Clark's husband, the tree house was reminiscent of large bunk beds, with the bottom bed missing. To give the tree house some privacy, large flat wooden tree shapes were attached at either end and comfortable pillows lined the inside. Being able to read in the tree house was a privilege and will be discussed later in this report.

This classroom also had its own bathroom and a large steel sink with an attached drinking fountain. A painting easel was set up most
of the year and two tables housed the classroom collection of children's literature. A large oval rug was used for building blocks and informal group sessions on the floor. Two blackboards ran the full length of two walls. Figure 1 depicts the arrangement of Mrs. Clark's room.

**Two Days in School**

Because the reading events and the two children described in this study functioned within a particular classroom context, narrative of two complete days in the classroom are included. A description of the first day of school would be helpful in examining how the teacher established relationships, conveyed the rules, and made decisions about the children which would influence the coming days of school. A description of a typical day in October could highlight the reading environment and reading events in this classroom which took place within a certain classroom context and schedule of activities.

**The First Day of School**

On Saturday and Sunday before the first day of school the teacher made a telephone call to each child's home. She asked to speak with the child and carried on a friendly conversation telling the child how happy she was to have him in her room and briefly describing the activities he could look forward to in first grade.

On Monday, August 27, 1979, Mrs. Clark arrived one hour before the children. She had worked in the room frequently in the three weeks before school started so that bulletin boards were up, papers
and name tags were placed on each child's desk and materials were organized.

The first day of school was comprised of five major activities which are listed here in chronological order. Each activity is briefly described as accurately as possible relying on field notes and tape recordings of most of the day's events.

Welcoming. Each child arrived in the classroom with his mother. The teacher stood near the door, greeting each child and parent as they arrived having a brief, friendly verbal exchange. Examples of the greetings four different children received follow:

T: 4 "I'm glad to see you. You look so pretty!"

T: "Hi Karla! I was looking forward to seeing you!"

T: "I was glad to hear that I had you in this room!"

T: "Mrs. Smith came down and told me she was glad you're going to be in this room."

None of the children's comments are included here because they said very little during the first thirty minutes of school. They observed, hid behind their mothers, exchanged glances, studied the investigator, looked around the room and seemed quite pleased to find a desk with their own name on it.

The non-verbal behavior of the teacher was noteable during the welcoming period. As she chatted with parents, she hugged one child, tapped another on the head, and even rubbed the back of a girl reported to be a "crybaby" as she held her near and stood beside her mother.

---

4T: Teacher
Upon discovering that Debbie had a recent birthday, she made a public announcement and allowed her to choose a prize from the Treasure Chest.

As the mothers left and the desks began to fill up the teacher began to make comments to the group:

T: "Did everyone know that Jean has a broken arm? Jean stand up and show them. Has anyone else ever had a broken arm?"

(Illicits verbal responses from two children)

T: "This looks like a really super class."

T: "I had the best class last year and this class is going to be just as good. I can tell."

**Coloring Clowns Activities.** When each child arrived, a picture of a clown and some crayons were on his desk (See Figure 2.). As the children sat down Mrs. Clark repeatedly extended the invitation to the children to color the picture. But, she pointed out, each section was labeled and had to be a certain color. She offered a rationale for this exercise to the class:

T: "I want to know if you know your color words."

T: "I want to know how well you work."

T: "My gosh! Some of you know your color words already!"

When the papers were finished Mrs. Clark suggested a sharing of the papers and conducted a vote as to how this sharing would occur. It was decided that those who were finished coloring could go to the front of the room to show their work. This and other coloring activities will be examined in more detail in Chapter V of this report.
Coloring Clowns on the First Day of School
Figure 2
Free Time. In mid-morning the teacher addressed the class on the topic of free time. Free time is actually an indoor recess and they could decide for themselves what they wanted to do. She walked around the room explaining the various activities from which they could choose, but stressed the fact that there should be "one person at a place" for at least a few weeks. Some of the choices mentioned by Mrs. Clark were library books, magic markers, tracing books, large puzzles, blocks, chalk table and matching names with animals. Seven children chose to read books alone during free time on the first day of school.

Looking for Lollipops Activity. After lunch the children were assembled on the oval rug and their attention was directed to a small free-standing chalkboard on which a message was written. The teacher took some time with the class decoding the message and various children offered their guesses at the words. Finally, the message was "revealed" (read aloud in its entirety): "FIND TWO RED LOLLIPOPS AND ONE BLUE LOLLIPOP IN THE TREE HOUSE."

At this point the teacher announced that only one person could go into the tree house to find the lollipops for the class. The teacher's choice was Jennifer "because Jennifer can already read." The entire class then escorted Jennifer over to the tree house and waited until she climbed up the steps and found the lollipops.

It seems to be significant that the teacher publicly pointed out that this child "could already read." This and similar events which give status to the ability to read will be discussed in Chapter V.
**Rug Talk.** Near the end of the day the children were asked to sit on the oval rug near the teacher. In a quiet, reassuring way the teacher reviewed the classroom rules which she had introduced to them at various times during the day. Examples of these rules included how and when to use the bathroom, always to whisper and never shout and never to ask "When is lunch?" (She joked with them earlier in the day about how not to remind her of how hungry she is.) The strategies children should use for getting help were also reviewed:

T: "Go to the helpers for the day to find out how to do your work, not so they can tell you the answers. If the helpers don't know, they can go to Jennifer (since she can read). If she doesn't know, she'll come and ask me and if I don't know I'll go and ask the principal."

A second major emphasis in this first "rug talk" was reading. The teacher asked "Who can already read?" and recorded on paper the names of the children who raised their hands. (Only one of the six who raised their hands could actually read.) She then talked to the children about learning to read and focused on how difficult but rewarding the task is:

T: "Reading is working, everybody has to know how to work for themselves."

T: "If you don't know your color words, don't worry about it. We'll learn them.

In examining the events of the first day of school the teacher seemed to accomplish several tasks which she did not explicitly state, but were apparent in examining this data. First, she was careful to create a comfortable, accepting relationship with the children. She
began to weave a social relationship with them by using several strategies:

1) She acknowledged and accepted each child as a unique individual:
   T: "Remind me to call you T.J. instead of Thomas."
   C: "I'm going to bring you an apple as soon as I get red ones."
   T: "You don't have to bring me an apple; having you is the best thing."

2) She attempted to create an environment in which the children could feel free to try new activities, make mistakes and take guesses without the fear of being wrong:
   T: "Don't worry if you don't get it just right."
   T: "It doesn't matter if you miss something. You don't learn anything unless you miss something."
   T: "Good guessing!"

3) In order to reinforce the establishment of a "risk-free" environment, the teacher tried to show the children that guessing and making mistakes is also something teachers (consequently, adults) do.
   T: "I forget an awful lot of things. I forget more things than all of the kids in this room put together."
   T: "If you make a mistake, don't worry about it. I make 1000 mistakes a day. Sometimes we keep count of them.

---

5 C: Child
C: "My dad didn't want me to grow up!" (Teacher responds with a short story about her father when she was little. The story ends when she was yelled at and received a spanking for doing something wrong.)

These strategies used by the teacher are pointed out here because they directly relate to the events of the first day of school. The strategies used by the teacher, along with the children's perceptions of some of the events will be expanded in Chapter V.

A Day in October

(8:30 A.M.) When the children arrive at their desks, their morning seat work is waiting for them. Each child's workbook and ditto pages have been selected according to the teacher's judgment of the individual child's ability. They sit down and begin to work. When all children have arrived Mrs. Clark interrupts their work to take the lunch count. At 9:00 she suggests that they finish up and prepare to do another activity. The helpers for the day collect the papers.

(9:00 A.M.) The teacher calls the names of the children who will work on "Science" (Individualized Science, 1972) today and those who should go to the reading circle. Some children take their science workbooks and find a tape recorder and earphones. They work with a partner, listen to the tape and write the response into their science workbooks. They work independently unless they have a mechanical failure with the tape recorder.

The teacher takes a group of children to the reading circle to play a game. She has a pack of flash cards with words on them and the first child begins by reading the word on the card. Jeff reads
"sad;" the teacher nods and smiles. The next word is "you" and Jeff calls out "the" (pretending to sound it out). Since Jeff missed this word another child was called on to supply the word and Jeff goes to the caboose of the train to wait for his turn again. Had he gotten three words right in a row, he could have returned to his desk.

(10:00 A.M.) The children are seated at their desks again and Mrs. Clark begins to talk to the group about the papers they did the day before. She points out some papers that were well done and discusses other common errors people are making. Then each child receives all of the papers he has completed the day before in morning seatwork. All of the errors have been circled or checked and the child's task is to correct the errors. When he is finished, he may have his paper checked by the teacher and begin his choice of free time activities.

(10:10 A.M.) The children engage in a variety of activities during this period since they are free to choose activities for themselves. Four boys have elected to build a town and bridge with the large blocks. A girl has taken her Sullivan workbook (Programed Reading, 1973) into the treehouse while two other girls read to each other underneath. Several children are drawing pictures on the floor using fat magic markers, one is painting at the easel and two are playing dominos. One child is working with the teacher today since he had difficulty making the corrections on his papers from the day before.

(10:45 A.M.) The children walk silently in single file to the library which is at the other end of the building. Today is Wednesday and they have been scheduled into the library for thirty minutes. They
assemble on the rug in the center of the library and the librarian reads them Mr. Wiggle's Book and talks about how important it is to take care of books. During the remaining part of the library period the children are free to choose one book from the shelves and check it out for one week.

(11:15 A.M.) The teacher asks that the children take out their math workbooks and turn to page 26. The teacher explains the directions and several problems are worked through as a group. The children are given ten minutes to finish the page and place it in the teacher's basked.

(12:00 A.M.) The class assembles in the reading circle (some are on chairs and some on the floor). The student teacher reads them a story, The King, the Mouse and the Cheese. This book was chosen because one of the children brought it in to school that morning. During the story the student teacher invites the children to predict how the king will remedy his persistent problems. At the end of the reading, she asks, "Who can retell the whole story?" and one child volunteers. Other children are encouraged to fill in the parts she omitted.

(12:15 P.M.) Lunch

(12:45 P.M.) Recess (Either outside on the playground or in the gym in inclement weather).

(1:15 P.M.) The blue group is asked to come to the reading circle while the other children are working on math papers at their seats. The teacher asks several questions about the story they read yesterday and then calls their attention to page 28. She assigns
parts for "Sam's Big Fish" (Houghton Mifflin, 1976) and they read the story aloud taking turns according to assigned parts. The children are encouraged to make up their own questions about what they have read and the other children answer their peers questions with some prompting and prodding from the teacher.

(2:20 P.M.) The children prepare to go home. They put all of their papers in a take home folder, put their chairs on top of their desks, put on their coats and get in line to leave the room.

(2:30 P.M.) Dismissal

Summary

A description of the school and classroom setting in which this study took place is contained in this chapter. Events of the first day of school are described in some detail in order to observe the teacher and children as they begin to establish social relationships and establish classroom rules. Descriptions of a morning and afternoon in October are included to illustrate the typical events in the participants' school day.
CHAPTER V
CLASSROOM PARTICIPANTS AND EVENTS

Two Children in the Classroom

Amber

One of the children chosen for this study is a female (see Chapter III for a description of how the sample children were chosen). Amber has one brother, age 4, and both of the children live with their parents in a sub-division in the community; the children are adopted. Her mother is a former first grade teacher and her father has a white collar position. The family owns their own home.

Amber also attended Kindergarten at Concord Elementary School. On the locally developed Achievement Kindergarten Inventory, she scored in the 98 percentile. According to the Kindergarten teacher Amber was "a good student" who "tried hard." This teacher reported that Amber "picked up readiness easily" and had only one "inadequacy" which she described as eye-hand coordination.

The kindergarten teacher reported that she would rank Amber in the upper middle of the class which she sent on to the first grade.\(^6\) Amber's social development was good; the teacher reported that she makes friends easily and seems to be independent enough not to "hang on her mother."

---

\(^6\) This ranking of the child in the class was not elicited by the interviewer.
Amber's mother and father were excited that she was placed in this particular classroom. They felt that Amber was excited about the teacher and school and had only one "slump" after Christmas when she was reluctant to return to school.

Amber's parents reported that she has always had a strong interest in books. Her mother read to her at a very young age and she developed favorite books by the age of two. By the age of four, Amber could recite all of the text of simple Dr. Seuss books which she "thought she was reading" At this stage she was able to recognize some printed words in context such as words in television advertisements as well as familiar print in the environment in McDonald's and Kentucky Fried Chicken logos. But, her mother reported, she did not know "actual words" such as "and" and "the." Even though she knew the alphabet before she went to school, she "could not actually read in a book."

Amber's mother subscribed to book clubs, bought books as gifts, took her to the library for story hour and read to her often in the first five years at home. Since Amber was read to frequently, she "read" to others in turn. As an only child she played school and read to her baby dolls. When her brother arrived, Amber read to him frequently and by April of 1980 her mother reported that Amber had taught her four year old brother to read.

Her mother felt that the major influence in Amber's rapid reading development over the first year of school was the teacher's emphasis in phonics. This fact is worth noting in view of the strong reading
background provided in the home as well as Amber's intuitive knowledge that meaning in reading is always a primary concern. In her mother's words, "She always thinks about what she's reading. She looks at the pictures and decides what would make good sense." (This observation is supported through an analysis of Amber's oral reading miscues.)

The parents were very mindful of their daughter's "place" in this classroom. To illustrate how well Amy was developing in reading, they offered this example: "they're in the second grade book." They explained that "everyone would like to see their child be number one in the class" but "we accept her for what she is and try to get her to work to her ability." Parents' perceptions of where their child ranked in relation to other children in the class can be traced to the teacher's perception and will be further developed in a later section of this report.

Amber was six years and five months old on the first day of first grade. From the beginning Amber's attitude toward reading was that it was "fun." Amber has a strong positive image of herself as a reader. She testified that she is a "pretty good" reader and that in order to read one should "just read the title." When asked how she learned to read she offered an insightful response: "I found out for myself."

Amber likes to indulge herself in activities she enjoys. She "hates work" and work to Amber is doing math papers which are "stupid and hard." Amber's favorite part of school is playing ("We play after we do our work") and her favorite activity during free time is painting rainbows and clowns. In January Amber refused to read a list of words
for this researcher because in her words "I hate doing just plain words. I only read in books."

Tommy

The second child described in this report is a six year old male who was also placed in Mrs. Clark's room for first grade. Tommy lives in the same subdivision as Amber, a white middle class neighborhood in the suburb of a midwestern city. Tommy has two younger sisters, one of whom has a severe learning disability which doctors have indicated was caused by some unknown event during the mother's pregnancy. Tommy's mother does not work and his father has a white collar position.

Tommy attended Concord Elementary School for Kindergarten and, in fact, was in the same class with Amber. Tom scored in the 82 percentile on the Kindergarten teacher's Readiness Inventory. The teacher recalled that Tom was a "medium" student academically who had speech and serious motor problems. She described Tom as a cheerful, happy child who "didn't appear to have problems with reading."

However, this kindergarten teacher's assessment and predictions concerning Tom's future reading development are worth noting. She indicated that in future years "he would never be in the top reading group" which was due primarily to his "immaturity." She indicated that his drawings did not reflect detail or correct size proportions; he had a short attention span and was "antsy" and did "babyish" things.

Tom's parents were intensely interested in his academic development. They were happy to have their son in this teacher's first grade
classroom since "she has such a good reputation for teaching kids to read." Tom's parents indicated that they read to him when he was younger but that much of their time was taken up by their disabled daughter, and they were not able to work with him as frequently as they would have liked. Tom's mother, feeling almost guilty about this fact, reported that during first grade she worked with Tom everyday after school on his reading.

Tom always liked books but did not develop "favorites" until the age of five, according to his parents. Tom's own perceptions of how he learned to read were vague ("I don't know") but his understandings of what is involved in reading became obvious. Tom said he liked to read only "if the words are easy" and his mother "tells me the sight words" which he doesn't know in a book. After signing out a library book one day in November, Tom rejected the book: "I should choose a new one because I don't know any of these words."

This emphasis on knowing how to pronounce all of the words correctly while reading is also in evidence in his parents' responses. When Tom was five they purchased a book for him; they reported, "Tom can read the whole thing now except for a couple words he didn't know and he sounded them out and got them right." Tom's father stated that when Tom reads he "tries to go by the sound of the words printed there. In fact most of the time it sounds like a word that's completely made up." His mother agrees that "If it doesn't make sense he'll still say the word" but "it's really hard for me to explain to Tom why some words are pronounced the way they are. It's just that way." Tom's over
dependence on grapho-phonemic information as well as his "no-response" strategies will be examined in a section of this report dealing with the analysis of oral reading miscues.

Tom was also placed in speech therapy classes at Concord Elementary School because, according to the speech teacher, he had an "articulation problem." She met with Tom two times each week for 20 minutes "to correct the 'l' sound in conversational speech." In a parent conference with the speech teacher, the parents were instructed to show Tom "the correct tongue placement" while he reads "l" words to them at home.

Changes Over Time

Formal Measures

Clay (1972) has used the term "emergent reading" to refer to a period of time which includes the child's first encounters with books and printed material. It is during this period that early concepts about literacy and attitudes toward reading are developed.

Since the time frame of this study began at age six for the sample children, an attempt is made here to describe the early reading experiences of the two children in terms of several formal measures. A previous section of this report describes the children's reading background as remembered by parents.

During the first week of school both children were administered the Concepts About Print Test: Sand (Clay, 1972). Table 2 lists raw scores and stanines for the two subjects for September and April.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>September Raw Score</th>
<th>September Stanine*</th>
<th>April Raw Score</th>
<th>April Stanine</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Amber</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tom</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Stanines are based on a group of 320 children ages 5-7 in 1968 in New Zealand.

It is interesting to note that the overall scores for both children increased over time indicating a growing awareness of the conventions of printed language as well as the teacher's reading instruction register. Both of the children knew fundamental items on the test during both administrations such as the front of the book, the direction of print and the fact that print carries a message.

Items which Tom knew at the end of first grade, but not in the beginning were word by word matching and the location of words and letters. In both cases the child is asked to display a knowledge of the term "word" which may have been vague to him at the beginning of the first grade.

Both children were vague about terms such as "question mark" and "comma" in September, but only Amber displayed correct responses to these items by April. In addition, Amber indicated that she was paying more attention to the print by the end of first grade than Tom by scoring correct responses on items such as a change in letter and
word order and pointing correctly to specific words such as "was" and "no."

Another measure which was administered to both children in September, 1979 is Taking Inventory of Children's Literary Background (Huck, 1966). A total possible raw score for the Huck Inventory is 60; Amber scored 28 correct and Tom scored 15. These scores seem to support the fact that Amber had a wider, more intense exposure to literature than did Tom. This fact is also supported through the parent interviews.

Samples of the children's oral reading were also collected over the months of data collection. In some cases materials for them to read were provided in the form of a library book, story from a basal reader or a story typed on plain paper. Once the children were invited to bring their "favorite" book or story to read aloud.

An attempt was made early in the school year to elicit "text approximations" (McKenzie, 1976, 1979). After hearing The Carrot Seed read to them individually in early September, they each tried to "read" the book by themselves. Amber's attempt at reading this book showed that she was relying on her prior knowledge of the story (having just heard it), on the picture which told the story and partially on the

---

Based on this researcher's experience in eliciting text approximations from emergent readers, the books chosen for this reading must have several elements in common. The books must have a simple but strong story line and pictures which clearly illustrate the text. It is also desirable for the text to contain some elements of repetition. Repeated events or repeated linguistic structures seem to interest and amuse young readers.
text itself. In the following examples Amber relies mainly on the text but in the example which follows she easily and naturally resorts to information in the pictures in order to "read" the book:

**TEXT:** A little boy planted a carrot seed.

**Amber:** Once a little boy planted a carrot seed.

**TEXT:** Everyday the little boy pulled up the weeds and sprinkled the ground with water.

**Amber:** He pulled the weeds and watered it.

Amber made these "approximations" or substitutions of what she thought the text should say easily, assuming that this was a natural way for her to read aloud. Tom, on the other hand, became very nervous when he was asked to read the book stating that he was not sure he could. When he found that his approximations were accepted as "reading," he became greatly relieved and proceeded to read the story entirely from the pictures with great enthusiasm two more times by his own request. He read in a way which carried the meaning in his own language:

**TEXT:** Everyday the little boy pulled up the weeds around the seed and sprinkled the ground with water.

**Tom:** He pulled the weeds everyday and watered water everyday.

**TEXT:** A carrot came up just as the little boy had known it would.

**Tom:** And then he had a carrot and he was able to wheel it. (Based on a picture of a wheelbarrow.)
But by the end of the same month, September, Tom was extremely reluctant to try approximating the text again while reading The Very Hungry Caterpillar:

TEXT: In the light of the moon a little egg lay on a leaf.

Tom: IS IN THE LITTLE I don't want to read this.

After a brief discussion with him in which he was encouraged to "read what you think the book says" and "use the pictures to help you" Tom read the entire book, laughing frequently:

TEXT: On Thursday he ate through four strawberries, but he was still hungry.

Tom: On Tuesday he eated through four strawberries and still was hungry. (Laughs)

TEXT: He built a small house, called a cocoon, around himself. He stayed inside for more than two weeks. Then he nibbled a hole in the cocoon, pushed his way out and ... he was a beautiful butterfly.

Tom: He was fat and he went into a little hole and he growed to be a big pretty butterfly.

Once Tom was assured that he did not have to read every word of the text correctly, he was able to enjoy the book. But Tom had to be encouraged to attempt approximations. Amber, on the other hand, saw risk taking and guessing at the text as an important part of reading the text.

A few months later these same differences were evident in the analysis of the children's oral reading miscues. Amber would attempt to read material which she felt she could handle and would guess at
unknown words based frequently on their semantic acceptability and then on their grapho-phonic similarity. Tom, on the other hand, was reluctant to read any material in which he could not pronounce most of the words. When he did guess at words, his attempts were most always guided by grapho-phonic constraints. Examples of the children's typical miscue patterns are contained in Figures 3 and 4. An example of the Reading Miscue Inventory Coding Sheet (Goodman, Burke, 1971, pp. 40-41) can be found in Appendix E.

These examples show that Amber's oral reading miscues are almost always grammatically and semantically acceptable which in turn results in few, if any, changes in meaning. The number of times Amber's miscues were grapho-phonically similar seemed to increase over time, but she never lost the emphasis on meaning during oral reading.

It was very difficult in the later months of school to collect oral reading miscues from Tommy because he refused to read anything unless he knew all of the words. As a result, his non-response rate remained high and he continued to attempt to "sound out" words or guess at unknown words based largely on grapho-phonic information. Meaning in Tom's reading was secondary to "knowing the words." Whenever Tom was asked to read out loud for this researcher, he would read a few sentences and then stop saying, "I don't know much of these words."

Writing

Reading and writing have a definite, yet relatively unstudied, relationship. Clay (1975) points out that "the child who engages in creative writing is manipulating the units of written language--letters,
Sample Reading Miscue Inventory Coding Sheet for Amber 1/80

Figure 3
Sample Reading Miscue Inventory Coding Sheet for Tommy 1/80

Figure 4
words, sentence types—and is likely to be gaining some awareness of how these can be combined to convey unspoken messages" (p. 2). Writing certainly demands that the child pay attention to the details of print, the letter features and sequences, which in turn contribute to the process of reading.

Most of the children could print their own names on the first day of school. But flexibility about the direction of print (Clay, 1975, p. 26) can be seen in one child's signature on her lunch ticket:

YERAC

The classroom teacher had definite ideas about writing which influenced the kind of writing the children produced as well as their own perceptions of the function of writing. The teacher's theory about the function of writing is reflected in the following comment: "She's learning that she can write down something and get the message across to somebody without saying it and then she can read it..." This view of writing to convey a message was not practiced frequently in the classroom. On the fourth day of school, the children began writing lessons. The formation of their letters seemed to be of utmost importance to the teacher. In a discussion of Amber's writing the teacher observed "She doesn't form every single letter right and like her B's don't go all the way around in a circle yet. It's shaky.
They're more sure of themselves when they're more mature."

The following is a sample of writing which Amber "practiced"
during the first month of school:

```
*d a d d d d d d d d
```

In a similar appraisal of Tommy's writing the teacher commented
"I never thought Tommy would ever get a word on the line at the
beginning of the year. You can tell the maturity of a child by
looking at their writing." A sample of Tommy's writing during
September shows this "insecurity" and "immaturity" according to the
teacher:

```
* c c c c c c c c o a a d d
```

The teacher's emphasis on penmanship was again expressed in her
comments to the class one October morning when she announced that
papers with "small circles that don't touch the lines" and "no spaces
between words" would not be acceptable. Equating writing with penman-
ship was quickly adopted by the children:
INTERVIEWER: What is writing?

Tommy: Writing is supposed to be printed nice.

Despite the emphasis on practicing the form of the letters in the first grade classroom, Amber insisted that she already knew how to write before first grade: "I taught myself by scribbling. At nursery school I had help. First I started to scribble then I started to really write." Tommy experimented with letters and words during free time very early in September. While he wrote, he commented, "These are letters:"

```
O AISP
```

"These are words. This says 'mom':"

```
T
```

And his final comment about the paper he was writing that morning was, "I feel like making my name."

As the months passed the children were frequently required to copy sentences from the board or to write down dictated sentences on lined paper. Frequently, Mrs. Clark assigned a writing topic such as
"clowns" and the children would write a story about clowns. The following example was written by Tommy in March:

A Clown
A clown is funny.
A circus about you and me.

During the teacher's general comments to the class about various pieces of writing which had been completed, she subtly revealed to the class what was important in these writing assignments:

T: "She filled up the space."

T: "She has more than one sentence. It's a story."

T: "He has only one page. What else could he say if he wanted to make the story bigger?"

T: "Put this in your story folder in case you can't think of a story sometime."

The teacher's implication is that writing is neat penmanship in great quantity with no mention of content.
The children were encouraged to use writing to express their feelings at the end of a class debate in January. Children choose sides according to whether they were "for" or "against" pets. After a heated debate, they were given time to collect their thoughts and summarize these in writing. The teacher took the opportunity to correct every "error" in the writing without regard to its contents. (See Figures 4 and 5 for Amber's and Tom's responses.)

It is interesting to note that the teacher marked all of the errors on the children's papers because she feels a sense of obligation to call attention to the errors; this is the only way they will learn to write "correctly." Development in writing according to Mrs. Clark is not a gradual process but an immediately corrected product:

T: "I feel like I have to help them correct their stories and get capitals and periods and show them how to spell things. But I like it better before they correct them.

I love their stories before they're corrected while they're spelled wrong and a lot of times the way they're spelled is the way I would spell it if I had to make up the rules."

The Teacher and the Children

The Social Environment

In chapter four of this report, the events of the first day of school were described and it was pointed out that one of the teacher's underlying tasks for the first day of school was to make the children feel welcome and accepted as individuals. This emphasis on establishing strong social relationships with the children continued after the first day of school.
Pets Are Nice I like cats. I love cats. The cats are good. Cats are cats and cats are good.
Cats Ate the Bad.

Cats go to the table. They make a mess. They walk on the floor. They eat the bread. They scratch at people.
The teacher emphasized the importance of letting the children know they were "special" through her verbal and non-verbal behaviors in the classroom. In the teacher's words,

"I just think you can get positive results if you can let them know that you're interested in them as a person....

I think it's neat when they start writing little things on here, like 'Do you like me, Mrs. C___? I say, 'I do not like you M___A___, ... I love you.'"

The importance Mrs. Clark placed on "showing kids I care" could be manifested in a number of ways. Putting her arm around them, patting one on the shoulder, hitting another on the head with a book are all ways to "let them know they're there and you like them" according to the teacher.

Besides calling each child prior to the first day of school, Mrs. Clark frequently attends birthday parties, organizes skating and big wheel parties and allows children to "help" her after school and then drives them home to chat with parents. A collage of photographs of her own family hangs in the classroom and her husband and five year old granddaughter are periodic visitors in the classroom.

This warm social climate pervades the academic areas as well; frequent comments on the children's work remind them that they are important to her. Amber received this note on one of her workbook pages one November morning:
When Tommy bought the teacher a Christmas gift, she promptly replied with a thank you note and invited him to stay after school with her:

"Thank you for the nice potteries, dishwells, and dish towel set! They are exactly right for my kitchen and I love them!

Maybe you could stay after school and help me sometime. I'd like to take you home and see the baby. Bring a note if you can stay (not Tuesday or Friday).

I hope you had a wonderful Christmas and I hope you have a Happy New Year!

With love,

[Signature]"
Mrs. Clark frequently handed out "special person" awards to the children and carried on some private correspondence with them occasionally. In the following note she reinforces social relationships and reminds the child some of the classroom rules in a way that is not threatening to the child:

As a result of her efforts to create an accepting, non-threatening social climate in the classroom, the children responded positively. Both Amber and Tommy stated that they were happy in the classroom and were very fond of Mrs. Clark. The following note written during free time, is typical of the written comments the children made to the teacher:
Similarly, parents sensed that the teacher was a loving person who was trying to help their children. Among the many positive and complimentary notes written by parents to this teacher is this Christmas note from Amber's mother:

Mrs C

A little thank you for helping Anna in everything this term.
I was so pleased she's just loved school and
you played a big part in that attitude.
I think that you are GREAT!!
Thank you for everything! Merry Christmas.
A Supportive Environment

Besides making the children feel secure through strong social relationships with her, the teacher created another kind of security in this classroom. An attempt was made by the teacher to have each child experience some success academically and to provide enough sources of information so that the child could always work his way out of a difficult academic situation.

Mrs. Clark's idea of meeting each child on his own level is reflected in the following comment:

"You have to find something that they're really good at. And they're all keeping up. If somebody was just a dummy and was sitting over there, I mean we're giving them enough support that even ____ and ____ are keeping up."

Mrs. Clark's primary reason for using a variety of reading materials in the classroom is that "no matter what they can do, they can still do something."

Positive reinforcement is of vital importance in this supportive environment according to Mrs. Clark. In a newsletter to parents dated October 1, 1979 she shared an idea of her own positive reinforcement which could help the child to read:

NOTES IN LUNCHBOXES
A short POSITIVE note (preferably that your child can read) is nice in the lunchbox occasionally.

Just "I love you" or something of that nature encourages your child to read.
Verbal comments during classroom lessons were another means of making the children feel secure about the academic task before them:

T:  "You're getting good."
T:  "Boy, you're fast."
T:  "Right! That's good thinking."
T:  You're smart as a whip."
T:  "We're doing this now because Tommy's good at this."
T:  "If you have a lot of trouble don't worry because we'll help you tomorrow."

During many academic tasks the teacher reminded the children of all of the sources of information available to them. In a whole class lesson on how to form the number two, Mrs. Clark illustrated using the chalkboard and then pointed out that if they ever needed to see a number two, there were twos on the bulletin board, on the clock, on the number lines taped on their desks and on the top of the chalkboard.

The system of appointing two class members per day to act as helpers was instituted by Mrs. Clark so that the "child will never be trapped and not know what to do." In her opinion "there's very little cheating since everybody's doing their own thing."

Expectations

The children in this classroom are faced with certain expectations which influence their behavior. From the first day of school the teacher made it clear that "hard work" would be expected from each student who wanted to learn. (See Chapter IV for a description of the first day of school.)
Mrs. Clark's determination in teaching each child to read, regardless of obstacles, is revealed in the following statement made to the investigator:

"It's important to me and you're going to learn it. You know whether they want to or not, kid, you know. If I can help you, I will help you and you're going to learn how, but, you have to learn yourself; I can't do it. I told them if I could pour it in their ear or give them a pill or something I sure would do it, but if I could do the work for them I sure would do it, but it's just a lot of hard work goes into learning how to read."

The teacher conveyed these same feelings to the children on various occasions. She often made the analogy that their parents had work to do to earn a living and school was their work. She pointed out that babies in cribs are the only ones who don't have to work.

To promote this "work ethic" the children were given a certain amount of paper work to do in a certain amount of time. Morning seat work, which was on their desks when they arrived at school, took twenty to thirty minutes to complete. Those who did not finish were given a few more minutes later in the morning, and then were permitted to go outside for recess only when the paper had been completed:

T: "Get done so you can go out to recess."

T: "If we get the pokey ones done, we can all go out to recess."

T: "I'm trying to teach you to get your work done correctly and on time."

T: "Let's get finished with these papers. The four of you are keeping us from going out to recess."
On the second day of school Tommy did not go out to recess since he was working slowly and having difficulty matching the words with the colors on the paper he was coloring. (See Figure 2.)

Another child was working very slowly during the first few weeks of school which prompted the teacher to send this note to his parents:

Dear Mr. & Mrs. [Name],

Please have a firm but loving talk about working quietly and finishing work on time. I am doing more talking than working. There appears to be no need even though I am one of our brightest people. First habits and self discipline need to be improved. Many times first grade is the first time a child really has to do things on his own.

Give him responsibility on his back and expect him to do them in a reasonable amount of time.

Very sincerely,
If the children did not finish their work on time, it was usually because they were talking to the other children during work time. The teacher's public comments reminding students not to talk were in abundance during every school day and throughout every daily event except free-time:

T: "You people are so quiet. You're just great."
T: "I like the way you people are working quietly."
T: "I hear somebody."
T: "Let's not have the talking. Let's try to get this little book out of the way.
T: "A big thing you have to learn in first grade is to do your thinking in your head."

Public comments by the children were rare in whole group sessions. The children responded verbally with answers to the teacher's questions, or the teacher employed strategies to have the children respond without talking:

T: "Raise your hand if you know what month this is."
T: "Please take our your science folders."
C: "What color is it?"
T: "I'm not listening when you talk out."

The children's use of oral language was very limited during daily routines. (See also Chapter IV for "no talking" times in the lunch room.) Occasionally, and especially toward the end of the year, Mrs. Clark encouraged the children to participate in puppet shows which reading groups presented to the other grades.
Getting one's work done on time, and doing it quietly, contributes to what the teacher calls "maturity" or "being ready for first grade." In the following comment made to a parent during a conference, the teacher points out how "immature" this first grade class is as a group:

"They're really nice kids but they're all about the same. They're kind of immature and not really ready to sit down and work. Even our top people are immature. We don't have top people to take over small groups. No class leader. No one for the other kids to emulate. Some are on the verge of hyperactivity, I think."

Amber and Tommy were also labeled "immature" by the teacher. It is interesting to note that both sets of parents stated that their biggest worry about their children was immaturity.

T: "Amber is a little immature but not drastic. She's not really ready to sit down and do this stuff. She should be playing instead of trying to learn to read and do math."

T: (about Tommy) "He didn't seem ready on the first day of school. He's doing great for him; he's just less mature."

Some other elements of immaturity identified by the teacher over the first few months of the school year were thumb-sucking, kicking over blocks, staying on pitch in music class, staying on the lines in writing and coloring, as well as those previously mentioned, working hard and working quietly.

In late November a newsletter which was sent home to parents commented on their children's progress in this area: (See Appendix D for a copy of the entire newsletter of 11/27/79.)
Most of us are really growing up now. We have very few names on the board and very few baby noises. Most of us get our work done on time and nearly all of us work really hard. Nearly a third of the year is gone and we have a long way to go, but the hardest part is over. We have had some of nearly everything we have all year.

Reading and the Teacher

Mrs. Clark places a great emphasis on teaching the children to read. In her words, "If they can't read then they're going to be in trouble." She admits that learning to read "takes time" and, given enough time, the children "catch on." Her implication is still that learning to read is hard work which must be accomplished before the child can gain pleasure from reading:

"Once they learn how to read then it opens up so much that they can read all these things that they really like to read and then reading becomes fun. Once, they've learned how to read, from then on it's gravy. Then they really enjoy it."

This teacher has definite ideas about what is involved in the process of learning to read. Beginning readers who have not been "helped" at home have a much more difficult time. Children "pick up words from TV or cans in grocery stores" she observes. In addition, they come to school knowing how to recognize and print their own names.

But the teacher's task, according to this first grade teacher, is to teach them phonics ("the tools of the trade") and drill them on sight words until they are recognized instantly by the child. This
necessary learning, then, is the "hard work" involved in learning to read. The process is complete when the child has mastered both of these tasks: "When phonics and sight words get together, they've got something there."

The teacher's role, according to Mrs. Clark, is to make these two tasks easy enough for the children to feel success, to reinforce what they learn and to make the children proud of themselves. Mrs. Clark is aware that not all children are ready to tackle these tasks on the first day of first grade, but all of the children are "expected" to perform:

"Some shouldn't start until eight or nine but in our society everybody is expected to do it and some have to struggle."

This task of learning to read is easier for some children than others. Mrs. Clark points out that "Better readers see more things in pictures, they understand more, they have a better vocabulary. _____ had no vocabulary at all!" Meeting individual needs in this process of learning to read is difficult for the teacher and the rate of reading through materials is often determined by how many children are at the same point in their development, according to the teacher's judgment:

"One girl is ready to start reading, but I don't have a group that is ready to start. So she'll just have to wait until I've got a group." Mrs. Clark is aware of the fact that "instruction should start where the child is and go on" but, she says "we don't do that in this building."
The teacher's purpose for providing a wide variety of reading materials is partially to compensate for this lack of attention to the individual child: "I don't feel bad because I have SRA and Sullivan for up to fourth grade" and, consequently, "everybody can do something."

Mrs. Clark rarely reads to the children because "the librarian reads to them" and there's too many of them who want to read." A frequent reading activity is to have a child read a book to the class which he brought from home. Discussion about the book, in the classroom or library, rarely occurs. Amber and Tommy pointed out that the "teacher only reads to us once in a while" but they both expressed a desire to hear her read more books to them. The parents, too, stopped reading to their children at home because, as Amber's mother stated "now that she can read, she reads to me."

In summary, the teacher feels the factors which will influence a child's "success or failure" in learning to read are maturity, emotional reasons, exposure at home before school, eye or ear problems and I.Q. Mrs. Clark felt that she was developing a positive attitude toward reading, but the paper work and skill work were still necessary: "They like to read but they don't like to do all of the skills things that go along with it. They don't like work pages." Interview data based on four different children from the class support her observation that the children disliked workbook pages.
Selected Reading Events and Their Perceived Meanings

Coloring Clowns and Color Words

When each child arrived at his desk on the second day of school a small colored balloon was pasted beside his name. Some of the balloons were red, some blue and some yellow. The teacher announced that "the color will tell you which reading group you're in."

These colored balloons were assigned largely on the child's performance in coloring the clown picture which was on his desk when he arrived on the first day of school. (Figure 2 includes a copy of the clown picture.) The teacher's rationale for having the children color the clown is to "find out at the beginning who needs help" and she adds that this activity tells me a lot about the children." In fact the teacher conducts this activity every year and then saves the pictures and hands them back to the children on the last day of first grade "to show them how much they've learned."

The child's ability to color pictures tells the teacher how "mature" the child is:

T: "K is reading now, but her coloring is like a two year old. This is a very immature type thing."

T: (to the investigator) "What kids colored last year was unbelievable in comparison to these kids this year.

T: (to the class) "This is R's clown. R is just learning how to color in the lines but that's very good for R. That doesn't mean that hers isn't good. It's very good for R. As long as she did her best, it's good."

(R was placed in the bottom reading group on the second day of school.)
Other information which seemed to be valuable to the teacher was whether or not the child colored the correct colors in the labeled spaces. Amber correctly colored a red nose, orange face and green collar. Her coloring did not go all in one direction but, for the most part, she stayed in the lines and worked quietly and quickly only leaving two small areas unfinished. Amber was placed in the middle reading group.

Learning to recognize color words on sight was the first reading task of each child in the room. Children were tested daily by the teacher with flash cards in the form of the color words. They received a certificate to that effect signed by the teacher which they could share with others in the room and then take home to their parents. Those children who could recognize the color words on the second day of school achieved status in the classroom and praise from the teacher.

Children who were still in the group learning their color words two weeks after the start of school were asked to try to pronounce all of the words. When two or three were read incorrectly the child was often asked to return to his seat or to go to the back of the line and "try again next time."

The Treehouse

The treehouse was a comfortable, private reading area situated high in a corner of the room. On the second day of school the teacher announced to the children that "only people who were reading in Sullivan book two or higher can go in the treehouse to read during free-time." In addition, she pointed out that while in the treehouse
they should be reading their Sullivan workbooks (Buchanan, 1973). It was also explained that Sullivan workbooks could be signed out and should be taken home and read. These workbooks were used by the teacher and "lowest" children in small groups only occasionally. The children were responsible for reading a certain level book on their own time or during free-time and, when they thought they were ready, could have the teacher "check them" (listen to them read) to see if they could move on to the next book.

The first child who was given the privilege of reading in the treehouse was Lisa who also was selected to look for the lollipops on the first day of school because of her ability to read. Lisa also was given the job of first classroom helper and first librarian:

T: "The reason I'm starting with Lisa is that she knows how to write a little better than most of us."

One day after explaining the treehouse privilege to the class, Mrs. Clark repeated the explanation. But after this second explanation she publicly announced that Lisa could already read in book number four, could take home any of the book numbers one, two or three, and was the only one so far who could read in the treehouse. Lisa read in the treehouse during free time everyday until another child was also able to enter.

It is worth noting that every child who was interviewed during the months of data collection, as well as the teacher, stated that Lisa was "the best reader in the class." Lisa identified herself as "the best reader" and when asked if she thought the other children thought so too she responded, "Yes, they can see how good I read."
Getting into the treehouse to read was "a big thing to Amber" according to her mother. Amber watched two girls who were reading in the treehouse interact one morning in September. The two girls decided to decorate the walls by hanging pictures they painted. Some of their conversation focused on the Sullivan workbooks:

\[ C_1: \text{"I'm on book four."} \]
\[ C_2: \text{"I skipped that one."} \]

Amber listened and watched for eight minutes and then took a Sullivan book number one and exchanged a few words with the two girls:

\[ \text{Amber: "I'm just going to sit on the step."} \]
\[ \text{C: "O.K. But we're the only ones allowed up here."} \]

From time to time the teacher assured the other children that they would be able to read in the treehouse:

\[ \text{T: "If you're not on Sullivan book two, it won't be long before you are all in Sullivan book two."} \]
\[ \text{T: "Pretty soon everyone can go in the treehouse. It won't be long because you people are really working."} \]

Often, the teacher would "check" the children and then make a public announcement: "We have three boys and two girls ready to read in the treehouse."

Tommy was one of the last children to be able to read in the treehouse. He found the language of the Sullivan workbooks difficult to read:

\[ \text{TEXT: This is a mat.} \]
\[ \text{Tom: T hut hut is is a pat to} \]
Amber seemed to have had little trouble with the style of these materials:

TEXT: This is a pan on a can
Is this mat tan?

She read the sentences easily and, in fact, began to imitate the linguistic structure in her own writing during free time:

My Baby
My Baby's name is Billy boy
Is my Baby's name Billy boy?

Both Amber and Tommy were very excited when they were permitted to read in the treehouse.

Reading Groups

Some description of how children are placed in reading groups is contained in an earlier section of this report (Coloring Clowns, p. 103). After the initial placement of children into reading groups the teacher uses other sources of information as the weeks progress to help decide
where the children "fit." Observations, workbook pages, how well they count and recite the names of letters, sight words and phonics checks and Kindergarten teacher's recommendations also are taken into consideration.

The teacher's ranking and placement of children into reading groups is consistent from the first day of school to April. That is, a comparison of members of the high, middle and low groups from August to April shows all but four of the children in the same group on both dates. When a child does move to another group, the movement is never more than one level, i.e., from low to middle or from middle to high. Movements are made only by "borderline" children who could function in either group. Children who are solidly high, middle or low in the teacher's opinion, do not change reading groups.

The children quickly learned what the status of each of the reading groups was based largely on its members. That is, children who could already go to the treehouse, who were picked to be helpers and who were librarians were in the same group. Similarly, children who were still missing color words and received drill in making the sounds of the letters were in another group.

The teacher also gave status to certain groups through her public comments to the class:

T: "Let's see, Dennis are you still in the yellow group? I think I'll change you to the red group. You're doing so well. I'll have to change your balloon."

T: "I don't think I'll pick a yellow group helper this morning."

---

Over the eight months of data collection the teacher "ranked" the children in the class 183 times.
The children were aware of which group they were in and seemed to be aware of the activities of the other reading groups:

INTERVIEWER: "What can you tell me about your reading group?"

Tommy: "I'm in the baddest. I'd like to be in the other reading group because it's the best reading group. They read a lot. They're on higher books. You learn hard words."

Amber: "There's a good one and a not-so-good one. Mine's a pretty good one. I'm happy."

Pat: "I'm in the yellow group; that's the top group. We read in reading group. We read books."

One child who moved away in the middle of the year and wrote to Mrs. Clark decided that her reading group's position in her new classroom was newsworthy:
February 26, 1980

Dear Mrs. C.,

Thank you for the

Valentines and papers.

My school is open.

We have gym outside
every day. We have lunch
at 11:00. School starts at
8 am to 2:45 pm. I’m in
the best reading

group. We have

art once a week.

Love G
During the first weeks of school all of the reading groups learned phonics rules and sight words. The top reading group was introduced to the basal reader in September while it was October before the low reading group read "stories."

A typical reading group lesson began with the teacher calling the children to the reading corner:

T: "O.K. Blue group, why don't you come on over quietly."

The children assembled in the reading corner and Mrs. Clark gave each child a book instructing them to turn to page 28. The reading lesson opened with a few questions by the teacher which served to review what ever had been covered in reading group the day before:

T: "Who remembers what happened in the story yesterday?"

T: "On page 28, who is this boy with short black hair?"

The focus of this review seemed to be to help the children recall "what happened" in the story on a literal level.

The next event during a typical reading group was to take turns reading aloud or to assign parts to be read aloud if the story was broken into lines spoken by specific characters:

T: "O.K. Let's assign parts and try to read this. John you be Sam. Tommy you're Andy."

Oral reading during reading groups was a frequent activity. The teacher often reminded the children during this reading group activity about how important it is to read aloud with expression:
T: "Now read that like you really mean it. He wouldn't say it like that; he'd be really excited about it. Read it again."

T: "Try to make it sound like somebody's talking and get some good expression in it."

Reading loud enough for everyone in the group to hear was a problem for some children.

T: "Linda you read that page very well but we couldn't hear you. Could you read it over again for the others to hear?"

During oral reading Tommy had difficulty and frequently called on the teacher for help:

Tommy: (5 seconds of silence)

T: "Here"

Tommy: "Here we"

(3 seconds of silence)

"What's that word?"

T: "are"

Tommy: "Here we are Becky."

T: "What is that word now Tommy? Try and sound it out. Can anybody help him? Raise your hand if you can tell what that word is."

During this group oral reading exercise the teacher frequently reminded the children to devote their attention to the story being read aloud:

T: "O.K. Now, eyes on your books."

T: "Linda, if I called on you would you know the place?"

The teacher's purpose in conducting this daily oral reading activity was inherent in one of her comments to the reading group: "If everybody reads right along, then everybody will be able to read."
Early in the year reading groups read lists of letters or words in turn, usually in a game situation. When the child "missed" the word he sat down or forfeited his turn or did not get to shoot a pop gun as determined by the game situation. The teacher's rationale for having them read lists of words in the beginning has to do with context: "I don't encourage the use of context at the beginning since they can't see to the end of the sentence."

When children take turns reading aloud in a group, they frequently come to words which they cannot pronounce. The children's own professed strategies in coping with unknown words are interesting:

Amber: "Mrs. Clark tells me the word. Sometimes other kids tell me the word."

Amber: "My mom helps me if I have a long word. She tells me to sound it out. And I say I tried sounding it out 1000 times and I just don't know it. Then she tells me the word."

Tommy: "I just see what the sounds are."

Mrs. Clark reported that when the children are reading aloud she provides the "unimportant words," since "they get the same meaning anyway." But, she stated, "If it's a nonsense word 'real weird' then I say let's try it again." Observations during reading groups revealed that in both the high and low group Mrs. Clark frequently reminded students to "sound it out." Also, she provided many unknown words, or asked other children if they could help the reader. The children were rarely encouraged to make use of context or meaning to discover unknown words.
The low group often used markers to keep their place on the lines. The teacher's rationale for this practice was "usually I don't use markers, but this group is more immature than I've had for a long time." Other than the use of markers, the activities of the high, middle and low reading groups were the same after October. Before October, the middle and low groups read lists of letters and words and continued this activity for a longer period of time.

The third and final event during reading groups occurred when the teacher encouraged the children to read silently "with your eyes" and to make up questions which could then be put before the group. The questions posed by individual children were rarely altered or clarified by the teacher but were frequently repeated by her so that all of the children could hear the questions:

C: "What were they going to s-e at the zoo?"
C: "Who couldn't go to the zoo with Becky and Andy?"
C: "Where did the tiger want to go?"
T: "Where did the tiger want to go? Who knows? Raise your hand if you know."

The child who asked the question was then permitted to call on another child for the answer. This process of volunteering questions and answering others' questions was often dominated by a few children in the group. When this became obvious, the teacher tried to involve the children who were not volunteer or not paying attention:

T: "O.K. now you're doing great but its the same people all the time. What about the rest of you? Who hasn't asked a question yet?"
The questions asked by the children were similar to the teacher's review questions at the beginning of reading group in so far as they discussed the events in the story on a literal level.

In summary, reading groups from October to March for all "ability levels" met on the average of three times each week. Activities during reading groups consisted of a brief review of the previous day's story by the teacher, a longer period of oral reading by the children in a round robin fashion and a final short question and answer period which consisted of children posing and answering their own questions.

Phonics

Small group lessons in phonics were a daily routine in this classroom for the first three months of school. The teacher emphasized phonics because, without this instruction, a child trying to read would be "a builder trying to build without tools." She added, "So many of our kids aren't able to sound out anything. They just don't know so they're really at a disadvantage."

Consequently, this teacher required the children to work through 72 lap sheets by the end of the year. A lap sheet contained a list of words with some common phonetic element such as short "a" words. These sheets were sent home to parents and then signed and returned to the teacher when the parent felt his child could read all of the words on the list.

Many times during the day (i.e., not only during phonics lessons) the teacher gave advice as to how to sound out words:
T: "Here are two vowels. The first one says its own name."

T: "The e on the end is asleep but before it goes to sleep, it tells the other e to say its own name."

T: "That's called an outlaw word. It doesn't fit the rules. You can't sound it out."

Phonics lessons were held for groups of four to six children; each took his turn at calling out isolated words for the group. During the following group sessions Tommy squirmed, played with his belt, killed an ant and never made eye contact with this parent aide or another child:

Parent Aide: "O.K. on to Lionel." (Shows the word gun.)

(12 seconds of silence)

Parent Aide: "What's the first letter Lionel?"

Lionel: "G"

Parent Aide: "And how does a g sound?"

Lionel: "guh"

Parent Aide: "That's right. You're gonna have to talk louder so we all can hear. How does a u sound?"

(Silence)

Parent Aide: "Tommy"

Tom: "uh?"

Parent Aide: "That's right. Now what's the last letter?"

Tom: "N"

Parent Aide: "That's right. Now how does an N sound?"
Tom: "nuh"

Parent Aide: "O.K. Now put them all together."

(13 seconds of silence)

Parent Aide: "Let's all say it together, O.K.? How does the g sound?"

Children: (in unison) "guh"

Parent Aide: "guh, guh A u?"

Children: "Yah"

Parent Aide: "And an N?"

Children: "nuh"

Parent Aide: "Let's put it all together. Mary."

Mary: "Gun"

Parent Aide: "That's right the word's gun. Lionel didn't make it so we'll have to go on. O.K. next."

During these lessons a frequent strategy used by the teacher, student teacher and parent aides was to call on children who were not paying attention as a means of forcing their attention to the task. When phonics workbook pages were assigned, Tommy often found the work difficult:

T: (publicly) "Tommy if you need help, go to the helpers instead of copying off of your neighbor's paper."

Sometimes, as the teacher points out to the parent on the following worksheet, the pictures were too ambiguous for Tommy to name them correctly:
Children's performances on word calling tasks were often public knowledge:

T: (publicly to student teacher) "Did Janet come in because it was too hard or did she do them all?"

C: "That's not fair. (On a list of children who succeeded at a game.) You didn't put my name down."

Tommy: (aloud to class) "I went through the whole batch!"

T: "O.K. If you can get three of these words without missing you can go back to your seat."

During the second week of school, the teacher talked to the children about vowels:

"Vowels are important because you have to have a vowel in every syllable. Every part of a word has to have a vowel sound. So in Jenny's name she has two parts—the e and y. Boys and girls I'd better tell you that sometimes y is a vowel and sometimes W is a vowel."

Mrs. Clark often did the "the vowel cheer" for the children:

"A E I O U! Vowels! Vowels! Vowels!" During one of the interviews with Tommy, he was questioned about vowels:
INTERVIEWER: "Tommy, can you tell me what a vowel is?"

Tom: "Vowels are letters and words."

INTERVIEWER: "What are some vowels?"

Tom: "A I O"

INTERVIEWER: "What does vowels mean?"

Tom: "I don't know."

Finally, the children were accustomed to calling out words without thinking about their meanings. In a rare instance, a parent aide asked Tommy, who had just sounded it out, what the word "mutt" means. Tommy replied with confidence, "It's a kind of jar to put mud in."

Evaluation

During the year the children were continually evaluated with regard to "levels" of materials and skills they could perform. One goal seemed to be to prepare children for the next grades:

T: "I think it's important to read. If you can't read when you get into fifth or sixth grade, you can't do social studies and sciences and all that stuff."

One way to accomplish this task of preparing children for future schooling was to help them do well on the required tests:

T: (to class) "We have a lot of pages to correct because we're trying to get ready for the Surprises test. We haven't been doing much reading lately but we'll get back to that."

Early in the year during parent-teacher conferences, the teacher went over the basal reading test with the parents in order to point out the sections of the test their child "would probably have trouble with." Results of two standardized achievement tests were sent home
during the year with the scores of all of the children in the class ranked from highest to lowest, so that the parents could identify their child’s relative position.

The ranking of the children on reading activities was communicated to parents in frequent newsletters:

**Sullivan**

9/17/79

The Blue Group is working on workbooks 2 through 9. We are weak in that group. Ask your child what Group he is in and ask him to show you his workbook.

To get into the middle reading group we need to be on Sullivan Book 12 at the least.

10/1/79

To have a C in Reading you must be on at least Book 8. We have eight people on 8 or above. We have two on Book 18 now. However, you must be on at least Purple S.R.A. and you must work carefully on the workpages to get a C in Reading.

11/3/79

We have three people still on Book 2. We have four people on Book 3. These people need to work on the Sullivan workbooks. There are books that go.

11/12/79

Our weakest people (two) are on Sullivan Book 3.

11/27/79
On Phonics our better readers are in the 20s or 30s. Two are on Lap 55.

Our average readers are on Lap 17

Our weak readers are on Lap 13

The newsletter seemed to keep parents aware of the instructional activities and would often become a source of concern over their child's reading grade. The following newsletter item, which announced that a child must be reading on the purple level of SRA (Parker and Scannel, 1961), caused one parent to request to be sent "enough SRA's home to allow M enough to reach Purple."

S.R.A.

We have one person on Orange.
You must be on Purple to have a C
in Reading. We have six people on Aqua and the rest of us are on Gold.
Mrs. C.

Many Christmas.

Thank you for the progress report regarding the child, as is becoming evident, doing well. I am glad.

We have been having fun working on the SRA tests. I think they stimulate his thinking.

Please send enough SRA's home to allow me enough to reach Purple. We will work on them a little each day over the holiday.

Thanks

The evaluation scale for work habits according to the Concord Elementary School report cards is as follows: O=Commendable; S=Satisfactory; N=Needs Improvement. One parent pointed out that her son "reads so well" and "reads a lot at home" yet would receive an S- on his report card in reading:
The standard for achievement in this classroom seemed to be the best student in the class; parents of children lower than this standard were advised to be patient and "accept the child as he is." (Underlining by this writer.)

Understanding, patience, thoughtfulness, and encouragement pay big dividends. A child who has done his best must not be made to feel himself a failure. Praise and reassurance will help him gain insight into his true capabilities and help him derive satisfactions from them without feeling the need to be at the top.

(Taken from a letter to parents, 10/79)
MARCH COMMENTS:
Teacher

It just takes time on maturity. A doing all right. We have to accept our children as they are. She's fine.

Thanks for all your help!

(Taken from Amber's Report Card)

As was mentioned earlier in this report the teacher ranked the children (and provided the researcher with a copy) a total of 183 times during the year for her own purposes in the areas of Sullivan, Houghton-Mifflin, SRA, Math, Science, Counting and Word Attack. Her final ranking in the form of recommendations for high, middle and low reading groups was passed on to the second grade teachers on the last day of first grade. Some parents were also notified of their child's probable reading group in second grade:

Reading will probably be in middle reading group next year

(Taken from a progress report to Amber's parents 2/20/80)

Free-Time

Everyday the children were given a period of time, usually thirty to forty minutes, which was called free-time. During this period they were able to select an activity from a variety of choices and sustain themselves in the activity. On the first day of school Mrs. Clark described some of the choices to the children such as large blocks,
painting, reading in the treehouse, and drawing with magic markers. Other choices were added from week to week.

Mrs. Clark explained to parents through a memo that free-time had definite values for the children. She pointed out that they needed time during the day to make their own decisions about the activities in which they were interested. In working with other children they became "part of a school group" and consequently had "a more positive self concept."

During free time the children were permitted to talk while working in pairs or small groups. Sometimes their conversations centered on the task or topic at hand such as making ghost or pumpkin drawings for Halloween or building bridges. At other times the children talked about themselves, their families or various other topics such as "The Muppet Show" on television the night before. During this time the children always seemed to be relaxed and intently interested in their chosen tasks and conversations.

Observations of Tommy during free-time revealed that the building blocks were his favorite and most frequent choice. He often played with several other boys on the oval rug constructing intricate structures which Mrs. Clark would allow to remain standing for the rest of the day. The language used by Tom during this time was often imaginative (Pinnell, 1975):

Tommy: "This is the first bridge to be built in the U.S. of America!"

Tommy: "Hey: Get him! Those robbers wrecked our garage and they're stealing our gold."
When Tommy choose other activities besides blocks, the activities were usually ones during which he could interact in an imaginative way such as hammering wood, soap bubbles, sand play and water play. Even while drawing with large magic markers Tommy engaged in imaginative play:

Tommy: (talking to himself): "This is Fred. (A boy in the class) He's a baby. Make his face orange. No. I'll make his face green." (Laughter)

Amber's most frequent choice of activities during free time was reading, especially reading in or around the treehouse. She seemed to enjoy long periods of private time with her Sullivan workbook (Only Sullivan workbooks were permitted in the treehouse.) When she read during free-time outside of the treehouse, however, she never choose to read Sullivan and always choose a library book.

Amber's other choice of activities during free time usually involved painting or drawing. She frequently painted pictures of her family or drew pictures of herself with magic markers. At other times she helped to paint a mural, decorated Easter eggs and played with finger paints.

All of the children in the class made some use of the library books\(^9\) available in the classroom during this time. Mrs. Clark pointed out that interest in books was heightened when she talked about the books and then left them out on the shelf.

---

\(^9\)Library books is used here as a term to distinguish them from instructional materials. These books were usually ones Mrs. Clark brought from home and were not borrowed from the library.
"If I had said something about it and got them started on it or if it was a new book, like I said I got a little bag of new books, all you gotta do is put out new books and they go crazy."

Children frequently choose to read the same book several times and enjoyed taking these books home to share with parents and siblings. Table 3 shows the number of times Tommy and Amber read the same book during free-time and took it home to share over a seven month period.

**TABLE 3**

**NUMBER OF READINGS OF SELF SELECTED BOOKS BY TWO CHILDREN FROM SEPTEMBER TO MARCH**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Tommy</th>
<th>Amber</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>CATS</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>Our Parade</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Green Pirate</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>Put Me in the Zoo</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Little Duck</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>Wild Ponies</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Blue Sea Horse</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>CATS</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Stories in the basal reading series and other instructional materials were read once by the groups.

**Summary**

A traditional first grade classroom has been described in terms of its participants and selected events especially as they relate to reading. The description has focused on two children in the classroom, Amber and Tommy, in an attempt to describe their reading development within the context and events of the classroom. Data used to describe
The two children were collected from some formal measures, observations and tape recordings of classroom events, the children's writing, and interviews with their Kindergarten teacher, their first grade teacher, their parents and the children themselves.

Next the teacher's attempt to create a warm social environment in which she supported the children's efforts was described. Also included were examples of the teacher's expectations of the children in terms of their work habits and behavior.

Finally, the description focused on selected reading events in this classroom which include coloring, reading groups, the treehouse, and phonics. These events were described as seen by the teacher, the children and the observer. A summary of reading evaluation procedures used by the teacher and communicated to teachers is also included. The children's activities during a section of the day called "free-time" were also discussed.
CHAPTER VI

SUMMARY, IMPLICATIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Summary

The Problems of the Study

Despite the abundance of research which focuses on reading in the schools, few studies have attempted to examine how and why children learn to read in a particular classroom setting. The purpose of this research, then, was to describe the participants and reading related events in a first grade classroom in order to examine the factors within the context of the classroom which may have influenced their learning to read. This involved the identification and categorization of classroom and reading events focusing on two children and, in turn, describing what seemed to be meaningful in these events to the participants.

Procedures

The purpose of this study was to describe the events of a natural classroom setting. Therefore, an approach was taken which is suitable for descriptive field research in permitting the researcher to become immersed in a largely undisturbed setting. The investigator observed in a traditional first grade classroom in an elementary school which includes Kindergarten through grade five. The study began on the first day of school and continued until mid-April. Observations
focused primarily on two sample children but the recording of events within a contextual setting necessarily involved all of the children and the teacher in the classroom.

Information about reading events was collected in descriptive field notes and anecdotal records, taped whole group and small group classroom sessions and interviews with the children, teacher and parents. Samples of the children's work were copied along with selected communications with parents.

To clarify the classroom setting described in this study, a description of the school setting was included as well as narrative accounts of the first day of school and a typical day in November in this first grade room. Significant reading events and their implied meanings emerged as the field notes and interview data were transcribed and coded, and finally, categorized for the purpose of description.

Findings

Two children in the classroom. Observations which focused on two children within the classroom setting were coded and classified. In addition several formal measures, as well as interview data from the teacher, children and parents, yielded a composite view of the children as they learned to read.

For one child, Amber, certain methods used in the classroom did not interfere with her own strategies in learning to read which started at home through an enthusiastic interest in books. Amber read for meaning and guessed at unknown words in context; printed text
always had a sensible message to convey. Therefore, when she was taught phonics rules, she was not confused about the primary goal of reading, to gain meaning.

Tommy, on the other hand, did not come to first grade with the same attitude about the function of print. Tommy's parents and teacher stressed the importance of knowing the words and sounding out words, causing Tommy to resort to nonsense and non-response strategies during oral reading.

Amber, in all reading-related tasks performed quickly and efficiently, as expected by the teacher, and thereby gained the sought after status awarded to children who could perform reading tasks. But Tommy met with few successes, worked slowly, and had difficulty putting isolated sounds together to pronounce words. He found the pressure of competition on academic tasks uncomfortable and was consistently ranked by the teacher near the bottom of the list in all areas.

Both of the children's concepts about print became clearer during the first eight months of first grade. An analysis of their oral reading miscues over time revealed that Amber's miscues were almost always grammatically and semantically acceptable, but Tom's rarely were. Eventually Tom refused to read any material unless he knew all of the words. Tom's high rate of non-response and nonsense errors were similar to the strategies used by Cohen's (1974) subjects who were taught to read using a code emphasis approach. But Amber's patterns seem to conform to Biemiller's children whose miscues were 83% contextually acceptable in the post non-response period. Tom's miscues were
frequently grapho-phonically similar, while Amber's sometimes were. These patterns support the view that Amber read for meaning and Tom read to pronounce words correctly.

On the first day of school some attempts at writing revealed that the children were beginning to become aware of the letter features and sequences used in print. They explored the permissible limits of print as did the subjects in Clay's 1975 study, a characteristic which she termed "the Flexibility Principle." But, from the beginning the teacher stressed neat penmanship, copying from the board and writing about assigned topics with little regard for the expressive mode. The children's writing was immediately corrected and returned to them for re-writing which erased all "errors." Frequent errors and shakey penmanship was a signal to this teacher that the children were "immature."

The teacher and the children. The data were examined for possible significant relationships which may have influenced the learning which took place. The following categories emerged from the data:

1. The teacher's verbal and nonverbal behavior with the children seemed to convey the message that she accepted and enjoyed each child as an individual. The children, in turn, seemed to like and respect the teacher. This situation supported her reputation as a "good teacher" in the school and community. Yet observations of classroom practices and interaction revealed that children may have been given a false sense of security in so far as their attempts at
learning were constantly corrected. Certain children were given status because of their abilities and all were made to compete on academic tasks. The teacher's underlying strategy for these children seemed to be to create a pleasant atmosphere in order to help children cope with the unpleasant task of learning to read.

2. The children in this classroom were faced with clear expectations which influenced their behavior. The teacher expected the children to work hard, to work quickly and to be quiet.

3. Teaching children to read was of primary importance to this first grade teacher. The teacher's procedures for teaching reading are to teach the skills and sight words. Reading at first is hard work only to be enjoyed after the skills are learned.

Reading Events and Their Perceived Meanings

The data collected through the eight months was examined for reading-related events which may be significant to the participants in the setting. The following reading events as well as what seemed to be meaningful in the events surfaced from the data:

1. Early classification of children into ability groups was based largely on the child's ability to color and to recognize isolated color words on the first day of school. Ability to color within the lines were linked, in the teacher's mind, to the child's maturity. In the teacher's view immature children have more difficulty in learning to
read. The teacher's judgments concerning the "immaturity" of students were also pointed out by Leiter (1974) in his examination of a teacher's placement practices in kindergarten. The teacher's judgment of the "maturity" or "immaturity" of students in kindergarten and first grade seems to be of considerable importance in influencing the student's school career.

Learning to recognize color words in isolation on flash cards and practicing coloring were the first major tasks of all children in this first grade classroom. Children were encouraged to learn color words in order to advance to other reading topics by frequent public display of the fact that some had not yet acquired this knowledge.

2. Being able to read in the treehouse, situated high in a corner of the classroom, was a privilege that was earned by the children when they were able to read aloud in a certain level of linguistically controlled materials. Knowledge of which children had achieved this honor was public information during the first three months of school. Therefore, these privileged children earned status in the classroom and the other children were motivated to read in these materials in order to gain similar status and privileges.

3. Reading groups represent the teacher's ranking of the children from highest to lowest in ability. Children were consistently placed in the same reading group throughout the year and this
information was passed on to the second grade teachers. Children in the class were aware of the status, ability and subsequent activities of each of the levels of reading groups. The children in the low reading group were aware of the stigma attached to membership in this group. During the first months of school the higher reading groups read more often in materials which had meaningful context. The most frequent activity of the low group was reading lists of minimally different words.

During the sessions of all reading groups, the teacher's major emphasis was on oral reading with expression and the correct pronunciation of words. Able readers were encouraged to help slower readers during oral reading and other reading activities. This practice continued to give status to certain children in the classroom.

4. Children did not appear to understand the teacher's lessons or phonics rules; these findings are consistent with those of Reid (1966) and Downing (1969) who found that the technical jargon used by teachers was often confusing to first grade children. The teacher emphasized "sounding out" words and recognizing sight words instantly which seemed to result in non-response or nonsense responses from children, findings which are similar to those of Cohen (1974). The child's ability to recognize these words and to understand the reading instruction register was often public knowledge.
Competition, in the form of games, played a significant role in motivating the children to achieve tasks related to phonics.

5. The children were constantly encouraged to perform at a higher level by the teacher and children through their performance on standardized tests as well as on the unit tests which accomplished the basal reader. The most frequent type of evaluation occurred when the teacher ranked the children in every subject at least three times each week. These rankings became the basis for determining the reading grades for the children. Parents were made aware of their child's performance in relation to other children through frequent newsletters and were advised to "accept the child as he is" if he was not on the top of the ranking order. Parents were sometimes motivated to help their child at home in order to help them achieve a higher ranking or to get a better grade.

6. Many activities which occurred during free time did not occur other parts of the day. The amount of child to child and child to teacher interaction increased during free time. Children's use of imaginative language was in evidence in the classroom only during this period. Conditions seemed to promote a variety of functions of language (Pimmell, 1975). Children frequently choose to read for pleasure and often choose the same book several times as did Hickman's (1979)
subjects. It seems to be important to children's reading development to provide books for repeated readings, much the same as parents read the same book to children many times during the pre-school years. Book sharing and group work on projects occurred during this period which enabled the children to establish social relationships not possible during other instructional times. While the teacher considered this time a "play time" the children engaged in meaningful reading and writing during this period of the day which seemed to be vital to their attitudes and development in literacy.

**Questions Raised**

Extended observation and descriptive reports of this first grade classroom have raised a number of questions about learning to read in this traditional classroom setting:

1. How important is the teacher's understanding of the processes involved in reading? This teacher structured her activities based on perceptions of what is involved in learning to read. Understanding the processes involved in reading and learning to read could result in the teacher adapting her methods to accommodate these processes.

2. Are teacher's early judgments about students' abilities dependable in assessing a child's developmental levels? This teacher used specific criteria on the first day of school to classify children into reading groups for the
second day of school. Taking time to observe the child as he talks, plays, interacts, reads, writes and draws may give the teacher a different picture of the child's developmental levels and thereby change her perceptions of the child.

3. Are early teacher judgments used to classify and label children? Once the teacher decided to classify Tommy as "low" the teacher's, parents' and his own expectations about his academic performance appeared to be limited. Expectations of children may change without these restricting labels.

4. What effects does being in the low group and being the last child to accomplish common tasks have on the child's view of himself as a learner? Tommy, who was always in the low group, said he was in the "baddest" group and frequently commented that words in a book were too hard for him. The child who faces the daily stigma of being on the bottom could develop negative feelings about himself. Flexible grouping in a classroom for different purposes may encourage the child to view himself as a competent learner.

5. What is the teacher's goal in helping first grade children to learn to read? In this classroom the goal seemed to be to help every child to read as well as the child on the top of the teacher's ranked list. These rankings as well as tests, oral reading lists and materials which were divided into levels served to remind the teacher that many children
had far to go to be as good a reader as the best reader in the class.

6. Should parents be given the impression that their children are better or worse than other children academically? Information on standardized and other tests gave specific information about the child's competence in reading. The parents of the children in this classroom experienced anxiety over test scores, ranked lists and grades for these first graders. If reading is viewed as a cognitive process which develops over time, understanding the processes involved could be communicated to parents. Other sources of information such as strategies during oral reading, retellings, interest in books and the children's own writing and drawings when shared with parents could give them additional information about the child as a learner.

7. Do lessons and activities on phonics rules using abstract terms contribute to the child's understandings about what is involved in learning to read? These children seemed to be confused by words such as "vowels" and had difficulty remembering and applying phonics rules. Their accomplishments and abilities on phonics related tasks become public knowledge in the classroom forcing them to compete on many instructional activities. The children seemed to be motivated to learn through competition, peer pressure and status seeking especially in relation to phonics activities.
8. Why did this teacher place such importance on daily oral reading with expression? Every reading group read aloud during each meeting and children were continually instructed to read with expression. Comprehension can be defined as a communication of ideas between reader and author; asking children to read aloud frequently may give them the impression that reading is an oral reading performance and not an activity to extract meaning.

9. Is interest and enthusiasm stimulated when children are given a choice of literature and quiet time to spend with books? Children's activities during free-time indicate that they were more interested and enthusiastic about reading books than any other time of the day. They also choose to read the same book several times. Having books available in the classroom and encouraging children to spend quiet time with a self selected book seems to be an essential element in developing positive attitudes toward reading.

10. What kinds of activities in this first grade classroom promoted the use of oral language and permitted social relationships to develop among the children? For most of the day the children were not permitted to talk. During free-time, however, the use and functions of oral language increased and the children learned to work together.

11. Was the social and supportive environment created by the teacher an essential element in learning for these children?
One of the teacher's major concerns was that each child feel liked and experience success with some tasks. The social context established by the teacher appears to be one in which the children felt they could take risks and make mistakes in order to learn, but a more careful examination revealed that errors were constantly corrected and children may have been left with doubts about their own abilities to learn.

Questions Raised for Further Study

Many questions about aspects of this particular classroom have been listed. Findings in this descriptive study raised important questions which could be investigated in future research:

1. What kinds of reading events, attitudes and behaviors would emerge from a descriptive study of reading, in an informal classroom? Would similar reading behaviors and perceptions of reading events emerge?

2. Would similar relationships between teachers and children with respect to reading events emerge in classrooms at other grade levels?

3. What is the relationship between the individual child's reading strategies and the kind of reading instruction taking place in the classroom? (Some research has been completed in this area but as yet little is known.)

4. How do these same children develop in later years with a different teacher and a different classroom setting?
5. If changes in the teacher's understandings about the reading process occur through inservice training and/or further education, what are the differences in the reading environment she creates and the subsequent effect on the children?

This study has described one classroom, one teacher and two children interacting and learning to read during the first eight months of first grade. The study has described and raised questions about what reading means to the teacher and children and, hopefully, has shed some light on these important issues.


Carini, P.R., Observation and Description: An Alternative Methodology for the Investigation of Human Phenomena, Grand Forks, North Dakota: Center for Teaching and Learning, University of North Dakota, 1975.


King, M.L., Beginning reading: The critical period. Faculty Publication for the College of Education, The Ohio State University, Columbus, Ohio, September 1976.


McKenzie, M., Reading as communication. Language Matters, December 1976, 2 (1), 5-8.


Newsome, G.L., Jr., In what sense is theory a guide to practice? Educational Theory, 1964, 14, 31-39, 64.


Sherzer, J., The ethnography of speaking. In R. Shuy (Ed.),
Linguistic Theory: What Can It Say About Reading? Newark,

Shuy, R., Some language and cultural differences in a theory of
reading. In K. Goodman and J. Fleming (Eds.), Psycholinguistics
and the Teaching of Reading, Newark, Delaware: International
Reading Association, 1969.

Slosson, R., Slosson Intelligence Test for Children and Adults,
East Aurora, New York: Slosson Educational Publications, Inc.,
1974.

Smith, B.O., Teachers for the Real World. Washington, D.C.: The

Smith, B.E., Goodman, K. & Meredith, R., Language and Thinking in

Smith, F., Psycholinguistics and Reading, New York: Holt, Rinehart

Smith, F., The role of prediction in reading. Elementary English,
March 1975, 305-311.

Smith, F., Understanding Reading: A Psycholinguistic Analysis of
Reading and Learning to Read, New York: Holt, Rinehart and

Smith, F. & Holmes, D.L., The independence of letter, word, and
meaning identification in reading. Reading Research Quarterly,
1971, 6 (3), 394-415.

Stiles, L.J. (Ed.), Theories for Teaching, New York: Dodd, Mead &

Thompson, L.J., The nature and need of theory. The Educational Forum,
1975, 34, 473-477.

Torrey, J.W., Learning to read without a teacher: A case study. In
F. Smith (Ed.), Psycholinguistics and Reading, New York: Holt,

Trickette, R. & Moos, R., The social environment of junior high and
high school classrooms. Journal of Educational Psychology, 1973,
65, 93-102.


Wilkinson, L.C. & Dollaghan, C., Peer communication in first grade reading groups. Theory Into Practice, October 1979, 18 (4), 267-274.


APPENDIX A

FACSIMILE SAMPLE OF ON-SITE NOTES
Sept. 31

4:35-

Has her head up indicating that she needs help
with her paper

Started to get up to seek help but was told
not to get up and turn around.

1:30 T. helps

Reads down beside her desk and
starts her back on the directions on the paper.

I have your hand if you think you need to be checked on your

bulletin work today (progress report, etc.)

These books are an independent project. Children are

 permitted to take them home and find during
free reading time. Teachers check from time to
time. From time to time small groups are

brought together to work or write at T. or T.+

Book 3 Sullivan

Save this project - no problem

Read if coming with minimal help

T. says ok you are ready to move to book 3.

I asked Amy if she take her Sullivan book home they right

Yes - you don't have to. Good but I want to.

10:40

and working with PH in

or small group

Signed to P. 123 - can you

A Cat (you) can't

A cat can't

A cat can put. Read again.

A cat can not.
Sept. 21

Correcting papers.
I urge parents to send in their children's papers that if they were not missing anything they wouldn't be so guilty.

Mrs. C. said: "She sent you the note to me. She will try you again." Having unpicked some children's papers. Must correct. When they are finished, they are permitted to play in the yard or on the tree house today. This is the first day she has been allowed to go up.

10:15 Finished correcting. Went to play on the treehouse and decide to get a coloring book. And theory paper.

10:16 Finished the coloring. Delilah has helped them for the past 10 min. and went to play in the treehouse.

To picture of Concord.

To — no punishment. Go back to your seat and work on your Sullivan workbook.

At 10:22: Has decided to get a Sullivan book (not workbook) and go into the treehouse.

At 10:25: Came out to get the red marker who had fallen and didn't notice the treehouse.
My head. Some of you know your color words already. If you don't know your color words don't worry about it. I'll teach them."

"I was so glad to hear I had you in the room."

Managerial - Showed bathroom, where to hang coats - you may get water, you may wash. 

Rest free. If you make a mistake don't worry about it. I make a lot of mistakes a day. Sometimes we keep count of them.

Managerial - I hate the way you're raising your hand when you have something to say.

Any want to get water 1 happy commanded by T.

Let's get room if you're going to have an accident.

Try to match color swatches to colors.

Name on desks - see if you can recognize your own name.

C: What does this mean?

OK - let me tell you. You can put your coat on write.

This is "Ok. I wondered where he was."

Do you want him? I 'Bally.'
T: Did everyone know that Jane broke her arm? I stood up and showed them. Jane's anyone that even had a broken arm.

C: Do you have the color something on the back? No, if you hadn't looked at your workbook it's alright.

T: Don't worry if you don't get it just right.

C: I need to know if you know your color works how well you work.

T: Keep your eyes on the board and make sure that the child may be argue to cause problems - RECOGNIZED her birthday - she got to pick something.

T: How many more on time on these papers? I think we need to give these people a little more time.

C: Can I look at a book?

T: Can share with you.

C: Bathroom rules - of accident.

T: If you don't know.

C: Showing of papers - Class could check how they wanted to be this everyone showed their papers at class.

C: Groups - Color groups - helper name on the board - printed letters and names - paid them as they printed.

C: Helpers got to check one of those to a name on the paper.

Pig-tale - Called by buses (or cutting groups) at they knew which group they will...
APPENDIX B

INTERVIEW QUESTIONS
Interview with Teacher #1

1. How were these students chosen to be in your room?
2. How long have you been teaching in this building?
3. What previous knowledge of the children did you have before the first day of school?
4. What preparations did you make for the first day of school?
5. Why have you arranged the room in this way?
6. Why did you choose to display these particular books?
7. What activities do you have planned for the first day of school? Why did you choose them?
8. How will you group the children for reading instruction?
9. How will you decide who will be in which reading groups?
10. How much time per day is spent on reading activities?
11. How is reading related to the other language arts activities such as speaking, listening, spelling, and writing?
12. Did you help to select this basal reading program? How much freedom do you have in its use?
13. In regard to the reading program, what do you consider the biggest challenge?
14. What do you hope to accomplish with these children in the first grade?
Interview with Teacher #2


2. How does this class as a whole compare to others you have had in previous years?

3. Does ___ like to read?

4. How often do you read to ___?

5. How much help does ___ get at home?

6. What does ___ like to read?

7. What does ___ do if he/she comes to a word he/she doesn't know?

8. How would you characterize ___'s writing development?

9. What do you see as the most important thing you did for ___ in teaching him/her to read?

10. Is ___'s oral language development linked to his/her ability to read?

11. Does ___ watch much television?

12. What is the most exciting or motivating thing for this child?

13. Can you describe an event where you could predict how ___ would react?

14. Does it matter to ___ what the other kids think of him/her?

15. What does ___ usually choose to do during free time?

16. Who are ___'s best friends?

17. Is there competition in this classroom?

18. How often does ___ read aloud?

19. What are the "rules" for reading aloud in this classroom?

20. What happens when someone makes a mistake while reading aloud?

21. Who is the best reader in this class? Why?
22. Who is the worst reader in this class? Why?
23. Do the children know who the best and worst readers are?
24. How does ___ feel about this class?
25. What kind of student will ___ be in years to come?
26. What should a teacher do to insure reading success for her children?
Interview with Children #1

1. How did you learn how to read?

2. Do you like to read?

3. What kinds of books do you like to read?

4. Do you read silently with your eyes or do you always read aloud?

5. Describe how you read during reading group.

6. Do you like reading groups? Why? Why not?

7. Who is the best reader in this class?

8. Do you like having reading group?

9. What is the best thing about school?

10. Do you like the teacher? Why? Why not?

11. Who helped you learn how to read? How did they do it?

12. Who is your best friend in this class?

13. How much television do you watch?

14. Does anyone help you with reading at home?

15. What is writing? Can you write?

16. What is a vowel?

17. Is it important to learn how to read? Why?

18. Are you a good speller? Who taught you how to spell?

19. When you have free time, what do you like to do?
Interview with Children #2

1. Does your mother or father help you with your homework? Everyday?
2. Do you have a lot of school work to do?
3. What is your favorite part of the work in school?
4. What do you hate the most about the work?
5. Do you like school?
6. Do you like Mrs. C.? Why?
7. Do you like reading, math or science best? Why?
8. Do you like to watch TV? What do you watch? Everyday?
9. What kinds of books do you like to read?
10. What is your favorite book?
11. How do you feel about writing? What is writing?
12. Is it important to know how to read? Why?
13. Can you spell words? What do you do when you don't know how to spell a word?
14. What's the most exciting thing that happens in this classroom?
15. What reading group are you in? Do you like it?
16. What have you been doing in reading group?
17. Do you like to read aloud?
18. What do you do when you come to a word you don't know?
19. Who is the best reader in this class?
20. When you have free time what do you usually like to do?
21. Does Mrs. C. ever read stories to you?
Interview with Parents*

1. Does ___ like to read?
2. What kinds of books does he like to read?
3. Do you go with him to the library? How often?
4. Do you ever read to him?
5. What does he do if he comes to a word he does not know?
6. How did ___ learn to read?
7. How do you feel about ___'s progress in reading?
8. Does he watch much television?
9. What were some of the things that interested him in learning to read?
10. Is ___ interested in school?
11. What do you know about Mrs. C's reading program in first grade?
12. What reading group is your child in?
13. What is your definition of reading?
14. How should reading be taught?
15. Does ___ like to write?
16. When did your child really start to read?

*Many of these questions are based on the initial parent interviews conducted by Clark (1976), Appendix A.
Interview with Kindergarten Teacher

1. What kind of student was ___?
2. Could he read in kindergarten?
3. Can you describe ___'s progress in learning to read in your class?
4. Was he/she interested in learning to read?
5. What kinds of activities was ___ involved in in your classroom?
6. Did you read to the children? When?
7. What kinds of books were available in the classroom?
8. How would you characterize ___'s social development?
9. Which activities did ___ enjoy most?
10. What is important for these children to know in regards to reading during kindergarten?
APPENDIX C

LETTER TO PARENTS AND PERMISSION FORM
Dear Parents,

Learning to read is an important part of schooling, and first grade classrooms are natural places for children to begin their attempts toward becoming literate. In order for schools to help all children in reading effectively, we need to know more about how children learn to read. Descriptions of children's reading development over a period of time would contribute valuable information to the field of education.

Mrs. Jean Hall, graduate student from Ohio State University, will be working with Mrs. ___ to learn more about how children begin to read in first grade. She plans to examine children's reading development in a study to be conducted from September to February of this year, under the direction of Dr. Sharon Fox of Ohio State University. Mrs. Hall has the support and cooperation of ___ Schools to observe for six months in your child's classroom.

During these six months, Mrs. Hall will be observing, talking with the children, and attempting to record some classroom events on tape or with a camera for later analysis. A few formal and informal measures of achievement will be administered to some children. Her observations and participation in the classroom will be as unobtrusive as possible so as not to interfere with the naturally occurring learning and reading which is taking place. Individual students will not be identified by their real names in any report of this study. We hope you will allow your child to be a part of this important study. Would you please sign the attached consent form and return it to your child's teacher right away so the program can begin immediately.

Sincerely yours,

Director of Elementary Education
I consent to my child's participation in a study entitled LEARNING TO READ IN FIRST GRADE. Gloria Jean Hall/Dr. Sharon Fox have explained the purpose of the study and procedures to be followed as outlined in the accompanying letter from ___.

I acknowledge that I have had the opportunity to obtain additional information regarding the study and that any questions I have raised have been answered to my full satisfaction. Further, I understand that I am (my child is) free to withdraw consent at any time and to discontinue participation in the study without prejudice to me (my child). The information obtained from me (my child) will remain confidential and anonymous unless I specifically agree otherwise.

Finally, I acknowledge that I have read and fully understand the consent form. I have signed it freely and voluntarily and understand a copy is available upon request.

Date: _______________________

(Investigator/Project Director or Authorized Representative) (Person Authorized to Consent for Participant - If Required)
APPENDIX D

SAMPLE NEWSLETTER TO PARENTS
Room 1 NEWS

November 27, 1979

BIRTHDAY

Happy Birthday to J W .
He is seven today.

SPELLING

We will be getting into Spelling now. Our first word - this week - is Christmas. Spelling won't be graded until next semester.

Our practice test will be Tuesday mornings and the real test will be Thursday mornings.

We will really be working on writing right along with Spelling.

One gives praise and encouragement and no criticism if one hopes to keep supporting a child and to help him along in the very difficult job of learning to read and do Math problems.

Accentuate the positive and eliminate the negative.

READING GRADES

To have a C in Reading you must be on Purple S.R.A. S.R.A. shows more than anything how hard you try and your ability. We have several people nearly ready for Purple. It goes Gold, Aqua, then Purple.

To have a C in Reading you need to be on Sullivan Book 8 or higher. We have nine.

Our weakest people (two) are on Sullivan Book 3.

To have a C in Reading you need to be on Phonics 26 or higher.

Our weakest people in Phonics are on Lap 12. The Yellow Group is on Lap 16 or higher.

READER

We have one boy in morning kindergarten and one boy in afternoon kindergarten. Reading with us. Our people are helping in.

All but five of our people are going to begin the primer - our first hard-back book.

More than half the room is in the better reading group - the Yellow Group.

CHRISTMAS GIFTS

There will be a gift exchange at school. Boys should bring a gift for a boy and girls should bring a gift for a girl. The gifts should be $1.00 or $1.25.

Santa might bring some of us new paste, erasers, pencils, crayons, etc. They are good stocking stuffers.

MIRACLE CLASS

Miracles sometimes occur, but one has to work terribly hard for them.

Chaim Weizmann

"A"

Counting - Our better counters are counting to 300 and to 400 along.

Our weaker counters are still counting from 100 to 200.

Math Races

Our weaker Math students are on Level 4 and the stronger students are on Level 5.

After Christmas we will have to remove the number lines and we will need to know the answers like sight words.

Most of us are really growing up now. We have very few names on the board and very few baby noises. Most of us get our work done on time and nearly all of us work really hard. Nearly a third of the year is gone and we have a long way to go, but the hardest part is over. We have had some of nearly everything we have all year.
Keep a record from year to year.

NAME

SCHOOL

GRADE

LEVEL

AGE

DATE

EXAMINER

List 1 (80)
1. see
2. look
3. mother
4. little
5. here
6. can
7. want
8. come
9. one
10. baby
11. three
12. run
13. jump
14. down
15. is
16. up
17. make
18. ball
19. help
20. play

List 2 (80)
1. game
2. friends
3. came
4. horse
5. ride
6. under
7. was
8. what
9. bump
10. live
11. very
12. puppy
13. dark
14. first
15. wish
16. basket
17. food
18. road
19. hill
20. along

List 3 (80)
1. safe
2. against
3. smash
4. reward
5. evening
6. stream
7. empty
8. stone
9. groove
10. desire
11. ocean
12. bench
13. damp
14. timid
15. perform
16. destroy
17. delicious
18. hunger
19. excuse
20. understood

List 4 (100)
1. harness
2. price
3. flakes
4. silence
5. develop
6. promptly
7. serious
8. courage
9. forehead
10. distant
11. anger
12. vacant
13. speechless
14. region
15. slumber
16. future
17. claimed
18. common
19. dainty
20. merchant

List 5 (120)
1. cushion
2. generally
3. extended
4. custom
5. tailor
6. haze
7. gracious
8. dignity
9. terrace
10. applause
11. jungle
12. frequent
13. interfere
14. marriage
15. profitable
16. define
17. obedient
18. ambition
19. presence
20. merchant

List 6 (140)
1. installed
2. importance
3. medicine
4. rebellion
5. infected
6. responsible
7. liquid
8. tremendous
9. customary
10. malicious
11. spectacular
12. inventory
13. yearning
14. imaginary
15. consequently
16. excellence
17. dungeon
18. detained
19. abundant
20. compliments

List 7 (160)
1. administer
2. tremor
3. environment
4. counterfei
5. crisis
6. industrious
7. approximate
8. society
9. architecture
10. malignant
11. pensive
12. standardize
13. exhausted
14. reminiscence
15. intricate
16. contemporary
17. attentively
18. compassionate
19. complexion
20. continuously

List 8 (180)
1. prairies
2. evident
3. nucleus
4. antique
5. twilight
6. memorandum
7. whimsical
8. proportional
9. intangible
10. formulated
11. articulate
12. depreciate
13. remarkably
14. contrasting
15. irrelevance
16. supplement
17. inducement
18. nonchalant
19. exuberant
20. grotesque

List P

List 1

List 2

List 3

List 4

List 5

List 6

List 7

List 8

Raw Score

(Total number of correct words including the words below starting level.)

This is the score for those correct words only. The validity of this test will naturally change with the validity of this test.
SCORING STANDARDS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item</th>
<th>Pass</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Front of book.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Print (not picture).</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Points to top left at 'I took'.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Moves finger from left to right on any line.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Moves finger from the right-hand end of a higher line to the left-hand end of the next lower line or moves down the page.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Word by word matching.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. Both concepts must be correct, but may be demonstrated on the whole text, line, word, letter.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. Verbal explanation, or pointing to the top of page or turning the book around.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. Score for beginning with 'The' and moving from right to left across the lower line and then the upper line OR turning the book around and moving left to right in the conventional movement pattern.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10. Any explanation which implies that line order is altered.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11. Says or shows that a left page precedes a right page.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12. Notices at least one change of word order.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13. Notices at least one change in letter order.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14. Notices at least one change in letter order.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15. Says 'Question mark' or 'A question' or 'Asks something'.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16. Says 'A stop' or 'It tells you when you've said enough'.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17. Says 'A little stop' or 'A rest' or 'A comma'.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18. Says 'That's someone talking'.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19. Locates two capital and lower case pairs.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20. Points correctly to both 'was' and 'no'.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21. Locates one letter and two letters on request.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>22. Locates one word and two words on request.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>23. Locates both a first and a last letter.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>24. Locates one capital letter.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Comments: Raw Score Stanine