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PATTERNS OF RESPONSE TO LITERATURE: A ONE-YEAR STUDY OF A FIFTH AND SIXTH GRADE CLASSROOM

The Ohio State University

Ph.D. 1982

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PATTERNS OF RESPONSE TO LITERATURE:
A ONE-YEAR STUDY OF A FIFTH AND SIXTH GRADE CLASSROOM

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

By
Susan Ingrid Hepler

The Ohio State University
1982

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iii
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CHAPTER I

THE NATURE OF THE PROBLEM

Background of the Study

For many years teachers have been concerned with helping children develop more than functional literacy. Elementary school teachers devote a large proportion of time to the teaching of reading and children are encouraged to refine and develop responses to what they read and hear read to them. Reading instruction in most elementary school classrooms, however, tends to ignore the literature which children choose to read. A concern with response to literature has historically been relegated to the high school and college classroom.

More recently, with increased interest in the development of literature-based reading programs in the elementary schools, there has been an increasing interest both in how children respond to literature and in the kinds of curricula which enhance this response. For instance, Dell, which publishes paperback reprints of notable and popular children's literature, now lists three volumes of teaching guides to separate series of books as well as two volumes of compiled guides to selected titles. These guides seek to "help students reveal their reading comprehension and increase their joy in reading". The National Council of Teachers of English has published a response guide to children's books, as well (Somers and Worthington, 1979).

It would seem that teachers who wish to enhance children's responses to literature in a classroom context would influence
curriculum more efficiently if they were more familiar with the kinds of responses children make to literature which they read or hear read to them. In addition, teachers who were familiar with kinds of classroom practices which generate certain kinds of response might better be able to adjust reading curriculum to fit the needs of the students.

There is a substantial body of research which attempts to describe ways in which high school age and adult readers respond to literature (Squire, 1964; Bleich, 1975; Holland, 1975). A growing body of information describes young children's responses to literature (White, 1954; Applebee, 1978; Sutton-Smith, 1978; Butler, 1980). However, less information concentrates on responses of ten to twelve year old children to the literature they read. Moreover, the greater bulk of studies of middle grade children's responses to literature concern their literary interests or preferences (Purves and Beach, 1972). Frequently, the acquisition of isolated comprehension skills are considered (Monson and Peltola, 1976). Seldom are naturally occurring classroom contexts considered as a part of the study.

As a result of this, teachers of ten to twelve year old students may be less familiar with the kinds of responses to literature which they can expect to emerge in their own classrooms.

Perspectives on Response

What is considered to be response to literature? Is it what children say about what they read? Can it be described as the products children create, such as dramas, writings, pictures, and models which are results of their interaction with text? Is response observable or measureable? Is there a difference between solicited and unsolicited
response to literature? The questions suggest the wide front upon which responses may be viewed. In addition, these questions suggest that a number of reader response behaviors may be interrelated.

Response to literature has most frequently been defined as what people say about text. Researchers have approached readers and have asked them to discuss what they have read or have interrupted the reading act and asked readers to comment (Squire, 1964; Galda, 1980). On the other hand, others have looked at what children do as a result of their responses to text (Benton, 1979; Hickman, 1979). In either case, suggests Benton, those who study response must be prepared to work with untidy, uncertain data, fleeting images, half-formed notions, inadequately articulated ideas, partially glimpsed meanings (p. 84).

Earlier perspectives on response to literature focused on adult readers' difficulties in "correctly" interpreting text (Richards, 1929). However, more recent studies are based upon the work of Harding (1937) and Rosenblatt (1938/1976) who both suggested that the experiencing of art is an individual activity, a transaction in Rosenblatt's terms, between the reader and the text (1978). This transaction is different for each reader and each "textual performance" lies somewhere between the text and the reader rather than exclusively in either one. Thus recent research begins to discern the reader's path through the text (Holland, 1975; Kermode, 1975; Benton, 1979; Galda, 1980).

In addition to discerning the reader's path through the text, researchers have investigated readers' perceptions of pattern (Bartlett, 1932; Bower, 1976; Gardner, 1977). This perception of
pattern is seen as an important part of a reader's predictive capacity and becomes one of the determining factors in the development of reading ability (Smith, 1978). Others have analyzed children's perceptions of story patterns within a developmental framework. Much of this work is concerned with children's tacit understanding of story grammar and centers upon primary grade children (Mandler and Johnson, 1977; Stein, 1978; King and Rentel, 1981). Applebee (1978) viewed children's development of a sense of story, ages two to seventeen. He examined concept development and patterns which children build systematically as they experience the world and the world of story. Applebee's model was based on what children said about stories and was correlated with Piagetian stages of development.

Children's interests and preferences in literature have usually been defined as part of response. Purves and Beach (1972) outline in a lengthy chapter the many factors, such as age and sex of the reader, or content and format of the book, which influence choice. Favat (1977) and Schlager (1978) suggest that a child's enjoyment of the book choices he or she makes is based upon how closely the chosen book reflects the child's perception of the world at a particular stage in the child's development. Neither study, however, interviews children to substantiate these theories.

Children's productions as a result of their experiences with literature are less frequently considered as a part of response. Yet, in classrooms where children may produce a variety of projects, the manner in which children work, what they say about their projects, and the content of the projects themselves may reveal much about
children's thinking. Hickman (1979) based her study of response partially on this examination of children's projects.

Response, then, may be variously elicited, defined, and interpreted. In addition, a focus on any one aspect of response is apt to ignore other aspects which would contribute to a more comprehensive view of response. It seems that a study of responses which middle grade children make to literature would need to maintain a broad definition of response in order to secure a more accurate description of those responses.

Response in a Classroom Context

Recent research suggests that children's language production is highly dependent upon the context for that production (Pinnell, 1975; Barnes, 1976; Donaldson, 1978; Heathcote and Hovda, 1980). Thus, if the classroom environment is manipulated and the classroom context changes, a subsequent change in child language use occurs. This would suggest that the teacher's arrangement of time, space, materials and children would be an important aspect of any study which examined response. In addition, the teacher's questions and assignments would influence child language productions as well. It would seem appropriate, then, that a study of response in a natural classroom context should consider the teacher's organization of the classroom as a landscape or background from which response develops over time.

In suggesting that research must be conducted in settings similar to those that the researcher hopes to generalize about, Wilson (1977) makes two points about observational research:
(a) Human behavior is complexly influenced by the context in which it occurs. Any research plan which takes the actors out of the naturalistic setting may negate those forces and hence obscure its own understanding. (b) Human behavior often has more meaning than its observable "facts". A researcher seeking to understand behavior must find ways to learn the manifest and latent meanings for the participants, and must also understand the behavior from the objective outside perspective (p. 253).

Mishler (1979) makes an equally strong statement on behalf of educational research which does not strip the observed phenomenon of the context in which it was observed.

Statement of the Problem

Although numerous perspectives have been brought to bear upon response to literature, little information exists which examines patterns of responses of middle grade children to literature within a classroom context. The primary need identified was for a broad view of middle grade children's response to literature in an elementary school classroom setting. This broad view would encompass children's thinking about literature, social patterns and teacher structures which effect response, changes over time in responses which children make to literature, and so forth. The classroom context, and the teacher's role in its planning, would be seen as a part of the study in an effort to suggest to others the sorts of contexts which allow for the kinds of responses described.

Approach to the Study

Since the study encompassed such a wide definition of response behaviors and productions and since the classroom context would evolve
and develop as the school year progressed, it was obvious that a short-term or a positivist, context-free approach would not yield the best description. Instead, a long-term anthropological approach was needed. Drawing from the work of ethnographers, the researcher chose to become a participant observer, one who employs a blend of methods to study the classroom. The role of participant observer assumes some amount of genuinely social interaction in the field with the subjects of the study, some direct observation of relevant events, some formal and a great deal of informal interviewing, some systematic counting, some collection of documents and artifacts, and open-endedness in the direction the study takes (McCall & Simmons, 1969, p. 1).

The researcher sought to provide an adequate description (Frake, 1964) of the classroom by identifying literature-related events or scenes in the classroom. Also, various settings, paraphernalia, participants, roles and routines were examined for patterns of relationships or interactions.

In order to secure a more adequate description of response in the classroom, the researcher as participant observer would approach the study in ways suggested by Wilson (1977). She would be present when response events were likely to occur; she would be present when students were responding to literature formally or informally; she would work to become the kind of person with whom the participants wished to share reactions; she would ask questions to clarify an emerging description of response; and she would build up a history of involvement which would enable her to relate new information to that which was previously gathered.
By a documentation of events (Carini, 1975), the researcher hoped to uncover patterns of response within a particular environment. By use of narrative and anecdote, the researcher intended to convey to the reader a better sense of the classroom in the manner of Armstrong's study (1980) of closely observed children in a British primary school setting.

**Purposes of the Study**

The primary purpose of the study was to describe middle grade children's response to literature in one fifth and sixth grade classroom. The researcher sought to identify and describe response events and the patterns which those events assumed. In addition, she sought to identify categories of responses and the meanings children held for those categories. Further, the researcher sought to examine response over the course of one school year to describe the changes those responses underwent. The nature of these descriptions would then lead to hypotheses concerning the relationship between response and the classroom context in which it occurred. Some initial questions framed the gathering of the data:

1. **Identification of Response**
   a) If children are placed in a setting with encouragement, opportunity, and time to read and interact with literature, what will happen?
   b) What behaviors, including conversation, writing, art, and other child productions, reflect middle grade perceptions about and experiences with literature?
2. Classification of Response

a) What are the general characteristics of ten, eleven and twelve year old children's responses to literature?

b) What kinds of connections and patterns are made, explicitly or implicitly, by middle grade children as they respond to literature?

c) Are these patterns sequential, similar, or varied for children in this study?

d) What kinds of responses, and what changes in response, occur to children during a nine month school year?

3. Context Relationships

a) What classroom situations seem associated with what categories of response?

b) What teacher behaviors seem associated with what categories of response?

c) How does group interaction influence individual response? How does individual response influence group response?

d) What relationships are apparent between response and teacher-child or child-child interaction?

e) What relationships are apparent between response and various environmental factors such as availability of materials, sequence of activities, time of day or school year?

In an effort to determine what structures children developed for understanding literature, more specific questions proved valuable (see
Appendix A). The study was specifically concerned with what children's statements and products revealed about their awareness of:

1. Literary types or genres
2. The author behind the literary work; the author's characteristic style, content or concerns
3. Thematic patterns; recurring ideas in literature
4. Themselves as readers; changes in themselves during the school year

Scope and Limitations of the Study

The most obvious limitation to this study is its lack of generalizability to other settings. The present study was intended to describe response events in a particular setting. Within this setting, children and teachers operated in unique ways. No doubt other classrooms in other settings have aspects which compare to those described in the present study, but each classroom context is unique. Thus, the findings of this study, while providing a basis for comparisons with other classrooms, are not able to be generalized as a whole to other classrooms. In addition, the findings from this particular classroom are not even generalizable to this classroom in the following year for the same reason that each group and the consequent teacher-and-student-created context are also unique.

A second limitation of the study is that which must limit any study in which the researcher depends on observational data. The researcher is subject to distortions in observations, anxieties, and personal affinities for certain types of data, children, or responses (Schwartz & Schwartz, 1969). However, it was hoped that by collecting
data from a variety of sources over the course of one school year, the density of data might compensate for these distortions in some measure. An observer in the classroom seeks to examine the settings and events in detail. However, each observer sees through different lenses and other observers might have seen or chosen to see differently. In addition, many of the responses reported were recorded on-site and as such, many simultaneously occurring events were lost. Although Chapter IV is devoted to a description of the general classroom context in which responses occurred and many of the response events reported are set in context, the total context of any event can never be known. Thus, it is the perceptions of a single investigator upon which the study rests.

A third consideration which affects the study is that the investigator no doubt influenced the context when she became a part of it. Although every effort was made to include in the report the influences of which the investigator was aware, there are certainly other influences which are not reported. The children in the study were unaware of the nature of the study but were aware of the researcher's area of concern and expertise. In addition, the teacher and the researcher were known to each other prior to the study's onset and frequently shared perceptions of the day's happenings. Thus, some "Hawthorne effect" might be expected to have occurred.

**Summary**

Although response to literature has been investigated by others at various levels, elementary teachers of fifth and sixth grade children need to understand ways children might respond to literature if they
hope to design classroom contexts which facilitate response. The present study used an anthropological approach to explore response to literature in a single fifth and sixth grade classroom context over the course of one school year.

A discussion of related research and theory will be found in Chapter II of this report. Chapter III details the methods and procedures by which the study was carried out. Two chapters present the data: Chapter IV describes the teacher's organization of the classroom context and Chapter V describes and analyzes children's responses to literature in this context. Chapter VI proposes some hypotheses, suggests their implications and includes some suggestions for further research.
CHAPTER II
REVIEW OF THE RELATED LITERATURE

Current interest in programs which help children become better readers has led to inquiries concerning what child readers do with what they read. Yet, the question has not been fully explored. Historically, however, there has been much discussion of how reading functions in general for the adult reader. A part of this discussion focuses upon the nature of the relationship between reader, text and the resultant meaning. The fields of philosophy, linguistics, aesthetics, psychology and literature all contribute perspectives from which to view literary response. Many of these perspectives draw from adult responses. Recent concerns include research in the development of response prior to adulthood. Few studies, however, examine children's responses to literature in actual classroom contexts.

The following review of related literature examines a foundation upon which response theory rests prior to discussing research on critical response and the development of response in children. In conclusion, this review examines selected studies which suggest the importance of context in language production and which support a study of children's responses to literature in a naturally occurring classroom context.

Foundations of Response

Current theories of response to literature are grounded in a discussion of what the reader finds in reading. The long history of the nature of the transaction between reader and text also contributes
to current theory. In addition, those who are concerned with both the reader and the reading act have descriptions of what behaviors constitute a more fully formed or mature response to literature.

The Reader's Use of Narrative

Many voices have suggested that through reading the reader experiences a sense of other lives which enables him to develop ideas about what directions his own life may take. In discussing the reader's use of narrative, it is helpful to distinguish the role of the onlooker or spectator from that of the participant before returning to the reader reading.

In an early work distinguishing the role of onlooker from participant, D.W. Harding (1937) developed a distinction which has proved useful to those who investigate reader response. Harding suggested that while participants in an event are involved in an activity and in accomplishing something, onlookers at the same event are distanced enough, although perhaps emotionally involved, so that they can see the event in a wider perspective. In the spectator role, "we can most readily endure the penetration of general principle among our sentiments" (p. 242). In the spectator role, one can more readily reflect, evaluate, represent and consider. In a later work, Harding (1962) developed the role of the onlooker as reader and suggested that the reader considers what might happen as he notes what did happen. In addition, the reader or onlooker is in a position to clarify his values, develop empathic insight into human dilemmas, and evaluate the participants and what they do and suffer (in Meek, et.al., 1978, p. 13).
Langer (1953) discussed the aim of the poet/author as one of creating a "semblance of events lived and felt" so as to constitute a "piece of virtual life." What differentiates for the reader this "virtual life" from life actually lived is that events are simplified but "at the same time much more fully perceived and evaluated than the jumble of happenings in any person's actual history" (p. 212).

While psychologists and philosophers suggest the importance of the assumption of the spectator role and its place in the reading act, others suggest that it is through story that the human mind organizes experience. Hardy (1968), a professor of literature at the University of London, suggests that narrative plays a vastly important role in our lives.

We dream in narrative, day-dream in narrative, remember, anticipate, hope, despair, believe, doubt, plan verse, criticize, construct, gossip, learn, hate, love by narrative. In order really to live we make up stories about ourselves and others, about the personal as well as the social past and future (in Meek, et al., 1978, p. 13).

Moffett (1968) suggests that children use narrative exclusively as a foundation upon which they then learn to generalize and theorize. Examples of young children's utterance of narratives would support Moffett's generalization (White, 1954; Chukovsky, 1963; Applebee, 1978). A sampling of the stories children tell shows a mixture of daily happenings, aspects of other narratives, and a sense of the child's perception of the world all organized in narrative (Sutton-Smith, 1978).

Concern with the reader's use of narrative underlies much of the current interest in response to literature. Historically, there has
been wide discussion concerning the adult reader's interaction with text. A natural consequence of this discussion is an interest in the ways in which children's uses and understandings of narrative develop. Certain theoretical perspectives on the nature of the reading act form a basis for the present study.

The Reader Reading

In the history of the examination of what happens when readers read, the emphasis has frequently been upon the text and not upon the reader. In the teaching of literature, many educators have focused upon correcting taste while obscuring the fostering of response (Applebee, 1974). As a result, research and resultant teaching methods have dealt with the reader's ability or inability to respond more fully, more appropriately or "correctly" to text.

A seminal study in readers' response was that of Richards (1929) who examined college students' responses to thirteen poems. Richards categorized as problematic reader inadequacies such as failure to grasp meaning, difficulty in sensuous apprehension and the visualizing of imagery, oversentimentality, use of stock responses and general reliance on preconceptions. From this concern for the formulation of more adequate responses to text there arose numerous theoretical perspectives on the proper teaching of literature. Few of these considered the reader and none of them were based upon a concern for the nature of the reading act.

Historically, most critical theoretical perspectives, suggests Abrahams (1953), could be interpreted with reference to four coordinates: the author/artist, the society from which the work arose, the work
itself, and the audience reaction to the work. Each of these four coordinates embodied a theoretical stance and implied a concomitant stance for the educational guidance of response. For instance, expressive theorists would examine the work of art in terms of the artist's background or content and the resultant classroom practice would include an historical and biographical approach to the artist as a way of understanding the work. The objective critic would examine the work in relation to itself apart from any factors external to the work. Thus, the student would be trained to be an ideal reader, a concern of the new critics.

The metaphor of a darkened stage upon which stood the author, the reader and the book suggested itself to Rosenblatt (1978). A spotlight focused upon either the author or the text but the reader tended to remain in the shadow. Rosenblatt (1938), however, had steadily maintained that the reader was central to the reading experience for it was the reader who performed the text.

A novel or poem or play remains merely inkspots on paper until a reader transforms them into a set of meaningful symbols. The literary work exists in the live circuit set up between reader and text: the reader infuses intellectual and emotional meanings into the pattern of verbal symbols and those symbols channel his thought and feelings. Out of the complex process emerges a more or less organized imaginative experience (p. 25).

In this sense, she preceded the thinking of contemporary reading theorists concerning the active and creative role of the reader. Rosenblatt suggested that literature enlisted the emotion of the reader in a way that other reading, such as documents, did not. She expanded her ideas into a "transactional theory of the literary work" (1978) in
which she explained "the text" as the printed page and "the poem" as the relationship of the reader and the text. The poem was evoked by the reader from the text at hand.

Rosenblatt distinguished between aesthetic and nonaesthetic reading, as well. In the reading of nonaesthetic material, the reader assumes an efferent stance (from the Latin effere "to carry away"). The reader is concerned with acquiring information; an extreme example of which is a mother frantically reading the antidote on the label of a bottle of poison which her child has swallowed. By contrast, the reader of aesthetic material focuses upon a living through of events during his relationship with the text (p. 25).

Rosenblatt's description of an efferent reading suggests certain correlations with the role of the participant as defined by Harding (1937) while the description of an aesthetic reading assumes the reader in a spectator role.

Currently, as Rosenblatt points out, critical attention is again turning to the reader of the text or, in the words of critical theory, the audience of the work. While it is not the intention here to review the various perspectives audience-centered criticism may take, much of the current discussion (e.g., Suleiman and Crosman, 1980), supports Rosenblatt's view of the participatory nature of the reading act.

Iser (1974) describes reading as a dynamic process in which the reader sets the work in motion, a process which awakens reader response. The text itself is a set of component parts which the reader connects based upon his unique set of perspectives, preintentions, and recollections (p. 279). The reader must complete that which the text suggests
but does not make completely explicit. Tabbert (1979) refers to this as a "telling gap" an example of which is an author seldom giving the color of a character's eyes; yet the reader tacitly assumes that the character's eyes have color. These gaps or "blanks," as Iser (1980) later refers to them, allow the reader to perform basic operations within the text, to discover relationships, patterns and thematic strands which are constantly modified in light of new information.

Thus, in Iser's view, one text can have multiple readings and multiple meanings.

One text is potentially capable of several different realizations and no reading can ever exhaust the full potential, for each individual reader will fill in the gaps in his own way, thereby excluding the various other possibilities (1974, p. 280).

In addition, the reading of text provokes certain expectations which are projected by the reader back into the text in such a way as to reduce the possibilities of interpretation. In recreating text, says Iser,

We look forward, we look back, we decide, we change our decisions, we form expectations, we are shocked by their nonfulfillment, we question, we muse, we accept, we reject; this is the dynamic process of recreation (p. 288).

Iser's theory of aesthetic response (1978) views reading phenomenologically. The reader grasps the text in consecutive phases over time rather than in a subject-object relationship. The reader's "wandering viewpoint" travels along inside the work of art, apprehending text from multiple and changing viewpoints such as those of the author, various characters or the reader's self. This mode of understanding, unique to literature, allows the reader to create a multiplicity of
interconnecting perspectives which give rise to a network of possible connections. As the reader reads, there is a continual interplay between expectations based upon the reader's "horizon of expectations" and continual reference to past memories. This creation and consequent reduction of uncertainty, this confirmation and disconfirmation of predictions is consonant with current psycholinguistic theory (Smith, 1978).

The role of the reader's personality in the creation of meaning was developed by Holland (1968). Holland's theory of the reader's personal identity theme as a determinant of response was based in psychoanalytic psychology. He maintained that literature allowed the reader to transform unconscious desires and wishes into conscious or more socially acceptable aspirations. Thus, each reader's personal "identity theme" influenced or controlled the reader's transformation of the text into meaning. Holland's work (1975) with the responses of five college students to American short stories led him to conclude that the responses of one reader to several texts were more similar than were the responses of several readers to one text. Thus, Holland saw responses to literature very much from the side of the reader rather than from the perspective of the text.

The definition of the reader as an active creator engaged in a dynamic and dialectic process of building meaning from text poses certain dilemmas for the nurturing of response. Before proceeding to a discussion of research which bears upon response theory, it is helpful to consider what theoreticians identify as conditions which nurture and develop response.
The Nurture and Development of Response

As has been discussed, a theoretical stance with regard to works of art influences the definition of a mature response to those works. The nature of the reading act, however, suggests that conditions which facilitate the development of response might be various and difficult to define. Yet, in discussing a theory of children reading literature, the reader must certainly be considered. Meek (1980) calls for a greatly extended model of children's literature - one which does include the reader.

In 1966, a group of scholars from the United Kingdom and from the United States met at Dartmouth College for a conference on the teaching of English. The seminar began with Britton's general discussion of response to literature. Britton suggested that development in response lay in the reader's building "an increasing sense of form." In addition, progress also lay in the reader's perception of gradually more complex patterns of events, of clues more widely separated and more diverse, and in the taking of satisfaction from that which was less directly related to the readers' expectations and desires (1968, pp. 3-10). A sense of form grew, as do other frames of reference, from further experiences. Britton reminded the seminar that mature responses grow from "a legacy of past satisfactions" and he warned that response must be nurtured at all levels of development, not simply at the reader's reading at maximum effort. Progress could be seen in a student's reading more books and reading with more satisfaction.

A study group, chaired by Harding at the same conference, accepted Britton's paper with the understanding that a) response was active;
b) response included immediate response as well as response over time; and c) overt responses may indicate very little about inner responses (in Squire, 1968, p. 11). The group saw the nurturing of response in a developmental perspective and suggested certain broad dimensions through which response might pass. The study group warned against over-analysis, made a plea for the child's own affective voice, and defined the teacher's role as one of leading diverse student respondents to feeling comprehension of literary works of art. These literary works of art were not limited to "classics" but included diverse works readily accessible to individual readers, as well.

Rosenblatt (1970) makes many of the same points about growth in response. Once the reader has become involved in literature and has experienced an enjoyment of it, "it is possible to further develop, within the emotionally colored context of the literary experience, the habit of reflecting on experience, of thinking rationally" (p. 18). The reader must "savor" his response to the text during the lived-through transaction with the text. The reader then examines his responses seeking to understand how his own values coincide with or differ from the world he has participated in in the transaction with the text (1978, p. 174). For Rosenblatt, the nurturing of response would include ample opportunity for readers both to respond to and to reflect upon those responses to text.

Early (1960) suggests that responses to literature are built upon a foundation of unconscious enjoyment followed by a stage of self-conscious appreciation and then conscious delight. Spencer (1977) outlines four stages in which the reader develops response. In early
stages the reader is concerned with what happens next followed by a sense of identification - "Where am I in this story?" In the third stage the reader is concerned with the author's intent and how the author worked. In the final stage of response the reader is concerned with the applicability of his understanding of the author's meaning to the reader's own life. For Spencer and Early, then, the nurturing of naive responses to literature would include supporting the earliest stages of unconscious enjoyment and the impetus to discover what happens next so that further stages of conscious awareness of author intent and personal meaning might develop more fully.

In summary, the nature of the development of response lies in developing the reader's awareness of responses without sacrificing the emotional impact of this transaction with text. At the same time, the reader's growing experiences with texts should give him or her an increasing sense of the forms and patterns literature may assume and the human experiences literature may encompass. Finally, this increasing awareness, experience and reflection should suggest to the reader certain implications for the possibilities in his or her own life.

**Research in Response**

Prior to the last several decades, studies in children's responses to literature were conducted primarily in the area of reading interests (Purves and Beach, 1972). It is only recently that children's critical thinking about literature, their developing sense of story and their interactions with literature have begun to be described. Children's reading interests and preferences suggest one perspective on response.
Studies describing the nature of adult response provide insight into the developmental stages through which children may travel.

**Children's Reading Interests**

Purves (1975) summarized some 360 studies on reading interests by describing an archetype study consisting of a survey of titles students liked or disliked; from these preferences, the researcher drew inferences that students prefer fiction, mystery, adventure, and so forth, that girls' and boys' interests differed and that interests changed with age. Purves added that few studies suggested the interactive quality of variables such as availability, instructional models, media or adults' perceptions of the child's interests. He suggested that there have been few studies prior to the date of the summary which consider teacher-pupil interaction in classroom contexts. "Yet we know from the studies that have been made that that factor is a crucial one" (p. 464).

Many of the interest studies are "plagued with the usual problems of descriptive or survey research" (Purves and Beach, 1972, p. 61), such as questionnaire bias, the potential inaccuracies in self-reported data, or the indefinable nature of certain categories such as "adventure" or "exciting". A selection noted by the researcher, for instance, as an animal story may be chosen by the child because of its conversation (Austin, 1956). Nonetheless, the sheer number of interest studies conducted suggest certain influential factors in children's reading choices.

Content, for instance, influences choice with young children professing preferences for such broad categories as adventure, fairy tales
or humor (Broening, 1934; Peterson, 1971). Older children overwhelm-
ingly prefer realistic fiction followed by fanciful tales, historical
fiction or biography (Schulte, 1967; Terman and Lima, 1931). In
grades five and six, reading interests become more fixed (Terman and
Lima) and the sex of the reader is more likely to affect choice
(Thorndike, 1941; Feeley, 1972). Interestingly, a comparison of
results from early studies to those in recent decades suggests that
sex difference in literary preference are now emerging earlier prior
to age nine (Purves and Beach, p. 93).

Other research relates children's preferences to form or type.
For instance, Terry (1974) conducted a nationwide survey of fourth,
fifth, and sixth graders' poetry preferences. Children listened to
taped sequences and rated the poems. Children preferred contemporary
poems with strong narrative elements, humor, rhythm and rhyme over
free verse, haiku, figurative language and traditional poems. Urban
children reflected a greater affinity for poetry than did rural or
suburban children; younger children were more open to poetry than were
older children. In determining children's liking for certain styles
of art Smerdon (1976) removed illustrations from a book context and
ranked children's preferences on a continuum to suggest that children
preferred pictures of castles in more representational rather than
abstract modes.

Other investigators have examined the influence of teacher and
classroom practices on reading interests. Bissett (1969) randomly
assigned classrooms to one of three treatments based on accessibility
of books. One group continued normally; a second group received
increased accessibility to books; the third group's teacher devoted class time to recommendation and peer discussion. Bissett reported in fifteen weeks that while the control group averaged 9 books per reader, the averages for the second and third groups were 12 and 23 books read per reader. Thus book accessibility and peer or teacher recommendation influences reading. Other studies also suggest as well that children respond to what peers, parents, and teachers say about books (Getzels, 1956; Lawson, 1972; Packer, 1967).

Research which relates children's preferences to age and sex of reader, content, classroom milieu or teacher behavior indicates other dimensions by which teachers may describe their own classrooms. However, differing classroom contexts contain complex interactive variables and the book choices of individual children are made, often unconsciously, for complex or simple reasons but rarely for single reasons.

Two recent studies have suggested that, in addition to other factors, children's reading interests may be a reflection of their conceptions of how the world functions. Favat (1977) compared aspects of folk tales with developmental characteristics of children from six to eight years old. Favat's content analysis of folk tales relied on the functions set forth by Propp (1968) and his analysis of developmental characteristics were based primarily upon the work of Piaget. By comparing the two "reservoirs", Favat proposed similarities between children's thinking and the "rules" of folk tales. Correspondences suggested by Favat were the child's belief in participatory magic, animism, a morality of retribution, a lack of expressed causality, and egocentrism. Favat suggested that during the time a child is
establishing new patterns of behavior and belief, folk tales embody old and familiar patterns or a literary retreat; when the child has assimilated these new patterns of behavior and belief, folk tales no longer hold an interest. Favat's stance is a theoretical one based upon the work of others rather than an experimental one.

Schlager (1978) proposed, as did Favat, that children select books which reflect their perceptions of the world. Schlager examined the content of five popular and five unpopular Newbery Award-winning titles. (Popularity was determined by circulation records from a Los Angeles library.) She compared aspects of the content of the books with characteristics of seven to twelve year old children, based upon the developmental position of Piaget, Freud and Erikson (1950). The most popular books contained concerns of middle childhood such as individual achievement without adult assistance, examples of syllogistic reasoning, a successful struggle against reality or a survival against odds, and an orientation to the making of things or completion of tasks. Schlager maintained

> When children literally perceive themselves in a book, when thought patterns coincide with those of the characters and situations presented by the author, a bond of attraction is established. When there is little such match, the book is less likely to attract a readership (p. 64).

In setting the task of describing "How children respond to fiction" Tucker (1976) makes many of the same points as Schlager. He suggests that many factors contribute to children's literary preferences. Children may prefer stories of adventurous characters as they themselves try to build autonomy and independence around themselves (p. 179).
Children also respond favorably to short, repetitive plots which may rely upon, to the adult, well-worn conventions but which are, nevertheless, fresh to the reader. Children prefer tangible results, clear-cut rewards and punishments, and plots which work out clearly. Tucker also points out a child's need to identify with someone in a book. Along with this identification occurs a sense of projection in that the child reader treats books as experiences, as a type of internalized play. Thus, Tucker sees children's interests in terms of moral and psychological development as well as in terms of literary elements. Tucker's psychological perspective is based upon observation of children but, like Favat's and Schlager's, his is again a theoretical discussion.

Taken as a whole, research in children's reading interests and preferences suggests to classroom teachers possible reasons for the choices their students make.

Critical Response Studies

Although there is an increasing body of research which examines the responses adults make to literature, there are fewer studies of children's responses. An examination of selected research in response of adult readers provides a background with which to examine three research inquires into children's critical response (Applebee, 1976, 1978; Benton, 1979; Galda, 1980).

The foundation upon which response theory rests owes much to the work of Richards (1929) who examined and categorized the written responses of university students to poems. Richards' focus on the reader set the stage for current interest in response, but his focus
on reader inadequacies gave rise to critical concern with the importance of text and the shaping of taste.

Studies which follow the line of reader response have moved into wider descriptive and categorical territory in an effort to describe the nature of response. For instance, Squire (1964) examined responses of 52 fifteen-year-olds to four short stories. He interrupted readers six times during their reading to secure oral responses. Reader comments were then categorized as 1) literary judgments; 2) interpretational responses; 3) narrational reactions; 4) associational responses; 5) self-involvement; 6) prescriptive judgments and 7) miscellaneous.

Squire identified reader difficulties similar to those discussed by Richards, such as 1) failure to grasp meaning, 2) reliance on stock responses, 3) a tendency to expect and interpret pleasant endings in spite of contrary evidence, which he termed "happiness binding," 4) critical predispositions, 5) irrelevant associations, and 7) a search for certainty. In addition, Squire noted that readers differed in unique ways. Those who became deeply involved in a story were more likely to consider the literary values of the story. Also, involvement was strongest midway into the text with evaluative responses more frequently made at the beginning or end of the reading. Intelligence and reading ability did not predict quality of the reader's interpretation. In addition, he noted few responses which indicated that adolescents related fiction to their own lives.

Purves and Rippere (1968) also sought to describe response by developing an extensive categorization system for oral and written responses of readers to text. By examining written statements of 13
to 17 year olds from four countries they described 120 categories of response which were regrouped into five broad categories: 1) engagement-involvement, or reader reaction; 2) perception, or the observation of objective elements in the text; 3) interpretation, or relation of text to the reader's world; 4) evaluation of author method, author vision or effect on the reader; and 5) a miscellaneous category.

Others have used or modified Purves' and Rippere's categories. For example, Cooper (1969) examined written responses of 117 high school juniors to four short stories and discovered that three-fourths had a preferred mode of response: 53% favored an interpretive mode; 24%, the engagement mode; 19%, the evaluative mode; and 4%, the perceptive. Cooper suggested that if the Purves-Rippere categories represented "major stances a reader can take toward a work, a better spread of responses across modes might have been expected" (p. 143).

In a later study, Cooper and Michalak (1981) were interested in testing whether individual response styles could be determined by counting responses such as Purves and Rippere did. Three measures of response style were compared: essay analysis, Response Preference Measure (RPM), and a statement analysis. Of the 76 students completing all three measures, 16% had the same preferred response mode across all three measures; 58% agreed in two of the three measures; and 26% had three different preferred modes of response, one for each measurement instrument. Thus it appeared to be difficult to ascertain response style with reliability.

Cooper and Michalak concluded that counting types of responses, in addition, missed the true character or the main emphasis in a
response. For instance, a response might be framed by an evaluative beginning and end while the connecting discourse was categorized as engagement - involvement. Thus, the main thrust of the response might well be evaluative. They also concluded that essay analysis would provide at the least a fully formed statement to be analyzed. Hence, the essay technique was more likely to describe the thrust of the response. However, the question of how to categorize responses, whether written or oral, remains a problem.

Golden (1978) recorded the oral responses of fifth and eighth graders to a realistic and a fantastic short story they heard read. She then sought to develop a framework for the analysis of response which included the functions of language, thought processes underlying language use, and the relationship between reader and text. This schema related the work of language theorists and linguists to the Purves-Rippere categories. Her analysis of the results included reference to the context in which the responses occurred but her model, like those of previous studies, did not include context as a major influence on response.

The preceding studies indicate a general direction research in critical response has usually taken - a focus upon adult subjects, without reference to naturally-occurring classroom contexts, and the categorization of response using pre-existing categories. Use of the categories proposed by others, suggests Benton (1979), runs the risk of obscuring the very nature of the response.

Any approach that trundles up the heavy machinery of content analysis and aims at the exhaustive categorizing and quantifying of stated responses runs the risk ... of reaching a descriptive conclusion about what happens
in the reading of literature that misses the living quality of the psychic processes and substitutes inert data (p. 75).

Applebee (1978) referred to the Purves-Rippere elements as the most thorough system of content analysis yet proposed for literary response (p. 152). While he initially began with these categories, his work with children ages two to seventeen led him to propose his own categories of response. Thus, Applebee noted development in children's ability to discuss the action, evaluate, and interpret metaphor. Generally, older children could produce more complex responses to story intertwining aspects of plot, character and theme while younger children concentrated on single aspects. The length of younger children's responses suggested that they were not yet able to summarize or generalize as were older children. Applebee asked nine and thirteen year old students to select from their own written statements about literature the part of their answer representing the most important thing they had to say about the story. Two thirds of the nine-year-olds selected some part of the action as most important while a sixth indicated an evaluative statement. On the other hand, at thirteen, half indicated a part of the action and a fourth noted evaluative statements as most important. This tendency of older children to offer and value evaluation was confirmed by other parts of Applebee's complex inquiry into the nature of the development of children's concept of story. The developmental model proposed by Applebee is reported in a following section of this review.

While Applebee's rigorous attention to the development of children's responses represents a landmark, other research provides insight into
response on a smaller scale. Benton (1979) and Galda (1980) indicate two approaches to the responses of upper elementary students. Benton asked ten and eleven year old children to interrupt their reading of a ten-chapter text and respond orally to the text so far. His analyses of five children's responses suggested much about the nature of the reading act from a child's point of view. Benton's students did the following: they 1) anticipated, 2) appeared to hold self-dialogues, 3) were bound by their awareness of story conventions, and 4) analogized or made connections between what they read and other stories they knew or experiences they had had. From this, Benton proposed a model of reading based on three intersecting planes, one of the reader's tension between detachment and involvements ("psychic distance"), a second of the interplay between the reader's conscious and unconscious ("psychic level"), and the last one of retrospection and anticipation ("psychic process").

Benton's model of reader behaviors allowed for describing reader-differences in, for instance, imagining. Some child readers connected fictitious settings to known settings or linked experiences in the text to those they had had. Others exaggerated detail so as to make scenes or descriptions more dramatic and more frightening, a tendency confirmed by Bartlett (1920) in his study of folktale retellings over time. Although Benton suggests the need for more detailed work on children's transaction with text, his study is one example of an approach to children's response which tries to account for the nature of the reading act, as well.

Galda (1980) sought to examine the individual and collaborative responses of three fifth grade girls to two realistic fiction novels,
Greene's *Beat the Turtle Drum* (1976) and Paterson's *Bridge to Terebithia* (1977). Allowing classification of responses to evolve from the data, Galda differentiated between the three reader discussants in such areas as styles of responding, focus on evaluation in which readers' ability or inability to accept dissonance was noted, ability to assume a spectator role, and response to metaphor. In addition to differentiating the characteristic responses of the three girls, Galda looked at the interaction of the group, noting, for instance, that the three responded more critically to the second book discussed than they had to the first. One group member's concern with controlling the group appeared to stifle her responses while another saw the group as an arena in which to state her ideas rather than to listen to others. This reflected a general tendency on the part of all three not to modify or extend individual response based upon the group's path through the discussion. Galda suggested that the ability to profit from group interaction in literary discussion might be developmental.

Galda also noted that all three girls used "facile applications of meaningless labels" (p. 169) when talking about the two books. Although they could talk of plot and style an examination of their response revealed greater concern with using the terms than it revealed meanings conveyed. In addition, two of the girls were more concerned with presenting an "objective" response to the stories than was the third (whose statements consistently revealed greater maturity than did those of the other two).

The work of Applebee, Benton and Galda suggest the breadth and depth of interest in children's response to literature. Research into
children's responses - in relation to the reading process, in groups and individually - continues to contribute to a more developed picture of the developmental paths response may take. The following section examines theoretical and research perspectives on this development of response.

Developmental Stages in Response

Numerous theoretical models have been offered which suggest how response develops. Carlsen (1974) proposed a five-stage model of response proceeding from the unconscious delight of early primary grades through the perceptions of vicarious experience and seeing of oneself in literature in the upper elementary grades. This was followed by a period of philosophical speculations in children prior to fourteen. From about fourteen, children were able to see literature as an aesthetic experience. Carlsen's model provided for aspects of each stage at all levels of response but suggested that response evolves primarily in the order stated.

Early (1960) proposed a three-stage model of the growth of literary appreciation: unconscious enjoyment, self-conscious appreciation, and conscious delight. Spencer (1977) suggested that a reader moves in his life or in his reading through four stages: 1) what happened, 2) where am I in the story, 3) how did the author do it, and 4) is he or she right about the issues.

These theoretical perspectives, no doubt distilled from numerous sources and observation, suggest that children move toward greater patterns of awareness by passing through a time of self and textual examination. However, it is only recently that children's responses
to literature have actually been examined in a systematic way to confirm or deny the theory.

The most extensive investigation of the emergence of children's response was recently undertaken by Applebee (1978). Applebee examined patterns and changes in response of two to seventeen year olds. By comparing responses to stories children knew, heard or had read or written, he was able to propose a model of the development of response which corresponded to developmental stages as described by Piaget. Applebee's description of the emergence of response to literature specifically in the concrete operational stage (ages seven to about eleven) and the first stages of formal operations (ages twelve to about fifteen) are particularly relevant to the present study.

Generally, Applebee's model grew from an examination of children's responses in several areas. He examined story retelling of children at ages six, nine and thirteen. In addition, he asked six and nine year olds what a particular story was about and also what they thought about a story in an effort to uncover reasons for children's preferences. Finally, children were asked about the meanings of common metaphorical sayings such as "when the cat is away, the mice will play". From children's completions of these various tasks, a description of the development of response emerged.

In discussing the action, young children of six retold the story either in part or in whole but children in a concrete operational stage classified and organized responses in an effort to summarize. Typically these summaries were short and were subsumed in categories such as "adventure," "nice" and so on. An alternate response was what Applebee
termed "the character list" which frequently began with "It's about a man and a lady who..." Occasionally children attempted to synopsize events rather than to retell. The synopsis was a report of ongoing events in present tense with a reporting of dialogue rather than a recreation. On the other hand adolescents were more concerned with an analysis of the story in terms of its mechanics or characteristics. In addition, younger adolescents were concerned with giving reasons for their reactions or examining their own responses.

In evaluating, young children tended to focus upon one singular striking aspect of the story. Thus a six year old might like "Cinderella" because "she went to the ball" but dislike "The Three Little Pigs" because "they get all eaten up" (p. 99). Whereas the adult might cite an example in light of the whole, young children were not yet able to take this broader view. Seven to eleven year olds, in the stage of concrete operations, would typically evaluate in a circular fashion by ascribing their subjective response of "I like it" to a perceived objective aspect of the book, "because it's good." A typical evaluative response of a nine year old might be "sometimes stories are dull and I don't like them." In addition, middle grade children would evaluate the content aspects of stories, such as "cowboys", as good.

On the other hand, the adolescent attempted an evaluation based upon criteria outside of himself. Adolescents noticed changes within the work such as patterns of rising or falling action. This analysis allowed them to empathize which characters or identify with situations more readily. Typical responses of thirteen year olds, for instance, would be "I like to live in stories." Paradoxically, as children
became more engaged or involved in stories, they also evidenced the ability to assume a greater distance from the story. As Applebee pointed out, the adolescent reported that the story happened "like I was there" whereas for the young child, the experience was more direct and immediate.

Applebee also asked children to explain the meanings of sayings such as "Birds of a feather flock together" and found that nine-year-olds usually gave literal interpretations. Slightly older children gave examples ("It is like when...") suggesting that the expression was only one of a larger set of analogies. Adolescents in the later stages of formal operation (sixteen and over) made generalized statements. Applebee suggested that this generalizing ability was based upon a foundation of ability to group examples and to see patterns. In addition, this ability to see several levels of meaning was a forerunner of a child's development of a sense of theme. Gardner (1979) suggested that children's understanding of metaphor proceeds in several ways. For instance, young children produce metaphors readily but this capacity seems to be temporarily lost as a child enters a stage of seeking to understand metaphor. At about age ten, children were verbally able to appreciate and distinguish metaphors such as "a guard who is hard as a rock." Gardner suggested, however, that younger children are able to appreciate metaphors providing the groundwork is laid (e.g., pictorially or textually).

In summary, Applebee reiterated that children build upon previous stages. Thus an adolescent who generalizes about a work or considers
its theme may also call upon earlier established powers of narration, summary or analysis.

Others have noted the development of interpretive response from a literal base. Purves (1975) found that third, fourth and fifth graders dwelled on literal aspects of story, compared themselves to characters in a story, and evaluated the story in terms of personal reactions. Sixth graders attempted interpretation, especially in questions about characters. By eighth or ninth grade, children evaluated the story in terms of its meaning and sought to interpret hidden meanings. Angelotti (1972) compared eighth graders' responses to a junior novel and to an adult novel. He found that the more easily understood junior novel led to increased interpretive responses while the more difficult adult novel elicited content and perception-related responses.

Applebee (1976) also investigated children's construal of stories in general by using a repertory grid technique in which he gave nine, thirteen and seventeen year old students one pole (e.g., serious; really happened; easy; interesting subject) and elicited the other pole. These pairs of constructs were then used by students to rate favorite poems, books, stories, plays, television shows and so forth. In a complicated analysis, Applebee noted certain developmental changes within the categories of evaluation, simplicity and realism. Evaluation increased as children grew older; in addition, older children were more likely to tolerate or prefer disturbing, unpredictable content. Young children opposed simplicity with "hard" meaning difficult or lengthy text; older children opposed simplicity with "complex" or "disturbing."
In addition, young children contrasted books intended for different audiences while adolescents tended to contrast books which were intended for an adult audience. Older students' distinctions were subtle ones within a category while young students made more gross comparisons between unlike categories. The fact that children construed realism in various ways suggests that students' perception of what is "real" is a complex one. For instance, a fantasy, *The Lion, The Witch and the Wardrobe* (Lewis, 1961), was categorized at both realistic/not realistic by different readers. An understanding of realism appears to begin in a concern for the distinction of "true" from "made-up" and evolves into a judgment of the distance a reader perceives himself to be from the work.

In related studies of children's development of story grammars, others (Bower; 1976; Mandler and Johnson, 1977; Stein, 1978) have investigated the development of children's frame of reference for aspects of literature. Generally, children displayed an increasing ability to organize stories around particular frames. New material was understood in relationship to old; out of this construal grew an ability to predict or fill in the gaps. Where young children were overwhelmed by a task of retelling a folktale with causality or motivation removed, older sixth grade children were able to complete the task and add the unsupplied motivational details (Rubin and Gardner, 1977). These children enlisted what they knew about stories to fill in the gaps. Predictably, older children also showed increased ability to complete unfinished stories with endings reflecting multiple aspects of the story such as character development, thematic statements, or causality.
While previous studies have examined aspects of children's thinking about stories or have looked at the development of response, Hickman (1979) took a different view of response in the context of a naturally-occurring classroom. She became a participant-observer in classrooms spanning kindergarten through fifth grade. There she recorded children's oral and written responses, nonverbal behaviors and various products of response to literature including writing, art work, drama and discussions. Hickman's consideration of the teachers' roles and the classroom contexts are reported in the next section of this review.

Hickman's description of various grade levels suggested certain developmental characteristics of response. Very young children used their bodies to respond, gesturing, getting together to demonstrate pieces of the action. Stories told by young children featured prototypic characters (the man, the mother, the boy). In addition, their artwork tended to be a collection of significant objects in a story. The youngest children commented on their own experiences no matter how thinly these were attached to the story. Second and third graders sought to validate their behaviors as readers by demonstrating facility with conventions of print such as index, heading, table of contents and so forth. They attempted to make logical interpretation and clarifications of what they read. Artistic products showed greater integration, as well. Older children's responses differed in degree rather than in kind from the second and third graders' responses. They demonstrated a narrowing preference for certain types of story and were generally more aware of story conventions.
Hickman's study indicates a growing concern among educational researchers that research should reflect classroom conditions as they occur naturally. Because Hickman observed the classrooms over four months' time, she was able to attest to the growth of response and the interactive nature of responses. She reported, for instance, one child producing a mural and story from a combination of sources such as an illustration from "Noah's Ark", part of a shipwreck from a television rendition of Longfellow's poem "The Wreck of the Hesperus," and folktales which were being talked about in the classroom. This view of the development of response over time as well as in the interactive context of a classroom is rare in studies of response to literature.

Response in Classroom Contexts

Current research in language and literature suggests that context profoundly influences children's response. Particular illustrations suggest the importance of context when investigating language.

Heathcote and Hovda (1980) invited upper elementary school children to participate in a dramatic context which examined the morality of conquest. The children functioned as archaeologists on site speculating upon the origin of nine "stone" tablets. The archaeologists gave public lectures on each tablet's content, compared each other's findings, later interviewed adults in role as stone effigies and engaged in a reconstruction of the events leading to the conquest of one group by another. The children's language productions were varied and context demanded several types of language production children were not used to creating in school. Those teachers witnessing the four-day
experience commented upon the dramas' power to change children's language and influence their development of ideas as well.

Donaldson (1978) proposed that very young children were more likely to use advanced thinking strategies when confronted with tasks embedded in a context meaningful to the child rather than disembedded. For instance, one Piagetian task which four to six year olds are asked to perform involves observing two sticks of equal length. The experimenter aligns the sticks carefully and children agree that they are equal. The experimenter then moves one of the sticks and asks children if they are now the same length. If children agree, they are said to be able to "conserve." If they disagree, which children under age seven commonly do, they are said to be unable to decenter or to use inferential reasoning powers. Donaldson showed that if the task made greater human sense - if the second set of sticks were "messed up" by a naughty teddy bear, for instance - many more children would demonstrate "conservation." Following many other examples of children's ability to reason, Donaldson concluded that children attend to meanings based on their knowledge of language, assessment of intentions of others, and the manner in which physical situations are presented. This suggests that children's responses to literature, as well, might show more advanced stages of thinking if examined in normal human situations in which children engage.

Chambers (1978) described several group literature discussions, some merely recalling, some question-and-answer directed, some purposefully less-structured, which elicited various responses from children. He suggested that children tend to use portmanteau words such as
exciting, boring or interesting because of the kinds of contexts set by adults. Chambers suggested that adults who talk with children in conversation rather than at children as interrogators may elicit from them a higher level of participation, more insightful comments, and less reliance on stock phrases. But the adults must set the context in which this may take place.

Just as the demands of the task influences response, so, too, does the context of the group. Purves and others (1973) conducted an international study, a part of which examined response preferences of fourteen year old and pre-university students. There were significant between-country differences which were attributed to the difference in teaching emphasis and critical traditions in the countries studied.

Barnes (1976) demonstrated how the small group context enables its members to work toward expression of wider meanings. He provided transcripts of four eleven-year-old girls discussing a poem. Much of the discussion was digressive, hesitant or speculative. However, the individuals collectively arrived at a statement showing depth of understanding during the discussion. Beach (1973), in examining college students' group discussion responses to poetry, found that students who did not spend time in free association prior to the discussion began with personal and digressive statements in the group. Galda (1980) demonstrated how the interactive strategies of three fifth grade readers developed in discussion. One child was afraid to risk a wrong statement, another spent time trying to control the group, while the third demonstrated an ability to listen as well as to contribute. Galda suggested that the three children's discussion abilities improved with practice but that
unstructured group discussions might not be as helpful to some readers as to others. Generally, research in response has not considered this group context; the preceding studies suggest that it might be important to consider context as the landscape in which response occurs.

Response to literature in context has been studied on an individual case basis by some. White (1954) and Butler (1979) each followed the reading and free responses of a single child over several years' time. Both studies were conducted within a family: White observed her daughter; Butler observed her grandchild. While both studies attest to the power of literature in the lives of children, they show as well the importance of a knowledge of the individual child, of the context of response, and of the history of the child's encounters with books. Once more, response over time reveals much about the interactive and elusive nature of response.

One study which examined reading in an ethnographic sense, demonstrates the importance of defining reading broadly. Griffin (1977) reported the number of instances where reading occurred in one first grade classroom. She demonstrated that the reading act did not simply take place during an assigned period but went on all day. Again, Griffin pointed to reading behaviors generally considered more advanced than one would commonly expect in first graders.

By defining response to literature as all behaviors children offer in response to literature, Hickman (1979) incorporated Griffin's broad definition of response. In addition to the developmental characteristics of children's responses, Hickman was able to describe the developmental behaviors of children responding. She noted, for instance,
that certain responses seemed to be tacitly rule-governed: talk about a book you can touch, offer support to a fellow reader, and work with a book the teacher has acknowledged. Hickman noted children's listening stances, children's interactions, certain titles such as Silverstein's poetry collection, Where the Sidewalk Ends (1974), which appeared at all grade levels. In addition, Hickman described teachers' questions, classroom emphasis, and interactions with children as a background or framework against which and within which children's responses could be viewed.

It seems reasonable to suggest that studies which replicate Hickman's study in other settings or ones which examine response at a particular level would contribute new material to a description of response. In addition, a study which takes into account the patterns which emerge in the course of a school year might suggest to teachers how response grows and changes. The nature of this growth and change would have resultant curriculum implications.

Summary


A mature response to literature would include various behaviors such as the habit of reflection upon one's own responses (Rosenblatt, 1979), an increasing sense of form growing out of a legacy of past
satisfactions (Britton, 1968), or the capacity to move from unconscious delight through self-conscious to conscious delight (Early, 1960). Various theoretical descriptions of stages of literary response suggest mature responses are best fostered by the nurturing of responses in readers at each particular level of their development. Thus, readers are supported through each stage rather than encouraged to move as quickly as possible to other more advanced stages of response.

Frequently, children's reading interests have been studied as a part of response. Although these studies provide some general statements about children's preferences, few discuss the interactive nature of the variables and fewer still suggest the influence of classroom contexts (Purves, 1975). Two studies (Favat, 1977; Schlager, 1978) suggest correspondences between children's literary preferences and developmental characteristics.

Research in response to literature has frequently focused upon the adult respondent (Squire, 1964; Beach, 1973; Cooper and Michalak, 1981). However, recent studies, most notably those of Applebee (1976, 1978) and Hickman (1979) have contributed to a more adequate description of the development of children's response. In addition, others such as Galda (1981) and Benton (1979) have contributed to the description of the process of response in children.

Attempts to categorize and analyze response have relied upon the non-hierarchal system developed by Purves and Rippere (1968) and modified by researchers who followed. Others have developed categories of response, in an anthropological manner, from those suggested to the researcher by the data (Hickman, 1979; Galda, 1980).
In building a description of the development of response, Applebee's work is significant. He noted the development of children's responses to story. In addition, he noted children's changes in describing action, evaluating, and ascribing meanings to metaphorical statements. Applebee's work to date represents the most complete investigation of the development of response in children. Others have begun to investigate the development of children's sense of story which promises to contribute to a description of children's responses to literature.

Current research puts much emphasis upon the studying of language and thinking in naturally occurring contexts (Heathcote and Hovda, 1980; Donaldson, 1978). Children are influenced by many aspects of the classroom such as teacher structure, peer interaction, and the nature of tasks or the demands posed. The classroom context provides a wide arena in which to study incidences of reading behaviors. Reading occurs at times other than the designated period and hence should be studied in this wider classroom context (Griffin, 1977). The study which took a wide view of response in a naturally occurring classroom context was that of Hickman (1979). Hickman compared kindergarten through fifth grade children's responses to literature and described developmental characteristics of children's products, activities, concerns and thoughts. The teacher's structuring of the classroom was viewed as an important part of this four-month long study. Hickman's study suggests the need for other studies which describe response behaviors - in other settings, in breadth and depth, and over a longer time.
CHAPTER III

STRATEGIES OF THE STUDY

This study employed a naturalistic approach to explore patterns in response to literature which children in one fifth and sixth grade classroom made during the course of one school year. Certain considerations guided the selection of the classroom and the focus of the present study was clarified in a preliminary informal inquiry. Strategies of the study are described in this chapter including the setting, population and time frame. In addition, the methods of data collection and a discussion of the role of the investigator are discussed. Finally, a description of the structure of analysis of the data is included.

Rationale for Classroom Selection

Most fifth and sixth grade classrooms are involved with the teaching of reading and there are numerous classrooms in which children would be able to talk with an investigator. However, there are few classrooms in which reading is taught solely by the use of children's literature. Since the overall purpose of the study was to examine the responses children make to the literature they are exposed to, it seemed most helpful to conduct the study in a classroom in which many and various responses occurred to a wide variety of children's literature. In addition, it was useful to select a classroom without the confounding influence of basal texts on the responses of children.
There were several classrooms known to the investigator which met these criteria of having a literature-based reading program and providing many and various opportunities for responses of children to this literature. The site of the study was chosen from among these several classrooms because, in addition to the above assets, this classroom was in a self-contained rather than in an open-space setting, and the investigator felt the smaller area would facilitate the collection of the data.

The investigator was familiar with the setting and the teacher's structuring of the classroom because of her supervision of student teachers in this classroom intermittently during the previous four years. In addition, the teacher expressed a willingness to allow the investigator to clarify her ideas by talking with children prior to the onset of the study. Following the trial observation, the teacher expressed a willingness to continue to work with the investigator and so this classroom was selected as the site of the study.

**Preliminary Planning**

In the spring of 1980, prior to the onset of the study, the investigator talked with children in several classrooms at Barrington Road School about their reading. Although this five-week period was not considered a pilot study, it served to confirm and clarify research questions formed by the investigator. In addition, it served to clarify data-collecting procedures which proved useful for the study reported here. During this trial period, for instance, it became clear that the investigator would need to insinuate herself into the classroom milieu sufficiently enough to be considered a natural part of the
situation rather than a distraction or an addition. It was also obvious that the presence of a tape recorder inhibited or changed certain kinds and lengths of response so that the investigator would have to rely upon other methods, in addition to taping of direct questions, when gathering data. During the trial observations, it became clearer, too, that responses to literature, both solicited and unsolicited, occurred so quickly and often simultaneously that a single investigator observing for a five-week period could not hope to capture the richness of response in such a short time.

The data collection of this trial investigation coming at the end of the school year produced a richness of responses which left the investigator with questions about the origins of those responses, as well. Therefore, the investigator redefined the data collection period for the present study to occur over the course of the following school year.

Proper permissions from the school's coordinator and the superintendent were secured and letters were sent to parents informing them of the study's purpose and time span (see Appendix B). The study began during the first week of school in September of 1980.

Setting of the Study

The site chosen for the study was a self-contained fifth and sixth grade combination classroom in the informal alternative section of a single elementary school. Serving an upper socio-economic suburb of approximately 45,000 residents, the school contained approximately 765 students. Of these, approximately 260 students were enrolled by parental choice in the informal alternative program.
The nine informal classrooms are located in three annex buildings of four classrooms each. Three other classrooms in these buildings are used as an art room, a combination music-dance classroom and a teachers' lounge. Informal classrooms are organized with an awareness of Piagetian stages of development so that a child might pursue his or her own natural and most strengthening course of learning by discovery, inquiry, and creative interaction with others under the guidance of the teacher. The child learns how to learn by making choices and experiencing the consequences of these choices within the larger context of his/her scholastic learning observations and emerging competencies. In this way, the child internalizes standards, goals, and procedures for on-going self-evaluation in preparation for adult life (Barrington School Philosophy, 1979).

Classroom environments included desks and tables or chairs for each student, a central gathering area, a loft, chalkboards and much of the conventional paraphernalia of the classroom, such as file cabinets, shelves stocked with various materials, tables and so forth. Ample display space for children's work is augmented in many instances by displays which can hang from the ceiling, on the windows or on doors.

Each classroom contains its own library although the room chosen for the study has an exceptionally large collection even for this group of classrooms. In addition, children may use the library in the main building located a half block away.

Many adults visit the school. Classes from nearby universities frequently send observers for the day. Student teachers and aides are always present at the school. Parents both volunteer their services and talents and visit throughout the school. The school welcomes
visitors and, as a result, the children are accustomed to talking with adults about their work or being observed as they worked. Under these conditions, the investigator found it relatively easy to assume the role of another interested adult observer at the beginning of the school year without needing to define to the students her purposes in the classroom.

Population of the Study

The population of the study initially included ten fifth graders and fifteen sixth graders in a single classroom. At the year's beginning the twelve boys included five fifth graders and seven sixth graders but one sixth grade boy moved so the school year ended with eleven boys. Fourteen girls, five fifth grade and nine sixth grade girls completed the class population. The school year finished with twenty-four students.

In addition to the regular classroom teacher, the classroom also included three student teachers, each present during one of the Ohio State University's academic quarters. Each of the three student teachers were training to be informal teachers in an alternative teacher education program at The Ohio State University. The program, known as EPIC (Educational Programs in Informal Classrooms) had worked closely with the school for ten years. The population of the study included many adults who visited the classroom as guest speakers, substitute teachers, aides or as observers.

Within the classroom population, certain students approached the investigator more readily than did others. While some ignored her, others sought her out. In addition, as the investigator became more a
part of the group and as the group began, in the words of the teacher, "to take shape" the role of the investigator changed slightly (see below).

Time Frame and Organization

The gathering of data for the study took place over one full school year's time. Since it was not practical for the investigator to visit the school site each day all day, actual dates and times of observation varied depending upon the nature of the school day as predicted by the classroom teacher and the investigator. Necessary arrangements and permissions were secured during the summer months and the investigator joined the classroom the first week of the school year in September. The teacher introduced her as someone "who is interested in books and will be visiting the classroom this year." Observations continued until the end of the school year in early June.

The investigator initially focused her observations on the second half of the school day beginning at 12:15 when students returned from lunch to 3:00 when they left for the day. During this afternoon period, time was generally given to the teacher's reading aloud to the class, a work time which included many literature-related activities, a sustained silent reading (SSR) period of approximately a half hour and a quarter hour of book discussions.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Topic</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>8:30-9:00</td>
<td>Group meeting, organization of work, assignments</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9:00-10:00</td>
<td>Work period, multiple tasks</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10:00-10:30</td>
<td>Music (or Art, library, etc.)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10:30-11:15</td>
<td>Work period</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11:15-12:15</td>
<td>Lunch</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12:15-1:00</td>
<td>Organization of afternoon; teacher reads aloud to class; discussion of book read aloud</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1:00-1:45</td>
<td>Work period</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1:50-2:00</td>
<td>Recess</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2:00-2:45</td>
<td>Sustained Silent Reading (SSR)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2:45-3:00</td>
<td>Book discussion, &quot;Sharing&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3:00</td>
<td>Dismissal</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Figure 1. Typical Organization of Time in the Classroom

The investigator visited the classroom at least twice each week and frequently three or four days each week. In addition, observations were occasionally made in the morning as well.

On occasions when the class was at camp or on field trips, or when the investigator was not otherwise present, the classroom teacher and the student teacher often contributed observations which related to the investigator's area of concern. The bulk of the data, however, was collected by the investigator in the afternoons between the end of the lunch and the final clean-up and dismissal for the day.

Types and Methods of Data Collection

The investigator used several methods of data collection throughout the year. Also all written work of the children in this study was made available to the investigator.

The investigator kept daily logs (which totaled approximately 220 pages divided into three spiraled notebooks) which she carried with her wherever she went with the class. Some children were initially curious about what was being recorded but upon seeing floor plans and titles of
books they eventually lost interest. These logs of observations of
events, conversations recorded verbatim or recreated, quotes and
musings of the researcher constituted the bulk of the data. A trans­
scription of a daily log appears in Appendix C.

Children's unsolicited and spontaneous comments or statements
were noted in the daily logs. Also, group discussions at the end of
the day, children's comments following the reading aloud of a book and
comments of the teacher were all noted. Occasionally, discussions were
audio-tape recorded. In addition, the investigator conducted four
interviews with children in the fall which were recorded and transcribed.
Teacher-student conversations were a frequent occurrence in the class­
room and the investigator simply followed the example of the teacher
and created another adult-student conversation in the classroom. During
the winter months, several groups of children ranking books were recorded
and transcribed. Sharing, interviews, several small group and whole
group discussions, some unsolicited discussion without the children's
awareness that they were being recorded, and a lecture the teacher gave
to a university graduate course also were tape-recorded and transcribed.
In the spring, the investigator again tape-recorded interviews with
eight individual children in addition to taping several class discussions.
The teacher taped three interviews and a small group discussion she
conducted as well. Background noise and the distance children were
from the recorder made some of the taped group discussions difficult
to transcribe. Nonetheless, the tapes provided more accurate transcripts
of what some children said and proved valuable when juxtaposed with the
daily logs and other types of data.
Children's written work which was made available to the researcher included the monthly book reports which were completed by most of the children at the end of each month. These were transposed by the investigator to a notebook or were given in actuality to the investigator by the teacher. Students also kept weekly journals in which they recorded their reactions to the work of the week. This included reports of their reading and concerns, thoughts, or feelings about what they had read. Relevant parts of these journals were transposed into the investigator's records. Also collected were children's written responses to several of the eleven novels which the teacher read aloud to the class during the year, surveys of reading which students conducted among themselves and occasional book reviews written for the school paper by members of the class.

Children kept a written account of all books read during the school year. Books read at home could be included on the book log which was kept on a series of 6 x 8 cards, one per month, on which title and author could be recorded. These logs were, for the most part, accurately kept by students and were used as a basis for conversation about books and as record-keeping devices for both the teacher and the students. The content of all children's book logs were recorded by the researcher.

Roles of the Investigator

Part of the understanding between the classroom teacher and the investigator was that the investigator was interested in children's responses to literature as a part of the ongoing classroom environment and that the classroom teacher did not need to alter her usual mode of operation. It was also understood that the investigator and the
classroom teacher might collaborate on certain aspects of the classroom program such as providing new books or suggesting book titles to readers. Initially the investigator was introduced as someone who knew about books and as an entry into the classroom, the investigator gave a few short book talks. As a result, children frequently asked the investigator to bring or find in the classroom collection particular books or a "sad," or "scary" book, or a "book for me." It is fair to say that the children saw the investigator's role primarily as a supplier of books to the classroom and besides the classroom teacher, another source of recommendations for what to read. Although the investigator brought books into the classroom throughout the year, in April and May, she brought some fifty new books (published in 1980 or 1981) into the classroom. These new titles, initially stored in boxes under the teacher's desk, fueled an already growing interest in reading and the books were circulated by children as individuals discovered "good" titles. At one point, the investigator noted sixteen of the twenty-four children reading titles she had brought into the classroom collection.

The investigator had hoped to conduct interviews frequently in the fall months. However, it became quickly apparent that for whatever reasons, interviews taped in the fall produced more stilted responses, hesitations, "I don't knows" and so forth from the students than did a more spontaneous conversation. Thus, the interviewer questioned children more informally and took notes in as unobtrusive a fashion as possible. Questions generally followed along the lines of the following.

- What have you read lately? How did you decide to read this book?
Which ones were particularly good? What was good about them?

What kinds of books do you like? Do you see any patterns in what you read?

Do you like any particular author? Why? How are his/her books similar?

Do you think this book has any particular message?

In actual practice, the interviews became more conversational as the year progressed and often several children joined in a discussion which started out with a single child. Many informal conversations were also initiated, participated in, or witnessed by the investigator. Interview questions and a sample of a solicited interview are reproduced in Appendix D.

In the spring, the investigator conducted interviews with children with their book logs spread out before us. In addition to the above, other questions asked were:

What changes have you noticed in your reading this year? What happened to help cause those changes?

Are there any books on your list you'd say were not so good? Why were they not so good?

What sorts of things do you think Mrs. Monaghan thinks are important in reading/about reading? What does she want you to think about?

The investigator had noticed that children were willing to explain their reasons if she gave them time. Interviews later in the year were distinguishable from those early in the year by the noticeable lessening of the investigator's contributions to the conversations.

In addition to supplying and recommending books or talking with children; the investigator took an active role on several occasions. In the fall, she helped a group of four children create a small drama, based on an interview of characters from Keep Stompin' Till the Music
Stops (Pevsner). The investigator felt that this activity jeopardized her observational role, however, and so did not engage in any further "teaching activity." She did, however, continue to introduce a book to the class occasionally and in January she shared a dozen picture books which were being considered for the Caldecott Medal with the assembled class.

Although the classroom teacher and the investigator did not formally plan any activity, they talked frequently about books, children and reading. The investigator suggested to the teacher a technique for eliciting evaluative criteria from the class as a whole which the teacher set up in the classroom. A chart with pockets was hung in the reading corner of the classroom and titles of books read aloud could be inserted in the pockets according to their degree of popularity. As each new book was completed, students then proposed where the new title should be inserted and the rest were rearranged accordingly.

As the school year took shape and the teacher and students grew to understand each other's expectations, so, too, did the investigator grow in understanding. Responses which had seemed so extremely difficult and elusive to capture suddenly seemed to be offered freely. The teacher indicated that she "felt them coming together as a group" after Christmas. The investigator noticed this, too, and became a more relaxed observer in the classroom. Perhaps children sensed this coming together, too. As a result the investigator felt much more at ease in the classroom after the initial observations in the fall had passed.
Report of the Data

Descriptive Data: The Teacher's Organization of the Classroom

In order to discuss the dimensions of response in a fifth and sixth grade classroom, it was necessary to assemble as much description as possible about the environment in which the response occurred since the response is a direct consequence of the child's interaction with the environment. An adequate description of the environment would have to include the physical setting of the classroom as thoughtfully planned for by the classroom teacher. (A description of the school and its community context were briefly set forth in a previous section of this chapter.) An equally important part of the description of the environment would necessarily be the teacher's arrangement of the time that she and students spent together. In addition, the teacher set certain expectations and goals for the students which were revealed tacitly or explicitly as the year progressed. Chapter IV constitutes a description of the teacher's role in the classroom and her arrangement of the physical, emotional and mental environment in which responses to literature occurred. In addition, the following chapter includes a description of the procedures, schedules, expectations and rationale by which the teacher choreographed the school year.

Analysis of Dimensions of Response: The Children

If the investigator had set out to complete an ethnographic study of the classroom, the first analysis of the data might serve as a step in defining which data were responses to literature. However, the investigator made these decisions daily in what was chosen to be observed or recorded.
At the end of four months of data collection in the fall, the investigator conducted a primary analysis of the data to determine what patterns, unique occurrences and "black holes" seemed to be evident. The second three months of observation were a continuation of data-gathering with a focus on the future development of the patterns and questions which arose from the primary analysis. The final two months of data gathering continued the data collection with major emphasis on changes children's responses appeared to have undergone during the course of the school year.

Several preliminary frames for categorizing children's responses were developed as the data collection proceeded. These included:

1. type of books selected and reasons for the selection,
2. range of reading behaviors during a variety of situations,
3. a description of characteristic responses of fifth and sixth graders,
4. responses indicating literary awareness,
5. other patterns of responses to a single selection, to genres, to books read aloud during the course of the year.
6. categories children assign to books.

The analysis of the data required that different frames be applied to the same data. Thus, single events had multiple meanings and existed in multiple contexts. For the sake of analysis, response events are often discussed in Chapter V as if occurring singly. Categories were further developed as the study progressed. Results of the analyses of dimensions of children's responses to literature are presented in Chapter V of this report.
Summary

A naturalistic approach was used to explore patterns in responses to literature which children in one fifth and sixth grade made during the course of the school year. Twenty-four children and one teacher were observed from September until June.

Data were collected by interviews, observations and the examination of children's productions in the classroom. Following a primary analysis of the data for patterns which seemed to appear, data continued to be gathered throughout the school year. Particular patterns were seen in the teacher's organization of the classroom.

The environment, including physical setting, emotional and cognitive setting, and the expectations of the teacher were presented as a background upon which the students interacted (see Chapter IV of this report). The analysis of responses which the children made to literature they read or heard read during the school year were examined to secure categories, patterns or frameworks by which responses could be described. These particular categories focused upon selection of books, reading behaviors, individual differences in response, awareness of certain literary elements, changes in children's response, and the identification of other patterns of response (see Chapter V of this report).

The final procedure of the study was to view the children's responses in interaction with the classroom as arranged by the teacher in order to develop hypotheses about environments which help fifth and sixth grade students develop greater breadth and depth as readers. A summary, implications and recommendations of the study are reported in Chapter VI of this report.
CHAPTER IV

DESCRIPTIVE DATA:
THE TEACHER'S ORGANIZATION OF THE CLASSROOM

This study explored the dimensions of response to literature made by a group of students in a self-contained fifth and sixth grade classroom. Since much of children's response is a consequence of their interaction with the classroom teacher's choices in arranging time, space and materials, it is important to understand the nature of these teacher choices in classroom arrangement. The classroom teacher is the virtual choreographer of the self-contained classroom. Her perspectives on children and learning, the rationale upon which she bases the classroom organization, and the changes she makes in classroom procedure as children grow and develop during the year's course become the warp upon which children's response is woven. Therefore, an essential part of the data is derived from observing the classroom teacher in action. The data in Chapter IV are presented in five parts: 1) the classroom teacher; 2) the classroom setting; 3) arrangements of time; 4) what the teacher seeks to build; 5) teacher roles in the classroom. Chapter V presents the responses to literature which children make within and as a consequence of the environment set up in the classroom by the teacher.

The Classroom Teacher

Lois Leaf Monaghan, the classroom teacher who agreed to be a part of this study, has been a teacher off and on for nearly sixteen...
years\textsuperscript{1}. She obtained a Bachelor of Arts degree from Central Michigan University and subsequently taught elementary middle grades in Michigan, California and Oregon prior to teaching in Ohio.

Before teaching fifth/sixth grades in the Barrington Informal program, Lois taught second, third and fourth grades for ten years in a traditional classroom setting. Lois became interested in informal and British primary school education in the mid-sixties and attended summer workshops at The Ohio State University. As part of an independent study with Martha L. King, Lois observed and participated as a graduate student in the EPIC program (Educational Programs in Informal Classrooms), a preservice teacher training program at the university. Following that experience, Lois joined the newly-formed informal education alternative at Barrington School.

Lois has been teaching in the Upper Arlington school system since 1974 during which time she obtained a Master of Arts degree from The Ohio State University. She wrote a thesis (1977) in which she used a repertory grid technique to look at the personal meanings or constructs which are revealed by children participating in inquiry.

As an active member of the staff, Lois represents Barrington Informal on such school or district committees as Middle School Design. In addition, during the school year, she attended various workshops or

\textsuperscript{1}The classroom teacher and the school site of the study are both referred to by actual name. In order to guard the privacy of the child participants, however, all names of children have been changed to fictitious names, as opposed to initials. It was thought that fictitious names would preserve readability.
conferences such as a three day meeting on children's writing sponsored by the Ohio State Department of Education.

For the last six years, Lois, along with other teachers in the Informal program, has accepted student teachers into her classroom. These preservice teachers are also trained in the EPIC program. Students in the program commit themselves to one year of concurrent study and teaching. During the course of the study three different student teachers participated in the classroom, one each during the fall, winter and spring academic quarters. The student teachers carried out the daily schedule as planned for by Lois but they contributed their own ideas as well. Curriculum was planned by Lois, the student teacher, and in many instances, with the children.

During the school year, curriculum focused on major topics of study which influenced what children read and how they reacted to literature. Fall topics were a study of natural science and a history of America. The winter topic was a study of South America and a study of the human body leading into a general ecological study in spring. Alongside of these major focuses, several smaller topics ("mini-courses", as they were called by Lois and the students) took place. A sampling of mini-courses included calligraphy, calculator math, several poetry-writing-and-reading groups, and so forth. Many literature-related events were also generated as small group projects. These literature-related events are discussed in Chapter IV.

The classroom teacher's philosophy on children and learning might well be summed up in the school's philosophy of encouraging children to take an active part in and to find meaning in their own learning.
Children were encouraged by Lois to develop their own projects, posters, or writings from topics of their own choosing within the framework which Lois set up. Thus, children worked individually or in small groups on a variety of tasks. A typical day's content is outlined in a following section. Lois saw the teacher's role as one of being "helpful, rather than intrusive".

In order to see more clearly the teacher in the classroom, it is helpful to view the classroom environment as set up by the classroom teacher.

**The Classroom Setting**

**Floorplan**

The classroom, like all classrooms at Barrington informal, is a square room, windowed on two walls, connected to the other three classrooms in the "pod" by a small center area hallway. Each teacher arranges the classroom to suit her own and the students' needs and Lois has not changed her basic arrangement in several years. Each child has a desk (the location of which may change periodically). Other furniture, such as the bookcases, tables, the loft, two sofas and the storage area for materials, is more or less stationary.
Figure 2. A Typical Classroom Floor Plan

Key:
A = Reading Area
B = "Mrs. Monaghan's Cupboards"
C = The Loft
D = Round table used by small groups
E = Display of monthly book reports
F = Storage Areas
G = Mrs. Monaghan's Desk
H = Student chair and desk
I = Display space for student's work
J = Table
For an observer used to classrooms with orderly horizontals and verticals, this classroom represents a departure from that norm. Desks are grouped by Lois, with child preferences considered, into chains, groups of four or five and banks of several with boys and girls in each group. Children work at their own desks but frequently work in other locations as well, such as on the floor in the reading area, in the loft, or at a large round table. The teacher's desk serves more as a repository for work in progress than as a consultation center as Lois prefers to move from group to group or to work with individuals in different locations in the room.

One windowed corner of the room is set off by bookshelves, carpeted and furnished with two sofas, and chairs which students add or subtract from time to time. This area is known as the "reading area" and it is here that many children work or gather to read in the presence of each other during the sustained silent reading (SSR) time. Lois also uses the area to call small groups together for discussions around some common topic such as a book several have read or the format the class newspaper will take. The reading area also serves as one of the class gathering places where, at the day's end, Lois convenes the group for discussion. The area is small enough that some of the twenty-four class members must find seats on the windowsills, the floor or the steps to the loft in order to be a part of the group.

The classroom contains much that is stored for potential use and these storage areas - of math materials, art supplies, reference material, paper, social studies materials, text books and the like - are readily accessible to children. The room also contains a sink, a
small TV set, several typewriters which the children use for preparing the class newspaper, lockers shared by pairs of students, a blackboard and several bulletin boards used for display.

The bulletin boards are usually covered with children's work such as the month's writings about "Good Books" or projects from some particular and current topic of study such as "Optical Illusions", "Famous Americans", "South America", "Poetry" or reports. However, display is not confined to the corkboard and displays of children's work often hang from the ceiling or in the windows, are taped to the walls and on the loft, or are arranged on a table top. The reading area at times has featured displays of children's work, as well. Usually, a visitor to the classroom can trace the class progress through a variety of topics simply by "reading the walls". These displays give the room a crowded but "lived-in" look and children seem proud of the work they have done. Parents are invited to an open house once each quarter and special effort is made to have the room well-furnished with the work of the children.

The Book Collection

One of the reasons that this classroom was chosen as a site for the study was because of the remarkable book collection which the classroom teacher, Lois, has amassed. Each classroom at Barrington Informal has its own classroom library. However, this classroom has more books than most. The books are located in two areas, one heavily used by the children, the other selectively referred to by Lois and a child when the need arises.
The reading area houses most of the books stored in the classroom. Two couches face each other in the squarish reading area and two banks of bookcases line the opposite walls. One bank contains the collection of approximately 500 paperback books which Lois has collected, bought, or brought from her daughter's outgrown library at home. Many of the paperbacks are "premium books" chosen by Lois for the class, as a result of their participating in the Scholastic Magazine Book Clubs. In the middle of the paperbacks is one shelf for 40 oversized books such as fairy tales, the architectural drawing books of David Macauley, a book of maps and books too large for the other shelves.

Opposite the paperbacks on the other side of the reading area are two large bookcases, one containing approximately 400 titles of non-fiction, reference material other than encyclopedias, poetry and assorted hardbound books. The remaining bookcase contains approximately 250 hardbound books of fiction. No attempt has been made by Lois or the students to categorize these books beyond the gross sorting of paperback, hardbound fiction, non-fiction and oversized books. At one point, a group of children alphabetized (from right to left) the hardbound fiction by author but this distinction was not maintained rigorously by anyone in the following weeks.

On top of all the bookcases are various groups of books which are changed periodically with a change in class interest or when they are no longer needed. One group of books were ones which I brought in because I thought they might be of interest to particular students. Another group, which appeared for two weeks in winter, were the considerees for the Caldecott Award for the most distinguished picture book for
children in 1980. Other groups of books collected by Lois or one of
the student teachers were ones which pertained to classwork. Groups
of books which appeared for a time in the classroom were poetry collec-
tions, biographies of people from the Revolutionary War period or
Pioneer-period Americans, informational books on South American
countries, fiction set in the World War II period, informational books
on the human body, and informational books on math concepts.

The classroom collection was used as a source for the gathering of
several other groups of books as well. When Lois and I noted that
Betsy Byars' books were popular with many readers in the classroom, she
mustered a group of children to display "Books by Betsy Byars" in the
loft. Later, the class as a whole suggested books in which the main
character showed courage and "Courage Books" replaced the Byars display
in the loft.

Another group of books, the classroom collection of reference books
such as encyclopedias, textbooks, and so forth, are housed under the
loft in wheeled racks. Children make use of these when researching
reports but children do not circulate these from hand to hand as they do
the books in the reading area.

The final source of reading material for class use is "Mrs.
Monaghan's Cupboard", a closed cupboard containing approximately 600
books, often in multiples of 3-10 copies which Lois uses for small group
discussions and for individuals who "need a book". Says Lois,

I hide books. I have a cupboardful of books that aren't
out because I don't want to throw them all out at once.
These are books I have multiple copies of. I like to
have fresh books flowing so I keep this cupboard full
of gems that I try to get out little by little rather
than give them the whole feast.
Often Lois gives one child a book from the cupboard which other children become interested in reading. She gives out other copies, then, so that readers can read the same book more or less at the same time. Students have easy access to the cupboard but they view this as the classroom teacher's private cache and wait for her to help them use this source.

Children may use the Barrington School library located one half block away in the main building but these children tend to use the classroom collection more heavily. In the spring, the librarian expressed concern to Lois that her class did not use the library as much or as often as did other fifth and sixth grade classes. This is perhaps not surprising since the classroom collection of books, excluding textbooks and reference sets, probably numbers between eleven or twelve hundred books. This, coupled with books children bring to school from the public library or from home and books supplied by me or the student teachers, makes the classroom collection diverse, changing and immediately available to the children. Lois is well aware of this.

They can choose books from the classroom, or bring them from home or go to the public library or the school library but I think it's really important for our kids to have them right at their fingertips. It's amazing how they finish one book and they want another one right now. They want to go on reading. They don't want to walk over to the library, which is about a block away from us, and look at the whole maze of books, but they want to be able to pick one up right away.

Arrangement of Time

An important aspect of Lois' structure of the classroom is her arrangement of the daily and weekly schedule. This arrangement is by no means immutable but the daily procedures follow a fairly usual
progression. Although occurrences such as assemblies, special guests, holiday preparations or report cards tended to alter the schedule, these were viewed by teachers and students as a part of the natural climate of the school day but not necessarily typical of an average day.

In order to view the literature response-related events in context, it is helpful to understand what constitutes a typical day in the classroom. The following account is of an actual day in early March with some parts generalized to facilitate description. This general picture of a day serves as a preface to an examination of the teacher's specific structuring of literature-related times and events and her explanation of those events in the context of the total classroom.

A Typical Day

Children arrive in the classroom in pairs and individually at 8:25 A.M. They talk among themselves until Lois calls them together near the blackboard on which the daily schedule has been written:

1. meeting
2. writing--project
3. skills
4. project
5. music 10:00
6. Spanish class: test
7. literature
8. reading
9. writing
10. patrol party

The class has been studying Spanish-speaking countries with the student teacher and she and Lois go over the events of the day. Some children question a TV newscaster's pronunciation of the word _junta_ and several children discuss how it is pronounced and what it means. One offers to bring in some Spanish money and another will talk on her trip
to Mexico. A discussion of the political situation in El Salvador ensues.

Lois reminds the group that they could write to two students, one who has moved, the other who has accompanied her family on an extended trip. Questions about the assignments given yesterday help clarify work time and near 9 o'clock one hour's work time begins:

Peg and Tammy work in the loft on posters to go with their South American country reports. Sam finishes up his "God's eye" weaving and adds it to those already hanging over the loft. Various children's work on their letters to themselves written as if from a child in another country ("Dear Cary: I have many things to tell you about Peru.") Amy is reading The Pinballs (Byars). Barb and Mitty are working on a sixth grade math packet together on the couch. The student teacher talks with individuals about how to get started on the "country" letter. Several children move to the blackboard to copy down the week's spelling words, all of which have to do with geometry.

Lois circulates, getting materials out of storage cupboards, helping children with math, reassuring a small group that their patrol complaint will be aired, or reminding several boys that "this is work time." Five children go to help the art teacher move supplies. Tom passes by a copy of Superfudge (Blume) lying on Joe's desk. "That's so good. It's so funny. Have you got to the part where Fudge sits on the file?" He and Joe talk in an undertone, finger- ing the closed book.

While the whole class goes to music at 10:00, Lois continues to staple finished work to display areas. She and the student teacher discuss individuals and the morning with the investigator. When the children return at 10:30, the student teacher hands out a Spanish vocabulary test which the students take with good humor. There is much undercurrent of trying to pronounce the words correctly as they match or identify words. The test is corrected at once and children return to a short worktime before lunch at 11:15.
At lunch, Lois attends a party for one of the teachers and returns at 12:15. Class begins with Lois reading aloud from *Walk the World's Rim*, Baker's story of Indians in the days of Cortez. As Lois reads, many students continue the work they started this morning.

Peg makes a "God's eye", exchanging scissors with two others at her bank of desks. Cary and Tom work on math. Mitty finishes her South American poster. Lois stops reading to ask "What is turquoise?", a reference to the book she is reading. Several children offer explanations. She continues reading with all but Nathan and Christy working on some project or other. They look intently at Lois as she reads. Will reads *The Black Stallion* (Farley). Three children leave the class for an extra-help reading lab as Lois finishes the chapter. As she reads that someone ate fish bones and lizards, work momentarily slows in the classroom. "What?" "Fishbones and lizards! That's what they eat?" "Oh gross!" Lois continues to read interrupting herself at one point to say to Joan "Please sit down, Joan. I'm going to read that one paragraph once more." At the end of the half hour of reading aloud, Lois asks "Why do you suppose Esteban was warned not to go to Mexico?" Several children contribute with the longest responses coming from Nathan. Lois announces a silent reading time in fifteen minutes. "Can we read now?" says Will.

While SSR is usually at the end of the day, today it is moved up because of the patrol party. In the fifteen minutes of work time, students complete items, the school secretary brings in the school newspaper for the editors of this edition to proofread. At 1:00, SSR begins informally, at first, until Lois says "I want you all to find a book now." Peg asks Lois to help her find a good book so the two of them, and at the bookcase pulling possible selections for Peg off the shelves. The student teacher accompanies Amy into the hallway where they are reading aloud to each other from *The Pinballs* (Byars). I help two students locate a good book to read and continue to take notes.
Lois has selected *The Bears' House* (Sachs) with Peg. As they talk quietly about the book, someone says "That's really good." Peg thumbs the book but doesn't appear interested. She and Lois go to "Mrs. Monaghan's cupboard" to select *The Rascals* from Haskell's Gym (Bonham) which she proceeds to read in the carpeted reading area.

During SSR children are positioned all over the room's many seating areas. Will continues *The Black Stallion* (Farley) under the loft, while above him some of the fifth grade boys are reading various titles. Children are on the floor, on the sofas, at desks, at tables or on chairs, all reading or moving in and out of reading.

After a half hour of SSR, Lois, who has been reading for the last ten minutes herself, says quietly "Who has a book they would like to share?" Seven children, by turns, "share a book" which consists of telling a short piece of the plot to the rest of the class. "Are any of these books in which the main character shows courage?" Lois asks. The class is preparing to assemble a display of books which involve courageous main characters. Several children reiterate *Escape from Warsaw* (Serraillier), *Island of the Blue Dolphin* (O'Dell) and *The Hero from Otherwhere* (Williams).

Following a ten minute recess, which Lois, the student teacher and I share in the teachers' lounge, the class reconvenes for continued work time. Many children are writing letters, reports or explanations of their posters. Several are completing the weekly entry in their continuing journals and book logs. At 2:20, part of the class goes to the main building for a safety patrol party while the remainder stay behind to work, read, or talk with Lois.
The school day ends at 3:00 and a reminder from Lois to "clean up the area around your desk, please." Lois stands near the doorway saying goodbye to some, giving permission for books to be taken from the room overnight, and hearing what children will be doing with their families during the weekend.

What is most typical of the day as described here is the expectation by both Lois and the students that much of the day's work is self-directed. The day's itinerary is explained and children work singly or in small groups with Lois and the student teacher intervening or working alongside the children. Lois prefers to work behind the scenes rather than in front of the class. As she states, "I don't want to be intrusive; I want to be helpful."

**Literature Response-Related Events in the Classroom**

During the nine months in which I observed in the classroom, Lois set up the classroom so that literature was apparent and acted upon in many different ways. She established routines early in the year which became part of the expectations for the continuing months. In addition, she varied the routines and modified expectations as the situations seemed to dictate. The "literature curriculum," then, was a series of broad concerns which Lois established within which she developed the content as the year progressed. For instance, Lois read aloud to the class each day and generally chose books for a variety of reasons. However, she did not know in September what titles she would cover by the year's end.

This ensuing section describes the following literature response-related events in the classroom:
1. Reading Aloud
2. Sustained Silent Reading (SSR)
3. Book Sharing/Discussion
4. Book Logs/Journals/Record Keeping
5. Extensions/Follow-ups
6. Book Groups

Within each section there follows a sense of how children respond to these events and the events as perceived by Lois. A more extensive treatment of children's responses to these events, however, is found in Chapter V.

Reading Aloud

From the first days of school and throughout the school year, after lunch Lois read aloud to the whole class for fifteen minutes to a half hour daily. The only exceptions to this occurred occasionally "between books," that is, when Lois finished one book and had not decided on the next book to read aloud.

Early in the year Lois revealed her expectations of children's behavior to the class and continued to reinforce these expectations as the year progressed. Children's behavior varied during this time according to what was being read and individuals reacted differently during this time, as well. In describing the reading aloud period, it is helpful to look at 1) routines during reading aloud; 2) what the teacher chose to read aloud, the reasons for those choices, and student reactions to the teacher choices.

The routines during reading aloud were explained to me by one student as "no walking, no talking" and another student added "no reading." However, a cursory glance at the class as they listened to Lois reading suggested that even these minimal rules didn't exclude all student movement, student talk, and reading of some sorts of material.
Numerous routines were established as the year wore on simply by the students becoming tuned to behaviors which Lois either noticed or did not notice.

<table>
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<th>Teacher</th>
<th>Student</th>
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<td>&quot;O.K. Will everyone have a seat now?&quot;</td>
<td>-Find something to do.</td>
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<td>&quot;I'd like you to find a place and not move around.&quot;</td>
<td>-Secure supplies such as yarn, scissors, reference books, graph paper, felt markers, posterboard.</td>
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<td>&quot;I want you to find a place where you can listen.&quot;</td>
<td>-Find a location in which to work: loft, desk, carpeted area, a table.</td>
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<td>-Start to read aloud.</td>
<td>-Quiet or stillness for several seconds.</td>
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<td>-Many begin to work on projects, rustle paper, exchange tools.</td>
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- "These are pictures now," said as Lois reads a description of a character.
- "Stench. What is that word?"
- "Now a grackle is a kind of bird."
- "Can someone summarize the story so far?"
- "What can the crow do now?"
- "The next chapter is called 'Enemies'."
- The text is read "Who could it be?"

- Children respond to the teacher's direct question without raising hands or being called on.
- "What's a blunderbuss?" They feel free to ask questions as well as to answer them.
- "I'll bet Nina discovers who shot the nest."

- Children answer "I'll bet it's her mother;" "Her mom"; "Her mother."

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<th>Implied Rules of Behavior</th>
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<td>-No walking</td>
<td>-May change seats; may sharpen pencil, go to bathroom, get reference materials; may stand up to think</td>
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<td>-No talking</td>
<td>-May whisper but laughing is risky; may discuss some work-related problem such as borrowing materials, agreement on joint procedure, etc.</td>
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<td>-May talk with any adult observers</td>
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<td>-May ask Lois a direct question if the answer enables student to proceed with work at hand.</td>
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The general rule seemed to be that if one chose to work at some activity, as long as he did so quietly and with some semblance of decorum, Lois would not interfere. Students who chose not to work while Lois read could do so if they assumed a posture which indicated they were not seeking to distract others.
A visitor to the classroom might ask if anyone was paying attention since most children were engaged in some activity. However, Lois frequently questioned the group asking them to examine characters' motives or to predict outcomes of character actions. Children responded readily to these questions and, depending on the popularity or impact of the book under discussion, children indicated that they were indeed listening, although as many put it, some books were "easy to listen to." Some books were not.

During the nine months of the school year, Lois tried to choose books which were "easy to listen to" or to help children listen by helping them to see, enjoy, understand or identify with the book through questions or writing which she asked the children to pursue. Lois or the student teachers read aloud eleven full-length chapter books (not including individual poems, picture books, or pieces from informational books) to the class during the school year. Titles and the month in which the major reading of that title was accomplished were as follows:

1. The First Two Lives of Lukas-Kasha by Lloyd Alexander (September/October)
2. Macaroon (fifth graders only, sixth graders were in camp) by Julia Cunningham (October)
3. The Cry of the Crow by Jean Craighead George (October/November)
4. The Witch of Blackbird Pond by Elizabeth G. Speare (November/December)
5. The Secret Cave by Claire Huchet Bishop (December)
6. Journey to Topaz by Yoshiko Uchida (January)
7. Walk the World's Rim by Betty Baker (February)
8. Jason and the Money Tree by Sonia Levitin (March)
9. **The Wolves of Willoughby Chase** by Joan Aiken (April)

10. **The Lost Star** by H.M. Hoover (April/May)

11. **The Worms of Kukimlima** by Daniel M. Pinkwater (May/June)

In addition, she read several picture books: **The King's Fountain** (Alexander), **Hawk, I'm Your Brother** (Baylor), and **The Wounded Wolf** (George). She reasoned that these books provided some other emphasis to either the previous book's theme or to its author.

When I finish a chapter book, I like to find what I call "Picture books for big kids" which might have some little connection and try to get from them the connections and thereby enhance the larger story we just read.

In order to secure a sense of which books children found more interesting, Lois and I agreed to conduct a small survey. We displayed copies of all the books she had read aloud through January and I asked children to talk with me about them and rank them. Then, I asked the whole group to rank them on a worksheet survey. Children gave reasons for their best and least liked books and predicted what choices would be best/least liked by others. These titles were ranked and placed on a chart with pockets which allowed titles to be moved around. In ensuing months, the chart was used as a vehicle to elicit discussion and ranking of successive read-aloud titles. In the following descriptions, student comments are taken from the survey as well as from class writings, or group discussions. (See Chapter V for a fuller discussion of the survey).

Lois gave many reasons for choosing books to read aloud.
### Teacher Knowledge

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### Variety and Balance

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*1. *The First Two Lives of Lukas-Kasha* by Lloyd Alexander
*2. *The King's Fountain* by Lloyd Alexander
*3. *Macaroon* by Julia Cunningham
*4. *The Cry of the Crow* by Jean Craighead George
*5. *Hawk, I'm Your Brother* by Byrd Baylor

7. *The Witch of Blackbird Pond* by Elizabeth George Speare
*8. *The Secret Cave* by Clare Huchet Bishop
9. *Journey to Topaz* by Yoshiko Uchida
10. *Walk the World's Rim* by Betty Baker
11. *Jason and the Money Tree* by Sonia Levitin
12. *The Wolves of Willoughby Chase* by Joan Aiken
13. *The Lost Star* by H.M. Hoover
14. *The Worms of Kuklmima* by D.M. Pinkwater

**Figure 4.** Teacher Stated Reasons for Selection of Books to Read Aloud
Lois chose *The First Two Lives of Lukas-Kasha* as the first book to read aloud because she liked fantasy and knew that Alexander's books were often popular with fifth and sixth graders. This fantasy, occurring in a middle eastern-type setting, with proper names such as Nur-Jehan, Abadan and Shugdad, proved confusing to some, but was reported by at least seven children in midyear to be one of their top two favorites. Margie spoke for several children when she wrote:

> I like Lukas-Kasha because I like books with mysteries and things that change, like *The Cat Who Wished to be a Man* (Alexander) and stuff like that. I would recommend it to people who enjoy reading, or even people who don't really like to read. I think if I read it again I could understand more parts. It's one of those books that you can read once, but if you read it again, it's a whole different book practically.

In a midyear survey, the class voted this book the fourth most popular of eight titles read so far.

In addition to asking the children to write a third life for Lukas-Kasha, Lois asked the student teacher to read aloud a picture book, *The King's Fountain* (Alexander). The picture book depicts a king who wishes to build a fountain which will cut off the town's water supply. Only one man has the courage to approach the king with a plea for welfare of the townspeople. The student teacher asked children to write about what the story "meant." At least half of the group interpreted the question as an invitation to retell the story, as Peg did.

> The story's about a king who was going to build a fountain and take all the water away from the city. A poor man was very mad about the idea so he was going up to the king and talk to him but he was scared. The poor man went up to a couple people and asked them to go talk with the king but they were also scared so he went up to the castle and told the king what he was doing and he decided not to do it.
Others retold parts but were able to append a moral or a flat statement. This was easy for some and difficult or impossible for others.

- If you want to do something, do it yourself (Bill).
- The man proves that poor people are as good as a king (Sam).
- A person that is determined to do something will do a better job than someone who would be better at the task who is not determined (Nathan).
- The meaning of the book is that a man with a big heart is much greater than a man with a huge body, and if you believe in it, it will come true. A man with a big brain doesn't mean he's better than a man with no brain at all (Christy).
- The story tells you that the people are just as important as the king himself because without water -- no people. Without people, the king's job is worthless (Cary).

When the group was discussing preferences for which books Lois had read aloud, it was interesting to note that many children did not remember The King's Fountain or if they did recall it, they did not wish to rank it with other books Lois read aloud.

The second book read aloud was Macaroon (Cunningham), which was read by another teacher to the fifth graders while the sixth graders were at camp. This book, an amply illustrated chapter book usually read by younger children, was barely recalled by students in a midyear survey and was later dropped by the class from the rank order chart of books read aloud. Although many sixth graders had read the book previously, it was not considered by them to be a part of the whole realm of what had been shared as a class.
The Cry of the Crow (George) proved to be an excellent choice for this group. It was the book most enjoyed by the class until The Wolves of Willoughby Chase (Aiken) replaced it in April. In a midyear survey, fourteen children listed this book as their first or second choice in the eight books Lois had read aloud so far this year. The story involves a girl who secretly adopts a baby crow and raises it in spite of its potential threat to her father's strawberry crop. The crow identifies the voice of the person who shot its nest down and when the crow discovers that the person is the girl's brother, the girl must make a choice between her pet crow or the welfare of her brother.

Lois chose The Cry of the Crow because of the author's reputation and because of a favorable review she read in The WEB (Huck and Hickman) a journal which often considers books from the point of view of children's response. She had difficulty finding this new book in a library and asked me to bring it in which I did.

During the reading aloud, Lois and the class frequently stopped to take inventory of what the crow could now do. The author, a naturalist, grounded the book in crow behaviors which the children found fascinating. Even more the group did not know who had shot the crow's nest until George revealed that it was the younger brother. Lois reported the class found it satisfying that the girl chooses to protect her brother by killing her pet crow but there were several children teary-eyed when she finished reading.

Following the reading of the book, Lois read to the group Hawk, I'm Your Brother (Baylor). The reason she read this picture book to the class, said Mitty, was "because they were kind of alike. People
with a bird." Lois led a discussion in comparing the two books. Children saw similarities: both involved a child with a pet bird; the bird was more than a pet or almost a family member; and, each child had to deal with keeping the wild bird or not and the consequences of that decision. They saw that each book's setting was different - a desert and a small town in Florida.

Several days after that discussion, Lois asked children to respond in writing to the question "What messages did the author have for the reader? Why would she spend that much time and energy to write this book?" She also asked children to write a paragraph on "your feelings about the book."

Children responded in various ways; some were unable to articulate a "message" or theme of the book, while others easily saw the book as imparting some ideas to the reader. Responses from several indicated that they found it difficult to encapsulate a theme or a reaction to the book.

-I think the book was the kind of book for people that like crows and maybe for people that don't like crows. I feel that I don't like crows because I wouldn't be allowed (Linda).

-I think this is a good book. Compared against I'm Your Brother, Hawk is would win my vote. I like the book. It is great. I think the book should win an award. Jean George is a very good writer. I've heard her name before this book (Cara).

-I think this book is partly true in real life with children having wild pets. I do think some parts are far-fetched though (Nathan).
One saw the book as a sort of manual for the care of an animal.

-I think the author wanted to teach us to be kind to animals and to take a responsibility like feeding and taking care of that animal or whatever. I think the story was very good. I also think that it was kind of a true story. I will probably read it to myself some time (Tom).

But a larger number of children were able to react to the theme in Cry of the Crow than they were to The King's Fountain. The Cry of the Crow elicited more passionate and lengthy responses than did The King's Fountain, most likely because Cry was contemporary realistic fiction and novel-length and the other was a folktale setting and in picture-book format. Children favorably responded to the longer, more complex book.

-I think she was trying to tell us that nature has its limit. I think she was trying to say "It's OK to feed animals but you have to let them live their own life. If people keep them in a cage for too long, they could only dream about being free." How would you feel if you were locked up in a cage and you could only dream of being free? I would feel awful. I really liked the book. It was a very good story about friendship and love for your family. I liked it when she killed the crow because she showed them that nothing could come between her and her family (Christy).

-Jean George was trying to tell whoever was reading the book that wild animals were really meant to be free and not to be taken from the wild and that you could have a relationship with another animal. I feel that the book was good but it seemed to drag on. I think it would be fun to take care of a pet but it would also be hard when the bird had to leave (Evan).

-I liked the story a lot. If I put it on a scale of 1 to 10, I would rate it a 9 1/2. The story was a fantasy. At least, that's what I think...I guess what the author is trying to say was that to be sure what you're getting into or doing before you
do it. Because it could get people into trouble. It's really kind of hard to explain. Also she cared for her brother enough that she would do anything just so her brother would be all right (Margie).

Children reported two months later that this was their favorite book so far, with comments such as:

- It was interesting, sad, even though I hate sad books (it's hard to explain) (Tammy).

- I liked the way it was written, the way the characters acted. It was interesting and always about something that kept you listening (Margie).

- Some parts of it I thought I was in the book (Mitty).

- It was easy to get into (Kelly).

- It was funny when the crow chased the dog and when it talked. But the end was sad (Amy).

Based on what children said they liked about this book, it seems that they felt close to the girl and her difficult choice. Even though the ending was sad, it somehow satisfied their sense of rightness.

Lois also read aloud The Wounded Wolf (George). Later, many children did not recall hearing this book read aloud and except for several fifth grade boys interested in informational books, this book was not favorably recalled. Later, it was unofficially and tacitly dropped from the ranking of books read aloud.

Lois chose the next book because she wanted to read some historical fiction selection which would go with the historical focus of the class work in American history. She debated whether to read The Witch of Blackbird Pond (Speare), successful with previous classes and a Newbery Award winner as well, or to choose some other title. This book, which followed a very popular book was one of the least popular books
with the children. Lois made efforts to help children follow the story. She handed out six or so copies of the book so that children could follow as she read. The class talked frequently about the time period, the customs, the Salem witch trials, and about the motivations of the characters.

In the midyear survey, four children listed this as their first or second choice while eight listed it in one of the last two places. Their comments revealed that they found *The Witch of Blackbird Pond* unappealing for several reasons.

-I don't know. It was pretty good but it sort of bored me (Peg).

-I thought it was boring because...I'm not really sure why. It just didn't get me interested in the book. I guess I just don't like the kind of book like that (Margie).

-Oh, I don't know. I suppose it was exciting, but not for me. I just hated it. I didn't want to get into it and I didn't (Tammy).

-It just didn't interest me (Joe).

-(I didn't like it) because there is too much going on at once (James).

Interestingly, however, when asked to predict what others would call the best book read aloud by Mrs. Monaghan, nine children each predicted the others would like *The Witch of Blackbird Pond* best. Perhaps they sensed that Lois put more weight on the historical content of this book. Although they didn't care for the book, they thought others "should" or perhaps, as one child explained, "so many people were following along that I thought they liked it."

In the remaining two weeks before Christmas vacation, Lois wanted to read something short so that it would be finished when the class
went home for the holidays. She chose *The Secret Cave* (Huchet) which again was set in an historical period the class was studying. *The Secret Cave* hides a group of Jewish refugee children from the Nazi's in France during World War II. Eleven children listed this book as one of the top two best books in the midyear survey. Children called this book "suspenseful", "very exciting" and "so interesting." One boy pointed out that "it was good because it kept you in tune and you could follow the story." Following as it did on the long month it took to read *The Witch of Blackbird Pond*, this short book read in less than two weeks time may have indeed been "easier to listen to." In the class ranking of books in January, *The Secret Cave* held second place behind *Cry of the Crow* but moved finally into fifth as *Journey to Topaz*, *Jason and the Money Tree*, and *The Wolves of Willoughby Chase* were each read and appreciated.

For the third time in a row, Lois chose again a book which suited the social studies unit. She extended the class interest in World War II to *Journey to Topaz* by Yoshiko Uchida, an autobiography of a Japanese-American's experiences in an American relocation center in Utah. When Lois introduced the book, she said "This is the story of Yuki, a Japanese girl who had to be put in a concentration camp in our country because and only because she was Japanese."

During the reading of the book, Lois frequently asked children to picture the action, the characters and the settings. As Lois said:

> In our study of World War II, I'm asking them to try to look at people as resources. (The class interviewed grandparents). And so this book is a kind of resource for them because it's somebody's story.
The children responded to the injustice of the situation in the beginning of the book and at several points responded to how they would feel in a situation such as Yuki faced. At the conclusion of the reading, Lois recalled to the class how Yuki wished she could "be in the skin of" her brother. Lois asked the group to recall a particular part of the story where they felt as if they were there in the skin of someone and to illustrate that scene. She polled each student as to choice in a near review of the story. Although Lois did not insist that each person take a different scene, some individuals changed the scene they wished to do so as to be the sole portrayer of the scene. Bill wanted to do the scene where "the guy got shot. I forget his name." Someone supplied his name and Lois asked Bill why he chose that particular scene. "Well, I guess cause I like to look for things. What are they called?" Sam supplied "Trilobites and arrowheads" from the story. Cary chose "When Yuki wakes up on Christmas and has this feeling that her father is coming home. I'll make her in bed with a big smile."

The pictures and writing were then put on a wall display under the title Journey to Topaz. When Lois asked the group to rank the book with others which she had read aloud, the group discussion placed it beneath The Cry of the Crow as the second most popular book read.

-It was more interesting than Cave. It had more feelings than just about one person (Tammy).

-It had a lot more character (Kelly).

-It should be second after The Cry of the Crow because you figured they were going to get there in Journey to Topaz but in The Cry of the Crow, you couldn't tell as well (Will).
- It should go after *The Cry of the Crow* because
  I like animal stories but before *The Secret Cave*
  because it has more action (Christy).

- It should tie with *The Cry of the Crow* because
  it is exciting and thrilling (Leah).

One must wonder if this book would have had so much power for the class
if Lois had not let them get "in the skin of" a person in a scene from
the story.

The student teacher and Lois chose *Walk the World's Rim* (Baker)
as the read aloud book for February. Once again, this book's subject
matter was chosen this time by the student teacher in conjunction with
the class study of South and Central America. Initially, both teachers
felt that this story's focus on the world as seen through a young
Indian boy in Cortez' time would give the class some valuable back­
ground information. However, the class responded more to the main
character's disillusionment with a friend and the resultant guilt when
the friend is proven right.

Since teacher questions had tried to focus student discussion on
the main character's judgment of his friend, students were told "we've
all had times when we discovered we were wrong about someone. Think
of a time when this happened to you and write about it." Poetry was
mentioned as one alternative. Children responded with both prose and
poetry.

I hated her, she hated me,
Now together we do see
I am nice and so is she,
How greatly wrong were we (Leah).
Well, I was wrong about a paper route customer. I thought she was real mean. But then she got real nice and now she is one of the nicest ladies on my paper route. She gives me a really big tip regularly. When I realized I was wrong is when she didn't call the paper and she didn't chew me out when I collected. I was embarrassed even if I didn't tell her (Tom).

Following the writing, the group discussed where Walk the World's Rim should be ranked and they agreed to place it after The Secret Cave as fourth, which moved The First Two Lives of Lukas-Kasha to fifth. As was usual in these discussions, little reasons were given for the rank each child desired. Rather each child simply said "I think it should be number two" or "I think it should go after Journey to Topaz." A child would disagree or agree depending on his preference. When a less popular girl voted to put Walk the World's Rim second, there were loud disagreements and two-thirds of the children were happy to place it fourth when the voting occurred.

The eighth book Lois chose to read was Jason and the Money Tree (Levitin), which she characterized as a "short, light, funny book." Again, as in December, she needed a book which she could read in the two weeks remaining before spring vacation. She considered reading The Dark is Rising (Cooper) since she had not read a fantasy novel aloud since September and felt the class might enjoy a change of genre. However, several children had "discovered" this book and were reading it during SSR. Although Lois would read a book aloud which some children already knew, she decided to postpone the decision on The Dark is Rising until the children's return in April.

Jason and the Money Tree was finished on the day prior to vacation. The class appreciated the humorous situation of having to protect a
tree which grew money. The ending, when Jason's baby sister flushes his money down the toilet, left the class groaning. Jason spent the one remaining bill rather than planting it.

-Cary said that he could have taken that $10.00 and planted it. But Sam reminded him that Jason had had a lot of trouble. "I don't think he'd have done it." The group discussed whether Jason should have spent or planted the bill.

The group didn't vote on the book as soon as Lois finished reading and the voting was forgotten until three weeks into the next quarter. Again the opinions were given and voting placed this book fourth behind a new first place winner, The Cry of the Crow and Journey to Topaz. Children seemed to recognize that although they enjoyed the light humor and tone of Jason and the Money Tree, the other books had a deeper impact on them.

The new first place winner and the ninth book read by Lois and the student teacher was The Wolves of Willoughby Chase (Aiken). This 18th century melodramatic adventure gradually took hold in the class. The student teacher began the book in the presence of a substitute teacher and the British tone and historical setting again proved difficult for some. No extensions were done with the book but the reactions at the end of the reading indicated children were satisfied with goodness rewarded and villiany vanquished. Children overwhelmingly approved of this book as the best one read aloud to date.

-I liked it because of the way it was written. It was not boring (Tom).

-It was told like a diary. (Bill might have referred to the fact that the reader understood the character's motivation).
-It's told in an interesting way. (Lois adds "The words were interesting?"") Not the words, really, but the way. ("The events were interesting?") No. I can't explain (Tammy).

-It was exciting. No part was dull. It was easier to listen to (Barb).

-It should be a tie with The Cry of the Crow because they both could happen. Even though the words were hard, you knew what was happening (James).

Children responded to the definitive characterization in the book. As Sam put it, "I think the good and bad were very distinct. There wasn't any middle." This brought forth a discussion of one character whose role was not clearly defined until the last of the book. Barb added that "They describe the people really well so you knew exactly what was happening every time." Tom said "Seems like I just saw it, like a TV program. It makes it like it's real - a totally different time." When Lois asked the group to "characterize the story" they supplied words such as crisp, brisk, daring, suspenseful and the ubiquitous interesting.

It seems that children in the class enjoyed listening to a book in which issues were not complex, in which characters were making "bigger than life" decisions, and in which stereotypical situations allowed them to "listen better." Lois described this book as "a very satisfying book to the class." One wonders if this satisfaction may reflect the influence of television watching on children's expectations for narrative.

The Lost Star (Hoover) was chosen for several reasons. Children had begun to discover and read fantasy and science fiction with greater frequency than they had in the previous months. No children knew the
author and Lois felt that the survival aspects of the book would appeal to the class. The book met with a lukewarm reception, perhaps because of a sixteen year old girl protagonist, or perhaps because of genre. Reasons given for disliking The Lost Star included "a bad plot," "boring," "a girlish book" and "I don't know. I just didn't like it so I didn't listen."

The final choice for reading aloud was a new book, The Worms of Kukimlima by Daniel M. Pinkwater. Pinkwater's books were enjoyed by many students and he had a reputation of writing good books. Cary, a sixth grader, read the book first and suggested it. The rest of the class (with several dissenters who either did not care for Pinkwater or wanted to read it to themselves) concurred so this was chosen. The student teacher read most of this book aloud rather than the teacher, Lois, reading it which was disconcerting to some who were used to the teacher's style ("When Mrs. Monaghan reads books, she uses expression and different voices. She doesn't just read it," said Amy). Although the class professed to enjoy this book, it was never ranked or rated.

The final ranking of books took place in May after the reading of The Lost Star. Children suggested several books be switched but few reasons were given beyond "because I thought it was better." The final ranking of chapter books read aloud was:

1. The Wolves of Willoughby Chase
2. The Cry of the Crow
3. Journey to Topaz
4. The Lost Star
5. Jason and the Money Tree
6. *The Secret Cave*

7. *Walk the World's Rim*

8. *The Witch of Blackbird Pond*

9. *The First Two Lives of Lukas-Kasha*

Macaroon and the three picture books had been dropped from the chart. *The Worms of Kukimlima* was not rated.

**Sustained Silent Reading**

From the first day of school and throughout the school year, in addition to reading aloud to children, Lois has a sustained silent reading period in which all children and adults in the room read books. This was usually held after the afternoon recess, from 2:15 to 2:45.

-We have a daily reading period and I tend to lose ground on that because we have so many interruptions in a day. But we have a regular period where they read.

This nearly always is followed by a "sharing" or discussion for the last fifteen minutes of the day. Early in the year, Lois explained that in the spring, children usually become restless in the afternoon and in order to help them concentrate she often moves part or all of the SSR time to the mornings when class begins.

When questioned about why she spent so much time on SSR, Lois said:

-(If students ask me), I tell them that when they get in junior high, they won't have so much time for reading and so we'll take lots of time for reading now. They're at their peak of reading interest now so they might as well read all that they can.

-Another thing, I think, this is our last chance before they get all programmed in junior high and they don't have time to read there as they do in elementary school. So I give them this kind of time.
Students generally come in from recess, take whatever book they are reading, find a place to sit or lie down, and begin to read. Students who do not have books to read move around the room until Lois asks them if they need help "finding a book" or until they ask her to help them. Often students stand at the bookcases pulling books off the shelf and reading parts, backs, jacket copy or "pictures."

Expectations are that everyone in the room will read a book and that absolute quiet will prevail. This is seldom the case, however, and it is a notable occurrence when everyone is reading, no one is talking, and the room is quiet.

It is helpful to view SSR in terms of the teacher's role and the students' routines as a preface to discussing the follow-up of SSR, which Lois conducts, termed "sharing."

During SSR, Lois assumes at least five roles:
1. She serves as a key recommender to children who "need a book."
2. She interviews children about what they have read and are presently reading.
3. She keeps records.
4. She herself reads.
5. She maintains order.

Without a doubt the strongest recommendation for the "goodness" of a book comes from one's peers in the classroom (see Chapter V). However, all students turn to the teacher at least part of the time when they are searching for something to read. Lois often asks the student what he or she has read lately in order to get a feel for the student's preferences. She and the child sit in front of the bookcases and select possible books. Often, children offer comments as the selection
process of Lois and the chooser continues -- "That's good," "Tammy read that", "Leah says that's no good."

-Tammy asks if Lois has any ideas on what she should read. Lois takes the newest Newbery winner, Jacob Have I Loved (Paterson), off her desk. "What's it about," asks Tammy. "Well, it's a Newbery book. You have to read it to find out." Tammy notices the author. "Oh! Katherine Paterson. I'll take it!"

-Lois is helping Peg find a book. She pulls The Bear's House (Sachs) off the shelf and Barb says from the sofa "That's really good." As Peg and Lois go to the cupboard for another choice, Tammy pulls The Great Gilly Hopkins (Paterson) off the shelf and says to Peg's back "That's a great book."

-Kelly asks for help in selection frequently. She usually doesn't read a book unless it is recommended by her friend Tammy. However she depends on Lois to help her "find a book" more than do other students.

-Bill asks Lois if she knows of any good books with "talking animals." She says she'll find Abel's Island (Steig) for him.

Lois functions as a key recommender long after the first time she has recommended a book to a child. Often, children will recall that she (and others, to be sure) has recommended a book sometime in the past.

-Lois introduces some fifteen titles of books set in World War II to the class. Two weeks later Cary, looking for a book to read, decides on Searching for Shona (Anderson) "because Mrs. Monaghan recommended it and I thought it would be good."

-Bill reads Abel's Island (Steig) on Lois' recommendation in March. When he finishes it, Tom and Christy also read it that month.

By the time the group had spent several months together, however, many books had so much "encrustation" of recommendations surrounding them that it was difficult to recall who had initially recommended the
book in the classroom. Some books, such as *Tuck Everlasting* (Babbit), *The Pinballs* (Byars), and *Island of the Blue Dolphin* (O'Dell), were so well-liked by Lois and had been read by so many students in previous settings that when they were reintroduced into the class, there would often be a chorus of multiple recommenders saying "That's so good," or "I read it last year".

My role in the classroom was strongest as another supplier of books. When I started bringing in types of books requested by individual students ("a good scary story," "something with animals in it", "a funny book"), others asked for special books or asked me for help as well. The books I brought in were termed "Miss Hepler's books" but were not treated in any special terms by students and became part of the class collection until some student recommended a particular title and introduced it into the inner circle of "books someone has read and recommended."

In addition to recommending books, Lois, and later I, interviewed individual children during SSR. The children kept Book Logs of titles and authors they had read during the month (discussed in following sections). In discussion Lois looked for several things.

- I like to look at all 26 of them as individual people and look at them in terms of what they're reading, and what they're getting out of it. And what meanings they're making out of their reading, and whether they like to read and the kinds of books they like to read.

The discussion usually took place in the room in an area where other readers were not present. Lois sat down beside the student and they spread the Book Log cards on the desk or table. Lois used the discussion to become better acquainted with students, to determine what
patterns she could see in the student's reading and to elicit from the students some patterns and meanings they saw in their own reading.

-To get to what meanings they're making of them, I'll sit down with them and we'll look at their January card or last month's card or whatever is recent and look at the books individually. They can tell me which books they enjoyed the best, which ones had certain kinds of themes, what the themes were. They can compare what books were like other books and what authors they're interested in and what kinds of reading interests they have. As the time goes by, we have more to compare and contrast.

A typical book discussion Lois had with Mitty began with her telling Lois about the most recent book she was reading, *When Hitler Stole Pink Rabbit* (Kerr). Then Lois asked her if there were two books in the last two months of reading which "were alike in some tiny way, some important way, and different from a third book."

-Mitty notes that in *Grandma Didn't Wave Back* and *A Taste of Blackberries* someone died but *Tales of a Fourth Grade Nothing* was humorous.

Lois and Mitty talked about other books and Mitty compared *The Bears' House* (Sachs) and *Tales of a Fourth Grade Nothing* (Blume), saying that the first was "more serious, had a problem but it wasn't a tragedy (like in the other two books where someone died)." They finished the discussion by comparing two books by Betsy Byars - *The Pinballs* and *The Cartoonist*. Mitty had difficulty expressing the idea that both characters wanted at first to be loners so Lois helped her with the words.

Lois says of discussions such as this one that:

-I like to look at their personal constructs. That's something interesting to me. I'll take three books and ask them which two were alike in some way and different from the third. The girl I was talking to today said "Well, those two books were about death -- someone died in it, and the third one is humorous." So these are things she's gleaning.
That's what they mean to her. As I build on that, I can see kinds of ways she is seeing material she's reading. And the kinds of things that are important to her -- how she reacts to a book.

These discussions serve as an informal means of record keeping, as Lois keeps most of this information in her head rather than noting or transcribing interviews. Lois also uses the SSR time as a chance to record across the classroom what is being read by each student. She moves around the room noting in her class record book titles being read.

-About once a week I walk around and jot down the book they're reading. I'll jot down the title they're reading during that week and this gives me a record of what they do pick up. It doesn't tell me what they finish, but perhaps it tells me how long it's taken them to read it. Maybe next week they're still reading it, or a couple of weeks and this gives me some hints that either they're bogged down in it, or they're not really reading it -- they're just holding it. Or they're not interested. It also gives me the range of things they're interested in and are likely to pick up. Sometimes it might be The Guinness Book of Records (McWhirter) and that's what I write down.

From this record, she might ask one student if he wanted to try another book, encourage another to finish the book so he could find another one he'd like better, or ask another if she wanted to borrow the book from the classroom overnight. She also would recall that, although a student had taken new titles to read from her cupboard, they were being stockpiled in the student's desk while he read something else. She would ask the student to put the pile back in circulation if he thought he wouldn't "get to them" for awhile.

A fourth role that Lois assumes during SSR, in addition to recommender, interviewer and record-keeper, is that of reader. Lois reads in the classroom in the reading area or at a desk several times each week. She reads parts of books brought into the classroom, books
which she is considering reading aloud, or books she has read previously. Children notice what she reads and comment with "Is that good?", "Cary read that, didn't he?" "Did Miss Hepler bring that in?" or "Can I read that when you're done?"

Lastly, during SSR, Lois keeps order. Since SSR usually starts by mutual consent rather than by official announcement, Lois often says nothing to begin SSR. However, since selection of books demands some talk and since Lois allows students to talk together about books, there is often an undertone which causes Lois to note that "This is reading time, folks". Occasionally Lois decongests the reading area, which could contain as many as fifteen children, by removing several children who have not "settled down."

Student procedure during SSR is tacitly understood to be either reading a book or selecting a book. Students are told that "this is a reading time." In actual practice, however, it is permissible to talk about books and much of the data collected for this study came from the unsolicited comments about books which students made during this time. I sat in an area where students had gathered, book in my hand and "reading", while listening to what students said. Student procedures, other than actual reading, fell under three broad headings: 1) Finding a book; 2) Finding a place in which to read; 3) Finding a friend/friends to read near. Figure 5 provides examples of procedures students engage in during SSR other than reading. These routines are also developed more fully in Chapter V.
Find a book

- If you are reading a book already, take it out of your desk and find a place to read.

- If you lack a book and want one:
  1. Stand at bookshelves and pull out potential choices.
  2. Stand with friends, saying "I need a book. What shall I read?"
  3. Ask Lois for help.
  4. Ask another adult.
  5. Ask an engaged reader "Can I have that after you?"
  6. Create a disturbance so the teacher notices you don't have a book.

- If you don't feel like reading, find a short book, a picture book, or some poetry and hold it or thumb the pages. Or, work on some other project and hope that the teacher does not notice.

Find a place to read

- The reading area is a prime choice. The unstated rule, "Once you claim a place, that place is yours for the SSR period" is enforced by the group. Groups sit here if they want to be with many people. This is usually a noisier spot than are other places and can hold 12-15 people.

- The loft is another prime choice. Usually 4-6 people may fit here. Pairs share a book here; usually the loft is quieter than the reading area.

- Own desk usually indicates that a student wishes to be left alone. However, desks are grouped by friend groups and often friends read together. Fifth grade boys interested in non-fiction often read together at their desks.

- Private spots are used by individuals wishing to get away from any distractions. Some private spots are under the loft at a single table and chair; between the sofa and the bookcase on the floor, and back by the lockers behind a display board. Various children used the private spots. Some readers such as Nathan nearly always use a private location; others readers such as Mitty never used the private spots.
Find a friend to read near

- Choice of location usually indicates a student's intention to talk and/or read.

- Books such as picture books, informational books, poetry and short books are more likely to be talked over as they are read.

- Students use each other to explain or share pictures in a book, jacket covers, and funny, good, or scary parts.

- Some readers such as Kelly nearly always find a friend to read near. Other readers such as Amy rarely do.

Figure 5. Student Routines During SSR

Some students were more adept than others in being aware of "who is reading what." Some students noticed what titles were being passed around; others noted what particular readers, such as Leah or Tammy who read more and more widely than others, were now reading. This information was used as recommendation by some readers. Even though a reader had not read a title mentioned by another student, he or she might then say, "Oh, Cary read that" or "Leah read that."

SSR ends when Lois says, "Who has a book they would like to tell us about", or when she asks the group to gather in the reading area "so that I can see all your faces." This begins what is formally called "discussion" on the blackboard schedule but is called "sharing" by students and teacher.

Book Sharing

The last fifteen minutes of the day is nearly always given to book sharing time. At this time, children talk about books they are reading or have read, new books are introduced by the teacher into the classroom, or occasionally poems are shared by children.
The teacher uses this time to get books talked about by voices other than hers. She encourages children to "tell us about your book." This invitation elicits long descriptions of plot. Children share books they have completed, books they have just started, and on some occasions, books they read in the past but not recently. (See Appendix E for a transcribed segment of a book sharing time.)

Often the same books are shared by different children. That is, one child will talk about a book and a week later another will retell the same plot.

-Cary talks about Searching for Shona (Anderson) once when he has read several chapters and again when he has finished the book. Lenny a week later shares the first chapter of the book again. Cara and Cary both offer clarification and correction to Lenny's summary.

-Margie is the first one in the class to read The Dark is Rising (Cooper) series and she talks about the first book, Over Sea, Under Stone. Nathan retells the same sequence several weeks later.

-Mitty shares her reading of the first chapter of I, Trissy (Mazer). Four days later, Tammy repeats Mitty's description. Barb helps clarify details.

Children listen to the repeated plots patiently. The accounts shared may be garbled in sequence or synopses may be unrelated to characters or motivation, but they listen quietly to each other. They treat each other's words with respect. Only once did a child indicate that another's sharing was inappropriate or inept ("Let Cary share. He tells it better.")

Children often help each other through the sharing by adding details and helping the main speaker find words, names or titles.
- Tammy is sharing *I, Trissy* (Mazer) and says "You can read it really fast because she 'types' it." I read it in one day," adds Margie. Tammy shows pictures and continues to describe the main character, adding "she wears red, white, and blue to school as a protest. Red for anger, blue for innocence, and white for...for..." "Peace", says Barb.

- Tom has just finished *The Pinballs* (Byars), a book read by half of the class. He outlines the main characters while other children smile, agree, comment "That's so good." Tom says "Harvey's got this...leg's all red - something that happens when you get a cut..." "Infection" add several voices.

- Casey is listing the five best books she's read this year. "James and the Giant...no wait. I liked...what was it?" Barb reminds her "The Ghost of Windy Hill (Bulla)." "No, Pinballs. What was that book?" Tammy suggests *Mama* (Hopkins). Casey says, "Oh, yeah."

Only once did a child become annoyed when the group tried to help her with the words.

- Cara is explaining why *Mandy* (Edwards) should be called a "courage" book. Peg interjects "She had to have courage to go to the house." Cara snaps, Peg, I'm sharing it!"

More often, however, a variety of book titles are shared in the fifteen minutes with as few as three or as many as eight children acting as main speakers. Lois may simply invite sharing or she may mention a category or topic of sharing for the afternoon. Early in the year she merely invited children to talk about books. However, by the second month of school, said Lois "I don't get to ask. They're more than eager to tell us about a book." Invitations to talk began:

- What are you reading? Will you tell us a little bit about it?

- Barb, you've got another one started. Want to tell us about it?
- Will you share a book with us?
- Who has something special to share today?

Later the invitation became more specific: share books in a category.

- Who has a book to share which would make a good movie? Tell us a little bit about your book and who you would cast as the main characters.

- Let's discuss November's books. Can you pick out one that was especially good and share it with us?

- Who will share a new book, one that hasn't been shared before, in five sentences?

- Is anyone reading a good historical fiction title which they want to share?

- What would be some good books to take on a vacation when you would be alone and have lots of time to read?

- Let's see if we can name some funny books. Tell us the name of your book and what's funny about it.

- Who can think of another book that is like the one we just talked about? How are they alike?

Lois encouraged children to begin to see patterns in what they read. She built upon what children said when they talked about a book.

- Something I like to try with book discussions is to pick up themes. I say "Who would like to share today." Actually, some will ask me before group sharing time "I'd like to tell about my book." If we pick up a book with a certain theme, I'll say "Are there any other books like that, that have some quality in common?" or "What else did that author write?" So we can talk more and more, then someone else might have read another book and we can perhaps get a little dialogue going.

Themes, or connections, which were talked about during the year were often indirectly brought out by Lois rather than stated directly. Thus, when groups of books set in World War II were being read, Lois asked for sharing of titles from that time period. This led to the sharing
of books in which the main character showed courage. Other connections Lois made were more explicitly stated.

-In an effort to make a connection between incidents of racial prejudice and individuals standing against it, Lois calls upon Sherry to share *Sing Down the Moon* (O'Dell) (persecution of Southwestern native Americans) following Joan's sharing of *Iggie's House* (Blume) (a black family moves into an all-white suburb). "Are there any other books like that?" she asks.

-Sherry shares *The HummingTop* (Spicer), a book in which a character can foresee the future. "What are some other books about prediction?" asks Lois. Tammy suggests *Half Magic* (Eager). Lois adds *The Hocus Pocus Dilemma* (Kibbe). Cary suggests *A Billion for Boris* (Rogers) but qualifies that by saying "He used a TV set, though."

-Cara has talked about *Fog Magic* (Sauer) and stops when the main character returns to a past historical setting. Lois says, "So it's one of those books that opens up into another time. Does that remind you of any other books?" Cary says enthusiastically, "Mine's just like that! *The Dark is Rising* (Cooper)." He also talks about "the strange things happening." Sam connects both books to *The Hero From Otherwhere* (Williams) because it both has strange happenings and is set in another time. As Sam talks about the two characters in the book who dislike each other, Nathan continues that thread of connection in *The White Mountains* (Christopher). "It's just like that. Two guys don't like each other at the beginning either." Lois has said very little during the flow of exchange.

Lois asked other questions which attempted to help children make connections between a single book and other books.

-After Tammy shares *Anything for a Friend* (Conford), Lois asks "What other books has she written?"

-When a book is shared which features a child in a one-parent home, Nathan adds that *Queenie Peavy* (Burch) only had one parent at home. Someone else adds that the boy in *Dorp Dead* (Cunningham) didn't have any. Lois says "So something has happened to the family unit. You'll find a lot of these Holocaust books are like that."
-Lois asks "What type of book is that?"

-"What message is the author trying to convey?
I'd like you to think about why the author wrote the book."

During the book sharing Lois tried to help children focus on the characters of the people in the story as well.

-Tell us about the characters. What are they like?

-Tammy and Margie are sharing I, Trissy (Mazer) together. Lois asks "What do you think of her as a person?"

In addition to getting more books talked about and helping children make connections, Lois uses book sharing time as another way to gain information about the group. She asks questions such as:

-Where did you find that book, Barb?

-How many of you have read The Dark is Rising (Cooper) now?

-Who will be reading Superfudge (Blume) when you are done, Tom?

-Who recommended that book to you?

These questions help her in the "monumental spy activity" she does which enables her to be "helpful rather than intrusive."

Although poems are selected from poetry collections and read in other parts of the day, and poetry collections are perused during SSR, poems are not often read aloud as a part of sharing.

-Lois notices that Bill has spent all of SSR with a collection of Nightmares: Poems to Trouble your Sleep (Prelutsky). She asks him if he'd like to read one to the class. He reads "Ghoul" much to the delight of the group.
The student teacher has given Bugs (Hoberman), a poetry collection, to the class as a farewell gift. Amy reads a poem aloud to the class.

Other rarely occurring events during book sharing included class discussions which ranked the most recent book read aloud by Lois with the previous books. Sometimes Lois or I added books to the classroom collection by saying a few words about them before handing them to a student or placing them on the shelf. The greatest part of book sharing, however, was the dialogue the students created around what they were reading.

**Book Groups**

Another literature-related event in the classroom, in addition to reading aloud, sustained silent reading and book sharing, was book groups. These groups were formed several times during the year either by assignment or by student choice.

When the sixth graders went to camp in October, the remaining fifth graders divided themselves by sex: the boys read an abridged version of Robinson Crusoe (Defoe) and the girls read Helen Keller's Teacher (Davidson). Each group then made an extension of the book to share with the rest of the class (see Extensions following this section).

In late October, Lois piled multiple copies of six titles on a table in the room and asked children to choose one book to read and discuss in a group. She spoke about each book and, as usual, children who had read books gave testimonials and agreed that the books "were good." Students chose from among The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe (Lewis); Keep Stompin' Till the Music Stops (Pevsner); Tuck Everlasting (Babbitt); Island of the Blue Dolphins (O'Dell); Summer of the Swans.
(Byars); and Sinbad's Seven Voyages (no author given). Groups numbered from four to seven children with some children choosing to participate in two groups.

Originally, the student teacher, Lois and I agreed to talk with the groups each and present the book in some way to the whole group. All groups did meet and parts of the book were discussed as far as children had read. The group who discussed Keep Stompin' Till the Music Stops (Pevsner) with me composed a drama/interview of three characters and presented this to the class. The rest of the groups discussed their reading during the morning work time but the new unit of study, American history survey, took over the class energies and the books were not presented.

A third book group situation grew out of the impending class study of the Depression/World War II period in American History. Again, Lois brought multiple copies of many titles out of her closed cupboard. She also had numerous single copies as well. Children were asked to choose a book set in the 1930's-40's and read it as part of their assignments. This time it did not matter if everyone was part of a group but two groups did form with approximately six children in each group around Escape from Warsaw (Serraillier) and Journey to America (Levitin).

Lois used the book groups as another way of letting children talk through what they were reading. Her questions in the group focused on getting the meaning straight, clarifying titles, predicting outcomes and determining how children were reacting to the book. (See Appendix F for a transcript of a segment of a book discussion on Escape from Warsaw). Again, extensions did not come from the book discussion.
As a result of the discussion, some students continued to read "World War II" books such as Cary who first read *Escape from Warsaw* and then read Olinek, *Searching for Shona*, and *Journey to America* (which the other group had discussed concurrently with Cary's discussion of *Escape from Warsaw*). (See Appendix F). These book group books were considered as possible titles to be shared at the end of the day, so that several children shared them, too.

**Extensions, Follow-ups, and Assignments**

The teacher encouraged students to mark the completion of books which she read aloud or some books which students read to themselves in several ways. The follow-ups might roughly be categorized as 1) write something; 2) make something; and 3) do something. At the end of each month, children were expected to write a book report on a book of their choice selected from the previous month's reading. The format for these book reports was loosely derived at first from whatever children knew of what a "book report" was. Lois asked children to "tell us a little about the book and how you felt about it." In a following month, Lois asked students to "pick a favorite character and tell us why you liked that character." Children interpreted the directions liberally and reacted to the books by following the loose format of writing their reactions or feelings about the book, and responding to the specific directions as asked for by Lois.

A typical book report written in November by Barb responded to *Ramona and Her Father* (Cleary).

Well, this book was so good I don't know where to start.
I guess I'll just start at the beginning. Ramona is a young lady in first grade. She has an older sister in the 7th grade. Her name is Beatrice but her friends call her Beezus. Well, Beezus was always being bugged by Ramona about Christmas even though it was only September! Another funny part was when she got out in the meadows, she used little burrs and made a crown out of them and she put it on her head and her father had to cut it out of her hair. It was a wonderful book.

My favorite character in the book was Ramona. She sounds like such a cute, bratty little girl. I think Beverly Cleary is a wonderful writer and I think she was trying to tell me that Ramona and her father are much closer than anybody else in the family thought! I think she was also trying to tell me that a bratty little first grader can be sweet if her daddy talks to her.

In January, partly in response to a statement from a parent that her child seemed to need some format for writing, and partly just as a change, Lois put on the board a "book report format":

1. Name, Author, Type
2. Who, What, When, Where
3. Importance, Author's Intent
5. An Illustration

This produced some fragmented writing set off by category but it did enable some children to provoke themselves into considering the book more widely. Some children who had previously written only about plot and their opinions of the book now considered the book's potential theme and a category which the book might represent.

This response to the given format was written by Sam in reaction to Unbuilding (Macauley).

This story is about men that want to take down the Empire State Building and move it to another country. And they do.
The author wrote this book to show people that we don't appreciate things till they're gone.

I think this book is very good and the illustrations are marvelous.

Sam made an illustration in pencil depicting the Empire State Building utilizing a picture from the book to guide him in his renderings and perspectives.)

Christy reacted to *Journey to America* (Levitin):

The book is serious and true.

The main character is Lisa. Lisa has a mother, a father and two sisters, Ruth and Annie. The book takes place in Germany and Switzerland. The book takes place in 1939.

The book is about a girl. And her father is going to America. Her father thinks there is going to be a war. Her father leaves Germany and goes to America. But he leaves his wife and children behind. He is going to get a job and buy a home and then send for them. Their family has some ups and downs but they finally get to America.

I think the author wanted to tell everyone how hard it really was for some Jewish people. The book is very good. I think that everyone should read this book.

(Christy used the jacket picture as a model for a colored pencil drawing.)

In April, Lois asked the students to write their book reviews from the point of view of one of the main characters. This assignment produced Bill's written response to Steig's *Abel's Island*, written from the mouse Abel's point of view.

Right after I got off the Island I met up with a mean cat. I felt strong after I got off so I could run with the wind. When I got sort of tired so I climb a tree, then to my surprise that stupid cat started climbing, too. When I was to the top, that stupid cat started pawing at me. Then as soon as he almost hit me, the
branch snapped underneath him and a hiss rang out from the cat and he went flying through the air hissing and as soon as he hit the ground he went running away. As soon as I knew he was gone I climbed down and walked to my home.

Casey responded to Good-Bye, Chicken Little (Byars).

It was one of the worst days of my life. Four days before Christmas some guys that had allot of beers in Harry's Bar and Grill bet my Uncle Pete walked across the Monday River and fell in. We all waited but he did not come out and another bad thing about that day was when I told my Mom, she got mad at me because I did not stop him and I tried. Since my father died I thought if anything else happened like that I would die but everyone got over it and it was a good Christmas after all.

Each month, the book reports and the accompanying illustrations were displayed in the room, usually on a wall visible to anyone who visited the room as they were in a prominent location by the door. Many other examples of children's writing were displayed, as well.

In addition to book reports, Lois asked children to "write something" in response to books which she had read aloud. (See Chapter IV). Lois asked children to react to what she read aloud because it gave her some idea of "the meanings they get from what they hear." If she thought the book was not especially well-received, she might ask the group to respond to some part of the book rather than the book as a whole. Thus, after a reading of Walk the World's Rim (Baker), which children seemed to be less interested in listening to, Lois asked them to "talk about a time when you might have misjudged someone" as the main character did in the story. Lois felt that this practice might allow children to salvage some positive response to the book and might stave off a discussion which focused on like or dislike of the book.
Numerous other follow-ups from children's reading and listening could be grouped loosely under the suggestion that they "make something". Following the reading of Robinson Crusoe (Defoe) and Helen Keller's Teacher (Davidson), the fifth grade boys made a model of Crusoe's island from natural materials and the fifth grade girls produced a puppet play of several scenes from the book. These activities helped children recall the book in later discussions but no one outside of the groups required to read these books read them later as a result.

Some children took a teacher suggestion to "make an extension" rather than an illustration for their book report and created various artifacts which suggested some connection with what they had read. Few extensions were made over the course of the year. One child created a model bridge after reading Bridge to Terabithia (Paterson). She was quick to point out that "it doesn't really look like the real bridge, though." Another child produced a paper-covered box labelled "The Bears' House" from Sach's book of the same name. Both of these extensions called attention in a novel way to the books which the two children read. Many children already knew Bridge to Terabithia but several children during the course of the year read The Bears' House.

Illustrations for book reports could be considered as a part of "make something" in response to a book. These illustrations usually were borrowed from the book jacket or from an interior illustration. Only when faced with nothing to copy or borrow from did children risk an illustration "from their heads". One child spent part of an SSR period moving slowly around the room to find a copy of Superfudge
(Blume) so that he could finish the lettering on his illustration by using the book jacket. Children used various media, however, and it was not uncommon to see watercolor or charcoal sketches in addition to the more common pencil and felt tip pen drawings.

One assignment which produced a variety of drawings "from the head" was the teacher's request that they illustrate a scene from Journey to Topaz (Uchida) in which the students felt they were "in the skin of" one of the characters. The single copy of the book circulated among some children in the room but most relied on themselves to produce some sensitively rendered work.

Occasionally, children were encouraged to share their book reactions by creating puppet shows, small dramas and dialogues. One group produced an interview drama after reading and discussing Keep Stomping 'Till the Music Stops (Pevsner). In March, small groups produced dialogues from books read by several people. In addition, as part of a math exercise and an activity which a substitute teacher could administer, Lois asked children to make surveys of their own literature-related questions. Typical questions which children surveyed each other on were "How many books have you read in the month of March?"; "Who's your favorite author?"; "What's your favorite Betsy Byars book?" and "Have you read any books by Marilyn Sachs?"

Although this section precedes the final section on record-keeping, Lois considered the results of the writing, making and doing of something in response to a book as part of the information she used to better understand what meanings children were making out of what they were reading. She kept notes of titles children responded to but did
not keep notes of how the children responded. The results of these efforts were part of the records Lois "kept in her head."

Record Keeping

In the first week of school, the teacher set up a record keeping system with the students which they maintained throughout the school year. About record-keeping, Lois said:

In looking at the kinds of things they read and they choose to read, I have to keep a variety of records. Record-keeping is not my favorite activity so I try to keep it as simple as I can because I tend to get buried by papers and not know where to file them or where I did file them. I also give them the responsibility of record-keeping so they know when they complete a book they have some responsibilities to not only share with others but to keep their records in order.

This record, called the Book Log, was located in a pocket stapled inside the back cover of a spiral-bound stenographic-type notebook. The Book Log consisted of 6 X 8 cards with the month written across one end and "Title" and "Author" written across the top. Each child was expected to write the title and author of all books completely read during that month. Books read at home as well as at school could be listed. Typical Book Log cards (see Appendix G for a completed year-long log) for March are Barb's:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Author</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. I, Trissy</td>
<td>Mazer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Felicia the Critic</td>
<td>?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. That Crazy April</td>
<td>?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Deenie</td>
<td>Judy Blume</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Secret of the Andes</td>
<td>?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. We Interrupt this Semester For an Important Bulletin</td>
<td>Conford</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. Class Pictures</td>
<td>?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. How to Eat Fried Worms</td>
<td>?</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
or Calvin's:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Author</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Superfudge</td>
<td>Judy Blume</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Paddington on Top</td>
<td>Michael Bond</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Paddington Marches</td>
<td>Michael Bond</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>On</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. The Thinking Machine</td>
<td>Jacques Futrelle</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Maurice's Room</td>
<td>Paula Fox</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Jungle Stories</td>
<td>Rudyard Kipling</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Children maintained their own records with reminders from Lois to "put that in your log now before you forget it." Children generally kept careful uninflated Book Logs because of the use Lois made of these in the interviews she conducted during SSR. Since number of books read was valued by Lois and by other students as well, someone might have been tempted to add titles of books he had not read. However, as Lois sat with individuals and talked with them about what they read, students realized that whatever titles they had recorded were likely to be part of the conversation. Thus, children's records had to be accurate accounts of their reading and falsifying lists of books read was seldom, if ever, done.

Lois notes that:

> By the end of the year, they have a complete record of their finished books. I also transpose this record into my notebook so I have another copy of their finished books.

These Book Logs were used in the classroom in several ways. Lois used them as a source of information on individual children and on the class in general. From the cards, for instance, she could generalize about the kinds and numbers of books a child read, particular authors or subjects which the child selected, and the child's awareness of
concern with authors. (Some children like Barb put question marks in the author space while others such as Calvin meticulously noted first and last name). She could see one child's growth or patterns in choice emerging over ten month's time.

By comparing sets of cards from different students she could tell how particular readers influenced each other. (Kelly and Tammy shared many titles with Tammy "discovering" the title first and her friend usually following the recommendation several weeks later.) She could note certain books which travelled around the classroom or which readers read titles first (that is, who led the class into new territory and who followed the leaders).

The cards were used by both Lois and by me as a starting point when a student asked "can you help me find a book?" By sitting down with a child and asking "Well, what books here that you've read are good? What did you like about them? What sort of books are you looking for?", we were often better able to help a child find a book that was likely to be completed.

Lois and I also used the cards as a beginning point for interviewing or talking with individuals in the classroom. (See the previous section on interviews in "SSR"). In the conversations, students used the Book Log cards in several ways, as well. In the absence of the actual books themselves, students relied on the cards as a tangible, physical item to handle as they talked. Secondly, the lists of books read was a constant roadmap of where they had travelled. Thus, a student who was asked to list several books he enjoyed was able to recall what he had read by looking back over his cards. The cards served as
a simple but powerful recalling aid. In addition, children also used the cards to count the number of books they had read, to note months in which they had read more or less books, or to see how many books they had read which were written by a particular author.

The rest of the spiral notebook was a weekly journal in which children wrote a weekly "letter" to the teacher. In the Journal, children were asked by the teacher to "tell me about what you've done this week and how you feel about your work. Tell me what you're reading and just let me know where you are." Sometimes during the Friday writing time, Lois asked children to write about more specific topics such as "your five favorite books," or "the kinds of books you like to read." Again, from the journals, Lois got a weekly view of the classroom across children and, as entries piled up, a view of one particular child as he or she selected events from the week to relay or comment upon to Lois.

Students' entries varied from several sentences to several pages in length. Some were informal in tone and others were stiff. Some children joked and carried on a dialogue from week to week while others forgot to write. Lois reacted with positive comments or acknowledged what children shared with her. Where the Book Log was viewed as public, the Journals were private and visitors to the classroom were not invited to read the Journals although they were placed in a box within easy access. Some children kept their Journals and Book Logs in their desks rather than risking the public eye.

Again, the reactions which the students wrote gave Lois more information about how children thought about what they read. Some
excerpts give an idea of the entries individual children made, and Lois' responses to those entries. Authors have been added.

- My book is very good so far, and it is very funny. In a way I don't want to finish it because I'll be sad it's over when I do.

- I read My Brother Sam is Dead (Collier). It is a great book. Now my mom is going to read it.

- I've read 35 books this year. (L: Amazing!) and 14 this month. The five books I liked most not in order are The Hoboken Chicken Emergency, Yobgorgle, Lizard Music (all Pinkwater), The Mad Scientist Club and The New Adventures of the Mad Scientist Club (both Brinley). (L: I guess Alfred Slote is taking a back seat to Manus Pinkwater. You have a fun list.)

- I've read 8 books this month! (L: Fantastic)

- I'm reading Who Really Killed Cock Robin (George). I think I know who but I'm not sure. There are two predictions.

- This week was good. I liked Seven Spells to Sunday (Norton) and Sing Down the Moon (O'Dell). Lately I have really liked reading. (L: That's neat) I don't know why. It just all of a sudden hit me. (L: When you read some outstanding books like Blackbriar (Sleator) you get hooked on books.)

- I just finished a book called Ramona and her Father (Cleary). It was great. Over Thanksgiving vacation I'm going to read The House of Dies Drear (Hamilton). Leah's been telling me how good it is and I'm tempted to start it.

- This week I started The 18th Emergency by Betsy Byars. (L: The 18th Emergency is very funny. You'll love it.)

- This week has been OK. I finished The Forgotten Door (Key). It was good and exciting. I'm going to read either Mrs. Frisby and the Rats of NIMH (O'Brien) or Watership Down (Adams). (L: Wonderful choices! If you have not read Mrs. Frisby, I think you have missed something great!)
I'm reading a Secret Seven (Blyton) book. It isn't very well known but it is very good. There are a whole lot of Secret Seven books.

I finished a book. It was the best book I ever read. It was Pinballs (Byars). (L: I'm so glad you liked the book. Now we'll have to find you another good one.)

Lois' comments generally encouraged forward movement, praising students' past choices and encouraging their future choices. She acknowledged children's pride in the number of books they had read. Most of all, she accepted all reading efforts that the students put forth as valid and important.

Many of the student entries simply tell Lois over and over that there are "good" or "great" books being read. Some readers who took longer to read were carried along by the teacher's comments, it seems. Here are four consecutive weeks of one child's partial entries:

-1. I got done with The Trouble with Explosives (Kelly). Now I'm reading From the Mixed Up Files of Mrs. Basil E. Frankweiler (Konigsburg).

-2. I'm still reading From the Mixed Up Files of Mrs. Basil E. Frankweiler. I think it's a great book.

-3. I'm STILL reading From the Mixed Up Files of Mrs. Basil E. Frankweiler. I hope to get it done soon.

-4. I'm STILL reading the SAME book. I'm going to take the book home and get it DONE. For shure. (L: I'm pleased that you are going to read at home. You have a really good book, I think.)

In spite of the reading absorbing nearly a month, the student later listed this as one of her five favorite books.

The Journal and Book Log were regarded by the students at year's end as valuable personal records and some were taken home as a sort of chronicle of the year while others were "lent" to me.
In addition to asking the children to keep records, Lois kept another formal set of records.

-About once a week I walk around and jot down the book they're reading. I'll jot down the title they're reading during that week and this gives me a record of what they do pick up. It doesn't tell me what they finish, but perhaps it tells me how long it's taken them to read it. Maybe next week they're still reading it. After a couple of weeks, this gives me some hints that either they're bogged down in it, or they're not really reading it -- they're just holding it. Or they're not interested. So it also gives me the range of things they're interested in and are likely to pick up. Sometimes it might be The Guinness Book of Records (McWhirter) that they're reading. But that's what I write down.

In a more formal sense, Lois has other records which she carries in her head. These "records" are gleaned from her observations of children's reactions during the reading aloud of books, both casual conversations and interviews with children, the sorts of things they offered during sharing, her notice of who asks to take books home over night and so forth. None of this is recorded or written down and yet Lois is able to offer much information about individual preferences and patterns. This information stays with Lois in the classroom and is not centrally recorded, noted on official reports to parents, or made use of in any way outside the classroom. However, with a Book Log and Journal in front of her, Lois can talk at length about a child's progress in reading using this gleaned teacher knowledge.

What the Teacher Seeks to Build with Readers

As Lois moves through a weekly routine with her class, she continues to ask them to think about certain things. Her questions appear to cluster into certain topics. Some of her goals for readers are explicitly laid out in the classroom ("I want you to begin to notice __")
while others are assumed as a tacit or indirect part of the classroom but occurring as a result of the way the teacher organizes time, materials, and sequences.

Questions asked focus on helping children 1) clarify information given in a book; 2) create images of the settings, characters, and time periods; 3) develop a sense of themes within a book; 4) compare books, making connections between books with similar themes, books in similar categories, and books by a single author; 5) build a critical framework; and 6) become involved with the feelings or emotions of the characters in the book and become aware of their own feelings as they read a book.

Clarifying information. Many of the questions or comments Lois asks or makes before she begins to read aloud to the class serve as a way of refocusing the attention of the group who have usually just returned from lunch and a recess. As Lois says, "I ask recall questions to get everyone tuned to the same thing, and as a way of focusing the group, or to review what's been read."

- The class has heard six chapters from The Cry of the Crow (George). Lois asks them to review the book so far by listing what the crow has learned to do up until now.

- A child has just returned from the reading teacher whom she visits each day during reading aloud. Lois asks "Who will bring Casey up to date?"

Many more of the pauses during reading or discussion of books have to do with the clarification of details which support the story. Thus, Lois asks for or supplies more information about individual words, about the sequence of events, the movement or motivation of characters,
and the meanings or interpretations concerning the events in the story.

- Lois invites Tammy to tell the class about the book she is reading. She holds up the book, displays the cover and says "Well, I've been reading The Hocus Pocus Dilemma (Kibbe)." In an aside to the class, Lois adds "A problem."

- Lois reads aloud a description of the market place in The First Two Lives of Lukas-Kasha (Alexander) which uses the word stench. "What's a stench?" James answers, wrinkling up his face, "A smell."

- The text states that a character in The Witch of Blackbird Pond (Speare) served "as a king's man." In answer to Lois' question, Jack suggests "he served under the king?" Tammy guesses "He was treated like a king? I don't know." Lois nods to Jack.

- Lois reads that Kit in The Witch of Blackbird Pond (Speare) was surprised to see water at the dining room table. "What do you think she meant?" Lenny says "she was probably used to milk where she came from." Peg, perhaps realizing something about the tropical Barbados Island climate where Kit came from, says "She was probably used to milk or orange juice."

- The class is discussing the treatment of witches and Lois recalls the trial of witches by dunking. "Remember only the guilty ones float." During the reading of The Witch of Blackbird Pond (Speare), Barb interrupts to ask "What's a Quaker?" Lois looks around. Peg offers "It's like the Amish." Lois continues reading.

- As she begins reading, Lois asks "First of all, let's describe Kit. What kind of person is she?" This is followed later by "What is Judith like? What is her husband like?" The class answers with physical descriptions and in Judith's case, "She's nice."

Creating Mind-pictures. One of the ways in which Lois seeks to encourage her class to gain greater depth or understanding of the text the author has created is to exhort the reader to see the book. She
asks the class to see what the characters look like, to picture the setting, the way the land looks, or how the interiors appear.

-In an aside in the teachers' lounge one day, Lois says "I'm working on making images with them."

-To a small group of boys fooling around while she reads aloud from The Witch of Blackbird Pond (Speare), "Put the pictures in your mind, boys. You'll be able to follow along better." Again in a later chapter, she tells them to "get a good picture of this house now."

-Lois reads a description of a small-town southern store in the 1940's. She asks, "Are you getting the picture? She's painting a word picture for you. Have you ever seen a country grocery store? That's what she's describing."

-Lois asks how a colonial house looks in the story being read. She helps the class distinguish between log structure and plaster, adding that it had "leaded glass windows, too."

-"Try to get these images folks," Lois says as she reads a description of some creatures on a distant planet in The Lost Star (Hoover).

Occasionally the attempt to elicit statements about characters' personalities or motivations is seen by the class as a request for more "word pictures." Lois asks "What's he like?" and a child answers, "He's big and he has a beard."

This "getting things straight" visually seems to be important to the class, as well. Children stop to ask what items looked like.

-Lois is reading The Secret Cave (Bishop) in which a tiny piece of chocolate is used to tantalize a Jewish child being hidden by the French Resistance. Peg asks "Well, how big was the chocolate?" and the rest of the group offers guesses from one small square to part of a bar. Lois guesses it was the size of a Hershey Kiss. This satisfies the group.
-The class is confused about what a blunderbuss looks like. One of the boys looks it up in the dictionary as Lois reads *The Wolves of Willoughby Chase* (Aiken).

**Developing a sense of theme.** Lois seeks to help children see wider meanings in many of the books they read and to articulate this wider meaning. She deliberately injected into the curriculum instances where children could more easily discuss theme.

- The class lists books in which the main character shows courage and students tell how the main character is courageous. "Courage books" are displayed in the loft for a period.

- Amy describes a book's plot to the class. She characterizes the book as realistic fiction and Lois asks her "what message does the author have? When you read a book, I like you to think about why the author wrote the book."

- After spending five weeks listening to and discussing *The Cry of the Crow* (George) the class is asked to write a two-paragraph reaction to the story. Lois asks them to think about what message the author had in mind. "Why would she spend that much time writing this book? What reasons or purposes did she have in mind?"

- Lois sets up the reading of the picture book *Hawk, I'm Your Brother* (Baylor) following the reading of *The Cry of the Crow* (George). She asks the students to compare the two books. They find similar characters, similar relationships between bird and child, and different settings. They also see the similar theme of the conflicts engendered by the keeping of wild pets. Later, Lois says "I like to ask them how this is like that."

- In a suggested book report format, Lois suggests that children write about "author message".

Gaining some facility with themes in books resulted in children beginning to see connections, or that, as one child put it, "Hey. My book is just like that!"
Making Connections. Lois constantly seeks ways to help children make connections among books they have read. She elicits categories from children as she talks with them individually. She asks the group to identify "other books which are like this one. How are they alike?"

-Sherry tells part of the story of The Humming Top (Spicer) which involves a girl who can see into the future and into the past. Lois asks the class "What other books do you know which are about prediction? Where someone else can see into the future?" Tammy offers Half Magic (Eager). Someone says A Billion for Boris (Rogers), but Cary says that isn't exactly a person predicting because Boris has a TV which helps him.

-Joan is describing the conflict between white neighbors over the arrival of a black family in Iggie's House (Blume). "They were trying to get petitions up." Someone asks "Petitions for what?" Lois explains what a petition is, then asks Joan to talk about Sing Down the Moon (O'Dell), concentrating on the Spaniards' treatment of the southwestern Indians. Later, Lois says she was hoping some of them would see the similar theme of misunderstandings between different races.

Often by the simple juxtaposition of children's responses to different books they have read, Lois seeks to help some children discover recurring themes in books.

-Barb narrates part of the slaves' escape via underground railroad in Freedom Crossing (Clark). She mistakenly calls the slave hunter a Nazi, probably because Lois is reading aloud a book about the Nazi attempts to round up French Jews. Lois distinguishes slave hunters from Nazis and calls on another child who relates the escape sequence of a boy and his grandmother from the Indians in Trouble River (Byars). Without suggesting a category of "escape from persecution," Lois only suggests that these books are "similar."

In addition to helping children compare books and develop thematic links, Lois seeks to help children develop their own categories for books. Thus, children call a book funny and Lois asks
"What are some other funny books?" Later, another group discussion reveals that children think *The Wolves of Willoughby Chase* (Aiken) is "easy to get into" and Lois asks if any other books fit that description. (For a more detailed description of the categories which children assign to books, see Chapter V.)

Lois also helps children develop an awareness of authors' names. As the year progressed, certain children developed interests in the work of particular authors such as Alfred Slote, Judy Blume, Ellen Conford, D. Manus Pinkwater, William Steig and Betsy Byars. This coincided with or interacted with the teacher's noting of authors throughout the year.

- After Lois reads *The First Two Lives of Lukas-Kasha* (Alexander), she holds up four other books by the author, Lloyd Alexander, and talks briefly about each one. Some children have read *The Cat Who Wished to be a Man* by the same author.

- After a short play presented by the students and based on *Keep Stompin' 'Till the Music Stops* (Pevsner) Lois asks "Who wrote that? What other books has she written?" Pam offers *And You Give Me A Pain*, Elaine and Tammy adds *New Girl*.

- Lois notes in the journal entry of a boy who has been reading all of the Alfred Slote books but lists three of Pinkwater's books in his "Five best books" list: "I guess Alfred Slote is taking a back seat to Manus Pinkwater."

- Lois gets a group together to list and gather all the books of Betsy Byars which are then displayed in the loft.

A result of this author awareness was that children sometimes referred to themselves as "fans" of a particular author and were aware of each other's author expertise ("Ask Cary. He's read all of Betsy Byars' books.") (For a more detailed description of children's responses to authors, see Chapter V.)
Building a critical framework. Throughout the year, Lois has tacitly and perhaps unconsciously helped children build a framework for the ways adults talk about literature. Although Lois rarely uses the terms adults might use but uses child terms instead, she does occasionally seek to help children develop a critical vocabulary. Thus, for "what the author might be trying to say" or "author message", Lois might also use *theme* in a verbal exchange. She does not ask children to discuss theme, however, unless she redefines the word in child terms.

Lois also asked children what kind or type of book they were reading and children replied with genre (historical fiction, fantasy), one-word adjectives which subjectively described the plot (exciting, boring), or which described their feelings about the book (sad, moving). Again, Lois preferred to let child categories supercede adult categories and many children were still confused about genre distinction such as fiction/nonfiction or realistic fiction/fantasy at the end of the school year. (For a more complete description of categories children assigned to books, see Chapter V).

Teacher questions helped children develop a critical framework around aspects of literature such as theme, type/genre, meaning of titles, prediction/foreshadowing, voice, author patterns, and empathetic response.

The ways in which Lois sought to develop children's thematic awareness and the subsequent leading of them to see thematic patterns has been discussed in a previous section. Questions which Lois asked about kind or type of book attempted again to help children see patterns or categories.
-Amy is telling the class about *The Trouble With Explosives* (Kelley). Lois asks her what type of book it is? Amy looks puzzled so Lois adds "contemporary realistic fiction? Fantasy? Folklore? Historical?"

-Lois asks the children each to read a book of historical fiction for their social studies assignment. The class offers titles for approval. Later the librarian asks for the definition of historical fiction. Leah says "it's a story which isn't true." The librarian adds that it's history "that can't be changed" and then it has "a story added to it."

-Lois reads aloud *The Wolves of Willoughby Chase* (Aiken) and bills it as a fantasy, perhaps referring to the melodramatic portrayal of the plot and characters. Children at the conclusion of the reading comment on the reality of the book, "like you were in it."

-In trying to interest children in several titles, Lois describes various books. "It's almost a tragedy but it ends well." "Here are two little books..." "This is a stark book, very sad."

In addition to encouraging attention to theme and genre/kind categories, Lois also asked children to think about the titles of books.

-Lois remarks about *The Trouble With Explosives* (Kelley) that "I ask them about the title and they say that something explodes and I say 'wrong'. Then I read them the first page about a girl who stutters."

-Before assigning students to small group discussions, Lois holds up *Keep Stompin' 'Till the Music Stops* (Pevsner) and notes that the author uses interesting titles. "You'll want to find out what the title means as you read this." Two hours later, Barb asks Peg if she's gotten to the part where the aunt says she'll "keep stomping 'till the music stops"?

She also called students' attention to hardbound books that had been retitled, a common practice of companies such as Scholastic Book Clubs.
-A group of six children are reading *Escape From Warsaw* (Serraillier). Lois notes that it used to be called *The Silver Sword*.

-Lois reads aloud *The Secret Cave* (Bishop) and points out that the original title was *Twenty and Ten*.

Children indicate an awareness of wider meanings in titles or of the title itself by the unsolicited comments they make. For instance,

- Tom is sharing *The Pinballs* (Byars) at the end of the day. He says to the group, in the middle of a plot description, "Carlie thinks they're pinballs because they're always being thrown around like pinballs. That's why it's called *Pinballs*." 


-"Why is it called that?" ask students during a sharing time. Peg answers "Well, it's called *Jelly Belly* (Smith) because it's about this guy and he's really overweighted and he can't stay on a diet."

Lois also asked children to predict from jacket illustration, from titles, from chapter headings, or from the text what they thought might happen next. She encourages this prediction as a way of building reader interest. "That way they know what to listen for."

-Mitty relates an incident in *The Witch of Blackbird Pond* (Speare). Lois reminds the class that the incident is important. "It will come up again."

-A character in *The Lost Star* (Hoover) meets a 'lumpie'. "Do you think that is going to be important?" asks Lois.

-Lois is sharing a group of books which deal with characters facing handicaps or problems. She shows the cover of *He's Your Brother* (Parker) and asks "What problems do you think this person faces?" Noting the railroad track in the background, Nathan wonders if he has been hit by a train.
-After a crow has been shot out of the nest in *The Cry of the Crow* (George), Lois asks "who do you think shot the nest? What will the crow do next?"

-Lois states, "Chapter Twelve is called 'Enemies'. What do you think the title will refer to?"

Although Lois is not building children's predictive abilities solely around the literary device of foreshadowing, she encourages children to use whatever clues the text provides as a way of looking ahead in the story. Foreshadowing is one of the clues.

Lois also uses child terms in referring to first person narrative as "I-books". Books written in the first person (by authors such as Judy Blume, Ellen Conford, Judie Angell, or D.M. Pinkwater) are extremely popular with this group and are often requested when children ask for help in "finding a book."

No formal attempts were made by Lois or by the students to discuss author style or generalize about author patterns. However, children could discuss authors in terms of what kinds of books they wrote, the sort of characters they created, or the types of themes they dealt with. Children unable to generalize when asked directly could nonetheless make some comments about a particular author if pressed. Mitty, for instance, could not readily say what sorts of things Judy Blume put into her books. When asked if she would tell if a book were written by Blume, even if she could not see the title, cover or author, but could read it, she answered

-Probably. It would be the point of view of the person ... I guess the main person in the story would be telling the story. (What else? What kind of families?) Maybe like somebody in the family would have a problem or something. Maybe the family would have a divorce or something.
(Would you expect to find a particular kind of adult in a Blume book?) Yeah. A parent who cares too much. Or who doesn't care enough. One that's always bugging someone.

Other literary elements previously discussed include Lois' efforts to make children aware of settings and of the characters which they encountered in books.

**Developing empathy.** Lois often asks children to talk about why characters behave as they do. She says that she hopes children become involved with the people in the story. In the weekly journals children keep, Lois asks them to tell her what they've been working on this week and how they feel about it. In the monthly book reports an accepted format is a paragraph about the book and a paragraph on "how the book made you feel."

-After a particularly strong ending of *The Cry of the Crow* in which a girl Mandy chooses to kill her pet crow, Lois asks the class why that decision was made. Lois asks them how they feel about Mandy's decision. Later, she notes that the class seemed relieved that Mandy chose the family's interests over the crow.

-Lois asks children to think about a character they'd like to know and tell the group why. Children offer a variety of characters and reasons. Lenny says he'd like to know Harvey, a boy with two broken legs, in *The Pinballs* because "I'd like to cheer him up."

-After reading *Journey to Topaz* (Uchida), in which the main character wishes to "get inside the skin of" another character, Lois asks children to illustrate a scene in which they felt, as listeners, that they were in the skin of one of the characters.

-Lois asks the class to write a one page reaction to a book she has read aloud. "The second paragraph should tell of your feelings about this book."
In summary, Lois sought to help children continue to develop a literary framework based on what they were reading. She sought to help them develop their own categories and occasionally supplied them with adult terms for those categories. Lois asked questions or provided instances where children might notice particular themes, types or genres, wider meanings conveyed in the titles, clues which children might use in the prediction of textual outcomes, an author's use of first person narrative and characteristic patterns of particular authors. In addition, she also helped children respond empathetically to what they were reading or hearing read aloud and she helped children be sensitive to setting and character as well.

Other Roles of the Teacher

Whole books are written about the numerous roles a teacher fulfills. However, it is not the intention of this section to examine teacher roles in depth. Previous sections have suggested the teacher's role in the arrangement of materials, space, time, sequences and inquiries. Establishing a classroom structure which is conducive to response is surely one of the more, if not most, important roles a teacher fulfills. There are other facets of the classroom which might be termed a part of the mental landscape which a teacher provides as well. Several additional roles can be discussed under the headings of 1) Looking back; 2) Holding the history; 3) Receiving the good; 4) Supporting the reader; and 5) Censoring.

Looking back. Children often appear to move through the curriculum in a somewhat linear fashion, looking forward to the next event rather than reflecting over the previous events. Thus, a child puts
down a book and takes up another immediately without a pause. By asking children to respond to what they have read, the teacher helps children look back, if only momentarily, over where they have been. By asking children to "Think of a book in which the main character shows courage" or "tell us your five favorite books," Lois provides children with a chance to range back over what they know, recategorizing certain books, and remembering what they have passed through in their reading. This group remembering invariably resurrects titles temporarily forgotten in the classroom and some other student thinks again about reading a particular book. This "uncovering" rather than continually "covering" material is likely to occur only if the teacher causes the children to pause and look back.

**Holding the history.** The teacher must know the group history in order to ask the questions which help children make connections. In order to help children connect books thematically, for instance, she must recall what books children read previously or are reading which deal with racial prejudice if she is going to ask, after a child reports on *Iggie's House* (Blume), "Are there any other books like that?" This holding of the group's progress becomes more important as the year passes and as the history becomes more complex and intertwined. Ideas are forgotten temporarily; book titles fade away; experiences dim in memory. But they are retrievable by someone if the right question is asked.

In a more mundane sense, Lois functions as the "Chief Archivist" in the holding of history. Children ask her to help them recall "the book about the three animals who walked home", or "the book that Cary
read last year". Another child asks for "a book no one has read here". Children expect the teacher to "keep track".

As in "Looking back", this practice of holding history means that titles of books are retrieved. Thus, someone decides in April that she is now ready to read Summer of the Swans (Byars) which someone else mentioned two months previously as a book in which the main character overcomes a large problem. This reference to the group history may also give a child a chance to see what he has read as part of a larger picture. The child who has read Summer of the Swans (Byars) may suddenly see it in a wider framework. And the child who has not read it may commit himself to new territory. In this way, books are continually being renewed and reorganized, accommodated and assimilated into the classroom.

Receiving the good. Once children discern that the teacher values reading, they are most anxious to share the fact with her that they are reading. Again and again, children tell Lois that "I finished Searching for Shone (Anderson)" or "I just finished a 'Trixie Belden' at home. That makes 8 books this month!" or "Pinballs (Byars) is the best book I ever read." As Lois moves through a day, children hold books up to let her see the title. They say "See? I read all that in just a half hour" or "I only have two more chapters to go." Lois receives the good news, acknowledging that she is pleased ("Fantastic", "That's neat", "I'm so glad", "That is wonderful") and the children continue to read and read and read.

Supporting the reader. A corollary of this role of receiving is that of the teacher's validation or confirmation of a child's
efforts to involve himself in a book. Not only does the teacher acknowledge children's efforts, she holds on to the child struggling through but enjoying *The Mixed-up Files of Mrs. Basil E. Frankweiler* (Konigsburg) for the fourth week in a row; she assists the child temporarily adrift in *The Guiness Book of World Records* (McWhirter) in finding *The Pinballs* (Byars) ("The best book I ever read"); and she waits for the child who reads half of three books before finally becoming immersed in a title she can finish, *The Chocolate Touch* (Catling). This trust in the reader does not assume a passive teacher role, by any means. The teacher waits, accepts, confirms, validates and supports; but she also encourages, assists, suggests and leads.

**Censoring.** Perhaps censoring is a strong term for what actually was a suggestion to a child who was reading Peck's *Are You in the House Alone?* Lois mildly suggested perhaps that was one book the student wanted to read at home and not pass around in the classroom. (The text concerned a babysitter who is molested while on the job.) In another situation, Lois asked a child to bring her a book which was being giggled over by a group of girls so that she could "see it". Lois also rejected a chance for her class to join the "Teenage Book Club" because she thought some of the titles were inappropriate for ten and eleven year olds. Several children eager to read "older" books found *Flowers for Algernon* (Keyes) and *All Creatures Wise and Wonderful* (Herriot) to be absorbing. *Flowers in the Attic* (Andrews) which involved an incestuous relationship, was read by several, but the book was not hovered over for that aspect and Lois ignored the title.
Summary

The classroom teacher was viewed as the virtual choreographer of the classroom environment. As choreographer, she arranged the physical setting, and the time sequences daily, weekly, and throughout the course of the school year. In addition, she also created a supportive climate in which response could develop. The setting, the time sequences, and the created environment provided a context within which children responded to literature in various ways.

Numerous patterns in the classroom provided opportunities for student responses. Literature related events were described which functioned throughout the year. The teacher's suggestions and requirements changed within these literature events as the year progressed so that each year-long event became a kind of theme and variation. That is, the teacher might read aloud or discuss books throughout the year, but topics and emphasis were differently handled over the ten month period.

Throughout the year the teacher sought to develop student appreciation and understanding of literature by encouraging a wide variety of responses. She provided an opportunity for students to talk about books, to write, to keep records, and to reflect upon what they and others had read. The teacher encouraged students to be aware of numerous aspects of literature such as theme, authorship, settings, and recurring patterns. In addition, the teacher supported students by her positive statements about their reading.

The following chapter examines numerous ways in which students responded to the environment which the teacher arranged.
CHAPTER V
DESCRIPTION AND ANALYSIS OF CHILDREN'S RESPONSE IN THE CLASSROOM

The original focus of the study was an inquiry into the patterns of response which were evident in the context of one fifth and sixth grade classroom. Chapter IV described the teacher- and student-created context in which response occurred. The classification of response patterns dealt with in this chapter includes the social context of the classroom in which children's behavior in the reading community is described. A second pattern to emerge was the distinction of types of reader behavior which were categorized by the teacher and described here. Much evidence exists as to the factors contributing to children's choice of reading matter and the interrelatedness of those factors which is a third pattern of response. Fourth, certain response events set up by the teacher generated responses which changed, developed or grew during the course of the school year. These changes may be variously attributed and certain causal relationships are suggested. Finally, a description of the range of responses present in the classroom attempts to describe the emerging stages of formal operations in the classroom. Although responses are often discussed here in individual categories, it is helpful to see these responses as intertwined and interrelated with each other and within a rich classroom context.
Social Context of the Classroom

One would expect that fifth and sixth graders, who are entering the age where peers have a strong influence upon opinion, ideas and actions, would be powerful influences upon each other. Such was the case in this classroom. Readers placed themselves in certain areas of the classroom near to certain friends. They recommended titles to each other through numerous personal testimonials. They entertained, reminded, valued and reassured each other. They recalled their collective and individual past reading stories to each other. Throughout the year they build with the teacher a community of readers, a context in which reading, with all the complexities and subtleties the term implies, occurred. Recognizing the importance of this community, the teacher supported its development in many ways and guided its growth.

Students exercised many options in the classroom. Choices included where to read, whom to read with and what to read. In addition, children showed certain behaviors which became part of the contexts of the classroom such as entertaining each other with books and using pictures as a vehicle for talking.

Where to Read

During SSR one might choose to read anywhere in the room. Pairs often read in the loft, lying beside each other or head to foot. The loft overlooked the reading area and provided a good vantage point for watching the group that usually congregated below.

The two couches in the reading area provided seats for as many as seven children and perches for several more. Children often slid chairs into this area making it possible for a dozen or so readers to be in a
space about nine feet square. Within the space, browsers stood at the bookshelves, the teacher conferred with individual readers over choice of book, and students came and went. Occasionally someone lay or sat on the rug-covered area. This area was the most popular place to read during SSR and was the spot in which the class congregated at the end of the day. Often the good seats were claimed early and held during SSR until class meeting.

Loners, such as Christy and Nathan read at their desks. Sometimes other students remained at desks rather than move to another spot particularly if they were deeply involved in a book.

A corner by the lockers provided the most private spot in the room since it was bound on three sides by tall shelves and walls. There readers such as James and Sam sat together to read books or to look together at the same book.

Whom to Read With

Numerous pairs formed and reformed in the classroom. Students read the same book or different books together; they sat together; they monitored each other's reading.

-During recess, Calvin and James are lying on their backs in the loft each reading individual copies of What's The Big Idea, Ben Franklin? (Fritz) "Wait, wait...OK" One wants to read page by page with the other. They turn their own pages simultaneously. "Done with that page? Yeah." Pages turn.

-Kelly and Leah want to read something short in the next fifteen minutes. They choose poems, Bread and Jam for Frances (Hoban), (a picture book) and Puddlums, The Cathcart's Orange Cat (Parker), sit down on the couch, each holding the cover. "OK", and pages turn.
- Evan and Cary read different books one day on the couch. The next day they read in the loft. They nearly always sit near each other. They are both self-professed fans of the books of Daniel M. Pinkwater and recommend them to other readers.

- Barb and Peg are sitting in the reading area each reading a book. Barb asks Peg, "Have you gotten to the place where the aunt says 'Keep stomping till the music stops'?"

- Several fifth grade boys read books in sequences, rotating titles as they finish.

Lois supported this by allowing pairs to work together, by supplying opportunities for them to read the same book, and by maintaining a flexible definition of a "silent" reading time.

- Lois is reading aloud The Witch of Blackbird Pond (Speare) and hands out six copies to people who "want to follow along together as I read."

- Peg tells the class about a book she has enjoyed, The Secret Language (Nordstrom). Lois tells the class, "I have other copies of this if you want to read along together."

- Lois referred children who were thinking about reading some book to one who had already finished it. "Why don't you ask Cary which one he thought was best?"

- Six sets of multiple copies of books are set out and Lois introduces each one before asking children to choose one to read and discuss. Books are chosen by some as ways of reading with friends as well as for their content or appeal.

- While the sixth graders are at camp, Lois directs the remaining fifth graders to work with the student teacher in two groups. The girls choose to read Helen Keller's Teacher (Davidson) and create a small puppet play as an extension. The boys choose Robinson Crusoe (Defoe) and create a model of the island for their contribution.
Personal Testimony as Recommendation

Students influenced each other's reading in many direct and indirect but powerful ways. One of the commonest responses in the class was the stamp of approval on the book choices of another person. A child who was browsing often picked up a book someone in the class had talked about. A child about to begin a book often heard some comment by another child about how he had read it, or how good it was.

-Joan has taken several books from the shelf each time sitting down near Leah to thumb the opening pages. She finally settles on The Incredible Journey (Burnford). Leah says "That's so good."

-A group of six sits in the carpeted area getting ready to read during SSR. "Is that by Lois Duncan? That was the first book I read this year." Another person adds "I read that." A third adds "Do you know I Know What You Did Last Summer? That was real good." The others look on interested.

-Three boys are talking about a book with Casey. Will asks if she has gotten to a certain spot in the story. Another boy reminds her that she got the book from him.

-The librarian is talking about Newbery Awards books. As she holds up a title, various people offer comments. "Oh - that's good."

-Tom passes by as Joe begins The Cybil War (Byars). "You're going to love that book," he says.

-Peg has checked out The Matchlock Gun (Edmonds) from the library and is sitting down at her desk to read. Evan comments from the other side of the room "That's a great book. I read it."

-Kelly read The Secret Language (Nordstrom) in October and talked about it in class one afternoon. In December, as she pulls it off the shelf for another look, Peg says, "Oh, can I have that?"

-Joan talks about Iggie's House (Blume). Lois mentions that she thinks it's the first book Judy Blume wrote. Tammy murmurs, "Uh-huh, that's a good book."
Lois is trying to "sell" *The Pushcart War* (Merrill) to another student. Bill, passing by, says he heard it read aloud last year and "It's really good."

Lois supported "personal testimony" recommendations by providing time at the end of each day for the class to share what they were reading. In this way she could plant a book in the hands of one reader, call on the reader who would invariably recommend the book, and be assured that some other reader might be considering that title for future reading. She also referred one child to another saying, for instance, "Evan read that and could help you find it, I think."

Lois also supports "personal testimony" indirectly by not pressing students to be negatively critical about their reading. She did not insist that a student say more about a book, in group sharing, beyond a selection of events in the story and some sort of summary comments. There was much to like in the classroom reading; many books were labeled "good." Throughout the year many books became well known in the classroom and several children became known as good recommenders.

**Reading as Entertainment of Others**

Students read to entertain themselves, but often, a particularly funny passage caused someone to chuckle audibly. If there was another child handy to listen, someone might read aloud a part, or retell it.

- Tammy sits on the couch reading poems aloud to anyone in range of her voice.

- Mitty reaccounts a humorous part of *Superfudge* (Blume) during the end-of-class sharing. The class, half of whom have read the book, smile and chuckle appreciatively.

- Joe spreads flat the jacket of *Superfudge* (Blume) and tells a group of boys how Peter ("That's him") sells worms to "this one". Then he reads aloud a
page in which someone is suspected of eating worm pie. The group disperses laughing.

-Leah and Kelly read aloud to each other on the couch.

-Evan, sitting next to Cary on the sofa, laughs and then reads aloud a part of his book to him.

-Tom is holding Lizard Music (Pinkwater) as he says to the teacher "Hey, Mrs. Monaghan. He starts seeing lizards everywhere - on the TV, in the window, in this guy's sleeve!" She laughs with him.

-During sharing Cary reads aloud a passage from The Worms of Kukimlima (Pinkwater) which he finds particularly witty.

Lois encouraged the enjoyment of the humor by asking readers to retell certain funny parts of a book. She also allowed a child to ramble through parts of a plot in summary/retelling fashion if the group was attentive, which it usually was. Children listened appreciatively.

In one case, Lois noticed a student enjoying a poetry collection during SSR. She asked him if he would read the class a selection or two.

-Bill read "Ghoul" from Nightmares (Prelutsky) in a stumbling, halting way. The group's attention was fixed on him. They know and love the poem and seemed unaffected by Bill's delivery. Grimaces of satisfaction and recognition of the macabre follow his sharing.

It seemed that part of the enjoyment children received from the sharing of "good parts" was contributing to some sort of group memory or group spirit. They remembered who had talked about what book ("Oh, Eric read that") and they recalled the pleasurable experiences others had with books. This pleasure was constantly reaffirmed, then, by sharing.
Recollection of Things Past

Group memory served in other ways as well. Students recalled to each other books which were read to them in the past, books which were talked about in class, or books someone liked last year. This was partly the "personal testimony" of readers reading as it was, too, the remembering of the book which linked the reader to the group's past.

- Lois holds up *The Courage of Sarah Noble* (Dalgliesh) and Peg, Sam and Linda chorus "That's so good. Mrs. Harbert read it to us." (They heard it at least two years ago.)

- Lenny is looking for a book someone talked about last year. "It was about these three animals and it was called "The Long Trip" or something." Lois helps him locate *The Incredible Journey* (Burnford).

- Bill remembers that *The Pushcart War* (Merrill) was read by Miss Elam (at least two years ago) and "it was good."

- A visitor wears a button featuring the main character from the picture book *Where the Wild Things Are* (Sendak). Six children separately comment "I know that book" or "What is that book? I read it a long time ago." No one recalls the title but one boy says "It's about that guy who tamed all the animals."

- Lois mentions *Friedrich* (Richter) as another book with a World War II setting. "Mrs. Jo called it 'Freed-rick' last year," says a child.

- Amy chooses *Tuck Everlasting* (Babbit) to read because the art teacher read a part of it to her class last year.

Lois asked the group if they recalled other books they had read in previous years by a particular author. She also invited participation. She did not interfere if someone who had just read and talked about a book was assisted or corrected by someone who had read the book in previous years. Thus, Lois acknowledged the existence of a reader's
background and encouraged readers to recall their reading histories as a way of furthering connections. This recollection was easier for some children than it was for others and more children offered recollected titles and authors more frequently at the year's end than they did at its beginning.

Valuing Quantity

Although the number of books read or the number of pages read was not seen by the teacher as a most important indicator of the quality of reader experiences with books, nonetheless, both teacher and children valued the number of books read. Perhaps because one reader had read so many more books than the next three, children did not compete to see "who could read the most." However, children were pleased to see increases in their own lists of titles read so far.

-Sam finishes his book card for the month saying with satisfaction "That's three books for this month."

-Sherry announces that she has read five books over the long weekend at Thanksgiving. "All I did was read!"

-In February, someone suggests that the class tally the number of books read so far. They are pleased to see that collectively the group has read over 600 books.

-At the year's end, Tammy notes in her journal to the teacher that she has read 80 books.

-Peg, like so many children in the class, reads more books in May than she usually does. She refers to May as "My best month."

-The teacher shows a guest in the classroom the reading log of the most prolific reader in the classroom. Amy, who only averages three books per month, listens intently and disconsolately while the two adults talk.

-A class assignment to conduct a survey produces several surveys with titles such as How many books have you
read in March? How many books have you read so far this year? How many mysteries have you read?

The teacher encouraged children to read as much as they could and she rejoiced with them as they set new personal records. She recommended as a good average that a child aim for a book per week. This was difficult for many children early in the year but a goal reached by all at some point in the year.

Children also valued length of book read or the speed with which they had read a book. This was not true for all children or any child all of the time. Rather, one of the skills readers practiced in this classroom was learning to read faster or to read more and they showed off their speed or valued the speed and volume of others.

-Kelly holds up a book she started yesterday to show an observer that she has read over half of the book. She holds it sideways so its thickness can be seen.

-Three boys ask an observer if she has read a 700 page textbook they are holding. In response to the observer's answer, Will says incredulously, "She's read that whole book?!!"

-Lois bills a book a "little book." Several children ask to see it.

-Sam is reading The Chocolate Touch (Catling). He says to the teacher, "I read 64 pages today!" Cary several weeks before had recommended the book, calling it "real short. It's got 119 pages but the print is big." This book is read in April and May by more than half of the class.

-Tammy says that several books she read in March were "four or five hundred pages long!"

-Tom says, "Hey, Miss Hepler. I only read for a half hour and look how far I read!" He is holding up a copy of Ben Franklin: Printer's Boy (Stevenson) from a popular series of biographies of famous Americans.
When various children were asked near the year's end what they thought the teacher valued in reading, no child said that the teacher valued the number of books they had read. Instead they commented on her valuing their understanding, their selection of books they liked and their depth and breadth in selection.

-Barb says "That's what Mrs. Monaghan has been trying to teach the people - to read slower and as long as you enjoy the book, it doesn't matter how many you get read as long as you enjoy it and understand the book.

-Tammy says the teacher is emphasizing enjoyment and "growing up. Growth. Like if you get into reading, you could start reading more books or better books."

Tammy's comment sounds remarkably close to the definition of reader growth given by James Britton (1968).

That a student should read more books with satisfaction may be set down as one objective; as a second, he should read books with more satisfaction. We need to foster, in other words, wide reading side by side with close reading (p. 8).

Using Pictures

Pictures in books or on the jacket or cover of a book were often used by children as vehicles for talking in the classroom. Children used pictures to introduce characters to a listener, to point to as they retold interesting parts, or to help recall the story. Children read with interest the dozen or so books the researcher displayed in the classroom as Caldecott Medal nominees.

-Pointing to the cover of Mirror of Danger (Sykes), Kelly says, "This girl is trying to get that girl to come back into the past with her."

-Sherry is recommending Bagthorpes Unlimited (Cresswell) to the class and using the jacket to point out the characters.
- Tom is holding a copy of Dog (Andrew) and talking to Cary. He points to the cover saying "See, there's where they keep the dog."

- Nathan shows Lois a picture from The Lost Spaceman (Harding) and asks "Is this what the spaceship looks like compared to the two boys?"

- Joe explains part of Escape to Warsaw (Serraillier) by showing three pictures in the book. "That's Joseph there and that's Jan. Here's another picture of Jan."

- Groups or pairs of boys sit looking at Colby's illustrated non-fiction books. They talk about planes or ships, survival techniques or recount personal stories the pictures conjure up. The same group spends several days looking at wordless picture books by Mitsumasa Anno and talking about the pictures.

- The jacket of Superfudge (Blume) is used by children to keep characters in view. Numerous times children point to the jacket as they tell funny parts to each other.

- Nathan tells me that he has read a book which he enjoyed, Ursurak (Hildebrandt). The book, marketed in the adult fantasy section of the bookstore, has some dozen colored illustrations. Nathan brings the book in the following week with paper markers at each illustration and retells parts of the story as he reveals each illustration.

In addition to using pictures from books as an aid in explanation, students used the illustrations in books when planning their own illustrations of the monthly book report. Children often "copied" the book jacket being careful to put in details that the artist had included. Some children searched for the book they were writing about until they found it because they needed to use it for their illustrations. Even though children might make a collage representation, a watercolor, or a painting, they needed the jacket or the illustration as inspiration. Since making a poster was seen by most children as the only extension
to do each month, pictures in the text or on the cover took on added importance.

Categorizing Readers in the Classroom

Toward the end of March, after seven months of working with the children, the teacher loosely categorized students in the classroom into seven categories of readers. Three categories of readers were based on the genre these readers were usually most likely to choose: contemporary realistic fiction, fantasy, or non-fiction. Two categories were based on other types of books readers chose: funny or light, and short, easy fiction. While all five of the preceding categories had some relationship with the social structure of the classroom, two categories were based more on social aspects and less on type of book that the readers were most likely to choose. Pliable readers tended to be more easily influenced by the teacher's suggestions; and "different drummers" included those readers who exhibited unique reading behaviors, patterns or preferences. Several children appeared in more than one category and by the year's end, more children were moving in that direction.

Contemporary Realistic Fiction Readers. By far, the greatest number of readers in the classroom preferred realistic fiction. The teacher placed fifteen of the twenty-six children in this category, putting seven in a category of readers who preferred or would tackle books which were "heavy, with substance." The remaining eight usually preferred a contemporary setting and a good story, often told in the first person (and referred to by the group as "I-books").
- In looking at the titles of books she's read so far, Tammy says "I guess I like realistic fiction, mostly books about a girl with a problem." Although The Hundred Dresses (Estes) is about a girl with a problem, she didn't like it because "it's old-fashioned - it was way back then and I like nowadays books. It wasn't my kind of story cause my kind are older girls with more a variety of problems."

- Popular authors with this group included Judy Blume, Ellen Conford, Betsy Byars, Marilyn Sachs, Hadley Irwin and Lois Duncan. By the end of the school year, many children who had not previously mentioned books by author now referred to some books by author categories, such as "a Conford book."

Many children in this group read together during SSR, recommended books back and forth, and supported each other's effort to explain or talk about books.

- The teacher asks "How many have read Ellen Conford's Anything for a Friend?" Peg and Barb holding hands, raise their hands together.

- Barb and Mitty are both reading Keep Stomping 'till the Music Stops (Pevsner), sitting on each other's feet on the sofa. "After you read a chapter, wait" Barb tells Mitty, who's reading faster.

- Evan and Cary read aloud funny sequences from Superfudge (Blume).

- Tom passes by Joe who is reading The Cybil War (Byars). "You're going to love that," he says. He is reading The Cartoonist (Byars) which Cary recommended to him.

- Holding up a paperback copy of From the Mixed-up Files of Mrs. Basil F. Frankweiler (Konigsburg), Tom says, "Mrs. Monaghan, I finished my book." Leah adds "That's so good." Will adds, "That's a great book."

When a reader in this group was looking for another book to read, he or she often asked the group at large for recommendations.
- Linda asks the teacher for "another book by the guy who wrote The Chocolate Touch (Catling)." From behind her, Peg says, "Mama (Hopkins). I loved that book. Anastasia Krupnik (Lowry) is super." She gets up and stands by Linda at the book case, pulling out books and commenting on them.

- "I like it when people recommend books to me because a lot of people will do that - just look ever in the reading center and say 'Oh, a good book is ___' and show it to me. And I like that because it's easier for me because I don't have to search through everything and most of my friends like the same type of books I like. So if they find a book, I'll believe them and I'll try it. Normally, I like them. Every book that somebody's recommended to me I like except for Blackbriar (Sleator)", says Barb.

Lois frequently called upon members of the group during sharing time. These readers were usually the most eager to retell plots of the books they were reading and they had a willing audience. Frequently others asked "what was the name of that book?" and asked if they could read it next. Titles read by this group sometimes had sign-up sheets taped inside the cover but often the routing was simply known by the readers.

- Sherry tells Lois the next three people to get The Green Futures of Tycho (Sleator) when she finishes. "How do you remember that," asks Lois. "Oh, we just do" answers Sherry.

- Superfudge was introduced into the class by a reader. The next day, over half of the class had signed up to read this latest Judy Blume book. At the end of the school year, all but two readers in the class had read it.

In summary, this group of fifteen readers all enjoyed realistic fiction, often with girl protagonists, in contemporary settings. They shared books with each other, read the same titles simultaneously, or passed around a single title. They relied heavily on each other's
recommendations and on the reliability of the authors they knew. Members of the group were frequent contributors to the class discussions.

_Funny, Light Fiction Readers._ Nearly a sub-group of the previous category, this group of readers looked for humor in the books they read. This group also contained several of the less able readers in the classroom. When asked to name types or kinds of books preferred, many children answered "funny" as a first category. However, in May a class discussion of books that are funny revealed that children saw humor in various ways.

- _Superfudge_ (Blume) was offered as an example of a funny book. "Wasn't everybody going to say that?" said Jack. Cary added, "the things Fudge says and does are real funny."

- Ten children have read _Lizard Music_ (Pinkwater) this year largely because of Cary's recommendations and Lois' support that it is a funny book. The mention of the title brings several children to recounting funny parts "like when he met the chicken man" and "when he met the big lizards." "The whole thing's looney to start with," says Barb.

- In proposing his favorite title, _The Pinballs_ (Byars) as a funny book, Jack said of Carlie, the main character, "How rude she is is funny." Lois pointed out that serious books can also have funny elements. This reminded Tom of _Anastasia Krupnik_ (Lowry) because of the "funny lists she made."

Children obviously liked funny books for the entertainment value they provided. Nearly all of the instances where one child read aloud to another voluntarily involved humor. Funny names, funny occurrences, jokes, funny poems, smart remarks by book characters, ridiculous situations or embarrassing moments were all shared. Again, the entertainment
value of humor was partly social - something with which to regale a friend in the classroom. During sharing time, a statement that a book was funny was always followed by an example or two to which the group listened avidly.

Many children asked Lois or each other for humorous books when they were wishing to read less demanding literature. Children looked for less demanding literature such as humor when the classroom was particularly stressful (e.g., class project due or the end of grading periods) or when they had just finished a good book and didn't know what to read next. Less able readers, who did not want to risk reading a book that they might not enjoy, sought out humor. Thus, humorous titles were passed around much like contemporary realistic fiction but without being steady fare for most.

Popular humorous titles and authors over the course of the year included D.M. Pinkwater, Beverly Cleary, Jelly Belly (Smith), the "Bagthorpe" series (Cresswell), The Chocolate Touch (Catling) and numerous other books with wise-cracking female protagonists from contemporary realistic fiction. Although joke books were not actively discouraged, few found their way into the classroom perhaps because these readers felt joke books were for younger readers.

In summary, humorous books were preferred by less able readers but were read by nearly all of the class at certain times. This group, as categorized by the teacher, were the ones who most frequently asked for a "funny" book. Funny books were variously described by class members as books with funny situations, impossible happenings, funny characters or funny quotes. They were highly shared in the classroom.
**Short and Easy Fiction Readers.** As with humorous books, short and easy books were seen as valuable during certain times. Readers who wished to add another book to the number of books they'd read in the month's tally often asked for a "short book." By the same token, short books were often seen as less worthy than a longer book. ("The Hoboken Chicken Emergency (Pinkwater) is good - but it's a short book.") Children chose short books as less of a commitment or a risk to read, a time-marker until they could find a good book, or as a book to read while waiting for someone to finish the book they wanted to read next.

-Peg is explaining her reasons for choices of books she's read this year. She points out three books about a little witch from the "Dorrie" series (Coombs). "I started reading those when I was in second grade but it's just something to read when I don't have something else."

-The group was discussing titles on a sixth grade reading list put out by the local library. How to Eat Fried Worms (Rockwell) is sneered at by several. "It's not a hard book. It's easy." Black and Blue Magic (Eager) is a good book but "it's not that hard" so it should be on a reading list for younger children.

-Kelly asks Lois "Do you have any short books I could read because I'm waiting for Superfudge (Blume). Barb isn't finished with it yet and I've been waiting for over a week now."

Even though many children qualified short books to each other as less desirable, most readers in the class at some time during the year read a "short" book or an "easy" book. As Will said,

I don't think they should have a fifth or sixth grade list. If a person can read it and wants to read it, then that is for them.

Books in this category included books which children also called "easy to get into." Whether this was a quality of the book or simply
a reflection of the reader's interest as piqued by others' descriptions of the book, it is difficult to say. Most of these books were frequently talked about in the classroom. Good short and easy titles included *Mama* (Hopkins), *The Chocolate Touch* (Catling), *A Taste of Blackberries* (Smith), *I, Trissy* (Mazer), *How to Eat Fried Worms* (Rockwell), and *My Robot Buddy* (Slote).

**Non-fiction Readers or The Gang of Four.** This category might better be called "the gang of four" as this more accurately reflects the group's functioning than does the simple genre preference of non-fiction. Four of the five fifth grade boys began the year as readers of various types of books but they all read non-fiction titles in much the same way as did readers of contemporary realistic fiction. They sat together or near each other and they recommended titles to each other. They often read the same book side by side or shared one title between them, talking about each page or picture and comparing what they'd read previously to this new title. Bill, James, Calvin and Sam formed this group.

-Bill and James are looking at *World War II Warships* (Lyons), turning the pages slowly, discussing the pictures and reading an occasional caption. One remarks "Did you know Kamikazes only have a tank of gas?" "I know. That's all they need," answers the other.

-Sam gets the poetry book *Rolling Harvey Down the Hill* (Prelutsky) and passes by Bill saying "Oh boy, my favorite book." Bill comes to sit beside Sam and the two read aloud alternate poems. Sam says "I'm the one who tells the story," Bill adds, "I don't want to be Willy. Willy ate a worm!" Nathan, the fifth grade boy who is not one of the four friends, passes by and says "I'm the one who's smart." The other two let him join the group.
Calvin is looking at Anno's Counting Book (Anno). "Oh, neat! Each time you turn a page, there are more houses and roads. See? Three roads. Three houses. Three boats," he says to James.

Sam and Bill are looking back through Anno's Italy (Anno) after spending forty-five minutes discussing what they observe in the pictures. Upon noticing that many scenes from the Bible are hidden in the pictures, they now find "The Last Supper," John baptizing Jesus and so forth, on the second look through the book.

James and Calvin are each reading their own copy of What's the Big Idea, Ben Franklin? (Fritz) in the loft. "Are you done? With that whole page?" They turn the pages simultaneously. "Dang. He's smart." "Yeah." "Are you done with this page?" "Yeah." They read together through recess.

The working together as a group had been nurtured in October when the sixth graders went to camp. The remaining fifth grade boys read Robinson Crusoe (Defoe) and with other fifth grade boys in a neighboring class created Crusoe's island as an extension of the book. As fall continued, they read various fiction titles separately but continued to talk together while reading titles such as Dr. Zed's Science Experiments (Penrose), Our Space Age Jets (Colby), Weapons (Tunis) and World War II Warships (Lyons).

Their discovery of David Macauley's books of architectural constructions, such as Pyramid and Castle, began another round of noticing how Macauley worked. When the informal program's coordinator visited the classroom and showed the group Macauley's latest book Unbuilding, she remarked that he always included a visual "joke" or two in his books. These four boys returned to Macauley's books to find the "flaw," as Bill came to call it.

Optical illusions became a topic after the class visited a local museum and saw a display of optical illusions. This group discovered
Mitsumasa Anno's books when the student teacher created a small display of his books in the classroom. These books were talked about and studied intensely by the four boys but none of the other students found them of more than passing interest. After several days of reading the books in pairs or threes, the boys returned to their own reading of fiction.

-Typically, Calvin writes three or four sentences in his weekly journal entry. Following his lengthy look at Anno's books, he writes a lengthy two-and-a-half page discussion of his observations of Anno's books, speculations on Anno's background and recommends to the teacher other books he enjoys. For the rest of the year, Calvin's journal entries return to a short three or four sentences.

The four boys seldom shared what they read with the rest of the class during the period of talk at the end of the day. This changed somewhat by the end of the year and the four were more frequent contributors. Perhaps because they sensed that no one else was interested in non-fiction, they choose not to recommend the books to others (which was one of the tacit purposes of sharing as understood by the class).

By the end of the year, three of the boys had announced to the teacher that they were forming a group to read certain titles.

-Calvin, Sam and James say they will read My Robot Buddy (Slote), C.O.L.A.R. (Slote), and The Boy Who Spoke Chimp (Yolan) as a group. James explains "We're going to pass them to each other as soon as we're finished."

This group also shared other titles in common with each other. In the last months of school two boys moved from reading two or three books per month to reading eight or ten books. One boy who had returned from a long vacation listed no books as finished during the last two months. The fourth boy selected Where the Red Fern Grows (Rawls), a much more
demanding book than previous titles he had selected, and this occupied his reading time for the last weeks of school.

One sixth grade boy had tried to align himself with these four boys but he remained outside of the network they had created. Perhaps it was because he wasn't interested in sharing details or illustrations or was not a "friend" of the other four. Perhaps it was because of what he shared - items which demanded little response except acknowledgement of the item.

-Jack is reading the dictionary between Sam, who is reading a book on planes of World War II and James, who is reading Escape from Warsaw (Serraillier). Jack says "Wow. Highest number. A vigintillion." Sam looks over. "Yeah. 120 zeroes." James closes his book and sighs contentedly. "Finished!" Three minutes pass and Jack says, with no response from the other three, "I wish I could have that much money."

-Jack is reading one of the Guinness Book of World Records (McWhirter) commenting on the biggest or the fastest occurrences to James who is reading beside him. James glances up but does not comment.

In summary, this gang of four boys functioned for each other as a microcosm of the larger group of readers of contemporary realistic fiction. However, they began as discussants of non-fiction and ex-changers of information and later moved into recommenders of titles for each other. Although the teacher was open to them and evinced an interest in their discoveries, they functioned as a self-sufficient network in the classroom for most of the year and they influenced the rest of the class minimally. The network gave them opportunities to express opinions, ask questions, work out meanings, clarify and recommend alongside the other groups doing somewhat the same thing.
By the year's end several of the four had moved into broader reading, the reading of more fiction, and greater participation in class discussions.

**Different Drummers.** The teacher characterized six readers, who had also appeared in previous categories, as "loners". She called them, "different drummers". These readers exhibited reading and listening behaviors different from the majority of the class members. Their choices of what to read were based less on what "everyone is reading" and more on their own intuition, in many cases. They were less frequent contributors to group discussion but what offerings they made were accepted by the group.

Observations made of the class during the time the teacher read aloud might lead one to speculate that no one was listening. Children generally worked at many tasks, as described in the previous chapter. However, different drummers were often but not always the exception.

- Lois is reading *The Witch of Blackbird Pond* (Speare). Nathan has his own copy and moves his chair from his desk to several feet from Lois.

- The rest of the class is working on posters. Christy sits at her cleared-off desk, hands folded, watching Lois intently as she reads *The Cry of the Crow* (George).

This concentration was exhibited during SSR as well. Instead of placing themselves in the center of the reading area, usually a highly social spot, they would frequently sit at the edges of the center, at their own desks, or in an obscured location so as to be removed from the group.

- For three days Nathan reads beside the couch on the floor. He is engrossed in *Over Sea, Under Stone* (Cooper).
Will is reading *The Black Stallion* (Farley) at his desk. Half way through the book he moves to a chair under the loft and reads there for the rest of the week.

In March, Christy finishes her third Marilyn Sachs book and as she starts *The Truth About Mary Rose*, she is sitting in a chair at the edge of the reading area. Someone on the couch in the reading area whispers "Christy's got another Marilyn Sachs book." Tammy says in Christy's direction "I read that. It's good." Christy looks up and then continues reading.

Margie and four others are reading on the couch. Three, including Margie, have started new books today. There is much shuffling, poking and play but Margie reads through it all.

Many readers in the course of a year sampled books that the majority of the class had not read. But within this group, children read a higher proportion of books "on their own."

Calvin, one of the fifth grade gang of four, reads non-fiction and two C.S. Lewis fantasies in the fall. In the winter, he reads *A Bear Called Paddington, Paddington on Top* and *Paddington Marches On* (all by Bond). In addition, he reads *The Mother West Wind* "Where Stories* (Burgess). No one comments that they read those in third grade, although many have, but no one else in class reads these titles.

Joe has read three books by Alfred Slote and reads *Hang Tough, Paul Mather* in September. By March, he has read "all but one of Slote's books." He persuades several other boys in the class to read *My Robot Buddy* (Slote) in April.

Christy is familiar with Zilpha K. Snyder's books and reads two in the fall. No one else is familiar with Snyder.

Nathan discovers *The Riddlemaster of Hed* (McKillip) trilogy in winter and the Dragon series of Anne McCaffrey in May. No other student evinces an interest in reading these books. Later, he says he likes books that no
one else likes. By the end of the school year, he is still refusing to read Superfudge (Blume) which all but three students in the class have read by April.

Although other readers in the class went on reading "jags," staying with one author or a particular genre, the different drummers seemed to exhibit unusual tenacity in staying with an author or genre. In addition to the above examples, in which students followed interests in non-fiction, the Paddington Bear series, Alfred Slote, Zilpha K. Snyder and an interest in fantasy, several others illustrate the point.

-Margie read four of Susan Cooper's quintet, "The Dark is Rising." Although she talked several times about the books, only one child, Nathan, read one. Margie also read several "Trixie Belden" mysteries and "Cherry Ames" nurse stories which few others read.

-Throughout the winter and spring, Christy read ten books by Marilyn Sachs. Although other girls read several of Sachs' books during the year, no one had read them all, as did Julie.

This group, too, more frequently considered sources of books outside the classroom. While many of the rest of the class read what was available from the well-stocked classroom library, loners tended to visit the school or public library for particular choices. One child purchased books or brought from home books he wanted to read. Although other children used the library or bought books, it seemed particularly true of this group that they were less attuned to the group and more attuned to themselves.

By the final third of the year, this group had become less isolated or conversely, the rest of the class had moved toward this group in several ways. Fantasy titles were most usually read by this group
earlier in the year but by the year's end, many of the class had
followed the lead of this group, discovering fantasy and passing it
around. In addition, several readers who had read primarily realis-
tic fiction and "what everybody else likes" moved into new territory
and away from the choices sanctioned by the group. In that sense,
there were more independent readers by the year's end than there were
at its beginning. By the same token, as the class progressed as a
group, those readers who had been loners were regarded by others as
more important sources of recommendations than they had been pre-
viously. Reader differences were merely described and acknowledged
by the group rather than seen as "weird" or "different."

This group was by no means on the social edges of the classroom.
They simply made less use of the social milieu in determining what to
read. Several were frequent sharers at the day's end and several were
not. One infrequent sharer, Christy, volunteered late in the fall,
and was applauded at the end of her description of a Marilyn Sachs
book (the only time anyone was ever applauded for sharing a book).
This was in seeming recognition that the class liked Christy and acknow-
ledged that she rarely shared what she read. (See Appendix E for a
transcript of this sharing period.)

In summary, this group of readers exhibited tenacious reading
habits and tended to concentrate, to follow their own choices and to
behave more independently of others than did their classmates. How-
ever, by the year's end, they were less distinguishable from their
classmates who had begun to exhibit these same traits, to some degree.
Fantasy Readers. This group of readers was characterized by the teacher not simply as those who would read fantasy but rather those children who would seek out fantasy and read fantasy of a more demanding nature. Many children early in the year sampled fantasy.

-Several less able readers asked the teacher for "easy" books and she selected several by Ruth Chew and Edward Eager. These books were sampled by several and completed by a few children.

-James and the Giant Peach (Dahl) was read early in the year by five readers who remembered it as a book people had recommended in previous years.

-When Lois gave the class free choice of participating in small group discussions on any of seven books, Amy chose Tuck Everlasting (Babbit) because it was supposed to be good. "When they said 'get the books' I went right towards that one because most of the other people had read it. Mrs. Wilson (an art teacher) read a part of it to us last year for something and I remembered it."

Few children, however, saw fantasy as a strong preference early in the year. When the teacher chose to read aloud a fantasy, The First Two Lives of Lukas-Kasha (Alexander), the book was received coolly and no one read another Alexander book even though they were readily available. Still certain readers occasionally found fantasy titles which were picked up by others.

-Cary and Evan set about reading all of the Pinkwater books. Certain ones which were "short and easy" such as The Hoboken Chicken Emergency and The Magic Moscow were read by many in the class when a "short or easy" book was desired.

-Mirror of Darkness (Sykes) involved a contemporary girl in danger of being enticed into the past through a mirror. The Hocus Pocus Dilemma (Kibbe) was about a contemporary girl who had ESP. These two titles were passed around by the readers of contemporary realistic fiction as "good books."
-James continued to read Madeleine L'Engle's books outside of class and talked occasionally about them in the fall. No one else read them.

However, after four months of school, some children settled into defining kinds of books they liked. Several children emerged as fantasy fans.

-Bill continually asked Lois for books "with talking animals." He often stood at the book case pulling out books and putting them back for several days before finding what he wanted. It was Bill's enthusiastic reading of Steig's Abel's Island in February and March which started this title around the room.

-When asked what kind of books he liked, Cary answered "I like those kind of books like Jason and the Money Tree (Levitin) that could never happen but might happen if it did happen. Like The Chocolate Touch (Catling) or My Robot Buddy (Slote). (Well, that could happen someday) and C.O.L.A.R. (Slote). And The Hoboken Chicken Emergency (Pinkwater). Well, a lot of Pinkwater books."

-When Lois held up a new book and noted it was a fantasy, several children said "give it to Nathan." or "Margie and Sherry would like that."

-In January, in an unsolicited discussion with me, fifth grader Nathan introduced the topic of fantasy books he had enjoyed in the past. In the course of twenty minutes, he mentioned numerous authors, series, lands in fantasy, conventions such as "the quests, sorcerers, and magic amulets." He recalled The Gammage Cup (Kendall), which his fourth grade teacher had read, The Phantom Tollbooth (Juster) which he had at home, The Wizard of Earthsea (LeGuin) "trilogy which I haven't read but heard a lot about" and his current favorite, Ursurak (Hildebrant). Nathan had a well-developed concept of the category and convention of fantasy.

By spring, however, a surge of new interest in reading produced an interest in fantasy titles, and in addition to the continuous passing around of realistic fiction, students began to share fantasy titles.
- Abel's Island (Steig), first read in March by Bill, was read in the following months by Tom, Joe, Leah, Christy and Barb.

- Easier reading was still sought out by all and The Chocolate Touch (Catling) was passed around by half of the class ("Look, Mrs. Monaghan, I read 84 pages during SSR today.")

- Other less demanding science fiction reading such as Invasion of the Brain Sharpeners (Curtis), The Forgotten Door (Key), and The Hero From Otherwhere (Williams) were started by the fifth grade boys and were circulated among many others.

High fantasy and more demanding science fiction were picked up by single readers but never caught on in the course of the school year. In May, however, so much was being read and talked about, one had the feeling that many readers would be more willing to read more demanding fiction if the school year had continued and these books could be inserted via interested readers into the network of the class.

As noted in the discussion of different drummers, many of the more independent readers discovered fantasy than did the group bound to realistic fiction. Four of the seven readers listed by the teacher as loners were also listed in the fantasy readers section. Perhaps because fantasy demands more of a risk in suspension of disbelief than does realism, it was enjoyed most usually by independent readers.

Since more readers throughout the year grew in independence, fantasy was enjoyed more readily at the end of the school year. Perhaps, too, many readers trying to emulate the reading behaviors of older readers saw some fantasy such as animal fantasy as the property of younger readers. It would seem that unless readers make the transition to more demanding high fantasy and science fiction choices, they are likely to abandon fantasy altogether as did six readers in the class.
In summary, readers in this group could be characterized by their degree of willingness to read fantasy. Several children voiced a preference for fantastic titles and were known by the teacher and by their classmates to like fantasy. Others would be unwilling to read fantasy. One of the changes seen over the course of the school year was the number of fantasy titles read in the class with increased interest in fantasy developing in the spring. Fantasy readers at first tended to be those less attuned to the social network of the class. Later in the year, fantasy titles were recommended and passed around in ways similar to realistic fiction titles.

Pliable Readers. The teacher categorized pliable readers as those readers most willing to read anything recommended by the teacher. This included some of both the most able readers and the less able. Frequently students asked the teacher to recommend a good book with such qualifiers as "one about animals," or "like the one I just finished". Others simply asked for suggestions. Lois spent many minutes each day helping some children select books. To others, she simply said "I think you'll like this", and handed them the book.

-Of the two most voracious readers in the class, Leah is the more pliable. She frequently asks for "new" books or "different" books. Leah willingly read the 1980 Newbery winner Jacob Have I Loved (Paterson) while no one else will touch it.

-Cary asks for a book and Lois gives him The Cay (Taylor). Although he finds it difficult initially, he continues to read it because Lois says "it will take a little getting into." Cary later shares the book with the group and warns "It starts a little slow but it's good once you get into it."

-Margie takes The Fledgling (Langdon) solely on Lois' recommendation that she'd like it because it is a fantasy.
If pliable readers could also be described as those readers who do not have well-developed preferences, then many other readers would form this category. Many of the readers in the fall approached the teacher for recommendations even though they might not follow them. Many less able and even eager readers who read one or two books a month spent time casting about for a genre, author, type or style of book they liked and would finish. However, when the networks in the class jelled somewhat, these students turned to their classmates for ideas as well as, or instead of, to the teacher.

Other Ways of Categorizing Readers. At the beginning of the school year, some children readily engaged in reading during SSR while others did not. These others had difficulty finding books they liked, difficulty in staying with choices, and difficulty in expressing what they had read to the rest of the class. Some readers in the classroom might be categorized then as catalysts, others as detached from reading. In addition, readers might also be categorized by the number of books they read during the course of the year. This latter category, however, is a deceptive one if used in other than a descriptive sense.

Catalysts. Those children who came readily to books often did so privately or with delight shared with a few friends. The end of the day sharing became a time in which children could share enjoyment of "good books" in a wider arena. Several children were adept at involving others in their narrative and were known to the teacher as catalysts or to the children as "good recommenders."

-Cary reads most of the books by Betsy Byars. Later, Casey is asking which Byars book she should read. "Ask Cary," says Barb. "He's read 'em all."
-During sharing at the end of the day, the teacher often calls on Mitty who also frequently volunteers. Today Mitty retells a funny part of *Anything for a Friend* (Conford), a "worm wrestling" sequence. She and the class are laughing so hard that she can't continue for several seconds. Others ask if they can read it when she is done.

-Barb frequently updates the class as she reads *Hail, Hail Camp Timberwood* (Conford). Her descriptions and retellings are animated and enthusiastic. The book later is read by over half the class.

-Joe frequently hoards books in his desk to read next so he won't be without a book. He becomes known to many boys as a source of good recommendations and an expert on the books by Alfred Slote.

-Cara is struggling to retell good parts of a book. Nathan says "Let Cary tell it. He tells it better."

-Cary finishes *Searching for Shona* (Anderson) before lunch. After lunch as children return to the classroom, he accosts several saying to each "Have you read this book yet? It's a great book!"

Catalysts may be avid readers, ones who become involved quickly with a book or ones who become involved deeply with what they are reading. On the other hand, they may also be enthusiastic talkers who can elicit the class interest more easily than others. Of the two most avid girl readers in the classroom, Tammy was a more vocal recommender. She frequently volunteered "good books" during sharing. Leah, regarded by the class as the "best" reader because she had read the greatest number of books, was an infrequent volunteer during book sharing. Lois often called on her to talk about a "new book" in the classroom which she had read. Leah's reading choices were observed by various members in the group, however. Students often said "Leah's read it" as if this put a stamp of approval on a book.
Cary looked to the teacher as one of the best recommenders, then "Tammy or Leah because they've read so many books; they might have an idea." When asked if he recommended books to anyone, Cary answered "No, not really. Sometimes I hear someone asking about what's good and I say something. But people don't come to me."

When asked who are good recommenders in the class, Barb said "Well, Cary always recommends a good book. And Mitty is pretty good at that. And Mrs. Monaghan finds ones I like. And Peg. Really a bunch of people. Tom - he finds a lot of funny books so he'll find a book I like most of the time." Barb goes down the list of books she's read since March pointing out eight books recommended by Cary.

Tammy says "I'd say Leah is the one who usually recommends good books." She tells of seeing Leah carrying Petals in the Wind (Andrews) to school and wanting desperately to read it. "I don't know why because I'd never seen the book. I just said "I want to read that." I couldn't believe myself after I'd said it!"

This is not to say that the other children were not constantly inserting new books into the classroom context by recommending other titles. However, the books which the catalytic readers inserted often permeated the classroom within several months.

Detached Readers. By contrast to catalysts, detached readers found it difficult to choose books and were unaware of what was being recommended. They often did not finish what they chose to start. If they became interested in a book, they found it difficult to speak coherently or interestingly about what they'd read. Because they were not involved in what they were reading, these readers often provided much of the classroom distraction during reading periods.

Lenny "holds" The Cartoonist (Byars) for most of November. This is a teacher term for students who simply sit during SSR and look around, camouflaged by an open book. He creates a diversion from reading for others near him.
-Bill returns from an extended trip taken during early spring. He records no books completed in April, May or June. Usually during SSR he looks at the book shelves, starts various titles, or looks at non-fiction. The teacher says "this spring, he has looked at the shelves more than anyone this year. He just can't seem to find a book now that suits him."

-During a day when children have been particularly restless, six children are on the couch all reading contemporary realistic fiction. There is much whispering, poking and restlessness. It appears that five of the six do no reading for twenty minutes. The sixth turns pages but keeps an eye on the others. Several reminders from the teacher that "this is a reading time" produce little results. The teacher moves two children to their desks.

Being attached or detached to books was not a year long description of any student. But all readers who could have been categorized as frequently detached readers (including two who went to the special reading teacher each day) were attached at some point in the year to books that captured them.

-Lenny discovered The Pinballs (Byars) in March and this became his example for and entry into all class discussions about books in general. In April, he and Jack read two copies of Superfudge (Blume) keeping track of who was on what page. Frequently, they were in the loft side by side. Superfudge took all of April for him to complete. In May, however, Lenny read voraciously through highly recommended titles such as My Robot Buddy (Slote), The Hoboken Chicken Emergency (Pinkwater), I, Trissy (Mazer) and The Chocolate Touch (Catling).

-Tom reads indifferently through the fall, choosing easy titles or non-fiction. In the winter he begins to pick up speed and becomes an ardent recommender of Judy Blume's and Betsy Byars' books. In April, when the newest Betsy Byars book, The Cybil War, comes into the class, Tom gets it from the library. His mother tells the teacher "This is the first year we've ever had to pull him away from a book before."
Will records six titles in the first four months of school, such as Fighting Gear of World War II (Colby), Greek Myths (Coolidge) and Superfudge (Blume). In February, however, Trouble River (Byars), The TV Kid (Byars) and Escape from Warsaw (Serraillier) (a book read and discussed by small group with the teacher), start him reading again. In the next four months, he reads twenty-two books and becomes one of the most vocal participants in book sharing.

Linda records an average of four books per month during the fall. In the next three months she reads one book per month. While the class generally increases number of books read in spring, then Linda reads four books in three months. Most of her time during SSR in spring is spent starting numerous books.

It may be that being detached from a book is not so much a quality of the reader but a product of other causes. Factors which create detached readers may be ones such as generally distracting movement in the classroom, a chain of several dissatisfying book choices or a detachment from the classroom in general (there were more readers "at sea" in the fall than in the spring when the class had jelled; people returning late from vacation or about to leave early were often distracted). Changes in the classroom, such as a substitute teacher or a new student teacher, produced general detachment to tasks at hand including reading. And, as one child said, "Sometimes I just don't feel like reading."

Number of Books Read. In the course of a school year, twenty-five children reported reading 1083 books. The number must be considered an approximation because several children did not list all that they had read or an occasional child listed a single book twice. In nine months, individual reading totals varied from 23 to 122 books completed. If totals were taken monthly those children who read the
fewest books would vary. Quantity alone, however, did not reveal the quality of books read or the quality of thought, satisfaction or engagement those books generated in the reader.

There was little competition in the room for greatest total number of books read. The top three totals at the year's end were 122, 82, and 69, a great number which most accepted as untouchable). However, children seemed to set personal goals and were satisfied with meeting these.

-Sam records Frankenstein Moved in on the Fourth Floor (Levy) in his log for April. He says to himself with great satisfaction, "That's three books for this month."

-Sherry says, "I read five books over Thanksgiving. All I did was read."

-Amy writes in her journal in May "In this week I have read The Cybil War (Byars) and I, Trissy (Mazer). I think I have improved in reading (at least a little) since I read them in two days."

-In February Joe writes in his journal, "I've read 35 books this year and 14 this month." ("Amazing!" the teacher writes back.)

-Throughout the year Joan does not mention in her journal how many books she has read. Suddenly in May, she begins to note a surge in her own reading week by week. "So far this month I have read three books - Misty and Me (Girion), The Hoboken Chicken Emergency (Pinkwater), and Gabriel (Doty)."

Many of the most thoughtful observations or generalizations were made by students who had read a book which moved them in some way. Some children gave time to more demanding books rather than searching for "easy" books to add to their monthly totals.

-In May, Sam reads The Chocolate Touch (Catling), a "fast and easy" book. He then tackles Where the Red Fern Grows (Rawls). Of that he states,
"I'm reading more serious books like that. It's sad. It's great. It's about this boy and his two dogs. It's really written good and I liked it." When asked what he meant by "written good" Sam defines it: "Well, the plot's good and it describes a lot. It describes what their face is like when something happens and the way people respond in time." He describes a fight and quotes from memory a description of the boy "reaching back his hand behind him and when his fist came, it had a lot of power."

-Tammy points out that in March she read fewer books than she usually does because she'd been reading popular adult fiction: Flowers in the Attic (Andrews), Petals in the Wind (Andrews) and Lisa, Bright and Dark (Neufeld), books which were "harder than what I usually read."

Children rated their own improvement as readers according to how many more books they read. But they also acknowledged as growth the reading of books with greater depth, longer books, or books with an intended older audience as well. The teacher sought to acknowledge any signs of growth the students saw in themselves. However, she also acknowledged and supported other signs of growth, such as a child's branching out into other genres, a particularly thoughtful statement about a book, an attempt at generalization and so forth. (See What the Teacher Seeks to Build with Readers, Chapter IV).

In summary, readers might be categorized in a number of ways. These categories, although descriptive, suggest that even within each category, different signs of growth and change throughout the year can be noted and these changes have many implications for teachers and the evaluation of readers (See Chapter VI). These categories of readers were not rigidly defined nor could any student be described wholly in terms of one category. Rather, the categories were ways of marking or describing similar reader behaviors in this classroom. No
doubt other observers would have seen different patterns in the classroom but these ten categories were seen as one helpful way of describing readers and change in this fifth and sixth grade classroom.

How Children Choose Books

Children in this classroom chose books for a variety of reasons, some which were explicitly stated and some which seemed to operate unconsciously or tacitly. By far, the greatest influence on choice of most of the readers in this classroom was the influence of someone else's recommendation. Children also selected a book because it was about a particular topic or was of a particular type, in which case the endorsement of someone else was an extra bonus.

Children in this classroom appeared to choose books to read by considering:

1. Recommendation of peers, teachers, and other adults
2. What the teacher assigned
3. Prior experience with a book
4. Preference for a particular type, genre, or subject
5. The author of the book
6. What was immediately available in the classroom
7. The book's appearance

Considering Recommendations

Influence of Peers. Children commented frequently upon the choices of each other and at the mention of a title which someone had read, there was often a chorus of "That's so good" and "I read that." This personal testimony counted as powerful evidence for the child considering something to read that a particular book would prove satisfying. Children were quite candid about the influence of peers on their decisions to read a book.
-Joan says in discussion The Pinballs (Byars) that the reason she read it was that "everyone else in the class has read it and so I figured I ought to."

-Kelly asks for help in choosing a book from the school library shelves. When I ask her what sort of book she likes, she answers unhesitatingly, "Oh, I usually read whatever Tammy reads."

-Joe reads The Green Futures of Tycho (Sleator) because it "sounded good. Sherry read it. So did Tom."

-Tammy who serves as recommender to Kelly also listens to what others say is good. Leah recommends 18 of the last 38 books Tammy has read.

-Four fifth grade boys form a group and agree to read four books since one usually likes what another likes.

-Barb says "I like it when people recommend books to me because a lot of people will do that - just look in the reading center and say 'Oh! A good book is ___' and show it to me. I like that because it's easier for me because you don't have to search through everything and most of my friends like the same type of books I like. And so, if they find a book, I'll believe them and I'll try it. Normally, I like them - Every book that somebody's recommended to me I like except for Blackbriar (Sleator)."

Other peer influences were less straightforwardly reported but were nonetheless operative. Certain pairs or groups influenced each other's choices. Children read the same titles or certain children follow each other through a series of titles either immediately or over a time.

-Cary and Evan are deskmates and friends through fall quarter. Cary reads Robert Benjamin and the Great Blue Dog Book (Grise) in September; Evan reads it in October. Evan read Lizard Music (Pinkwater) last year; Cary reads it in October. Cary reads The Magic Moscow (Pinkwater) in October, Evan, in November. Both boys join the group discussion of Island of the Blue Dolphins (O'Dell). Later in the winter, the two friends
have a falling out and no longer read the same titles.

-In October, Kelly reads *The Pinballs* (Byars) which Tammy had read in September. In November, both girls read *Hail, Hail, Camp Timberwood* (Conford) and join the same book group to discuss *The Lion, The Witch and the Wardrobe* (Lewis). Kelly reads *I Know What You Did Last Summer* (Duncan) which Tammy read in September. Clearly, Kelly is accurate in her assessment of Tammy's influence on her choices.

-Calvin, Bill, Sam and James, all fifth grade boys, read non-fiction together. In pairs, or a threesome, they study the line drawings of David Macauley in *Unbuilding* to see where the jokes are. They talk their ways through *Our Space Age Jets* (Colby) and *Monsters of the Sea* (Lindsay). They sit on the couch reading from a large book of *World War II Warships* (Lyon). In spring, they all agree to read *My Robot Buddy* (Slote), *The Boy Who Spoke Chimp* (Yolan) and two others.

-Kelly picks up *A Stranger Came Ashore* (Hunter) which Lois and Evan recommended, but she tells me "Leah said it wasn't very good so I didn't read it." Tammy, overhearing, disagrees. "She told me it was good."

-Joe recommends *All the Money in the World* (Levitin) to the class and a week later, Evan takes it off the shelf. When asked why he choose it, he says "because Joe said it was good."

-By the year's end, all but two children have read *Blume's Superfudge*, a book introduced into the class in October.

Lois suggested that sixth grade readers had the power to influence fifth graders' choices more strongly than the opposite. Some responses of the children supported this.

-Joan, a fifth grader, reports that she will read *All Things Wise and Wonderful* (Herriot). When I suggest that this is an unusual choice, she retorts "Why not? Leah read it, you know." Leah is a prolific sixth grade reader.
-Children who most frequently share books at the end of the day and who offer responses most frequently are the sixth graders.

In fact, there were certain key recommendants in the classroom (see Catalysts) who influenced a chain of choice, such as Barb.

- Barb reads Hail, Hail Camp Timberwood (Conford), a new book introduced into the classroom in September. By December, four people have read the book: Tammy, Kelly, Sherry, and Leah.

Lois pointed out that the recommendation of others in the class was the prime influence on choice.

- They keep their ears tuned to what others say about books. That's probably the most important source for them to know what's a good book: each other. They look to me, too, because they know I'm familiar with the books and can pick out a few good ones as time goes by because I can look at their interests.

Influence of the Teacher. Lois influenced children's reading choices in many ways, both indirectly and directly. She talked about books to the whole group, briefly describing plots or characters or summarizing themes in the book. She talked about books in groups or categories such as books which take place in World War II, the Depression, Germany or the American Revolution. She mentioned books by a single author. She drew together humorous books or books in which a character showed courage in some way. Thus children who liked a book out of that category had a source for selecting a chain of reading. Children browsed through what Lois had talked about and often these books were separated for a time from the rest of the collection to make them easier to find.

Lois frequently influenced one student's choices in the hopes of letting that student's enthusiasm entice others to read.
Lois gives Amy The Trouble with Explosives (Kelley) which she reads part way through before she talks about it with the group early in November. Lois asks her to talk a little bit about "what you are reading." By the end of the next month, three other girls have read the book.

Lois encourages Cary to read The Cay (Taylor) as an alternative to the humorous books he has been reading. She lets him talk about it several times at end-of-the-day sharing times. Cary's enthusiasm does not entice any other readers to the book. Several remember the title when Lois mentions it in connection with World War II books several months later, however.

Casey, a less able reader, has difficulty finding books she can finish. Lois finds The Trouble with Magic (Chew) which Casey reads and asks for another one like it. Later, Lois recommends a book by Edward Eager, and Casey asks for another one by him. For three months, Casey reads and records solely books recommended by Lois.

Lois indirectly influenced many readers by her own enthusiasm for what they found. She laughed with them when they recounted a funny incident in the story. She let them talk about what they were reading and was able to listen to accounts of the same story several times without giving the appearance of ever having heard it before. It was obvious to the class that Lois valued reading and that she valued their opinions. This support for what the readers were already doing probably gave her recommendations much more power because children saw her as their advocate. As Lois said, "I don't want to be intrusive; I want to be helpful."

Lois directly influenced readers by suggesting titles to them when they said that they "need another book." She stood with them at the book shelf pulling books out and saying things about the book which helped a child decide. She stopped, mid-description of a title, to
say to another child, "I think you'd like this one, Sam" or she asked one child to tell another privately about a book he had just finished.

Another direct influence on reader choices were the assignments which Lois provided. For instance, she asked everyone to read a piece of historical fiction set in the Revolutionary War period and then again, set in the Depression/World War II period. Most students complied and for many, it was the only historical fiction they read this year. She asked students to choose, from among six titles, a book which they agreed to read and discuss in a group. She assigned the fifth graders to two small groups to work on Helen Keller's Teacher (Davidson) or Robinson Crusoe (Defoe) while the sixth graders were in camp. These demands were met willingly and for several children the assignment provided some of the few fiction titles read in the sea of nonfiction they were reading early in the year.

For several people, the book groups assignment provided impetus to seek out other similar titles in a type of "ripple effect."

-Calvin reads The Lion, The Witch and The Wardrobe (Lewis) in a book group and then reads The Voyage of the Dawn Treader (Lewis) as his next selection.

-The student teacher has a small group mini-course on poetry and for several days after the group discussion and activity, children read and share poetry in the classroom.

-As a part of the many recommended titles, Lois talked about Search for Shona (Anderson) a week ago. Gary reads his choice of the recommended books, Escape to Warsaw (Serraillier) and is looking for another book. After trying two titles, he settles on Search for Shona from the same group of books Lois has recommended. When asked why he chose it, Gary says "Because Mrs. Monaghan recommended it and I thought it would
be good." He follows this with Journey to America (Levitin) from the same group.

Influence of Other Adults. Other adults, in the classroom and outside its walls, influenced children's choices of what they read. Parents, librarians in many settings, siblings, student teachers and the researcher all had some effect on what children chose to read.

- The school librarian gives four copies of the same book of short stories on occult subjects to four girls. They sit on the couch and read together after library period.

- James reports that he gets ideas on what to read from his mother and older sister. He says he reads Madeleine L'Engle books because his mother gave them to him.

- Leah asks me for a good book to read. I pull off the shelves The House of Dies Drear (Hamilton) saying only that it is a mystery and that I liked it when I read it. Leah reads and recommends it and several other girls read it in the following months.

- I bring in The Riddlemaster of Hed (McKillip) for Nathan who reads it, asks for the second in the series, and when I can't produce the third book of the trilogy, goes to the bookstore and buys the third one. He asks me if I want to buy it from him when he's done reading it.

Some children sought to please themselves as readers but for adults they liked or wished to be liked by, these children read or pretended to read books which they might not ordinarily have chosen.

- Kelly struggles to keep Autumn Street (Lowry) because I have given it to her. After keeping it at her desk for a week, she gives it back to me without reading it, saying "I'm done with this now."

On the other hand, some readers with a firmer sense of what they liked above what adults recommended to them felt more free to reject unsuitable recommendations.
-Leah returns *A Traveller in Time* (Uttley) to me saying "I just couldn't get into it."

-Lois says that she cannot interest Nathan in books by John Christopher. "I tried but he just wouldn't have it."

Parents influenced the reading choices of children in various ways.

-Leah is challenged by her father to read a three-volume history text which she does each day during silent reading. Cary notices the atypical reading matter saying sarcastically "The sound real good." Leah mocks the titles. "Yeah! 'Betsy is Born,' 'Betsy Grows Up,' 'Betsy Moves Forward'" substituting an imaginary girl's name for "America" in the three titles.

-Joan announces that her mother wants her to read more challenging books. Later, she tells the teacher "I'm reading Wuthering Heights (Bronte). My favorite book is *The Scarlet Letter* (Hawthorne)." Neither of the books appear on her reading records for the year.

-Several children list *Moby Dick* (Melville) on their reading records and Cary explains that they are really "Big Little Books," condensed and illustrated versions of the classic novel. "My parents bought it for me. It goes real fast because the pages are smaller."

While some parents tried to influence children's choices of reading matter toward classics or more "adult" material, many must have generally influenced children's reading simply by being listeners. Children frequently began statements by saying "Last night I was telling my mother about the part where...", "My dad asked me what I was laughing about..."

Some parents must have been aware of their children's reading, as well, since many reported to the teacher various anecdotes about their child and books. Parents reported in several instances that they noticed in their child a new eagerness to read.

The adult influence was powerful but for most children, peer influence was still the strongest motivator. Adults might serve to validate
or reaffirm children's choices. They might serve as connections between one child's choice and another's interests. They might be the initiators of titles in the classroom and the providers of books to read, but it was still the child reader whose voice was heard most readily by other child readers. No matter what an adult recommended, it was still the child who ultimately selected what he would read, finish, and recall with pleasure.

Prior Experience with a Book as Influence on Choice

Many readers acknowledged as "good" the books their former teachers had read to them. Readers referred, too, to what they had read last year and to books they recalled from past years as "good." When readers were looking for books to read, they often chose one with which they had had some prior experience. This was more often the case with less able readers than it was with more able readers.

- In reviewing approximately twenty-five titles she has read by February, Joan notes that seven titles are ones she's read before. Charlotte's Web (White) "I've read about five times." Tales of a Fourth Grade Nothing (Blume) she has read two years ago "over a period of two months. The second time I read it in a day. It was just sitting around." She adds that the second reading is different from the first in that she may just read the conversation parts the second time around.

- Bill looks for something to read and selects a paperback but puts it back and chooses another book because he remembers someone read it last year and liked it.

- Three readers choose Tuck Everlasting (Babbit) to read in September because their previous teacher read it aloud.

- Peg brings The Matchlock Gun (Edmonds) from the library. Evan says from across the room "That's a great book. I read it." He read it at least two years ago. Someone else adds, "Mrs. Harbert read it to us in second grade."
Just as readers labeling a book "good" stamped that book as an "approved" book in the classroom, books which were read by many children had accretions of approval surrounding them. Some books were "musts" in this classroom.

- Joan says that since everyone has read The Pinballs (Byars) she thought she ought to, too. When Lois asks how many people have read this, about ten people raise their hands.

- When Judy Blume's Superfudge comes into the classroom in the fall, so many people want to read it that a sign-up sheet is pasted to the front of the book. Most of the class is familiar with or have read Tales of a Fourth Grade Nothing (Blume).

- Other tried-and-true books such as James and the Giant Peach (Dahl), Tales of a Fourth Grade Nothing (Blume), How to Eat Fried Worms (Rockwell) and other Blume, Cleary, or Byars books are seen by children for several years. That is, they are read by some readers as early as third grade and are read by others throughout fourth, fifth, and sixth grades. Thus, when a child reads one of those books and mentions it to the group, the rest chorus from their own past histories, "I've read that" or "That's really funny."

- At the end of the school year in May the teacher capitalizes on the children's repeated recommendations and the class generates a list of "Books You Should Read Before You Leave Elementary School."

Influences of Genre, Content or Type

Children seeking advice from someone about what to read often tried to convey information about what type of books they liked. The categories children gave to books were often idiosyncratic or particular to the children but not ones usually recognized by adults. Children referred, for example to weird, different, or good books. Frequent categories of books were ones which referred in some way to subject matter or content.
"If it's a horse book, Leah will probably like it," says Tammy.

Joan says she likes animal books and looks at titles with animals on the covers. I give her Puddums, The Cathcart's Orange Cat (Parker). Another student passing by says "How come you always read cat books?"

Bill asks the teacher for some other talking animal books like Bunnicula (Howe).

Tammy says she likes books about "girls with problems, a variety of problems;" adding of animal stories, "I don't like those, I'll tell you right now. I always want the dog and my mom says 'no, we already have a dog'."

Another category children assigned to books was funny books. Children often recommended a funny title to each other which could mean various things. For instance, the situations might be funny, as in books by Daniel M. Pinkwater whose books most students knew. Sometimes the "way characters said things" was funny, such as Carlie in The Pinballs (Byars), or Fudgie in Superfudge (Blume).

During the year, children describe so many books as funny that the teacher asks them to generate a list of funny books and to tell the group why they are funny. Rather than generalize about how books are funny children prefer to recount funny parts in books. Twelve titles are mentioned and remembered in less than ten minutes.

Children's difficulty in saying how or why the book was funny was an example of the way in which children appear to know what they mean by funny, weird or different. However, if a confused adult probed as to why a particular book could be categorized as weird, a child might reply as did Kim "I don't know. It just is."

Children's own genre categories for books included some which are generally accepted by adults, such as fiction, non-fiction, fantasy,
mystery or historical fiction. However, other categories were a confusion to some as in the case of fantasy.

-"I like fantasy and I like fiction," says Nathan.

-Bill calls Robinson Crusoe (Defoe) a fantasy. He also calls realistic fiction such as Summer of Fear (Duncan) and The Westing Game (Raskin) fantasies because "you can phantasize in them. It's like you feel like you're there."

-Bill reports he likes fiction and non-fiction suggesting he does not like other types of books.

-The teacher reads aloud The Wolves of Willoughby Chase (Aiken) which, because it is melodramatic, has many highly improbable but not strictly impossible situations in the story. She refers to it as a fantasy and children agree.

Again, the distinctions did not seem to be a problem to children themselves who knew what they meant. They recommended books to each other by these genre categories and were aware of each others' preferences for genre.

-Lois holds up a "new fantasy." "Give it to Nathan," says a voice.

-Tammy is thumbing through a box of books. She rejects a book. When asked why, she says "I don't like fantasies." But she suggests Margie might read it.

Whether children liked a book and would recommend a book often depended on the child's subjective rating of the book as exciting or boring.

-Mitty speaks about her love of Judy Blume books because "something funny is happening all the time. Like, in some books that I've read, nothing happens. Nothing exciting."

-Cary reads the first chapter of The Stones (Hickman) while trying to choose the next book to read. He reads the first chapter but selects another book because "that one was kind of slow."
- Tammy, Linda, and Peg all agree that *The Cry of the Crow* (George) is much better than *The Witch of Blackbird Pond* (Speare) because it is not boring. In *Witch of Blackbird Pond* "you have to listen to all these details. Like she takes three little steps this way. It's so boring."

-Joe described his least favorite book read aloud as *Walk the World's Rim* (Baker) because "it got boring and it just wasn't a good book."

Closely related to this description of books as boring/exciting was the categories of adventurous books. Some children referred to exciting books as adventurous.

-Sam explains that *The Skin-Diving Mystery* (Adrian) and the nonfiction *Outdoor Survival* (Platt) are "adventure books" because they contain information. He then says *Where the Red Fern Grows* (Rawls) "is an adventure, too. He stays around in the same area. He's not adventuring to one place but he stays around and does adventuring things."

Children's descriptors were often confusing to the adult whose categories were defined differently. In an effort to bridge the gap, children explained what they were looking for by defining a book in terms of another. It was often not clear to the teacher or to the interviewer early in the year what aspect of the book the child was referring to when she or he asked for "another one just like this." Children were sometimes a greater help to each other in finding similar books than were adults.

**Influence of Author on Reader Choice**

During the year, a frequent teacher response to the dilemma of finding a child "another book just like this" was to find him or her another book by the same author. Many students began to group books by author and to select books based on their knowledge of author reputation.
- Sam, Bill and Nathan are trying to rank various picture and chapter books. As they discuss, Sam says "Well, if you're talking about drawers, David Macauley books are the best. He's the best."

- Christy asks Lois if there are any more Zilpha K. Snyder books in the library because she's read several and wants to read another one.

- Cara says she's reading a "Beverly Cleary book."

- Tammy sits with her list of books read and says "I like books by Lois Duncan, and Betsy Byars, and I love Hila Colman. And I'll read anything Ellen Conford writes."

- Mitty says she, like so many other readers in this class, prefers and enjoys Judy Blume's books. Joan asks me if I know another author "who's up there with Judy Blume. She writes real good books."

- Cary says he chooses books most of the time by author. "If I recognize the author, I know it's going to be good. But when I don't see any authors that sound familiar, I think of what people have said. Like Joe likes Alfred Slote so he got me reading My Robot Buddy and C.O.L.A.R."

Some students were loyal to certain authors. Some, in addition, developed an expertise recognized by the teacher and other children as well.

- Cary and Evan have read between them six books by Daniel M. Pinkwater. When someone asks for a funny Pinkwater book, the teacher suggests they ask Cary which one he thought was funniest.

- In February Christy discovers Veronica Ganz (Sachs). In the next three months, ten of the twenty-five books she reads are by Sachs. Initially, children who have read other books by Sachs suggests these to Christy. Eventually, it is Christy who is regarded as the Sachs expert.

- All children have read at least one book by Judy Blume this year. Superfudge is read by all but two children in nine months. Children refer to the title as "the new Judy Blume book."
Joe reads all the books by Alfred Slote. When other boys discover C.O.L.A.R. (Slote), Joe tells them to read My Robot Buddy which comes before. Cary says that Joe "got me started on books by Alfred Slote."

Series books had the advantage of supplying repeated satisfactory experiences with books and many series were represented in the choices children made of what to read during silent reading.

- Kelly reads three "Trixie Belden" books in a row in September before moving to other titles. Seven of twenty-five titles listed by Margie are from this series.

- James reads two "Danny Dunn" books in the fall to follow the one he read in the summer. He states that in each one "a scientist invents different things and Danny Dunn gets into a lot of trouble."

- Linda has just finished Matthew Looney's Invasion of the Earth (Beatty) and asks Lois if there are any more of these because she needs another book.

- Tammy says "One time I was sick last year and I read seventeen Nancy Drews in two weeks." She later adds that she has now read them all. "It took me a year. Exactly."

- A group of sixth grade girls pass back and forth copies of E.W. Hildick's mysteries such as The Case of the Nervous Newsboy and The Case of the Phantom Frog. They are known as good books if you want something "short and easy to get into."

- Amy reads Sobol's "Encyclopedia Brown" mysteries because "I like trying to figure them out. They're sort of spare time books. I'd usually pick them up between books."

- Peg reads several "Dorrie" books (Coombs) during the year. "I read almost every single one. I just wanted to see if I could read the whole series. I just think they're fun. She's always into some trouble."

One child explained the appeal of books in a series in terms of being able to choose books with settings, characters or situations in which he could be involved more deeply over a longer time period.
Nathan likes to read several books in series "because they have more detail. Usually there's so much more of it and you can stay with it a long time because it takes a while to read it. (Interviewer: You don't have to keep looking for a book every two days?) I don't like two-day books. Sometimes they're interesting but then they're over and then they're no fun."

Although every reader in the classroom had chosen to read at least two books by a single author, some children remained unaware or unconcerned about authorship of books.

Will seldom lists authors on his reading records. In May, his "best month" of reading, he lists no authors on the eleven books he reads.

Linda reads Journey to America (Levitin). Although there are numerous copies of the book in the classroom she writes "don't know" in the column provided for authors on the monthly reading records.

Sam has not listed authors on many of the books he has read. "Well, I forget their names or I can't find the book. Actually I just remember the titles. Authors aren't important to me."

At the year's end, children were more familiar with author's names and when one child talked about a book by a particular author, other children could mention other titles by that author. Many like Tammy were probably able to say

-I've been getting more into authors. Like if I find a book I really like, I'll try to read all of them by her. Like Hila Colman or Ellen Conford.

Acceptable comments on another reader's sharing were to ask, for example, "Who wrote that?", "Is that by the guy who wrote Lizard Music?" or "Didn't she write The Truth About Mary Rose?" In this way, children developed their grouping of books according to particular authors and often read books by single authors in loose sequence. Knowledge of
authors and author reputation in the class became an increasingly important factor in children's book choice.

**Influence of Length on Book Choice**

Children evaluated "short" books differently. Short books were described as books with fewer pages, bigger print, pictures or some content which suggested they were the reading matter of younger children. Nevertheless, many children read short books for various reasons. On the one hand, children saw short books as lesser fare.

- Two fifth graders, Bill and Sam, are ranking books which the teacher has read aloud in the first five months of school. They are comparing two books by Jean George, a chapter book called *Cry of the Crow* and a 30-page non-fiction picture book, *The Wounded Wolf*. They decide *Crow* should go before *Wolf*: "It's a little better because it's a longer story and it's more detailed."

- Evan is talking with me about two William Steig books, *Dominic* and *The Real Thief*. He describes *Thief* as "real short, only about 50 pages, and *Dominic* is about 150 pages." I ask if he prefers one of these over the other. "Yeah, probably *Dominic* because this one (Thief) is too short. It should have been longer."

- When asked if she'd read any books that were not as good as others, Peg picks out two illustrated short historical fiction titles, *Squanto* (Graff) and *The Matchlock Gun* (Edmonds). "These were short...but they were good. Maybe there aren't any I don't like."

- Cary is discussing books by Daniel Pinkwater and singles out *The Magic Moscow* saying "it isn't as good as the other ones. It should have been longer."

- Tom and Will are ranking books read aloud. They place *The First Two Lives of Lukas-Kasha* (Alexander), a chapter book, above *Hawk I'm Your Brother* (Baylor), a picture book, even after a long discussion on how beautiful and detailed Hawk's pictures are "because *Lukas-Kasha* is, like, longer. Yeah."
-Joan apologizes to the teacher in her weekly journal because she was reading a fairy tale collection. The teacher reassures her that she likes to read fairy tales sometimes, too.

On the other hand, shorter books such as poetry collections, some picture books, joke books, books of records, and other less dense chapter books, all had a place in the classroom choice.

-Kelly rejects Words by Heart (Sebestyen) because it looks too long and she wants a shorter book. No one has read this book yet and Kelly, who depends heavily on the influence of others when she decides what to read, is unwilling to commit herself without a peer recommendation.

-Poetry books are placed in the classroom by the student teacher as part of a small group project. Others in the class pick up a poetry book during SSR and read selections to each other and to themselves.

-Leah and Kelly look for "short books" to read together during SSR. They choose a short illustrated chapter book - Puddums, The Cathcart's Orange Cat (Parker), a picture book - Bread and Jam for Frances (Hoban), and a poetry collection, and read together on the couch for half an hour.

-Peg asks the teacher for a short book to read while she is waiting for Mama (Hopkins) to be finished by Casey. She reads The Magic Moscow (Pinkwater) while waiting.

-Leah, one of the strongest readers in the class, reads difficult or more adult fiction such as Flowers in the Attic (Andrews), Flowers for Algernon (Keyes), or All Creatures Wise and Wonderful (Herriot) and follows them with slight titles such as Macaroon (Cunningham).

Students chose shorter books for a variety of reasons. Shorter books often had the advantage of being less demanding; children could read them without committing themselves to a long siege upon a book. Short books helped pass the time after one had read a powerful, involving, or moving book, and they served as a kind of "time out." Short books provided an intimate way of reading with a friend that did
not demand two readers of equal abilities. Also, short books allowed
the reader to read bits and pieces while keeping an eye on what the
rest of the class was doing. A short book provided camouflage for
readers who were marking time, either because they were not ready to
get involved in another book, or because they wished to appear to be
reading but were unwilling or unable to get into a more demanding text.

For some readers, hearing a shorter book read aloud had greater
advantage, as well. Two sixth grade girls ranked second the shortest
chapter book which the teacher read aloud, The Secret Cave (Bishop).
Their discussion revealed a different attitude toward shorter books.

Mitty: The Secret Cave was easier to listen to be-
cause she (the teacher) didn't read it for
that long. It was kind of short.
Kelly: It didn't take very long. She read a lot in
one day because it really didn't take long.
She really got through a lot of story in one
day.
Observer: Does it make a difference when you listen?
Mitty: She might not read very much but it seems
like she's read a lot of the story since it's
a shorter book.
Observer: Is it generally easier or harder to listen
to a longer book?
Mitty and Kelly, simultaneously: Harder!
Mitty: 'Cause it keeps on going and going and going,
going!

Picture books were not rejected by this class because of their
"short" or "easy" appearance. Numerous opportunities existed for the
group to handle picture books such as with their kindergarten "buddies,"
in conjunction with other work in the classroom, as books designed
"for the older reader" or for some other purpose.

-Students read individually to a kindergarten "buddy"
onece every few weeks. The buddy brings in a picture
book or the older student selects one and the two
read together for ten minutes.
- Caldecott nominees for the current year are brought into the classroom and displayed in the book area. The children spend SSR time reading these and later discuss which ones might win and why. The books remain in the classroom for a week during which time many students read them until the novelty wears off.

- The school coordinator visits the classroom and shows and talks about two "picture books for older children," Joan of Arc (Boutet de Monvel) and Unbuilding (Macauley). She leaves both books in the classroom and Unbuilding becomes a focal point for children for several weeks after that.

Longer books were seen by some children as too great a risk and by others as more worthy because they were more difficult.

- In pointing out that she read fewer books, in March than in succeeding months, Tammy explains, "Well, I was reading older books, like Flowers for Algernon (Keys), The Amityville Horror (Anson), and Petals in the Wind (Andres). Some of these were over 400 pages!"

- Kelly returns Words by Heart (Sebestyen) saying "it looks too long. Do you have some shorter books I'd like?"

- Joe says "I like books that are at least 130 pages long because you can get more out of it. If its shorter, it only lasts for a little while."

Children understood that because of length some might think a short book was beneath their abilities. However, all children at one point in the year read what others defined as short books for a variety of reasons mentioned. Students indicated an awareness of book length as a factor of choices in various other ways. Many were concerned with reading books "on their own level," a concern of the teacher's as well.

- Peg sees one of the teacher's values as being "that we read grade level books." She elaborates "like if you don't get a book too hard - say high school people should read or you don't get a book that's too young for you, like 'Dorrie' books (Coombs). But I like those - they're good but I wouldn't pick them as my favorite."
In a discussion of books the local library recommended for various grade levels, children were irate over books which were "too easy for sixth grade." "James and the Giant Peach! (Dahl). That's a fourth grade book!" Nathan was more ecumenical: "These are really good books. I've read all of them except Dorrie's Book (Sachs) and The Kelpie's Pearls (Hunter)." Those who have read, Black and Blue Magic (Snyder) agree that it is "not a hard book. It's easy." Will says "I don't think that they should have fifth or sixth grade reading lists. If a person can read it or wants to read it, then that book is for them."

**Influence of Availability and Proximity on Choice**

With the exception of a very few readers, children most frequently chose to read books which were in the classroom collection. Although the class went to the library once every two weeks, and each student brought back a book, the books which were recorded on the monthly reading log were more often titles which existed in the classroom collection. When a child finished a book during SSR, he usually wanted another one immediately. Children frequently asked the teacher "Do you have another one like this one?" or "What should I read next?" They also asked the teacher to help them find a book that someone in class had recommended previously. Thus one opportune moment for influencing another person's choice was at the moment that person had finished reading a book and was casting about for the next book to read.

Frequently, children stood in front of the bookcases either alone or with a friend and pulled books one by one from the shelf to look at them. Other children would offer from the sidelines "Oh, I read that. It's good." "Mitty's read that." Children asked each other what to read next. Frequently, they asked the teacher for suggestions and both would stand at the bookshelves examining titles. The teacher stated
It's really important for kids to have books right at their fingertips. It's amazing how they finish one book and they want another one right now. They want to go on reading. They don't want to walk over to the library, which is about a block away from us, and look at the whole maze of books but they want to be able to pick up one right away.

Some children were particularly receptive to what was available because they thought a long time about what they wished to read. Thus, books displayed in the classroom or mentioned by another reader as "good" were remembered by children several weeks or even months later.

-Cary notices a selection of titles the teacher has gathered with World War II settings. During January and February he reads five from this group.

Since many readers seemed to need to talk about what they were reading as they were reading, it may have been important for those readers to choose books with which others and the teacher were familiar. In this way they would have help with recall during sharing.

-For the first three months of school, Casey reads solely the books which the teacher has suggested from the class collection.

Other readers selected books from a wider range of sources including friends' libraries, the public library and book stores. One reader seemed to prefer books from sources other than the classroom perhaps seeking to set himself off from the group.

A student who knew what she wanted tended to use the library to find another book by a particular author, for instance. But browsers tended to use the class collection.

Another interesting sidelight of children's choices based on availability was the frequency with which children said "I read it because it was there."
- Tammy read *The Hundred Dresses* (Estes) at a friend's house because it was there "and I didn't have anything else to read."

- Mitty talks about a book on wheelchair basketball which her sister got for Christmas. She read it because "there wasn't anything else to read and it looked good."

- Children report reading short or easy books between more demanding choices because they were there.

**Influence of Book Appearance on Choice**

Children spent time looking at book jackets. They would study the cover as if gleaning clues about characters, settings and happenings (see Using Pictures). However, most children also read some part of the text or the inside jacket flap as information to help them accept or reject a book. Occasionally a student would reject a book saying simply "it just didn't look good."

The book's appearance was just a single factor - one of the many which influenced children's choices of reading. As Barb said:

- I look at a book and I read the back of a paperback or the centerfolder (jacket flap) on the hardbound. I'll read the first couple chapters to see if I like it."

When the researcher brought new books into the classroom, in many cases these had not been previously handled by anyone. Some children enjoyed being "first" to read these new books.

- Cary attributes an upswing in the number of titles he'd read per month to "new books in the classroom."

- Christy carefully removes all the paper jackets of any hardbound books she reads. When she finishes she restores the dust jacket to the book. She is the only child in class to do this.

- Nathan says he likes to read what I bring into the classroom because "your books are in much better condition. Usually the ones I choose to read no one else has read so they're still clean."

New, unread books did stand out from the folded, spindled and mutilated copies of the much-read and appreciated paperbacks in the classroom. While the appearance of new books enticed some readers, books which showed evidence of hard use and many readings bore silent testimony to the popularity of the older titles.

**Influence of Assignments on Choice**

The teacher suggested to the class that "about a book per week was a good thing to aim for." Some children did push themselves to read four books per month; others read no books in a month or many. This suggestion was merely that - not an assignment. In addition, twice the teacher asked each child to read a book in connection with the social studies theme under study. Many children complied and for most these titles were the only historical fiction titles the child read as reported elsewhere.

The keeping of monthly records seemed to spur a flurry of reading at the end of the month. However, this influenced speed with which children finished choices already made more than it influenced choice although some read one or two "short, easy" books to add ballast to their records.

The assignment of writing a monthly book report did little to influence children's choices directly, but the presence of the mounted and illustrated writing in the room was extra evidence of "good books." Children seldom seemed to read each other's book reports but they were aware of what had been read and who had read it.

As has been stated, none of these factors operated singly in the influencing of children's choice of reading matter. Reasons why
children choose books are based on a complex interaction of factors some of which are not visible or knowable either to the observer or to the children themselves. To see these multiple factors of children's choice in context, it may be helpful to view the path of a single book through the classroom during the school year. In this way, the influence of peer recommendation, extension, availability, content, author and other factors may be seen in context over time.

The Year Long Paths of a Book in the Classroom

While it is helpful to speak of factors which influence children's choices as occurring singly, many intertwining factors influence children's reading choices simultaneously. A long-range factor, such as amount of accrued recommendations, works with an immediate influence upon other factors such as what is available now, or what "sort" of book a reader is searching for. To illustrate how these factors function in concert, it is helpful to look at a single title. The Pinballs by Betsy Byars may be used as an example for tracing a book's path through the classroom during the course of the school year. For many, an awareness of The Pinballs became the basis for discovery of the books by Byars.

At the beginning of the year, six people arrived at school having read The Pinballs last year. In September when Mitty read, talked about, and wrote a September book report on it, the six previous readers commented "That's so good" or "I read it and it was good." By October's end, four more students had read The Pinballs. At several points in the fall, children asked the teacher or me for "other books like that" and the author's name was used as a locator - "Other books by Betsy Byars."
-Joan read The Pinballs in the fall as a departure from reading books she had read previously. She moved into new territory saying she thought she ought to read this "because everyone else had read it."

-Casey moved from three Ruth Chew books in a row to The Pinballs ("I heard it was good.") and followed this with Summer of the Swans, another Byars book.

In January, Tom, a recent convert to reading, spoke enthusiastically about The Pinballs during end-of-the-day sharing. As he recapped the plot, others helped him, supplying names or details when needed.

- Tom explained the title saying, "Carlie thinks they're pinballs because they're always being thrown around like pinballs." He offered this explanation of the title unasked by anyone. Tom's rendition produced agreement that The Pinballs was a "great book."

In February, noticing that Betsy Byars' books were receiving attention by students, Lois asked the class how many books they had read by this author. Based on the list, a display of "Books by Betsy Byars" was created in the loft.

-Evan and Cary gathered all the books in the classroom collection so that multiple copies of others were displayed. On finding a list of all that Byars had written, Cary noted he was "missing one" and went to the library to find The Dancing Camel. By March, he had read all that Byars had written to date.

As a result of the display, many children chose books from this rack to read but few chose Byars books immediately. The display was used intermittently and directly for about four weeks after which it was replaced.

-Casey read other books while leaning against the Byars display. Several times in a week she fingered Goodbye, Chicken Little from the display. Finally, a month later she read it.
The Pinballs was mentioned several times in February in connection with other books. Lois frequently asked children to think of books in categories and children referred to many titles, often including The Pinballs.

-Lois asks children to suggest books in which "people showed courage." "Harvey in Pinballs," says Lenny, "because he has two broken legs." Barb adds "all the kids do because they have to go to a foster home." "So does Thomas J. because the twins are going to die and he has to go to the hospital," says Will.

-During a class discussion led by Lois in which children offered their own choices for "Five Best Books," Margie, Mitty, Casey, Peg and Christy listed The Pinballs as one of their five.

In March, three more readers had finished The Pinballs. Lenny, who found it difficult to get into fiction or to finish what he started, read The Pinballs slowly and absorbedly for several weeks, finished it, and reported in his journal, "I finished my book and it was the best book I ever read. It was Pinballs." In nearly all of the ensuing discussion in which Lois asked children to think of a book in a certain category, Lenny would use The Pinballs as his example. In fact, when he raised his hand two months later one voice said tiredly "He's probably going to say Pinballs again."

In April, surveys conducted by the students frequently used Byars material in their questions: "Who is your favorite author?" (Blume 11, Byars 4 - plus others); "Which of these books have you read?" (Pinballs 18, Summer of the Swans, 13, Good-Bye Chicken Little 8, None 4); and "What's your favorite Betsy Byars book?" (Pinballs 11, The 18th Emergency 5, Summer of the Swans 2, Trouble River 1, The Night Swimmers 1).
In April a discussion of "book characters you'd like to know," children suggested characters who'd be funny, who were "smart and could do your homework," who were unique, or who "could teach you things."

-Lenny offers that he'd like to know Harvey in The Pinballs because "I'd like to cheer him up." Lois seconds this "Yes. He needed people."

A similar discussion on "people in books who overcome severe problems," Cara mentions Harvey again because "his dad ran over his legs."

Although no one added The Pinballs after early April ("and I'm not going to read it," said loner Nathan "because everyone else has read it," ) eighteen children had now read it. The Night Swimmers and The Cybil War, the two most recent books by Byars, were now being passed around the room. Cary had read all of Byars and was considered the expert. Tom and Leah had read a fair number including these two new ones. They met with me and we discussed the new book in relation to the others. Several children happened in and out of the discussion which lasted nearly forty minutes.

In May, an invitation to suggest "books with funny elements in them" produced titles such as Superfudge (Blume), Yobgorgle (Pinkwater), and Bagthorpes Unlimited (Cresswell), all with funny situations.

-Lenny again gives The Pinballs as an example. Jack says "Carlie is funny because she's so rude." Lois suggests that a book which is "basically serious can have funny elements." "She's a tough dude," adds Tom.

In this month as well, the class was asked to list "Books You Should Read Before You Leave Elementary School" and The Pinballs was one of the approximately twenty-four titles given.
By the year's end, every child had read unassigned at least one book by Byars. Many had read several and three fourths of the class had read The Pinballs. Although a show of hands indicated all but two children had read The Pinballs, only six original readers and twelve readers who recorded it were counted here. A new book, The Cybil War by Byars, although it did not produce the kind of impact a new book by Judy Blume (Superfudge) did, did receive enthusiastic attention from at least half of the class and a sign-up sheet to read it went inside the cover.

In summary, children chose The Pinballs in a context in which many factors were operating. Children were constantly recommending the title or the author. The teacher frequently gave children the chance to range back over their reading to date for examples of courageous or funny characters. Thus, The Pinballs and other Byars' titles were frequently ressurrected, talked about and replaced in the classroom history. For some children, The Pinballs was a major discovery - the best book read or a great plot. For others, it was another good story. But for all of the class - those who read it as well as those who heard it mentioned over and over - it was one of the cornerstones of the shared reading experiences of the classroom. It was understood that "If you want a good book, read The Pinballs" or another Betsy Byars book.

Outcomes and Changes During the School Year

Numerous changes were noted during the course of the school year, many of which have been discussed in "Categorizing Readers in the Classroom." Some of the changes were incremental - that is, there were more
books being read, more discussion of books, more development of comparisons, and so forth. Other changes involved descriptions, for instance, of readers who became attached or detached to reading or of children who began to risk reading genres they had previously not read.

Different frameworks superimposed on the data yield various combinations which may suggest certain causal relationships. It is helpful to remember that although the researcher chose to order and categorize the description of changes in a particular way, the actual causes of these changes or outcomes may be due to additional and complex factors operating in and out of the classroom.

Outcomes, changes, and in some cases a description of growth, will be discussed in the areas of reading aloud, a book sharing/discussion, of sustained silent reading, and of extensions. In addition, changes in children's ability to discuss certain literary elements will be discussed.

**Outcomes in Reading Aloud**

Initially, reading aloud provided the beginning arena in which the whole group could discuss a book. Thus, during the reading of The First Two Lives of Lukas Kasha (Alexander) and The Cry of the Crow (George) early in the year, the teacher could involve the group in predictive or motivational questions such as What do you think will happen next? Why has she done that? Could she have done something else? With these questions, Lois sought to involve the class more deeply in what she read aloud. In addition, since Lois purposely chose books to read aloud which children might not normally choose to read to themselves, she also asked questions of fact and clarification to help children continue to locate themselves in the book.
Although the possibility of a whole group discussion was present, seldom did the group address itself to an issue. Certain children were often spokespersons for the rest of the group. This is not to say that other children were not listening. It was simply that as novice discussants, some made public remarks to the teacher while others made private remarks to those next to them and few public and interactive discussions appeared to develop. These discussions were often held at the end of the reading aloud period and children were anxious to continue the work of the day. As a result, if a single child and the teacher began a dialogue, other children drifted off to work.

Since with the exception of Superfudge (Blume) and The Pinballs (Byars), there were no books which nearly everyone had read in the course of the year, books read aloud would seem to be an important part of shared experiences. The teacher used these books in several ways. Through her questions to the class, she gave children a sense of what was important to her (See Chapter IV). Children noted this consciously or not.

- Tom is retelling the story of The Pinballs and adds without being asked "the reason why it's called that is because..."

- Barb commented on the importance of getting straight the occurrences in the book. "And that's what Mrs. Monaghan's trying to teach the people - to read slower and it doesn't matter how many pages you get read as long as you enjoy it and understand the book."

- When asked what the teacher wants readers to think about, Amy answered "think about the book. What's happening in it."

It is difficult to measure the impact of what the teacher read aloud on the choices children made as to what they read. No one asked
to reread a book the teacher had read aloud. (The single exception
was Joan who reread parts of *The First Two Lives of Lukas-Kasha*
(Alexander) during the fall when most of her choices were books she
had already heard or read.) No one immediately sought out another
book by the author of any of the books Lois read aloud. Many children
already were familiar with Lloyd Alexander, Jean Craighead George and
Daniel Pinkwater before books by these authors were read. It may be
that further on in the year, several students sought out other George
books based on their experience with *The Cry of the Crow*. However,
there are no other direct examples of children choosing "other books
by that author." This may be, too, because many of the authors repre­
sented by read aloud choices did not write popular books or books which
anyone in the class knew. Thus, there were no child voices to say
about Baker, Bishop, Speare or Uchida "Oh, I know her. She wrote ___." The teacher mentioned other Alexander books in the first month of
school. In addition, a sequel to the popular *Journey to Topaz* (Uchida)
was brought into the classroom several months following the reading of
*Topaz*.

-Lois holds up *Journey Home* (Uchida) and asks if
anyone remembers the author. Several read the
name off the jacket but no one connects it to
*Journey to Topaz*. Lois says that it is a sequel
to that title. Several students say, "Oh, read
that one aloud, too." Several disagree. No one
asks to read it silently or looks at it when it
is displayed in the classroom for several weeks.

It may be that children, sensing that the teacher reads "different"
books - that is, books they would not ordinarily read themselves - are
reluctant to approach for themselves what they enjoy hearing. However,
it may be that Alexander's fantasy came too early in the year, or that
several of the authors are less well known, or historical fiction is simply not a choice of this group so that children did not directly follow through on the read aloud choice.

Another outcome of reading aloud was that as the number of books accrued in the group history, children could rate or rank the books. Throughout the year children continued to rely on personal testimony as a primary evaluative criteria. However, with continual reminders from the teacher to "give us a reason why you think so" many children struggled beyond the "I don't know. I just like it better" answer to try to give some reason why one book was better than another. Although children seldom gave reasons to each other as to why a book was good, in the public forum of trying to change the opinion of another person, children's evaluative comments emerged.

Applebee (1978) characterized children in the concrete operational stages as able to separate subjective and objective responses. However, children were often unaware of the distinction between a characteristic of the work and their own personal response to it.

- Barb prefers The Cry of the Crow (George) because she liked it. Why? "Because it was good. I liked it better because it was more exciting."

- Leah agrees. "It was a lot better. It was more interesting."

- Cary likes Jason and the Money Tree (Levitan) because "it is easy to listen to."

- Linda likes The Wolves of Willoughby Chase (Aiken) because "it was not boring."

As discussions and comparisons progressed, it became apparent that certain children valued aspects of literature such as clarity, depth of characterization, truth to real life, quality of writing, satisfying,
unpredictable or happy endings, or depth of ideas. Their comments, however, do not use the language of adult critics.

- Will suggests two books should be tied in ranking because "both really could happen. Even though the words were hard in The Wolves of Willoughby Chase (Aiken), you knew what was happening."

- Tammy likes The Wolves of Willoughby Chase (Aiken) because it is "told in an interesting way. Not the words really but the way. No, I can't explain." The attempts of teacher and students to help her clarify leave her silent and frustrated.

- Will suggests that the Cry of the Crow (George) is better than Journey to Topaz (Uchida) because Cry was more complex. "In Journey you figured they were going to get there. You knew she'd be happy in the end. But in Cry you didn't know."

- Sam calls a story "a good friendship story."

- Barb suggests that Journey to Topaz (Uchida) is better written. "I mean it described a lot about the time and the person made it into a story that could be true."

- Kelly likes one book better because it has "a lot more characters."

During the ranking of books read aloud, then, children struggled to find words for their evaluation of books. The teacher acknowledged the children's evaluative criteria without superimposing an external set of criteria on the group. She occasionally tried to elicit more objective statements about evaluative criteria. Children continued throughout the year to seek to characterize what they read while at the same time trying to evaluate it in some way. This proved to be risky, difficult to do and impossible for some. It was, however, one of the most interesting fronts on which to observe.
Outcomes in Discussion

Children continued to use the period of sharing at the end of the day as a source of information on books. The longer the class spent together, the more cohesive this discussion period seemed to be. In the early months of school, children retold what they read and interested other people in their books. Children never seemed to tire of hearing the same plots recounted by different readers. The only difference in recounting style was that later retellings would be more readily augmented by those readers familiar with the book. A later reader who had difficulty would be helped by previous readers to recall plot turns, names, places or funny parts. In many cases, children who had not read the book but had heard it talked about so many times helped the "sharer" recall parts of a book as well.

The teacher noted a change in the students after about four months in the classroom.

-It was about January that I began to feel them coalesce as a group. It was as if they'd built up a repertoire and now they could relax and start to draw on each other and like each other.

Prior to January, the teacher felt that questions she'd ask during sharing often were not pursued with any great depth. Thus when Lois followed several weeks of inviting children to share "new books," "books they were reading" and "good books," with the request to share "books which would make a good movie," most people talked of the book they were currently reading rather than one they had read previously. Gradually as the class history matured, children gave examples in categories such as "courage books," "divorce books" or "animal books" which delved back much more readily into past reading.
There seemed, too, to be a gradual mellowing of the group. It was, said the teacher, as if they liked each other after the fall quarter. By the last several months of school, all children were offering comments during sharing periods and disruptions of or irrelevancies to topics of discussion were much less frequent. Children seemed to accept more readily the ideosyncracies of others in discussion.

Then, in the end of the day setting, children relaxed and became more willing to see connections between books. Since talk was less focused on single books (as it was during reading aloud) more children participated in discussion. Thus, children began to develop categories and furnished examples of other books in the category. The teacher solicited titles for many of these categories but the children volunteered as well.

-Cary is sharing The Worms of Kukimlima (Pinkwater). Tom interrupts to describe the plot of another book, asking if Pinkwater wrote that, too. Cary supplies the title. Tom says "Then I've read another Pinkwater" and several voices say "I've read three, four, five." Pinkwater's titles are mentioned for several seconds.

-Kelly calls Down a Dark Hall (Duncan) as a scary book. Tammy adds, "So is Mirror of Danger (Sykes)."

Children's categories for books most frequently were based on authors, on content (a "divorce" book, a "funny" book) or on subjective descriptions such as "weird," "exciting," "adventurous" and, of course, "good." Some children did not understand genre distinctions (as reported in the Influence of Genre on Children's Choices section of this chapter.)
In addition to the daily end of the day discussion the teacher had led several small group discussions during the year. These discussions were infrequent but nonetheless they provided some children with a chance to discuss a book or a category with more depth. In spring, a small group discussed patterns in "animal stories."

-Kelly, Leah and Joan offer several titles of animal stories. As they discuss what patterns are commonly found in animal stories, Kelly says, "usually someone is finding an animal or getting them at the time. They never have them to start with. Usually the animal gets hurt in a lot of them, too." Joan later adds that the main character "often won't accept what their parents say like in My Wolf My Friend (Corcoran). She couldn't accept for a long time that it was a wolf and not a dog." Joan also mentions "They're usually very defensive about their animals like someone will say 'why don't you get rid of them or kill them' and they'll say 'not on your life'."

Another small group discussion with two boys and two girls about Betsy Byars' most recent book, The Cybil War, led to a discussion of similarities in Byars' books. In these small groups, children seemed much more willing to talk for greater length about a topic. It was a way, too, that a child's area of strength or "expertise" could be legitimized.

It is more difficult to suggest outcomes of adult/student dialogues. Often some of the most profound statements came from one-on-one encounters or were tossed off as the pair disbanded. However, it is also true that some children within the protection of the group tended to say more or reveal more readily their ideas because they could rely on others for help if they suddenly lost the courage or the words to say what they meant. Certainly the interviewer had more blank, numb or "I don't know" statements with individuals early in the
year than she received in the spring. But, by then, we all were more used to each other and the interviewer had relaxed, too.

The basic difference in conversations with small groups was, of course, that more time was given to a fewer number of children to express their views. This is not to say that small group discussions were better than whole group discussions because different abilities were being exercised with different children. What small groups did provide, however, was a chance for children to take more time to work through what they wished to say without having to compete with other voices wanting to say something.

The teacher summed up the group's growth in discussion abilities when she suggested that

You have to help them stumble through the ideas at first. As they get used to reading and talking, then the discussions prove more fruitful. The early part of the year we spent building a background on which we could draw as the year progressed. Then discussions became more fruitful.

An interesting sidelight of discussions outcomes continued to repeat itself. Children would often not discuss a book beyond recounting the plot if they thought the listener had not read the book.

-Cary is explaining to me that some people didn't think Searching for Shona (Anderson) was good because of the ending. I ask "Why is this ending in question?" and he replies "Well, have you read it?" before he discusses the book's conclusion.

-Leah is asked if she thinks the author was trying to tell the reader anything. Leah begins "Well, she might want you to think... have you read it?"

The fact that the listener had not read what the child referred to meant that although the child would retell interesting parts to interest the reader, he would not reveal the ending. This has some implication
for a child's willingness to discuss theme if authors' statements are made in the ways that they choose to end their books.

Another interesting sidelight of discussion was the observation that several children indicated by their responses that they were unfamiliar with information ordinarily found on the copyright page or the jacket copy. Some children were unaware of authors and many children referred to the author as "they." One child referred to Blume's Superfudge as a "sequin" to her Tales of a Fourth Grade Nothing. None of these confusions seemed to be enough to thwart reader response but were indications that some readers were not yet in possession of this "book knowledge."

**Outcomes in Sustained Silent Reading**

In the course of SSR during the school year certain patterns began to emerge. Outcomes, such as the social aspects and the "rules" of SSR emerged early in the year and continued until the year's end. (See "Social Impulses in the Classroom"). Children's choices of reading matter and the implicit or explicit reasons for those choices changed; individual reader behavior changed, as well.

For many children simply choosing to read at all was a change. As has been previously discussed, readers often became detached temporarily from reading and spent time casting about for something to read. In spring, there was a remarkable surge of interest in reading and children who had little interest in reading suddenly "took hold." Many new books were introduced into the classroom throughout the year but they proved especially interesting to the class from March to June. As a new book was talked about, others would be interested and the book
would begin to be passed around the room. New books and first readers enjoyed status in the classroom.

- Peg asks "Do you have any new books? Something nobody else has read?"

- Kelly shares Class Pictures (Sachs). When asked if she is the first reader, she says "Oh, no!" and mentions three others who read it including the one who read it first.

- I bring in a box of books in April and a voice says "Oh, boy! Books!"

- Lenny wants a book "No one has read." He stands at the bookshelf and pulls off Topsy-Turvey (Offit). He asks "What's it about?" No one can say because they haven't read it. He puts it back on the shelf.

Children saw the increase in number of books read as progress of a very visible sort. They gave various reasons for the surge in reading interest.

- Cary noted that he went from reading an average of three books per month in the winter to five or six books per month. "I guess a whole lot of new ones came into the room like The Night Swimmers (Byars) and My Robot Buddy (Slote). I guess I just wanted to read." Interestingly, of the twelve books he reads in April and May, only five books are new to the classroom. The rest have been available throughout the year.

- Amy called May a good month because she read four books. Why did she read so many then? "I started taking them home. It was quieter." (Prior to spring, the books owned by the school were not allowed to leave the classroom but the teacher allowed her books to be taken home.) Amy added "I'm getting so many good books I can't stop reading. I just like reading."

- Sam compares his fall and spring reading saying "I'm reading more and faster now. In October I wasn't reading so fast."
The increase in reading was perhaps due to more fruitful discussions about ideas in books or connections in books which spurred reader interest. Perhaps, some reader's energy affected others. Perhaps, also, the coalescing of the group removed some of the social stress and children felt free to turn to reading.

Children's preferences seemed to become more well-defined. They looked at what they had read and said in retrospect:

- "I like the kind of books that could never happen but might happen if it did happen." (Cary)

- "I like realistic fiction mostly about girls who have a problem." (Tammy)

- "I like adventure books with sort of information in them." (Sam)

On the other hand, as some children's choices of books seemed to narrow, other children saw themselves as broadening their reading.

- "I like fantasy and mystery, like C.O.L.A.R. and the McGurk series. There are about six. They're kind of corny. I like a lot of books. I really like all kinds." (Joe)

- "I'm going out in a larger range than just adventure. I'm reading more serious books like Where the Red Fern Grows (Rawls). That's sad. I'm reading lots more science fiction like The Hero From Otherwhere (Williams) and The Thinking Machine (Futrelle). But I think I still like adventure books a lot." (Sam)

- "I've been reading more animal stories, not that I really enjoy them that much." Tammy also noted with surprise that she had enjoyed several fantasies in a list of relentlessly realistic fiction. "Mrs. Frisby and the Rats of NIMH (O'Brien). That was a good book - I thought that was an honest-to-goodness, down-to-earth, apple-pie, Chevrolet book."

More fantasy appeared in the book lists and children began to be aware of fantasy as a source of good stories. Fantasy had been the preference of several "different drummer" readers but other readers
sampled fantasy as well. Individual readers introduced fantasy titles by Susan Cooper, John Christopher and Alfred Slote into class discussions and these titles then found other readers.

-Nathan, a confirmed fantasy lover, said of fantasy "They're more interesting than other books. I just think they're better books. A lot of books some people like I think are sort of dumb. Some of them I started but didn't finish."

The teacher felt that she should have started the year reading aloud from a different genre because the fantasy she'd started with "probably would have gone in the spring with all the interest in fantasy that was happening."

Another change in children's choices of books seemed to be that some children became more independent in their book choices relying on a variety of factors for choice rather than simply on what "everyone was reading." Still children continued to read what others read and occasionally picked up an "odd" book recommended in previous years or one from the class-generated list of "Books You Should Read Before you Leave Elementary School."

In addition, individual readers began to emerge as experts in a genre or a particular author. Children knew who to ask for particular information.

-Numerous children set about reading all the books by one author. Tammy had read all the "Nancy Drew" series; Casy read all of Betsy Byars' books. Joe was one book short of all the books by Alfred Slote and had read most of Daniel M. Pinkwater; Peg had read "nearly all" of the "Dorrie" books (Coombs), and Christy knew most of the books by Marilyn Sachs.

-The teacher holds up a new book saying that it is a fantasy. Children suggest that Sherry, Margie, Joe or Nathan will like it.
Changes among individual readers, then, included a greater affinity or enthusiasm for reading on the part of many, greater reliance on one's own resources for book choice, an increased tolerance for and knowledge of the choices of others, and a greater willingness to risk new genres. Perhaps the single greatest change in individual readers, however, was that all children became readers. All children saw themselves as enjoyers of reading and all had several books to draw on when conversations developed around books. Some children developed passions for certain titles, as well, and continued to mention their favorite books whenever they could. This passion for a particular title was not limited to able or less able readers but cut across all levels of reading strength.

Outcomes of Extensions

Extensions, a term suggested by Charlotte Huck (1979) as a way of defining those concrete things students may create or do in response to a book, were a part of this classroom. As the teacher explained,

-Simply recording what they read gives the student a sense of accomplishment. It also legitimizes reading books as a school event. Doing something concrete with a book also legitimizes it. They remember what they've read. If we don't do this, then many books are simply read and forgotten.

Extensions were defined in this classroom in a variety of ways from the very simple task of listing books read to more complex tasks such as writing from the point of view of a main character or the creation of a drama from a book. Other extensions included dioramas, something done following the reading aloud of most books, book reports and an
accompanying picture, surveys, and journals. Needless to say, all of
the talk about books served to make books memorable to these students,
as well. However, for the purposes of discussion, this section will
consider only those activities in which something visible was created.

Making Things. It was expected that students would write a book
report each month. In addition, students were to make something to
interest the rest of the class in reading the book. Few students
during the course of the year made other than posters illustrating a
scene from the book. Those students who did create an artifact or item
from a book did so only in the fall.

-In November, Cara works on and completes a bridge
made of popsicle sticks after reading Bridge to
Terabithia (Paterson). "This isn't going to be
like the real bridge to Terabithia," she says to
someone who is looking on.

-Mitty covers a shoebox with paper and a roof as a
memento of The Bears' House (Sachs).

-Joan works on a painting of the White Witch from
The Lion, The Witch and the Wardrobe (Lewis).

-The fifth grade boys make a model of Robinson
Crusoe's island complete with trees, water, a
stockade and numerous tools. Later, the model
is displayed prominently in the school library.
They read the book while the sixth graders were
in camp.

-The fifth grade girls make stick puppets and put
on a short puppet show from Helen Keller's Teacher
(Davidson).

-Many children create dioramas from historical fic-
tion or biography which they have read as part of
a social studies inquiry. Several are labeled.

-Several boys make maps of the terrain of The First
Two Lives of Lukas-Kasha (Alexander).
Nathan enlarges the map which introduces The Riddlemaster of Hed (McKillip).

These extensions served as markers for the individuals who made them of the book they had read. Several children in the following month read The Bears' House (Sachs) but those who did recalled it as a good book recommended by someone rather than as a book someone had extended.

**Journals and Reading Records.** Another personal marker of books read was the weekly journal entry. By simply asking children to tell her what they were reading and how they felt about it, the teacher was able to respond to single children with encouragement. The children sometimes used the journals to evaluate, speculate or generalize about books. Often they recommended a book to the teacher or asked her for recommendations in return. Most usually, however, they reported that the book they were reading was "good" and the teacher acknowledged this.

- Sherry writes "The week was really good. I liked Seven Spells to Sunday (Norton) and Sing Down the Moon (O'Dell). Lately I have really liked reading." (Lois writes, "That's neat.")

- "I just finished the book Beloved Benjamin is Waiting (Karl). It was really good," writes Julie. "I might start the book Mirror of Danger (Sykes) but I am not real sure." (Lois writes "Kelly liked that book.")

- "I'm reading Wish Come True (Steele). It's my second book this month," writes Casey.

- "I've finished The Forgotten Door (Key). It was good and exciting.... I'm going to read either Mrs. Frisby and the Rats of NIMH (O'Brien) or Watership Down (Adams) writes James. (Lois replies, "wonderful choices! If you have not read Mrs. Frisby, I think you have missed something great!")

Children often wrote long plot synopses. Frequently they answered the teacher's request for "five favorite books" or "three best books so far this year." One unusual (and atypical for this child) writing
occured after a group of boys had been intensely involved for a week with the wordless picture books of Mitsumasa Anno. Calvin, a fifth grader, produced his lengthiest piece of unsolicited writing about books in his journal entry during a week in February. The entire entry appears just as Calvin wrote it.

-Dear Mrs. Monaghan,
This week has been a good one for me. I finished Escape from Warsaw and I'm starting Paddington Marches On. I'm on page 17 of my math booklet. Journey to Topaz ended really good. Spanish lessons are getting fun. My Peru map is a little slow but it looks nice. [Lois: Yes, it really does.] One thing really interesting about Peru - it is the biggest fish producer in the whole wide world. If you want, I could bring in some Spanish money. (My grandfather just got back from Spain.) At home I'm reading Mother West Wind Stories by Thornton W. Burgess. (He wrote that book in 1912). [L: That's interesting.] Sam and my game is almost done. (It should be done Monday.) I'm going to be taking home my math over the weekend. I might be able to finish it. The room looks really nice and it will look even better when everything is hung up on the walls. Sam and I have planned on making a weaving together. (My first one I never got. I don't know what happened to it.) So far the book Mrs. Tobin [the student teacher was reading aloud Walk the World's Rim] is really good and I hope she will read some more on Monday. Those Anno's books are really good (Anno's Animals, Anno's Journey and Anno's Italy). I wish we had more of them. They're really funny. My favorite one is the hidden animals. Have you ever noticed that he puts more animals in than he's supposed to? Anno's Italy is the funniest of the bunch. The only one I haven't read yet is Anno's Alphabet. (They are all by Mitsumasa Anno. He has a foreign name I think.) [L: He is Japanese.] As the next read aloud book could you read A Wrinkle in Time series? [L: Good suggestion.] They are really good books, too. In Anno's books beside putting down fairy tale characters, he puts things like Beethoven playing the piano, and Shakespeare making a play. A boy climbing a fence and over the fence is a lady taking a bath. They also have clocks with four hands and a couple of his books have optical illusions like four children throwing rings on top of a church steeple but they are really good, really funny and have super illustrations. Sincerely, Calvin [L: It might be interesting if you wrote him a letter and explained to him just what you told me. He just might answer.]
Most children eagerly looked forward to reading teacher responses to their writing the next day. Children did not read each others' journals and their entries were regarded as a private exchange between themselves and the teacher.

The reading records of books read per month were regarded by the children as within the public domain hence as readable by anyone. Children compared cards and noted similar titles read or counted the number of books read. More often, however, these records were a source of individual pride in accomplishment. As the months progressed and a card was added monthly, the titles mounted up. By the year's end, children were proudly noting changes and patterns such as "I'm reading more," "I'm reading more serious books," "I read five books by Judy Blume," and so forth.

The teacher used the cards as records for evaluation and discussions with students. But the children used them to mark their own progress as readers. In addition, children were more able to generalize about their own reading when they could handle the book cards as they talked. The cards served, too, as a convenient focus for both student and interviewer.

**Book Reports.** Following the recording of a month's titles of books read, children were expected to write about a single book they had enjoyed. During the fall months, the format the teacher suggested was for children to "tell us a little bit about the book and how you felt about it." This produced expanded summaries in which students sought both to categorize the story but at the same time to encapsulate the plot. Students who found this onerous often resorted to copying
parts of the book jacket. Some launched into a summary of the first chapter and upon coming to some appropriate length stopped with statements such as "It's a very funny book and I recommend it to everybody," or "If you want to know what happens next, you'll have to read the story."

An April assignment to write a review of a book read in March from the point of view of a character elicited some of the most lively writing about books that students had produced. (For additional examples, see "Literature Response Related Events in the Classroom").

-Amy takes the point of view of one of the lesser characters in The Pinballs, that of an eighty year old woman. She begins "Let me tell you what happened to me, Jefferson Benson, in The Pinballs by Betsy Byars. It started when my sister and I fell and broke our hips. 'Ow,' I screamed." Her writing ends with "They were feeding me through a straw when 'Ugg,' I was dead. So that's my story."

-Leah writes three journal articles for the main character of Into the Dream (Sleator). One reads "Tues. Last night I had a dream. It made me wake up sweating and very scared. Every night now I have this dream. Each time it gets worse. I do not know what this dream is for or why I'm having it."

-Sam prefaces his review of The Hero from Otherwhere (Williams) with "This is the part when Jessey and Rick rode the lizard. From the lizard's point of view." He continues "Hey, I wonder what these two kids are going to do with the wolf when they bind it with the three strands they are looking for? Man! From what I heard, that wolf is going to kill us if they don't catch him." He ends with a complaint of how heavy the kids are.

-Calvin begins discussing Maurice's Room (Fox) in the person of Maurice's mother: "Maurice's room has been cluttered up with junk since we gave him his own room. He's always looking for junk. I wish he would become interested in money or something besides junk."
-A review of The Forgotten Door (Key) begins "Help!!!
(Wack. I hit my head and went unconscious.) I was out for who knows how long. When I woke up I was lying on an edge of a cliff. I couldn't remember who I was. A fawn and a deer found me, they led me to a farm type place, and started eating. A man and a woman came out trying to shoot the deer, but I spoiled their aim and the deer and the fawn ran off. Then the guy shot for me. I ran and cleared the fence in one bound. (It was very high.) I wandered around and found a road and thought it should lead somewhere. A car came and picked me up and gave me a home. We became good friends. They were called the Bean's. To find out what happened next, read: The Forgotten Door by Alexander Key."

Four of the illustrations for these book reports were made using collage material, a departure from the pencil and felt tip marker illustrations children usually copied from book jackets. Although several children wrote the review in the customary format ("Mama is a book about a mother and two kids"), most of the group had little difficulty and a good bit of fun with the first person format. This assignment produced the longest book report writings to date. It also occurred during the early stages of an upswing in the number of books read in the class.

The round of book reports following this one showed a greater variety of format than at any previous time. There was, for instance, a "Newsflash! Fudgie Times" news article from Superfudge (Blume), a cartoon sequence from Queen of Hearts (Cleaver), a review in poetry format from The Chocolate Touch (Catling), attempts at dialogue and first person narrative, plus the usual retelling of the story. Illustrations remained solely in the medium of pencil or felt tip markers.

The book reports were mounted each month on large sheets of paper and hung in the room. Children did not seem to read what the others
wrote nor did they appear to read what they had written to anyone else. The book reports were probably used by the group as one more bit of evidence of information about good books. Individual children saw book reports as another way of telling the group and the teacher about good books and many of the reviews ended with "I highly recommend this book" or "Read this book you will like it." These mounted book reports were constantly enjoyed by visitors to the classroom.

It is difficult to ascertain why book reports became longer and more interesting stylistically. By the end of the year, more books were being read and more books were being talked about. Children were more interested in books and reading. The teacher's suggestion of writing from a character's point of view was "fun" and a change from "writing about" the book. Any classroom matures and grows in confidence throughout a school year and perhaps these outpourings in April and May were simply a natural consequence of that growth.

Other Writing About Books. In an effort to mark the completion of a book read aloud, the teacher often had children write something. In one case, it was a sequel to The First Two Lives of Lukas-Kasha (Alexander). In others the writing was related to theme: the consequences of judging a friend wrongly as did the character in Walk the World's Rim; or what the author wanted readers to think about after they had read The Cry of the Crow (George). The teacher felt, too, that this writing helped the children remember what they had heard and to remember it more favorably than they might have had they not reflected in writing.

It is difficult to measure students' changes in attitude about a particular book but it is interesting to note a sequence of events
surrounding the reading of *Journey to Topaz* (Uchida). Although this was historical fiction, a genre unappreciated by most of the group, this book was a year-long favorite. Children's comments and listening behaviors during the book's reading showed no enthusiasm above the average reactions given to what was read aloud. The morning following the completion of the book, the teacher asked the group to think about and illustrate a time when they felt as if they were "in the skin of" another character just as Yuki felt she knew what it was like to be "in the skin of" her brother Ken. Lois' poll of the group for individual choices of scenes constituted a near-review of the entire book.

- Tom wants to do Yuki in the sandstorm "because I liked that part in the story. It came clear to me."

- Bill will do "when the guy got shot. I forget his name. Well, I guess because I like to look for lost things, too. What are they called?" Sam supplies "Trilobites and arrowheads," from the story.

- Peg wants to do when Emmy was in the hospital; Casey will do her dog coming back.

- Cary chooses "when she wakes up on Christmas Day before and she has the feeling her father is coming home. I'll make her in bed with a big smile."

- Joan wants to do the scene when the strangers come to take away the father. "That's a very vivid scene," says the teacher.

Children illustrated the chosen scene and wrote a short explanation, quote or statement about it for display purposes. Some of the statements were more poetic than explanatory. That afternoon the class ranked *Journey to Topaz* with the other five books read to date. The discussion was heated and Topaz occupied second place, narrowly defeated by *The Cry of the Crow* (George).
Both the teacher and the researcher felt that the previous review and resulting extensions did much to help children remember the book favorably—a statement impossible to prove. However, an indirect indicator of the book's impact on the group came two months later. During a loud argument held among several children at recess, Tom said hotly "Think of how Sherry and Margie feel! Get in their skin!" and the argument was diffused.

**Outcomes of Other Extensions.** During the course of the school year, children worked in small groups on such productions as a newscast interview of characters from *Keep Stompin' Till the Music Stops* (Pevsner) and on skits from favorite books. They conducted surveys with each other on topics such as "How Many Books by Blume Have you Read?" or "What's your Favorite Byars' Book." These efforts also made books more visible in the classroom and were used as more evidence of a book's "goodness."

- Peg chose to read *Class Pictures* (Sachs) because it was "new and everyone was telling about it and I wanted to read it really bad. And then they did that little skit on it. I loved that book."

The preparation of the skits and surveys involved student planning so that children had to work out what was important to reveal to the audience.

- The group preparing the newscast interview of characters from *Keep Stompin' Till the Music Stops* spends a long time discussing who should play whom and what they should wear in the play. The discussion turns then to how the characters change and what is important to them. When they rehearse, Peg says to Barb, "She wouldn't say that," and explains why. Mitty says of a selfish character "She only speaks for herself." Since
Gramp has great trust in his grandson, the character playing Gramp says of the grandson
"He'll get better as he goes along."

Following the skit, one of the children asked the skit group to explain the title. The children answered with statements about the book's theme.

-Tom answers "Music is your life. Gramp is going to keep living until he dies," and Mitty adds "Like music is your life and you keep on dancing until your life stops."

The skits became vehicles for talk in the classroom among students or between students and teacher in which elements such as theme, characterization, and motivation might be discussed.

The Emergence of Formal Operations in Response to Literature

Applebee (1978) suggested that certain developmental stages in the formulation of response to literature exist and that these stages build upon one another. As children move out of one stage into another they do not shed old response patterns but instead integrate newly learned structures into previously existing ones. The characteristics of response superimposed upon Piaget's stages of development are set forth by Applebee as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Stage</th>
<th>Response Features</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Preoperational (ages 2-6)</td>
<td>Child's typical response is a narrative retelling in whole or in part.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Concrete Operational (ages 7-11)</td>
<td>Child seeks to summarize or categorize response; child's feelings about the work are attributed to the work: a story is &quot;sad&quot; or &quot;funny&quot; or &quot;exciting.&quot; However, child begins to separate objective and subjective responses.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Formal Operational I (ages 12-15)</td>
<td>Child is able to analyze the work, the logic of structure, symbols, and give reasons for reactions, child identifies with or becomes involved in the story.</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
Formal Operational II (ages 16-adult)  
Child is able to generalize about the work, consider theme or point of view; child applies understanding to own life (p. 124).

One would expect responses of the children in this study to cluster around those typical of children in the stage of concrete operations and the early stages of formal operational thinking. That is, children would be able to narrate, summarize and categorize. Some would be able to go beyond subjective response to objective analysis, and identification with the story. This appears to be the case. However, children also indicate that under certain circumstances they can and do generalize about theme and that they can apply those generalizations.

The Growth of Evaluation

Evaluation, suggests Applebee, first becomes systematic at the concrete operational stage.

As children become aware of their responses to a story, they begin to classify them into categories with clearly marked attributes. It is these categories which seem to be evaluated, rather than the specific details of the story itself. When they describe their subjective response, we find children claiming that a book is "interesting," "dreary," or "just plain funny." Such characteristics seem to be attributed directly to the book, though in fact they are the descriptions of the way the book has affected the particular reader. The evaluation of a story is often closely associated with this description of the subjective response, but it is not identical with it. Children do not find it repetitive to say, for example, "Sometimes stories are dull and I don't like them" (Laura B., 9 yr., 11 mo.) (p. 101).

Evaluative responses of children in this study were typically placed within Applebee's description of concrete operational thinking. As did children in Applebee's sample, these children also categorized books according to their own feelings toward the work.
- Cary wrote in October: "The Cay (Taylor) is a very interesting book because at times it was surprising, suspenseful, exciting, happy, and sad. After about a 7th of the way through the book, the book went really fast." He continues with a summary of the plot and ends "I think the author was showing the reader what it would be like to be marooned on an island until someone would come to rescue them."

- Barb suggests Rinehart Lifts (Knudson) is a good book because it makes you "feel good. This book is really funny and it is exciting in every spot of the book."

- Peg recommends Jelly Belly (Smith) because "it has no boring parts in it."

- A child who describes a book as well-written elaborates "it was exciting. You felt like you were there."

- Tom begins a book report with "The Pinballs is a funny story, a sad story and a happy story."

Children began to recognize other more objective categories, as well. Books were categorized as true or not true, fiction or nonfiction, or fantasy.

- Nathan writes in January "Heir of Sea and Fire (McKillip) is a fantasy although some stores carry it on their Science Fiction aisle. It's about the daughter of the King of An finding out that she has the power to possess fire. It's the second book in a trilogy. I think the author was trying to make a point of putting your trust in people who put theirs in you."

They were categorized as written in first person narrative ("I-books") or about topics such as "divorce" or "death." They were grouped as "courage books" and as "World War II books." "Funny" books were later recategorized as "humorous" books and the teacher attempted to elicit statements as to what constituted humor in books. Children reluctantly generalized about humor but preferred to recount anecdotes and "funny"
parts. A frequent technique the teacher used was to elicit a category of books from a child, ask the child for several other titles in the category, and then ask the child for characteristics of the category based on the book titles given. In this way, categories such as "animal stories," "divorce books," "good books," "serious books," or "sad books" were developed.

Students evaluated books constantly in the classroom. To each other the criteria they often used were ones of personal recommendation ("I liked it. It was good.") and a description of the plot (Why is it good? "Well, it's about this guy who..."). Variations on these two refrains were the common notes of the classroom. In an effort to modify this, the teacher attempted to help children be more explicit in their evaluation by asking them to compare books read aloud. This proved to be difficult.

-Three boys are ranking books read aloud so far by the teacher.

Sam: Unbuilding. I like the drawings in this one.
Nathan: I like the First Two Lives of Lukas-Kasha.
Will: Oh, yeah. David Macauley.
Interviewer: Is one better than the other?
Will: They're different kinds.
Sam: They're different books.
Nathan: This one's about architecture.
Sam: If you're talking about drawing, this beats all books. I mean David Macauley - all his books beat any kind of books.
Nathan: No, No. Cry of the Crow is best.
The other boys disagree. Nathan ends the discussion.
"I'm outvoting you one to one!"

The catch-all category of "books read aloud" bothered some children because it grouped picture and chapter books, funny and exciting books or realism and fantasy. But children were unwilling to hear each other out. When Will suggested in the above discussion that
there were different kinds of literature, the others did not want to abandon their personal favorites to help clarify kinds.

Discussions which evaluated books with the whole class fared little better as most children wanted to sway others by personal testimony rather than by reason. However, when an atmosphere of discussion was preserved prior to voting, children's reasons for their favorites revealed a tacit set of evaluative criteria. In a discussion of where The Wolves of Willoughby Chase (Aiken) should be ranked in relationship to other books read, children's reasons included the following:

- "It should be first. That's just my opinion."
- "Because I liked the way it was written. It was not boring."
- "It was more of a story than The Cry of the Crow."
- "I thought it could really happen."
- "It was told in an interesting way, not the words really, but the way. I can't explain."
- "It was exciting. No part was dull and it was easy to listen to."
- "Even though the words were hard, you knew what was happening."
- "It seems like I saw it like a TV program."
- "I think the good and the bad were very distinct except for Gripe - I thought he was a bad guy right up till the end."
- "It was a good friendship story."
- "They described the people well so you knew exactly what was happening every time."

The above reveals the typically untidy and disorganized fashion in which children evaluated a piece of fiction using certain tacit criteria such as clarity of plot, the author's ability to create
visual images and cliff-hanger plots, the quality of writing, the behavior of the characters as compared to real life, and melodramatic style. Responses such as these were more frequently elicited by comparison questions such as "Why did you like this book better than that book?" They did not as easily result from the probing of a single title ("What did you like about this book?").

Children who did not like a book also offered evaluations. However, more often children did not complete a book they disliked. Children were more likely to evaluate negatively a book they had completed at a distant time rather than recently. This distance, or the distance of reading a book clearly intended for a younger reader, allowed some children to be more objective.

-Cary describes A Taste of Blackberries (Smith) as one he didn't like. The book is short and the protagonist is probably several years younger than Cary. "I thought the author could have put more into it. I didn't really know much about the kid who died. I mean it really happened fast in the book - started out pretty soon and told about how sad he was and what they used to do - all the fun things they used to do together. I wished at the beginning they would have had all the things that he talked about. And then have him thinking about what a good friend he is and then all of a sudden he dies a little closer to the end." He is dissatisfied with the development of the two characters.

-Peg picks out Squanto (Graff) and The Matchlock Gun (Edmonds) from her list of books read as two that really "aren't very good." After a moment of consideration, she retracts the two "I don't know. Maybe there aren't any I don't like." The two books were ones she chose to read for an assignment in social studies.

Although children freely made negative comments about books they had started and not finished ("It was dumb," "I didn't like it," "I didn't
understand it," "It was boring."), they made more diverse remarks and statements of greater depth about books they liked. It seemed important to the children in the study to find books they liked rather than criticize or evaluate what they did not like.

Although children disagreed on categories of books, the category of "books by a single author" was easily recognized. A child might discuss books by one author, nominating one as the best with reasons such as "It starts faster" or "It's more scary." Again, children struggled to express criteria.

- In a discussion with three other children, Cary says he likes The Cybil War the best of the Byars books he has read because "it's a lot different than she usually writes. She usually writes..." Tom interrupts, "She always writes about kids" and the conversation veers to plots of other books again while Cary struggles to explain the atypical situations, characters and theme of the book.

- Christy says of the four Zilpha K. Snyder books she has read that they're all "kind of mystery books but not so much mystery... They're about this one special person and they have to find out about this certain thing." She adds that a typical main character "wouldn't be too outgoing: They'd just sort of sit there and do their work. You know, hardly talking to anyone." She mentions the one she thinks is best because "I liked it."

In summary, children hovering on the edges of the stage of formal operational thinking have the beginnings of objective evaluation within reach. If evaluation grows from a prior ability to categorize, these children are on the growing edge of objective evaluation. However, children's categories are different from adult categories. Children are able to make evaluative statements which reveal tacit and objective criteria but in many cases children are unable to state or are
unaware of those criteria. Children's statements reveal an awareness of and an attempt to evaluate plot development, characterization, and author style, for example.

The Development of Thematic Awareness

Children demonstrated an ability to discern wider meanings in their reading. Teacher questions emphasized children's finding an author's "messages" or "big ideas" and some children were able to phrase thematic statements with surprising clarity. Children had practice in stating themes after the reading aloud of The King's Fountain (Alexander), The Cry of the Crow (George), and Jason and the Money Tree (Levitin). They also tried to phrase a meaning for the poem "Hope's Forecast" (Fuller) (See Chapter IV).

When the teacher ceased to ask for a specific statement of theme in book reports, children generally did not offer one. However, they retained a certain awareness of theme and were able to state ones or paraphrase a story when asked. Recalling the teacher's valuing of thematic statements, children made typical statements in May such as the following.

-Barb says that in addition to "the book, the story, the characters," the teacher wants "us to think about what was the writer's intention." Cary agrees in a later conversation.

-In response to the prompting question "I've heard her say something about big ideas," Tammy stated "Cause I think she wants us to have like a 'piece of mind' from each book and to have an idea so we can remember them later. I don't know. She's always talking about the author's meaning. What they mean when they write the book. I mean cause some of our books have morals and you might not know it. Like some books I've read you really have to figure it out. The author doesn't tell you in the end. I mean I could have read a book
and not known there was a moral. You have to look hard." Tammy gives examples of a moral from *Seven Days to a Brand New Me* (Conford) as "she has to appreciate herself before she can have anyone appreciate her."

Some children saw themes as warnings.

- Bill says of the three Judy Blume books he's read "it feels like she has a moral to the story." He defines a moral as "there's something you shouldn't do" and gives an example cut of *Blubber*. "There's a moral not to call people that are fat, not to call them 'whale'."

Children's difficulty in making statements about theme often seemed to be due more to a problem with "making the words behave" than it did to an inability to recognize theme. Perhaps recognition of theme and an ability to articulate theme develop at different rates. Children's written statements of themes of *The Cry of the Crow* (George) revealed this dilemma. Other responses to theme may be found in Chapter IV, "Reading Aloud."

- I think Jean George wrote the book because she wanted to tell us that man should not mess with nature and if we would let it go its own way. (Sam)

- I think the book is the kind of story that tells the people who read it how to care for an animal, like if you should let it be free to roam in the forest or to have it locked in a cage or live in your house. It is a fiction book but I also think it could maybe be a true happening. (Peg)

- What the author's trying to tell you is that once something has lived in the world, it should stay there even if it's just like your brother or sister. And even if you teach it something neat and it is really smart. Sometime it could really affect your life. And also when you catch a bird and try to make it do something it is like being in prison for the bird. (Barb)

- I think the book had the main point of love for animals and for responsibility to them. The main point was that she wanted a pet so bad that it ended in tragedy. (Joe)
While some children continued to see themes in the narrow sense of warnings rather than as the more broadly defined central idea of a book, others saw themes in an informational sense. That is, the author's main concern in writing was to impart information and an attitude to the reader.

- The author was showing the reader what it would be like to be marooned on an island. (The Cay - Taylor) (Craig)

- The purpose is to make people understand that animals are running free all over the place. I think she also wanted people to know they can live on their own but only if they're lucky. (The Incredible Journey - Burnford) (Christy)

- What I think the author meant is that people who have a problem or something can end up being really nice, and sometimes, by having friends, can make the problem go away. (The Trouble with Explosives - Kelley) (Margie)

- Well, I think the author's point is 'Don't knock it till you try it' because she got better in something. She didn't want to go to camp in the first place but at the end, she didn't want to leave. (Hail, Hail Camp Timberwood - Conford) (Tammy)

- I think the author wanted to tell everyone how hard it really was for some Jewish people. (Journey to America - Levitin) (Christy)

- The author wrote this book to show people we don't appreciate things till they're gone. (Unbuilding - Macauley) (Sam)

- I think the author thinks you should have a big imagination about space and things. (Third Planet from Altair - Packard) (James)

Children seldom moved from a statement of theme to any statement of what it meant in their own lives. They did, however, identify with literature as having meaning for their lives. (As Tammy said "You're not the only one in the world"). Occasionally literature provided a
child with flashes of insight which revealed the depths to which some ideas had penetrated.

-After a discussion in which children offer examples of courageous behavior in books, Will says as the group disbands "Well, a lot of books show courage. I mean it takes courage just to go through every day."

-Sam is discussing Where the Red Fern Grows (Rawls), a book which absorbed him deeply. He discusses how well he related to that book, then to Superfudge (Blume). Suddenly, he muses, "I don't know. If you think 'I'm not going to be here all the time. What's it going to be like when I'm gone - Pooh! Out of there! Where am I going to be?' I might be in one of my favorite books or something when you're just dead. You'd think you might still be alive or thinking when you're dead. And in dreams you can become a book - a part of a book."

-About The Green Futures of Tycho (Sleator) Joe senses there is something serious being said but he can't quite put his finger on it. "It's a different story. Like sometime it's hard to understand. Like he has different futures and himself was being mean and it all had to do with this egg that changed. I haven't read a book like it. It's different."

-Peg reads Goffstein's deceptively simple-looking picture book, An Artist and says, "This is dumb. It shouldn't even be a book." Cary retorts with rare insight: "You just don't like it because you don't understand it. If you understood it, you'd like it." Will later comments "Some people would think differently about this book. It's about an artist who walks around painting all the things God had created. It's like God had made a person to be God on paper."

-In a class discussion of An Artist (Goffstein), Barb suggests that it could be understood by older children who would "get more out of it." Will again says "Even people who aren't good drawers. I think they could still read it and still get an idea. A thought." Lois agrees "You don't have to be an artist to understand what an artist is." Right. You could ... you know ... you don't have to be an artist," Tom asserts.

In summary, children showed an awareness of theme and were able on occasion to make succinct thematic statements. Although children
did not often appear to evaluate a theme or apply it directly to their own lives, some children gave reflective comments indicating that literature influenced their thinking.

**Identifying with Characters**

Children often demonstrated that they became observers, empathized or identified with characters in the book, a characteristic of the onset of formal operations.

-Bill says numerous times in an interview that he imagines himself in books. "You feel like you're just sitting there, like you're walking along and talking with them." As he read Bunnicula (Howe), he felt "like an ant walking through looking at everything they do." About Robinson Crusoe (Defoe) which he described as a fantasy, he says "I got fantasy out of that - like being on an island seeing exotic things, like building your own house and weapons. My fantasy is it being fun and you feel like you're there." In The Drought on Ziax II (Morressey) "You feel like you're in the story because you're zooming across the sky on those rafts, or fighting the grass."

-Cary thinks The Cybil War (Byars) is going to be liked best by sixth graders because "you're thinking - since you're in the 6th grade you're thinking how she thinks."

-Sam brings up his favorite book once more - My Side of the Mountain (George). "It motivates you. If you read this one and you're out there in the woods, you want to go out there and do that. You want to be that person. I always secretly thought I could do what he did."

-Tammy says sometimes she sees herself in books. "I say - 'Hey that's like me' or something. The girl will have some problems like me."

-Margie says of Class Pictures (Sachs) "That's kind of like me, how I've gone through school. There are two friends and it's kind of like I'm both people. I'll be one and sometime I'll be the other."
-In Blume's Superfudge, Sam says that he "identified with Fudge. I think that's why everybody likes that book because they can think - 'Boy, my little brother does that.' They can think what they did. It brings back a lot of memories. (Pause) I think books were made for people to relate to and think 'that really could happen!'"

Children expected to find people portrayed realistically in fiction and viewed the experiences of book characters as "other lives lived."

In summary, one might say that children at the final stages of concrete operational thinking have many of the beginnings of a more fully formed response to literature. These children were evolving categories for their reading. They demonstrated an ability to compare and evaluate books especially if they could compare books in categories of their own choosing using tacit, but to them explicit, criteria. They were able to make statements about theme seeing theme as a warning or moral and as the more neutral central idea of a book. In addition they identified with characters and saw books as information about the world. In the distinction made by Applebee, as their ability to become involved in literature increased, so too did their ability to distance themselves from literature increase toward a more defined role of the spectator.

What children seldom demonstrated, on the other hand, was an ability to analyze literature outside of their own feelings and reactions to it. Categorization and evaluation, the development of thematic awareness, and identification developed in concert based upon wide reading and a broad foundation of positive experiences with "good books." While often inarticulate, disorganized, confused, or complex, children's responses revealed that they were developing
the skills of the adult reader as they attempted to give meaning to what they read. This has many implications in the development of curriculum and the teaching of reading.

Participating in the Community of Readers

Although the reading act itself may be viewed as an individual one, much evidence exists here that children used the group in various ways to facilitate their own reading skills. For example, children used the class to rehearse what they had read so far, to help supply missing details, or to make connections between other book titles or authors. Children listened to others talk about books they hoped to read, and this listening made books more predictable. They used the group as a way of enjoying reading, sharing pictures or anecdotes, and for entertainment such as in reading aloud to each other.

Different children made different uses of the community. Some children were greatly aware of what others said, what they read, and how they reacted to what they read such as "Readers of Realistic Fiction." Some children, such as "Different Drummer" readers, made less explicit use of the community either unconsciously or self-consciously, as in the case of Nathan ("I don't like to read what everybody else reads"). Other readers played with or misinterpreted the behaviors the group had learned to expect.

-Lennie marches across the room carrying The Pinballs (Byars) and says loudly to no one in particular "I recommend this book to everyone!"

-Peg stands at the bookcase with two other girls who are looking for something to read. She pulls out popular titles at random and saying seriously "I read that. It's good." "Oh, I read that, it's good." One girl says vehemently, "You didn't read all those!" Peg grins and moves away.
-Kelly is discussing patterns in animal stories with two other students and the teacher. The group offers titles of animal stories and begins to list patterns. Kelly keeps remembering titles: "Oh, and another one is Old Yeller (Gipson)." "Another one is The Yearling (Rawlings)."

-Cara is reading Fog Magic (Sauer) and Joan sits down, saying "I read that. It's really good." Cara retorts "If you've read it, what's it about?" Joan, who has not read the book, looks at the cover and says with authority, "It's about this place and there's this fog coming in and strange things start to happen." Cara listens to the rest of the description before telling Joan "You haven't really read it."

In addition, some readers used the community and then withdrew partially from it as they moved toward greater independence in book selection.

Within this teacher-created framework, students and teacher developed this community of readers which became more visible or took shape after several months.

-In May speaking of changes she had observed, Lois said "It was about January that I began to feel really good about the group's response to books. They started to relate the books. They had accumulated some titles and were able to talk about books in retrospect rather than just in terms of what they were reading now. Something was growing. It was more than just the usual winter-getting-down-to-business. That was the point at which I began to see some shape."

This community gave directions to many readers as to how to behave, where and what to read, what to ask or say, what to share and remember, and so forth. For less able readers, the developing "shape" of response throughout the year gave them repeated opportunities to behave as if they were able readers since much of the reading behaviors discussed could be generated from anything a reader read. In addition all readers had access to the community history of what had been read
or said since talk frequently ranged over previous material. This allowed books, authors, ideas, and vocabulary to be continually introduced and reinforced or revisited in the community. If children missed something, there were multiple opportunities for them to see, hear, use, or find it again sometime in the year.

This community, then, was seen as a support system for the development of readers and the definition of reading behaviors along a wide front. Reading was pleasurable and sociable. Children discussed and practiced discussion in a variety of contexts with the teacher's realization that she needed to "help them stumble through the ideas at first" before discussions would evolve in more fruitful ways. Children made use of this community, to paraphrase Tolstoy, as a means of continually becoming readers.

Summary

Responses children made to literature in one fifth and sixth grade classroom at Barrington Elementary School were classified in various ways in order to discover, describe and clarify patterns. The first category of discussion was the reading behaviors children exhibited in the social context of the classroom. Children's decisions as to where and with whom to read were statements of intention to read with attachment or willingness to talk with friends. Children in the classroom recommended books to each other in personal testimonials such as "I read that. It's good." Children read to each other, retold interesting and funny parts, or used the entertainment as evidence of a book's worth. In addition, children reminded each other of past experiences in previous classes with books. In this classroom,
children valued the number of books read as well as speed or number of pages consumed but did not see this as a primary value of reading. Rather, numbers were one indicator of a reader's growth. Children used pictures in books or on book jackets to aid them in talking about a book in addition to using them as models for their own artwork. Examples from daily discussions, unsolicited discussions, overheard conversations, observed behaviors, children's writings and conversations with the teacher illustrated the social context of the classroom.

A second category of response was proposed by the teacher in order to discuss readers in the classroom. Readers and reading behaviors were classified into ten categories. Five were described according to the type of reading material those readers preferred; three were categorized according to the readers' relationship to the group or to the teacher; and the remaining two described readers in terms of their engagement with text or the number of books they read. None of these categories were mutually exclusive nor could any child's reading behaviors be classified within a single category throughout the year. Children made use of other children's recommendations in different ways and some children were seen as having more powerful influences on the group than were others. Examples from the reading records of children, reader interviews plus the range of data from previously mentioned events in the classroom, served to illustrate and describe these various types of readers. It was suggested that other observers would categorize reading behaviors in other ways and that these categories were the result of the teacher's observation and the researcher's augmentation.
A third category of response included eight factors involved in a child's choice of what to read. These factors were presented singly but were seen to function in concert in the classroom. At this age, by far, the most influential factor in children's choices as to what to read was what peers indicated about a book. Children proved adept at involving each other with literature by using their own descriptors such as good, funny, weird, a mystery, or adventurous, exciting and fast. Although children demonstrated an awareness of genre categories, some were confused by certain distinguishing points of, for instance, what constituted a fantasy. Children also demonstrated an awareness of authors and some children became known as experts on certain authors or genres. Children chose books by the length or appearance of the book and short books were valued by children during certain times. Children often read what was immediately available rather than search for a book elsewhere. However, children did make use of other sources outside of the classroom. Assignments brought book titles into visibility both for the student who completed the assignment and for the ones who observed the work of others. In an effort to portray the accumulation of children's response to a book as an important influence on the book choices of other children, response to one popular realistic fiction title, The Pinballs (Byars), was described as it occurred over the course of the year.

The fourth section included an analysis of responses to determine what changes had occurred from the beginning of the school year to its conclusion in June. Various aspects of response in the classroom were examined for comparison of early responses to later ones. Changes
were described in four categories introduced in Chapter IV and outcomes were discussed in reading aloud, discussion, sustained silent reading and extensions. Changes were seen in types, numbers and variety of books read by children singly, and as a group. Children's evaluative statements about books were seen to be bound to their feelings about a book. Within some confusing or inarticulate statements about books were seen the beginnings of evaluative criteria. Children began to categorize books, to compare books and to mention connections among them based on similar content, themes, or settings. Some children solidified their preferences as readers while others modified theirs in the course of a year. At the year's end, children reported more books read, more enjoyment of their experiences with books, and a satisfaction with what they defined as progress in reading. Children extended literature through drama, surveys, illustration or writing and all of these had some impact on children's book awareness. In addition, these experiences supplied a chance for children to talk through or reflect upon what they had read.

In a fifth section, children's responses in this study were analyzed and compared to stages suggested by Applebee (1978) in an effort to more clearly describe the range of reading behavior in one classroom. Children in this fifth and sixth grade classroom were seen predictably to exhibit many responses typical of children in the stage of concrete operations. Children summarized or categorized literature in terms of their feelings about it. Children appeared to have a set of categories which were understood by other children. In addition, they built upon a foundation of narration and retelling, characteristics of an earlier stage in children's thinking. Some children
also demonstrated an ability to make thematic statements. Some children identified with characters or situations in a book, saw the ideas in the book in terms of their own lives, or wondered "what it would be like". Some children appeared to be simultaneously distancing themselves from literature while at the same time involving themselves in it. Few children attempted to analyze literature. Although they gave reasons for their evaluative comments, the reasons were a combination of subjective and objective statements rather than with reference to any agreed-upon literary evaluative criteria. Children's lengthy statements revealed the complexity of their thinking about literature. A concern with categorization, summary, theme and involvement could be seen, for instance, in single statements children made.

The final section briefly described a reading community mutually created by teacher and students which supported all readers. This community was contributed to and drawn upon by all and in different ways at different times. Once again, the teacher was seen as choreographer of events and the person responsible for the framework around which children and teacher created an environment conducive to the change and growth of all readers.
CHAPTER VI
SUMMARY, IMPLICATIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Summary

The Problem of the Study

It was determined that adult response to literature is more frequently studied than is children's response to literature. In addition, studies in response to literature are not often conducted in real classrooms over a length of time.

The purpose of this research, then, was to describe the patterns of response to literature which ten and eleven year old children in one classroom made during a school year. This involved an examination of the environment which the teacher and students created, the identification and categorization of literature events, an analysis of the responses children made to those events, and a description of the change in children's responses which occurred from September to May.

Procedures

A naturalistic approach was used to explore patterns of children's response to literature in one self-contained fifth and sixth grade classroom. Twenty-six, later twenty-five, children (one child moved midyear), one full-time teacher and three student teachers were observed, most usually in the afternoons, two to four times per week. The study began in September and extended to the first week in June.
Evidence about children's response to literature was collected by informal observation and anecdotal records, tape-recorded interviews, and solicited or informal conversations. In addition, children's written work such as monthly book reports; weekly journal entries and "book log" reading records were transcribed. Children's other products or extensions relating to literature such as dramas, surveys, construction and artwork were noted.

Data were presented in two parts. The first part described the teacher's organization of space, time, materials and curriculum which facilitated response. The second part described children's response in terms of the social network children created, types of readers, reasons for children's book choices and the change in response over the school year.

Findings

The Teacher's Role. The teacher's organization of the classroom facilitated children's response to literature.

1. The teacher provided the arrangement of the physical setting in the classroom. A reading area with a book collection and display of books emphasized the importance of literature. Children used space in the room to read privately in corners or under the loft or more publicly in the reading area or at the grouped desks.

2. The teacher arranged time daily, weekly and over the school year so that each day children heard literature read aloud. She let children read books of their own choosing.

3. The teacher helped children talk about books by providing a "sharing" time in which children could talk about their present and past book experiences. She also spoke informally with and interviewed children about their reading, invited children's comments when she read aloud, and set up small group discussions on individual books.
4. The teacher asked questions which focused children's thinking on multiple aspects of reading and literature.

5. The teacher advised readers about books other children had enjoyed, books she enjoyed or new books in the classroom. Her knowledge of individual readers and her repertoire of literature gave her the reputation among students as a "good recommender" of books.

6. The teacher provided a simple record keeping format called "a book log" which enabled her to see emerging patterns in children's reading. The book log also enabled children to observe and discuss their own patterns and growth in reading.

7. The teacher asked children to extend their reading with activities such as written reactions, illustrations, dramas, constructions, and surveys. These extensions were displayed as further evidence that reading was valued in the classroom.

8. The teacher provided constant and optimistic support for each child reader by acknowledging children's efforts to become better readers. She shared their enthusiasm for certain authors and titles, their pride in reading a greater number of books or more difficult material, and their enjoyment of humorous, familiar or moving parts of books. She listened to children talk.

Social Context and Response

The children and teacher created a social context which influenced readers and reading in many ways during the year. Children's choices and behaviors formed patterns which could be phrased as "rules" for functioning as a reader in this classroom.

1. Choose a place to read. Children found locations, such as the sofas in the reading area or the loft, which indicated how much they were willing to be part of a group. They also chose to read at their desks or in private corners indicating their intentions to read privately or with greater concentration.

2. Read near someone. Many children found several others to refer to, either by proximity or by voice, who read similar types of books or who behaved similarly during silent reading. Pairs or small groups talked about books, influenced choice, read aloud to or entertained each other.
3. **Give book testimonials.** Children recommended book titles to each other or approved of the choices of others. Books were evaluated as good or great. Children infrequently talked about books which were not liked or enjoyed.

4. **Entertain others by sharing the content of books.** Children frequently shared funny, interesting, entertaining, or sensational parts of a book with each other. This was done publicly as in the end-of-the-day sharing, in small more private groups or between two children as a part of silent reading.

5. **Remember the past.** Children who were not able to find a book to read selected what other children had read, what previous teachers had read aloud, or what they had enjoyed in the past. In addition, children recalled authors, titles and parts of what others had shared, read or discussed and offered those memories during discussion.

6. **Use pictures as an aid to talking and as models for artwork.** Children used jacket or in-text illustrations to clarify their points in discussion. They also nearly always used book illustrations as a model in creating book extensions such as a poster for the monthly book report.

**Response and Reader Type**

The teacher observed and categorized readers in several ways. The teacher identified patterns in children's reading in terms of children's reading preferences, their interactive behaviors while reading, and the degree to which they relied on or were susceptible to recommendations of others. In addition, children were described by their degree of attachment to reading in general and by the number of books they had read. These categories were not mutually exclusive:

1. **Readers of contemporary realistic fiction** accounted for more than half of the class. Readers typified realistic fiction as "I-books" (first person narrative) and as about people (often girls) with problems. Readers of realistic fiction were aware of their own preferences and of certain authors (such as Blume, Conford, or Byars), relied on each other for recommendations, and frequently talked about their reading with each other and the class.
2. Readers of funny or light fiction selected this genre for its value as entertainment both privately and publicly. Many children, including less able readers, were readers of humorous fiction at some time during the year. Children were aware of titles of humorous books and of particular authors (such as Pinkwater or Cleary) and frequently asked the teacher for a "funny" book which was shared with the class.

3. Readers of short and easy fiction selected this type of book for various reasons such as marking time, while waiting for another book or as a quick book to finish. Although most readers read an occasional book in this category, it was regarded as lesser fare by some. Children recommended various titles of this type to each other.

4. "The Gang of Four" began early in the year as a group of fifth grade boys with a preference for realistic fiction. Four boys worked together, talked about books and shared non-fiction titles with each other. In their informal talk, they enjoyed reading, expressed opinions, asked questions, observed and clarified books for each other acting alongside the larger group but in similar supportive ways. They showed great tenacity in studying the picture books of David Macauley and Mitsumasa Anno. Later in the year, they influenced each other's reading and became a self-acknowledged "group" who read fiction titles together. Early in the year these readers seldom shared with the whole group but by spring they were more frequent contributors.

5. "Different drummers" were readers who relied less on what everyone else was reading and more on their own interests. These "loners" contributed less frequently to group discussion early in the year and behaved more independently than did other readers. At the year's end, they were regarded as important recommenders of new titles as children's reading interests broadened. Different drummers frequently made a series of selections written by one author, or from a particular genre. Some listened intently while the teacher read aloud, sat apart from others during reading, and selected books from sources other than the classroom collection.

6. Readers of fantasy overlapped somewhat the previous category. Few children preferred fantasy at the year's beginning but by the middle of the year, some children asked for fantasy recommendations. Some children became known to others as preferring the genre. Interest in fantasy grew steadily toward the year's end.
7. Pliable readers were those most susceptible to the recommendations of the teacher. While all readers relied on the teacher for recommendations at some time during the year, these readers turned most frequently to her for suggestions, specific titles, and support. Readers with a less well-developed (or limited) preference sought out the teacher for advice. By the year's end, pliable readers relied more frequently than previously on the recommendations of other students.

8. Catalysts were readers who could most easily influence the reading of other children and were known by them as "good recommenders." Catalysts could be avid readers, enthusiastic talkers or enjoyers. The teacher "planted" books with catalysts so that the books might be talked about in the classroom.

9. Detached readers were those children who at some time did not seem to be involved in a book. Some readers found it difficult to find a book they might like or to continue a book once they had started it. All children were attached at some time to a book. Some children were more frequently distracted or "at sea" than were others. Detached readers were less frequent in the spring.

10. Other. The number of books read was a way of categorizing readers without weighing quality of book or quality of the reader's experience. Children valued number of books read as an indication of progress. However, there was no or very little evidence of competition between children in this area. Year end individual totals varied from 122 to 25 books read. Children averaged approximately 5 books per month.

Factors Contributing to Children's Book Choices

Children's book choices were based on many factors which operated often simultaneously and over time.

1. For the majority of readers, the single most influential factor in children's selection of books was the recommendation of another person. Children recognized others as key recommenders. Librarians, parents and other family members as well as the classroom teacher were important sources of recommendation. Children's recommendations were offered frequently whether solicited or not.

2. Children recalled past experiences with a particular book, author or topic. Books read several years ago were reread; books or series of books begun previously were continued or completed.
3. Genre, content, or type of book influenced children's choices. However, child categories were in many cases confusing to or conflicting with adult definitions. Children's book categories included, for example, good, exciting, boring, different, funny, well-written, adventurous, short, interesting, horse, cat, animal, fiction, or fantasy books. Children did not agree on or establish criteria for inclusion in these categories but descriptors were understood by children to indicate something about a book's content or worth.

4. Children selected books by author reputation and demonstrated an increasing awareness of authors as time passed. Some children were known to others as "fans" or "experts" on a particular author by having read many (or in some cases, all) of a particular author. Books from popular series provided children with repeated satisfactions and predictable content. When authors were mentioned, children frequently offered other titles by that author.

5. Shorter, less demanding books were chosen by children when they wished to read together, when they wanted to "mark time" between books of greater depth, or as camouflage for less able readers. Short books were seen as less desirable by some but all children at one time read a short book. Some children equated length with depth. Children demonstrated a concern with reading books that were appropriately challenging.

6. Children selected reading material from what was available in the classroom collection more readily than from other sources. Some children considered reading a title only after long exposure to it in the classroom. Children reported other instances of reading a book "because it was there." Children also talked about books casually if the books were present in the classroom.

7. Although children considered a book's appearance, they also considered recent or new books; others preferred the much-read paperbacks.

8. Because of teacher assignments, children read at least one historical fiction title. In addition, the keeping of monthly records spurred some children to select books so that their monthly total would increase.

9. Response generated by a single title, The Pinballs by Betsy Byars, demonstrated how a single book attracted readers not only to this book but to other books by the same author. In addition, frequent class attention and rehearsal of plot enabled less able readers to enjoy this book. Frequent recalling of this book met with enthusiasm by previous
readers and by the year's end, most students were familiar with both the book and the author.

Patterns of Response during the Year

Patterns were considered in four literature events: reading aloud, discussion, sustained silent reading (SSR) and extensions. In some cases patterns were seen as changes and in other cases as evidence of growth.

Patterns of the teacher's structure for reading aloud:

1. The teacher read aloud eleven chapter books, three picture books and some poetry.

2. The teacher chose books to read aloud based on her knowledge of the book or author; a balanced sequence considering content, genre and student familiarity; the value of the book in the curriculum, and, the recommendations of others.

3. The teacher used a discussion of the book read aloud to highlight important aspects of the text such as character motivation, information, or author intent (theme). She also encouraged children to picture the settings, to empathize with characters, and to make predictions.

4. The teacher asked students to rank each successive book read with those previously read. The comparison of books elicited children's evaluative criteria.

Patterns in children's responses to reading aloud:


2. Children engaged in behavior during the reading aloud period which did not appear to be related to reading. Nonetheless, discussion revealed that some children were listening intently, some intermittently, and some were not listening at all.

3. Some children were willing to discuss aspects of the book with the teacher during reading aloud. As novice discussants, they addressed remarks to the teacher. Children did not readily or eagerly discuss together what was read aloud.
4. No child asked to reread a novel the teacher had read aloud. Few sought out and read another book by the author of a book read aloud.

5. Children noticed and appreciated the expressive way in which the teacher read aloud.

6. Children's evaluative criteria for books read aloud were most frequently stated subjectively. Although implicitly expressed, children's objective evaluative criteria could be discerned from their statements.

Patterns in the teacher's organization of discussion:

1. The teacher provided structured opportunities for whole group, small group and individual book discussion. The whole group discussed books in book sharing following SSR. Small groups were formed to discuss a particular book or topic and the teacher occasionally arranged individual conferences. Books were often discussed informally, as well.

2. In book sharing, the teacher initially invited children to talk about books they were reading. As children built a repertoire, she focused thinking and talk on books with similar content, characters, themes, settings, or motifs. The teacher helped children categorize and see patterns in literature.

3. The teacher asked children to make connections among aspects of books or between literature and children's experiences.

4. The teacher asked children to be aware of patterns in their own reading and to note changes in these patterns.

5. The teacher noted some cohesion in discussion as the year progressed. Children spoke to a topic with more authority. Topics were sustained for a longer discussion time.

6. The teacher used discussion to emphasize reader enjoyment of literature, to elicit children's thinking, to connect readers and books, to help children develop a literary framework, and to evaluate readers' progress.

7. The teacher used small group discussions to hear children read aloud, to provide for a smaller public arena for discussion and to provide opportunity for a more focused discussion.
Patterns were noted in children's response to discussion.

1. Children most frequently recounted plots to each other in discussion. Often the same books were recalled but children seemed to enjoy hearing about familiar titles.

2. Children supported each other in discussion. They agreed with each other on what was "good." They encouraged reluctant sharers; assisted each other in remembering titles, authors, characters' names, or specific words, and they tried to help each other express ideas.

3. The presence of a book in the classroom elicited much informal discussion. Children paused to talk about books which were touchable or visible on desks, chairs, tables or in people's hands.

4. The content of child-child discussions were frequently recall of "good" plots, enjoyment and observation of details, or getting information and characters straight. The content of child-teacher discussion was most frequently, but not limited to, the discovery and discussion of patterns.

5. Children were reluctant to discuss the endings of books they had read if those listening had not also read the book. They were reluctant to "ruin" the story for another reader.

6. Some children's discussion revealed confusion over authorship, book parts or literary terminology.

7. Children discussed books more easily when they had their book logs in front of them or when they could handle a book during discussion.

8. A child's statements offered within small group conversation often revealed more about the child than did those statements made as answers to questions.

9. Children offered few generalizations about books unless specifically led to by teacher questioning.

10. Children seldom if ever offered analytic statements about a book or the way in which an author worked.

Patterns in the teacher's structure for Sustained Silent Reading (SSR):

1. The teacher saw SSR as a way of valuing reading in the classroom. She felt that students would no longer have
as much time to read when they went to junior high school so that reading was especially crucial at this level.

2. During SSR the teacher helped children find books to read, discussed reading individually, kept records, read books herself, and maintained order.

3. The teacher noted that in the later part of the year when more reading satisfaction appeared to be taking place, the quality of SSR time improved.

Children's responses to SSR:

1. All children continued to become readers in this classroom. Most students were consistently enthusiastic about reading and liked reading. At some time during the year each student found reading pleasurable.

2. Some children became and were regarded by others as experts on a particular genre or author.

3. Many children were aware of what other children preferred to read and could recall who had read certain titles. Some children developed passionate attachments to particular books, authors or genres.

4. Some children became temporarily detached from reading and could not find a book to read or could not finish a book started.

5. During SSR children's routines, in addition to reading books of their own choosing, included finding books to read, finding a place in which to read, and finding someone to read near or with.

Observations concerning the content of children's reading during SSR:

1. Over the nine-month school year 25 children reported reading 1083 fiction and non-fiction books. A group of picture books being considered for the Caldecott medal were "counted as one book."

2. Individual totals for the school year ranged from 24 to 122 books read with the average being about 5 books per month.

3. Children saw progress as an increase in their individual monthly totals read. Children were not overtly competitive in "out-reading" each other.
4. Realistic fiction and humor were most popular in this classroom. Fantasy became increasingly popular. Non-fiction attracted a small group of boys. Picture books and poetry were read on an occasional basis and were enjoyed frequently in pairs. Historical fiction, with the exception of that which was set in World War II, was not read by this class.

5. From March to June, children's reading generally increased. Most children showed a greater interest in reading and a greater willingness to discuss their reading following SSR.

Observations concerning the teacher's structuring for book extensions in the classroom:

1. The teacher defined extensions as doing something with a book during or after it had been read. The purpose of an extension was to "help make books more memorable" for children. Book extension activities included talking, and writing, making, or doing something.

2. Book extensions in the classroom included discussion of books the teacher read aloud or children read individually as well as in other small group discussions; book logs and journals; book reports and the accompanying "something to interest the class"; dramas; dioramas or constructions; surveys; and displays.

3. The teacher used extensions for multiple purposes: to legitimize reading; to relate reading to other areas of the curriculum; to make books more visible in the classroom; to help children remember books; to help children reflect on reading; as information about children's thinking; as appealing classroom display; and, as vehicles for the furthering of talk.

4. The teacher gave suggestions for the focus or format of the monthly book report.

5. The teacher seldom gave directions for the format of "something to interest the class" which accompanied the monthly book report.

Children's responses to extension:

1. Children used book extensions as another piece of evidence attesting to a book's "goodness."
2. Early in the year, the artwork which accompanied children's written monthly book report showed some small variety in format. Later, children limited their artwork to posters or pictures generally constructed from the book jacket or a picture in the book. Children used a variety of media in presenting posters: paint, felt tip markers, pencils, and collage.

3. Children's written book reports reflected a wide variety of facility with language and organization.

4. In April the teacher's suggestion for writing the monthly book report from the point of view of a character produced generally longer and more cohesive writing than previously.

5. Children's May book reports following the previous assignment reflected the widest variety of format ranging from poetry and cartoons to newsflashes, journals and first-person points of view.

6. Children did not appear to read each other's writing. Children appeared to be more aware of each other's artwork.

7. At one point, a boy quoted a phrase to another child - "Think what it's like to be in the skin of" another child - which the teacher had emphasized by extension several months previously. This suggests that the extension was memorable for this boy.

Children's literary understandings: Children at the later stages of concrete operational thinking and in the beginning stages of formal operational thinking exhibited certain characteristics typical of those stages. The following observations were made about children's evaluative statements.

1. Children evaluated books according to subjective categories such as good, exciting, sad, funny or boring.

2. Children's categories were also based on content (animal stories; divorce books), voice of the author ("I" books), and genre. Some children were confused about the distinguishing features of fiction, non-fiction, or fantasy.

3. Children were more likely to evaluate a book negatively if they had not read it recently. Books begun and disliked were not completed. Frequently children could not say why.
4. Children's statements showed more diversity and depth when made about books they liked rather than about those they disliked.

5. Children evaluated books more readily and with greater depth when comparing books than when evaluating a single one.

6. Categories with boundaries agreed upon by children (animal stories, books by one author) helped them focus talk. Children attempted to evaluate, and in some cases, to generalize about these categories.

7. Children's statements taken in context, although often disorganized, confused or inarticulate, revealed objective evaluative criteria. However children very seldom offered an objective analytical statement about literature apart from their own subjective feelings about it.

Children's responses to theme:

1. Children exhibited varying degrees of skill in their abilities to phrase thematic statements.

2. Children did not frequently offer thematic statements in book reports or in discussion unless explicitly requested to by the teacher. They were, however, aware of the teacher's emphasis in this area.

3. In addition to seeing themes as the ideas central to a book, children interpreted themes as morals, warnings or merely as information about the world.

4. When making attempts to state a theme, children often struggled with finding the words. Other children and the teacher tried to assist the speaker.

Children's responses to characters and situations in literature:

1. Children saw the experiences and actions of book characters as similar to or different from their own.

2. Some children reported feeling like a spectator, "as if I'm there."

3. Although children did not specifically evaluate a theme in terms of its applicability to their own lives, they indicated that a book character's experiences had relevance to their own lives.
Development of a community of readers: The whole classroom context was viewed as a reading community in which all children could function as readers. Children made use of the community in the following ways.

1. Children showed their enjoyment of books and reading together by entertaining each other with recounting good parts, sharing pictures, or reading aloud.

2. Children used each other and the teacher for locating books to read, for reassurance that a book was worth reading, and for appreciation and acknowledgment when they completed a book.

3. Those who talked about a book as they were reading it rehearsed or clarified the content for themselves.

4. Children assisted each other in recalling information from a book, in finding words to express ideas, and in making connections between other books and authors.

5. Children were aware of and made use of the community in different ways.

6. The community provided all readers with ideas on what to read, how to talk about books, what to remember and how to respond. This evolved and coalesced as the year progressed.

7. The community supported the efforts of all children to become better readers.

Implications for Teaching

Although the findings of an ethnographic study are context-bound, generalizations drawn from this study can be used by other teachers. The study provides a description of a working reading program, based exclusively on children's literature, which facilitates and guides children's reading growth. In addition, this investigation describes the nature of some fifth and sixth graders' responses to literature.
Understanding Ten- and Eleven-Year-Olds' Response to Literature

1. Children strongly influence each others' responses to literature. Again and again children turned to each other for information, for recommendation, and for encouragement or affirmation. Much of this influence occurred during the casual talk of children commenting on books present in the classroom.

This spontaneous book talk generated child interest and promoted a positive attitude toward reading which carried child readers throughout the year. In addition, children assisted each other in predicting possible outcomes of books being read and in rehearsing or retelling parts of a book a child was engaged in reading.

Although some of this talk was actively encouraged by the teacher during sharing time, much of it occurred throughout the day, a fair indication that reading had an impact on and value for these children.

Teachers of middle grade children can make good use of peer influence in reading by supporting children's talk and approval of books. In addition, children's frequent talking about books in the presence of books suggested the importance of a book collection in the classroom.

2. Children need to know that their efforts to become readers are valued. Children took great pride in their book logs and marked the number of books they had read as an accomplishment. At the same time children were proud of subtleties such as reading a book of greater depth, switching to a new kind of book, seeing aspects of a book in a new light, or finding a book that no one else had discovered. Children were willing to talk about their reading and their thinking
in an atmosphere of respect. Teachers who understand what children see as progress would support children's efforts at growth. In addition, teachers would provide many opportunities for children to enjoy and take pride in what they have read as well as acknowledging that they have read.

At the same time the teacher would seek ways of guiding students' growth. James Britton (1968) along with Barb in this study, would remind us that growth in reading can be marked by the reading of more books with satisfaction and by the reading of books with more satisfaction. Teachers might be encouraged to foster both as children who have not read widely or with enthusiasm are hardly ready to spend eight weeks examining Great Expectations in hopes that the experience will foster greater satisfaction in reading.

3. **Children need time to engage in reading.** Some children arrived at school as committed readers. For others, reading was a difficult and time-consuming act. It took nearly half the school year for some children to settle into a reading pattern that included fiction. For most children, reading became progressively more pleasurable as the school year passed. Some children "fell away from" reading temporarily. It is helpful for teachers to remember that just as an adult reader moves in and out of reading, so do children. Just as an adult at times prefers certain reading material (even of lesser quality), so do children. This would suggest that teachers develop patience and trust that children will emerge more visibly as readers if given time. It would also suggest that teachers need to become better observers of what constitutes reading growth at this level so
that growth could be observed as a year-long process rather than as occurring within the bounds of a report card period.

4. **Children need a chance to extend and practice discussion.** Since children tend to use, in the word of Chambers (1978), such "portmanteau" words as exciting, boring, interesting or funny, teachers need to help children extend their responses. Why is a book exciting? What is interesting? How does this differ from another book? On what do you base your statements? In addition, teachers need to act as responders themselves, entering into conversations rather than sitting in as inquisitors. Teachers need to set up conversations and discussions where children seek to come to some understandings about human motivations and ideas around which literature is based.

Children frequently do not take time to reflect on reading or to return to what they have read unless asked to do so by the teacher. If teacher provides questions or activities which allow children to revisit past readings in a new light (such as the compiling of a display of books in which a character shows courage), he or she helps response become more reflective and more conscious.

Successful group discussion questions seem to be ones which ask for divergent responses in which children can propose several examples, reasons or answers. Children gave the most enthusiastic responses to questions which asked them to give examples of books in a category and then to discuss why the book belonged in that category.

Children needed practice in discussing. While whole group discussions often became disorganized or unfocused, small groups were willing to work through an idea such as the theme of a poem,
characteristics of an author's books or of a genre. This would suggest that teachers may build discussions in which children listen and react to each other if groups are smaller and are focused on a content and topic toward which all participants have something to offer. The fact that children were more attentive, focused and active discussants after five months of school suggests again that the building of discussion skills takes time and practice.

5. **Children need to build a legacy of past satisfactions.** Children do not want to talk about books they do not like and do not want to examine, in a negative manner, books they do like. Children were more willing to be critical of a book when they had some distance from a book (e.g., one read many books ago or in a previous year).

This would suggest that the major domain of teaching at this level would be the continuous building of a legacy of past satisfactions rather than suggesting to children that some of their choices are of lesser value or depth. (A child's discovery of this on his own, however, would be fine.) If a child feels that his selection is not adequate in the teacher's eyes, if what he chooses is not up to "standard," his confidence is shaken. This does not mean that a teacher would not make every effort to help children into more worthwhile material. It simply suggests that children read for an ever-changing variety of reasons and needs. What one person rejects as lesser material others may adopt in their effort to continue reading, growing or both.

It is the teacher's job to protect and support all readers and all reading growth behaviors. Perhaps critical reading should be
defined at this age with much emphasis on noticing and observing positive aspects of a book. Children should be encouraged to give reasons for their like or dislike of a book, of course. But "critical" in the negative sense of what is not good or is of less value to some adult reader destroys a part of reading for some other child reader. Today's reader of The Guinness Book of Records may be tomorrow's reader of material of more depth if given the chance to find his or her own way via a Blume, a Blyton, or a Byars novel.

6. Children need many opportunities to experience literature on their own terms. Ten and eleven year old children may have difficulty in expressing their understandings about literature. However, even though children frequently gave "because it was good" as a reason for liking a book, their further statements often revealed certain underlying objective criteria. Children understood that some characters were better developed than others ("You knew Yuki was going to make it but in the other book you weren't sure"), some books were better-written ("The words were different") and some books had more depth ("It made me think about things."). Since children need to "stumble through the ideas at first," teachers need to allow time for children to talk about literature. This struggle to talk about books and ideas is not made easier when children are encouraged too quickly into the use of adult critical vocabulary. The response must first be accepted in the child's own terminology.

Richards (1929) pointed to college students' use of "stock phrases" as a major obscurer of response. Galda (1980) showed how
a fifth grade reader's "facile use of meaningless phrases" frequently became the content of her response to literature. This does not mean that useful adult terminology should not be introduced at fifth or sixth grade. It does suggest, however, that, although the teacher may choose to use theme, fantasy or first-person narrative, not all children will hear or understand the adult meanings. In addition, some children will misuse or overgeneralize usage of the term until its meaning becomes more well-established in the classroom. Thus, the teacher ought to elicit and respect children's own descriptors for response, such as "I-books" or "Big Ideas" and introduce the use of such terminology as first-person narrative or theme sparingly and non-exclusively into the classroom.

Other factors which ease discussion seem to be that children begin with a known topic. Thus, a teacher would begin with a partial inventory of books in a category so that all children are located in the discussion with some mutually held assumptions. Lists, charts, and the presence of books help children sustain talk rather than straying from the topic at hand.

The teacher's job is to make it easy for children to grow in appreciation for literature. Rather than helping children acquire terminology, the teacher's focus is to help children acquire a growing satisfaction with literature.

Becoming Readers: Evidences of Growth

What can be described as growth in reading behaviors of ten and eleven year old children? Certainly such a wide range of readers - both in preferences and abilities - would suggest that children were
growing in many ways. If we view reading growth as occurring along a wide front rather than occurring as a series of steps up a long ladder, it may be easier to suggest how teachers might evaluate the growth of readers in their own classrooms.

A ten or eleven year old's demonstration or acquisition of any of the following qualities during a school year might be considered as evidence of his or her growth as a reader.

1. **Enjoyment.** A child who says "Oh boy. Books" has unlimited potential. A child who says "There are so many good books to read" will have the momentum to keep reading. A child who does not want to read unless pushed to read in the classroom is unlikely to become a reader in adult life. Thus, a child who continued to enjoy reading or began to find reading pleasurable would be showing growth.

2. **Fluency.** As Britton (1968) reminds us, "more books read with satisfaction" is a sign of growth. Readers who read often or who enter into reading easily may be called fluent readers. These readers may feel confident when approaching unfamiliar literary territory, may trust their own ability to select books, and are seldom without a book to read. Fluent readers are usually traditionally viewed as the most able readers in a classroom. However, some less able readers may demonstrate fluency as they read through a string of similar books such as biographies, series and "easy" books, or as they reread familiar books. Fluent readers may be those children who practice speed at the temporary expense of depth. Readers of all abilities, then, may demonstrate growth even as they appear to be repeating experiences at one particular level.

3. **Passion.** Greater satisfaction with literature shows itself in many ways and sometimes in ways not at all visible to the teacher or observer. Readers who demonstrate affection or strong commitment to a particular book, an author or genre are demonstrating literature's power to move them. The child who drifts through literature until he discovers *The Pinballs* (Byars) suddenly comes alive. The child who announces that she'll only read animal stories demonstrates not only that she knows where to find continuous reader satisfaction but also that she has formed some ideas about herself as reader. While some children love books, a child who learns to love a book should be viewed as one who has a foundation or the beginnings of a legacy of past satisfactions upon which all future satisfaction rests.
4. Perception. Although some children are able to make thematic statements and some are not, this does not necessarily mean that they are not responsive to ideas in literature. We know that when children learn language, meaning and intention come before a child's mastery of the words to express them. So it is with ten and eleven year olds. Children at this age struggle to express their thoughts, to lend meaning and significance to books which move them, and to communicate this understanding to others.

Perceptive comments which reveal children's thinking are often tossed casually into the classroom talk by children. Many comments are lost in the general speed at which classroom conversation proceeds and teachers might long for the luxury of dealing more frequently with small groups and individuals where talk can proceed more slowly. Nonetheless, since so much happens so quickly, perhaps teachers need to listen and to be attuned for the reader who makes a small perceptive offering which indicates large understandings.

In addition, teachers need to provide time in the classroom and for perceptive comments to be offered and the kinds of activities or questions which generate perception. Finally, perhaps we need to trust that although readers may not make perceptive comments, nonetheless they have moments of perception that teachers can not see, hear, or know about.

5. Flexibility. Children who demonstrate growth in this area of reading show a new willingness to move into unfamiliar material. They may seek to broaden their horizons by moving from non-fiction to fiction, by moving away from or towards what "everyone else is reading," or by switching genres. Some children whose reading selections appear to lack any discernable pattern may be flexible readers. Then again perhaps until these children build up a repertoire of books read it may be difficult to discern a pattern which later in the year is obvious.

Inexperienced readers often cast around for more satisfying reading material. Having little experience with literature, they sample joke books, non-fiction, fantasy for very young readers and science fiction in an effort to map the territory. Flexible readers may spend time "just looking."

Fluent readers may demonstrate flexibility on a wider scale. Since they read faster, they have less to lose if they read a book that is not especially memorable. More frequently, however, it is the readers with less well-formed preferences who are flexible. This willingness to sample, on the part of any reader, should be viewed as a sign of growth.
6. **Emergence of Preferences.** Seemingly the opposite of the previous category, this development of preferences signals that a reader is becoming self-aware. Readers who prefer fantasy, Judy Blume books or humor announce that they not only are readers but that they are developing categories in which they experience predictable satisfactions. Although some children may appear to be "in a rut" with what they choose to read, a teacher who respects children's preferences as areas of expertise supports the child reader. It is helpful to note that in the course of this study no child read exclusively from books of one kind, author or genre.

7. **Involvement.** Readers of realistic fiction most readily acknowledge some involvement with the characters and situations in their reading. Thus, children might say "I'm a little bit like each of the sisters" or "It reminds me of me and my brother." However, children also begin to see aspects, characters and situations in other genre which are similar to their own lives.

As Applebee (1978) points out, children at this age may be more deeply involved in what they read while, paradoxically, they are increasingly better able to distance themselves from it. Growth, then, may be seen in children who see themselves reflected in literature. It may be seen, as well, in children who see characters and situations as happening "out there" - as examples of the possibilities of experience.

Children who say "it's like I was there" or who shed tears indicate some involvement with a book. Some children may choose literature which involves them more thoughtfully and emotionally. On the other hand, some children may purposefully choose humor or particular kinds of non-fiction precisely because they don't wish to be involved. Often following a moving experience with a book, children will choose a less "heavy" book as the next one to read.

It is helpful for teachers to remember that children read for a variety of purposes and that every book does not demand, nor do all readers wish for, emotional involvement in all that they read. The ability to be moved by a book, however, suggests that a child is growing in ability to discern personal meanings in what he reads.

8. **Refining of Categories.** Children of ten or eleven already hold large and ambiguous categories for what they have read. Children who attempt to group books are growing in their ability to see comparisons or relationships and are paving the way for more objective evaluation of literature. In addition, children with experience in a category of books are more able to generalize about that category.
Teachers who support children's growth in the development of categories for books would respect children's "fuzzy" terminology but would assist children in making connections between books of similar genre, theme or type.

9. Connecting. Closely associated with the child's development of categories is the discovery of patterns. The child who says "Hey, that's just like my book" when another reports on a fantasy with a secondary world which parallels the real world has made an important discovery about one of the characteristics of fantasy. The boy who suggests that Anno's picture books are all similar in several ways or the girl who can tell what the next Judy Blume book should have in it have enough experience with Anno or Blume to be able to generalize. The child who sees that a picture book and a chapter book have similar ideas is on the way to understanding thematic patterns in literature.

These small connections often seem to be trivial but it is precisely those connections which a child makes over time that come to replace his childlike and ambiguous categories with more objective categories of the adult world.

Again, the teacher who supports children's growth will respect these small connections and assist children, by activities and discussion questions posed in class, in identifying these patterns. In time, children will grow to see larger and more complex patterns when encouraged from a basis of their own understandings.

10. Generalization. Children with enough experience with a particular genre or author often indicate their growth by attempting to generalize. The child who spoke about liking sorcerers, the quest and magic in fantasy showed that he could look back on his reading and make statements about it. Children who had read many books by Pinkwater, Byars or Sachs could make statements about similarities in that author's treatment, content or style. As readers generalize from their own experiences, they indicate growth in ability to distance themselves from those experiences. In addition, they practice the skill from the bottom up, so to speak, rather than applying meaningless labels learned prematurely from the terminology of adult literary criticism. A child who says "Well, 'Nancy Drew' - they're all alike" indicates new power over a small but important part of literature.

11. Emergence of Objective Evaluation. Perhaps most readers mix objective evaluation of a book with their feelings about it. However, a ten or eleven year old child who tries to explain why he likes a book and attempts to go beyond "because it was good" is working at the growing edges of his evaluative ability. As he struggles to express how "the words are different" or "It's not like other books I've read," a
teacher needs to recognize this as an important occurrence. Giving children time to work out meanings together, gives a teacher the chance to see how they may use each others' thinking to further their own. In addition, teachers receive clues as to the criteria by which children evaluate books when she or he learns to listen to the intent of the child's words which often lies beneath the words themselves.

12. Awareness of Literary Elements. For some children the conscious awareness that books are written by people is a revelation. For others, the mention that two Anno or two Byars books are similar is evidence of a growing awareness of author style. Some children may indicate growth in ability to locate information such as copyright date, dedication or author information. Others may notice for the first time that Tuck Everlasting (Babbitt) has a prologue and epilogue or that the language of Bridge to Terebithia (Paterson) is rich with similes. Any notice of how an author or illustrator works suggests children's growth in building a framework for literature. Here, as in other areas of growth, children's awareness must proceed the terminology and a skillful teacher will build prior experiences in noticing literary elements and wait for a "teaching moment" before introducing the adult term.

13. Seeing Self as Reader. Children who feel good about themselves as readers will continue to progress. Often an attitude change is the first indication of growth for children who have been numbed by repeated exposure to non-literature reading matter or insulted by reading material not of their own choosing. Less able readers need most desperately to acquire a positive attitude towards reading and toward themselves as readers if they are to continue growing. For those readers, often the selection and completion of any book allows them to see themselves as readers. For others, making a switch from reading joke books or picture captions of a book on snakes to a short fiction novel is progress.

If all children are encouraged to see themselves as readers engaged in all aspects of growth in reading, then children are less likely to divide themselves into "good" and "bad" readers. Since so much hinges on a child's enjoyment of reading, teachers should view the child's acquisition of a positive attitude toward reading as the prior, central and most important condition of growth.

Developing A Program Which Supports Growth by Middle Grade Readers

What kind of programs would provide an environment which would support all ten and eleven year olds' efforts to become better readers?
What kind of programs would facilitate reader growth? This study's description of children's typical responses to literature and of the successful practices in one middle grade classroom suggest a framework for those teachers who wish to develop or refine other literature programs.

1. **Teach reading with children's literature.**

   - Trust that all children will become better readers who practice reading from what they choose to read and who hear literature read to them.

   - Trust that as an intelligent adult reader, you can develop a challenging curriculum for all readers.

Many teachers never begin to develop a literature-based reading program because it seems like an insurmountable task. Yet, all who develop programs start with knowledge, some assumptions and some implementation ideas. Time, patience, more knowledge, and continuing evaluation help build a stronger program each year.

2. **Give children the chance to read.**

   - Set aside time for children to practice and enjoy reading at whatever their individual levels of efficiency and skill.

   - Allow children to select their own reading material.

   - Demonstrate, by giving class time to reading, that you not only value reading but that you trust and respect children's efforts to become better readers.

   - Allow children to read in pairs, to read two copies of the same book simultaneously and to quietly recommend books to each other.

Since there is much evidence to suggest that children do not read at home, that school age children watch an average of four to six hours of television per day, and that junior high school students are increasingly too busy to read, it is crucial that schools provide time for readers to read.
This study suggests that Sustained Silent Reading is seldom, if ever all three. Children need to make and reject selections, to consider what they read, to become involved in their reading and to share excitement about books with others. The teacher needs to be free to move around the classroom occasionally to advise or observe readers. Rigidly defining SSR (or giving it fancy acronyms such as USSR - the additional U for Uninterrupted) obscures once more the real purpose. Suggesting that everyone drops everything to read or that the teacher always reads, too, denies the teacher's ability to make intelligent choices about use of time in the classroom.


- Make books easily accessible to children. Let children arrange some books into new locations, for instance, if books on a common theme or by a particular author are a focus.

- Provide frequent opportunities for books to be handled, reclassified or displayed. In this way, titles resurface that were temporarily forgotten but are now able to be recalled as worthwhile.

- Change some books or make additions to the class collection. Do not change the entire collection as some readers take a long while to find time, inclination or need to read a particular title.

- Maintain a selection of multiple copies of a single title so that you are prepared to form small discussion groups of 2-7 people. Discussion books should reflect the criteria of readability by children and enjoyment by various children. They should also be worthy of discussion.

It took the teacher in this study many years to build her permanent classroom collection. If schools willing to spend thousands of dollars on reading textbooks could spend even a part of those thousands on furnishing classroom libraries with worthwhile literature, children would read and read and read. Meanwhile, a teacher has to
make use of libraries and alternative sources for books. Since some literature in the classroom is better, in most cases, than no literature, library books can be helpful. So, too, can parent and service groups, if a teacher is determined to provide children with easy access to books.

4. **Allow children to discuss their reading.**
   - Provide time for children to share their enthusiasm and knowledge with each other.
   - Invite children's talk with questions which will allow all children to add to the discussion such as requests to talk about a good book, a book someone is now enjoying, or a favorite book.
   - Focus children's talk, occasionally and with greater frequency as the year proceeds, on patterns, categories, similarities, comparisons, and conscious awareness of aspects of literature.
   - Involve small groups of children in sustained discussion of topics such as a particular book, patterns in books by a single author, or the comparison of several books.
   - Use critical terminology but allow children to use their own language and terminology when discussing reading.
   - Allow children to help each other explain and describe their reading.
   - Recognize that children will talk about positive experiences with books during times other than sanctioned discussion periods and accept this as evidence that children treat reading as one more interesting experience.
   - Listen to what children say so that you can more clearly recommend books and so that you can evaluate growth.

Barnes (1976) reminded teachers that children build meaning through their conversations with each other. By letting children talk through what they read and by allowing them to assist each other, teachers provide a chance for children to build meaning.
Teachers can help children structure their talk by turning occasionally to the blackboard or chart to list points. In this way, some children are helped to locate themselves in the discussion and to add their views to the growing record. Another aid to talk is the agreement of discussants on what the topic of discussion is. Therefore, a teacher can help children generate examples of a category (such as "What books have we read aloud so far?" or "Give me some books in which the main character has to survive") before asking children to pick the best book read aloud or to tell what someone needs to know in order to survive in the wild.

Extensions can provide particular opportunities for focusing talk. For instance, in this study the presence of a chart with pockets facilitated an evaluation of books read aloud. "Book Logs" reminded children of what they could draw from in proposing "my three favorite books."

5. **Give children a chance to listen each day to literature read aloud.**

- Select a title for a variety of reasons but most frequently because of the quality of ideas, quality of writing, and the book's potential for enjoyment by children.

- Let choices reflect a wide variety of types of literature, including picture books, poetry and changing genres, so that children will be broadened in their familiarity with literature.

- Realize that while not all readers will be able to appreciate each selection you make, you can help some readers to greater enjoyment by extension and discussion.

- Help children continue to listen by clarifying information, by short discussions about what is happening and why, by inviting prediction, and by occasional extension.
-Help children continue to listen by reading with interest. While it is not necessary to be theatrical, those who read with expression convey their own love of reading to others.

Frequently, teachers report that children did not like a particular book after a chapter so they stopped reading it. While some books may not be suitable for some classrooms, children who are not used to hearing stories but are used to seeing stories on television must be helped to listen. Teachers may assist children in listening by developing their interest in listening even before a book is read.

Children in this study did not readily incorporate what the teacher chose to read aloud into their repertoire of authors, "best books," or examples for a particular category of book. This would suggest that children feel much more strongly about what they have chosen to read than about what is read aloud to them. It also suggests that unless the teacher helps children make memorable the books that are read aloud, these books are largely passed over by children.

Predicting content from the book's jacket or from a chapter title is an example of a way of involving children's attention. Stopping frequently to define words breaks the listener's concentration. Nonetheless, some meanings, such as "the but and ben end of a house" or a foreshadowing phrase, may need to be lingered over or clarified if children are to continue to hear and understand.

Certain extensions during the reading of a book help children locate themselves in the book. A map of the action so far, a continuing journal kept by the main character after a few chapters' completion, or a simple list or "rogue's gallery" of the characters are examples
of extensions which help children focus. Discussing the *whys* rather than the *whats* of a chapter allows children to speculate on motivation rather than recall action, as well.

Literature to be read aloud should be chosen with reference to more than a single factor such as the book's value in the social studies curriculum or the fact that "children will love this." Many teachers will want to select literature which children may not be able to or choose to read to themselves. In this case, it is almost always necessary to help students find a way into the story by introduction, discussion, and extension. If children hear literature such as poetry, short stories, high fantasy, or historical fiction, they may be more willing readers of it when they meet it later on in their careers as readers.

6. **Provide time and direction for a variety of responses or extensions.**

- Lead middle grade children to respond to literature in ways other than discussion. Written, dramatic and artistic modes of response allow children to linger over literature, to reflect on aspects of their reading, to develop experience with various means of response, and to interest others in reading.

- Focus written responses into the practice of forms other than the traditional school task of book reports. Teachers should help children see other written possibilities such as: writings from the viewpoint of a book character in forms such as diary entries, letters or advertisements; explanations of the planning of an activity-type response such as a survey, or a summary of a charted comparison.

- Help children develop comparisons by the juxtaposition of similar material or by the charting or listing of similarities and differences.

- Let children collaborate on responses and the representation of response. Children may assist each other in expression as well as support each other's efforts.
- Encourage children to notice patterns and growth in their own responses by saving their work, by record keeping, and by asking children periodically what changes they notice about their reading.

- Display children's response and extensions so that children's work is valued in the classroom by other students and by visitors.

It is often the extension which guides children's thinking. In recall-type extensions, such as plot summaries or pictures drawn from the book, children remember literature favorably. If, however, they must recast literature in some new light, for instance, in a debate between two characters, it is the activity which causes children to dissemble contrasting viewpoints on a central issue of a book. If a child charts similarities in three of Pinkwater's books, he may be prepared to make some general statements about Pinkwater's books.

A teacher who helps a discussion continue by turning to the blackboard to list children's points assists children by extending their focus.

The caution always remains, however, in suggesting that many of the deepest and most important responses children make to literature are not visible in the classroom. Pleasure, enjoyment and satisfaction in reading must not be sacrificed for the sake of an extension.

7. Observe reader's growth.

- Let children keep reading records in as simple a format as possible.

- Refer to reading records and discuss these with children.

- Define growth as broadly as possible so as to include all readers' efforts to become more able readers. Acknowledge children's efforts with specific comments, praise, encouragement and optimism. Let children know that they are growing.
Children want to believe they are changing and that the change is a sign that they are improving. Learning involves risk and many readers are willing to take those risks with support. As children see successes pile up in the form of ten books read in three months they feel more confident that they can read better now than they could formerly. A child who tries a book of greater depth needs to know that his choice is seen by the teacher as evidence of growth, too.

The more items a teacher is tempted to include in the child-kept record or book log, the less happily a child will view his progress or be willing to record his reading. A simple author and title format allows a teacher to retrieve a child's reading and helps the child trigger his own response in conversation.

A folder of written responses to reading might give children a sense of their growth as readers, responders and writers, as well. Much school work is written as evidence for the teacher that some particular format is mastered. No child wants to read, or listen to another read, a book report, but if children were encouraged toward more lively extensions (see 6) including lively writing, extensions could be shared and refined in the classroom.

8. View a literature-based reading program as a year-long one.

- Consider the variety of experiences children have with literature so that no single mode of expression is repeatedly used.

- Keep pleasurable experiences with books as a foremost goal.

- Build a foundation of experiences earlier in the year so that activities such as comparisons, surveys and evaluation can more readily take place later in the year.

- Invite discussion early in the year. Continue to shape discussions and discussion skills.
Observe patterns evolving in children's activity, reading selections, talk, literary awareness and development.

Allow for and expect some temporary flagging of interest or energy. All readers do not stay continuously attached to reading in the course of the year.

Often we are forced to evaluate reading behavior before it has had a chance to show itself. We may "diagnose" a reader on the basis of the oral reading of a contextless (for the child) selection from a graded reader. A child who has been "grouped" for reading needs time to grow back into more natural reading patterns. Children who are used to competing for placement in the "highest" reading group may be temporarily nonplussed when introduced to a literature-based reading program.

Since each year's class group produces its own group effect, as well, teachers may not be able to compare last year's fantasy lovers with this year's realistic fiction fans. Each group needs time to get used to itself. It is helpful to recall that the teacher in this study did not feel that this group "came together" until well into the fifth month of school. In the year following this study, the teacher reported "an entirely different group from last year."


- Add to your knowledge of children's literature by reading yourself during silent reading.

- Select titles to read aloud which you will enjoy spending time with. Convey your enjoyment to children in the way that you read.

- Become involved in observing the reader changes, patterns and growth in your classroom.

- Talk to children to discover what they think about books and reading.
- Cultivate the interest of other teachers in building a literature program so that you have other teachers to talk to and plan with.

- Be patient with the evolution of the literature-based reading program.

It takes time for reading and literature knowledge to grow in a classroom. Children who are just learning what books can provide will wax and wane in their efforts. Teachers pressured to march children through "reading" workbooks may wax and wane in their efforts to provide time for children to read literature. Both children and the teacher need time to develop as readers and guide.

The children in this study had, for the most part, been exposed to good literature throughout their school attendance. Their reading and response had been a valued part of the curriculum since they had begun to learn to read. The teacher had been working out her literature-based reading program for several years, as well. Teachers and students who begin the conversion to a literature based reading program should expect that it will not materialize with instant success. But they should trust that children can eventually build a continuing love of reading and a foundation for all that literature may have to offer from the reading of the literature itself.

**Recommendations for Further Study**

1. **Replication in other environments.** The present study included both teacher influences and the evolution of group influences. A record of student/teacher interactions in other classrooms would extend, confirm or contradict findings of this study. Replication of the study in other environments would contribute to the description of the emergent child reader.
2. **Replication at other grade levels.** Many of the responses discussed in the present study grow out of children's prior experiences with literature. In addition, response patterns in fifth and sixth grade form the basis for response in older children.

- What kinds of patterns in response to literature would be evident in a year-long observation of primary grade children? Of children immediately following the elementary level?

3. **Longitudinal studies.** The present study suggested several descriptions of child readers and reading behaviors. Since it is not yet clear how reading patterns develop, a case study approach might be used to follow the changes of individual reading behaviors.

- Are there distinctly different individual patterns in children's response?

- How do children develop ability to refine response? Are certain types of responses refined before others?

- How will children in the present study develop and change over the next five years?

- In five years will the responses of children in the present study differ from their counterparts in significant ways?

- What qualities or behaviors seem to differentiate less able from more able readers? Do less able readers acquire the same skills as more able readers, but at a slower rate? Or do less able readers acquire a different set of skills altogether?

- In what ways do response patterns of boys differ from those of girls?
4. **Genre and response.** Readers in the present study often voiced strong preferences for a particular genre or type of book such as realistic fiction or fantasy. Those readers who preferred non-fiction were always boys.

- How do literature preferences grow?
- How does genre affect response?
- Do children who primarily read non-fiction (boys) respond in unique ways to the reading of fiction?
- In what ways do the responses of fiction readers compare to those of non-fiction readers?
- When or why do children move into "adult fiction?"
- How does the reading of particular genres influence the development of reader behaviors such as identification, evaluation, or a sense of theme?

5. **Computer studies.** There are many ways children's reading might be coded and a computer program used to describe patterns in children's reading.

- If a school kept reading records for children throughout elementary school, how could a computer program be used in the analysis of children's reading?

6. **Evaluation.** Children's evaluation statements differed widely. While many subjective statements included some underlying objective criteria, children most frequently were unable to state what those criteria were.

- What aspects of books do children most frequently evaluate? Are some aspects of literature, such as author style or the development of character, more difficult for children to evaluate?
- Is there a developmental description of the growth of evaluation?
-Under what circumstances are children able to disembed objective criteria in evaluative statements?

7. **Identification.** While some children reported identifying with situations and characters in books, others responded as onlookers.

-Is the tendency to respond with empathy or as onlooker more closely related to a quality of the reader or of the text?

8. **Manipulation of the environment.** Certain kinds of questions about or experiences with books and reading seem to cause a change in children's thinking. If one of the aims of a reading program is to foster depth of thinking about literature, it would assist curriculum makers greatly to consider the consequences of changing the demands upon children.

-What effect do literature extensions (drama, writing, illustration, discussion) have on children's thinking?

-What kinds of experiences with literature make literature more memorable for children immediately? Over time?

-What kinds of literary experiences develop appreciation?

-What kinds of literature experiences, extensions or discussion questions help children develop ability to evaluate, generalize, empathize, generalize or analyze?

-What are the consequences of direct teaching about a literary work on the future responses of children? After what experiences, or at what stage in development, is direct teaching most successful?

9. **Teacher development.** Many teachers feel less prepared to teach reading with a literature-based reading program. If educators could determine what experiences with literature would most help teachers, university or school-wide influences on curriculum might more easily come about.

Such support for teachers might encourage a wider view of reading and literature in the elementary school curriculum, a view which supports the evolution of skills of both students and teachers.
APPENDIX A

SOME SAMPLE CONVERSATIONAL INTERVIEW QUESTIONS
1. What are you reading now?

2. Could that book be like any other you've read? How?

3. What kind of book would you say that is?

4. Do you think the author might be trying to tell the reader anything? A "message"?

5. What did you think about as you read/listened to this book?

6. Did you like this book? What was good about it?

7. What makes a book a good one?

8. Are there kinds of books which you don't like?

9. Do you have some favorite authors? What do you notice/like about that author?

10. Are there other authors which are like this one?

11. Is what you are reading this month different from what you were reading before? How?

12. Have you changed as a reader this year? How?
Dear Parents:

Most teachers and parents hope that as their children grow they will become not only simply able to read but also able to read critically and with more depth. In order to help schools foster and develop children's ability to read with depth, we need to know more about how children respond to literature, how this response differs from child to child, and what kinds of classroom practices seem to provide encouragement for growth and development.

I am planning to take a look at this area in a study to be conducted during the course of the school year, 1980-81. The study is under the supervision of Dr. Charlotte Huck of The Ohio State University, with the cooperation of staff members of the Informal Alternative Classrooms at Barrington Elementary School.

Your child's classroom will be involved for a part of this time. No testing or other unusual measures will be used, since this is not a study of reading skills. I will be observing normal classroom practices, talking informally with children and recording some conversations on tape for later analysis. Individual students will not be identified by their real names in any report which makes use of this material. I hope you will allow me to consider and include your child's work. If you have any further inquiries concerning this study, please contact me or Marilyn Reed, Coordinator of the Informal Alternative Classrooms.

Sincerely,

Susan I. Hepler
Graduate Teaching Associate
The Ohio State University

SIH/bjf
APPENDIX C

TRANSCRIPT OF INVESTIGATOR'S ON-SITE DAILY LOG
Thursday, April 23, 1981:

Ideas for categories in loft - funny
what books are weird/suspenseful/
mysterious/scary

TL to Kelly: I thought you hated that book/no, it wasn't me/yeah you
said you hated it/no I said I hated that one Mrs. Jo.
read to us last year - The Westing Game/Well, I pointed
to it last fall and you said you hated it/No, I didn't.

Trying to find Kelly a book L. pulls off a stack. Leah suggests "Have
you read The Bad Times of Irma Baumlein (Yes) Anastasis Krupnik (Yes)
L - Have you read Queenie Peavy? That's a fine book. She's a spunky
girl.
TL: I thought you were reading Figgs and Phantoms.

Christy reading Hanging Out With Cici - minus cover.

L. brings over a pile of books: "Mrs. M., do we have to read those
books?" (Peg)

Christy finishes Hanging. Gets Bring to a Boil and Separate - absorbed
in book.

Lenny has Cat Magic which he uses to strike at T.L.

L. has picked out some books. Introduces
1. A Taste of Blackberries - (children) it's really good/L - It's
about a boy w b dies/Is that the ending/L - Well, no. They go
out into the woods to pick blackberries.
2. Incident at Hawk's Hill - (Laura) It's about a boy 2-3 years old
following a hawk and he gets lost/L - Is there anything special
about that boy?/He wouldn't talk/N.S. - He was deaf?
3. Hey, Dummy - about somebody brain damaged.
4. Summer of the Swans - Ch: That's a great book!/Peg - Is there
anyone who hasn't read that book? (Amy, Cara, Linda)
Casey - He follows the geese/swans, say others/
Peg - He's not really retarded but his sister takes him to a lake
where he's really attached on the swans.
Sam - swans are orangish
Peg - and he couldn't find them for about a day.
Sam - Aren't swans pinkish orange?

Will - "So they all have to do with what we're studying?" Lois
misses this. She's trying to get connections made between whole books
and injuries. Will asks for A Taste of B.

Door in the Wall - (Mitty) Doesn't he become uncrippled?

Bridge to Terebithia- Well, the girl dies/(Cara and TL: That's so
great!)
L - Can you think of someone in a book who's overcome a difficult problem?

(Peg) *Jelly Belly* "The guy is overweighted and has a problem and he can't stay on his diet.

(Cara) "Harvey in *Pinballs*. His dad ran over his legs."

*Deenie*

*A Wrinkle in Time* (Calvin) "They think their father is dead but he's trapped."

(Casey) *Island of the Blue Dolphin* "Somebody dies."

Lois on Lukas-Kasha - If I'd read it at another time in the year, I'd think they would have liked it better.

*Get I Know You, Al* for T.L.

"I wish I hadn't read that book so I could read it again." Tom about *The Cybil War*. To me: "Don't you hate Tony?"
APPENDIX D

TRANSCRIPT OF A SOLICITED INTERVIEW OF BARB,
A SIXTH GRADER, IN LATE MAY 1981

300
This half hour interview took place in a temporarily deserted classroom late in May. Sixth grader Barb brought her book card records of all the books she'd read since September. We sat side by side at a table and arranged the cards chronologically. Barb began by talking about the book she'd brought in and was currently reading, *Leo the Lioness* by Constance Greene.

B: The chapters are really short, just a couple pages so it's hard ... I'm really not very far. I'm just on page 75 or so.

SH: Is it looking like it's going to be any good?

B: Yeah. I think its going to be OK. I don't know.

SH: What's it about?

B: Oh, it's about this girl. She's a Leo and her sister's a Gemini and she thinks Gemini's are great. And her sister goes on, she's got dates every night and all of her friends like her. Like Leo - her dad calls her "Leo the Lioness" and that's how her name is - I can't remember her real name. Nina. Tip! Tip. That's her name Tip. They call her the Lioness. She's really lonely and not very many people talk to and she'll just be bored all day. And her sister's always - everybody likes her and is always hanging around with her - and so her sister calls her a slob, brat and everything.

SH: Is she?

B: No, I mean I think her sister is a snob because -

SH: She's got to be older it sounds like.

B: Yeah. She's an older sister. I think she's sixteen and I think the Lioness is only thirteen it mentioned in here. And she's always lonely. And that's where I am because it doesn't describe much. It's not much story. It just like describes people's feelings a lot. And I've never read a book that hasn't had a story much to it.

SH: So it's not like other books you've read.

B: No, not at all. It's pretty good.

SH: Have you read any other Constance Greene books?

B: What do you mean by that - "Constance Green?"
SH: The author of this book.
B: Um ....

SH: Like Your Old Pal A1 (Greene).
B: Ah! No. One of my friends read that and said it was good, though.
SH: Who did?
B: Kelly.

We arranged the cards chronologically and mentioned titles. At
one point in the year, the teacher asked students to list their "Five
Best Books" in their journal. Barb thumbed her journal.

B: Here are my favorite books. I have Class Pictures (Sachs), Bring
to a Boil and Separate(Irwin) and Summer of Fear (Duncan). Now, all
have changed. Now it's Don't Hurt Laurie (Roberts). It's first. That was
my favorite book I've ever read. Second, was Class Pictures and third was Bring to a Boil and Separate.

SH: So you kept two and changed one? How come you have that as your favorite?

B: I don't know. I just liked it. I thought it was really good about this girl and her mother abuses her because she's a lot like her father.

SH: And the mother doesn't like the father?

B: And the mother hates the father and they got a divorce and every­
thing. And now whenever she does anything like her father she'll hurt her in some way. And at the end (it's really great) - have you read it yet?

SH: Not the whole thing, no.

B: OK. So I won't tell you the ending! But the ending is really good. One of my friends is reading it now and is at a really sad part where she gets hurt real bad.

SH: Who's reading it now?

B: Peg. She's in the hospital and the mother is always taking her to the hospital because she's always getting injured and has to go to the hospital from her mom. And the hospitals are starting to get suspicious because the child's in there so much and she got cut on her hand real bad and she got a bump on her head and a tooth went through her lip. And all these accidents. So
they'll move. The mother will make them move so the hospitals won't get suspicious. Then when they start thinking about something they'll move. And at the ending it's really good.

SH: Sounds like a satisfying book for you.

B: Yeah. I liked it a lot.

SH: When you look at these book cards here, I'm just curious to know if there are some kinds of books you see yourself reading. Are there some kinds of books that Barb always reads?

B: Humor. I like humor a lot. And divorce stories are pretty good, too.

SH: Give me some examples of divorce stories.

B: Taking Sides (Klein) and Bring to a Boil and Separate. Of course, Don't Hurt Laurie was one.

SH: Divorce stories. Which ones do you characterize as humor?

B: Hail, Hail Camp Timberwood (Conford), Superfudge (Blume), Freaky Friday (Rogers), Harriet the Spy (Fitzhugh), Blubber (Blume).

SH: That was humorous?

B: It was kind of. In some places it's kind of sad. She gets teased a lot. But in some places it's funny the remarks they can make about her.

SH: Oh. Yeah.

B: Abel's Island (Steig) was kind of cute. Alan Mendelssohn (And the Boy From Mars - Pinkwater) was funny, too.

SH: What authors are you particularly fond of here?

B: I like Judy Blume. Um. Lois Duncan. I really don't have a favorite one. I just like a lot of them.

SH: When I bring in books - you know, the box - or you're looking on the shelves there, what do you look for when you pick out a book?

B: I like Daniel Pinkwater's books. I look for, well, I normally read the paperback back of a book or if it's a hardback I read the centerfolder of it, you know. Or I'll read the book the first couple of chapters and if I like the book or I think I'll enjoy it, you know. After I picked up Leo the Lioness (Greene) I thought that that would be a good book. And that's starting to get a little boring because it's starting to go a little bit downhill but I'm going to stick with it and see if it gets back
up again and if not ... Like there are some books I started like Blackbriar (Sleator) and I didn't like that at all. And some of my friends loved it and they thought I had to read it, but I didn't like it so I didn't read it. I read the first four chapters and it was really boring. They said I should have stuck with it to figure out the ending was better.

SH: So you generally like books that people recommend to you or do you generally like to kind of find your own way?

B: I like it when people recommend books to me, too, because a lot of people will stop in the Reading Center and say "Oh, a good book is ___" and show it to me. And I like that because it's easier for me. But I also like finding my own books.

SH: How is it easier for you?

B: Well, because like you don't have to search through everything and most of my friends like the same type of books I like. And so, if they find a book, I'll believe them and I'll try it. So I try it. Normally, every book that somebody's recommended to me I like except for Blackbriar.

SH: So normally that works pretty well. Who are good recommenders to you?

B: Well, Cary always recommends a good book.

SH: He knows.

B: And Mitty is pretty good at that. And Mrs. Monaghan finds good books that I like. And Peg. Really a bunch of people. And sometimes Tom - he finds a lot of funny books. He's a funny book reader, too. I like funny books, too, so he'll find a book I like most of the time.

SH: Are there any on here you can recall that were recommended by Tom?

B: By Tom? Blubber was. The House of Dies Drear (Hamilton) by Cary. I can name a lot.

SH: Tell me the ones by Cary.

B: Lizard Music (Pinkwater); Magic Moscow (Pinkwater); Taking Sides; Blubber; Superfudge. Of course, everybody in the room ... (laughs) Kelly recommended Class Pictures. I liked that a lot.

SH: How did you pick up How to Eat Fried Worms (Rockwell)?

B: Oh. I started that in fourth grade and I never got to finish it because the summer came and we just went out for summer vacation and I never got to finish it. So I just started up where I left and I liked it.
SH: Where did you get *Mrs. Frisby* (and the *Rats of NIMH* - O'Brien)?

B: I think Margie told me.

SH: I didn't realize she'd read it before.

B: No. It was Leah. She liked it.

SH: Where did *Rinehart Lifts* (Knudson) come from?

B: Mitty.

SH: Mitty read that first?

B: Mitty had read it first in the class. She said it was funny. She read it in March and said it was real good and I'd like it because it was funny and so I read it and I really liked it. She read it first and gave it to everybody else.

SH: When you think about books here on your list again, are there any particular books that made you wonder? You know, just kind of think about things?

B: *Down a Dark Hall* (Duncan).

SH: That's one - What's another one?

B: *Journey to America* (Levitin) did a lot. That was really good. It made me think a lot about the Nazis and what was happening and everything. It was really good. Mitty (she's my best friend) - her mom wanted to read it so I had my own copy so I gave it to her. She liked it a lot, too.

SH: How did you get your own copy of it?

B: I bought it at a book store - "The Little Professor."

SH: What else did *Journey to America* make you wonder about?

B: Like is it ever going to happen again? Is there ever going to be another war? Would that, could that ever happen to me? Stuff like that.

SH: And *Down a Dark Hall*. That was another one you said made you wonder.

B: Yeah. I liked it a lot. That was scary.

SH: What did that make you wonder about?
B: Lois Duncan's books always have some mystery in them. Like *Summer of Fear* (Duncan) had some mystery. It wasn't as scary as *Down A Dark Hall* but it had mystery in it. I normally don't like Nancy Drew and stuff.

SH: How come?

B: I don't know. I think they're boring. I need books that have a lot of action in them. I can't read mystery books. I don't know why.

SH: So I'll find no mystery books on this list.

B: No.

SH: That's interesting. You know that's pretty atypical, different from most people.

B: Yeah, I know. Everyone loves mystery books.

SH: When you think about the books you read this year - you've read an awful lot of books this year, by the way. Pretty amazing. You know how many you've read in a whole year?

B: Uh-uh. I haven't figured it out yet.

SH: What do you think Mrs. Monaghan is trying to teach you?

B: Well, a lot of people speed read. She wants us to read and understand it. Like in *Sounder* (Armstrong) I'd read a couple chapters and I'd read really fast and speedy and I didn't know the people's name. I didn't know the dog's name. I didn't know the father's name. So I started back from the beginning and I read it over again and I understood it and I kept reading through. And that's what Mrs. Monaghan's been trying to teach the people: to read slower and as long as you enjoy the book it doesn't matter how many you get read as long as you enjoy it and understand the book.

SH: I sometimes think about the sort of questions she asks when she reads aloud to get people to notice. What do you think she wants people to notice?

B: When she reads aloud?

SH: Well, yes, or when you read. I think it's all the same.

B: Well, when she reads aloud to us, she has a certain voice. Some people when they read - I really get sick and tired because it's a bland voice - like ta-da-da and it's so boring but she has a certain voice for each character in the book. So when she's reading us *The Worms of Kukimlima* (Pinkwater), for a certain
character she'll have a certain voice so it makes the book more
like you're reading it yourself. Like it's a play to me. All
different levels of voice at once. She reads to us really good.
I like the way she reads because I had a student teacher in third
grade and she was the boringest reader. It was pitiful. It was
horrible.

SH: Well, when she reads to you, what sort of things does she hope
you're going to be thinking about?

B: The book. The story. The characters. What was the writer's
intention of the book? Why did Judy Blume write Superfudge?
Why did she want to write a book? How does she get her ideas?
Whenever we have to do a book extension on something she has us
write the title of the book, the author, why we liked the book,
what was the author's intention? Why did Mary Rogers want to
write Freaky Friday? Where did she get her ideas for that be­
cause that's kind of unusual - a girl changing into her mother.
And so, how did she get that idea? Was there something that
reminded her in her life or something. And I think that's
important to know why she wanted to write - why he or whatever
wanted to write that book.

SH: Those are hard questions! How do you ever know?

B: Well, I did that book extension on Superfudge and I thought that
Judy Blume wanted to write that to like be a "chapter two" to
(Tales of a) Fourth Grade Nothing. And she wanted to keep her
reader's attention so she wrote another one - a sequin to it, or
whatever.

SH: Well, after my asking you all these questions, are there any
questions you want to ask me?

B: (Laughs). What type of books do you like to read?

SH: Well, I've liked this year to read books that you folks have
read. I never read any Pinkwater before and this year I read
all the Pinkwater books I could get my hands on.

B: Oh. I can - they're so good.

SH: I guess I like to read stories that have a good plot and are
adventurous. I like to read books like Anastasia Krupnik (Lowry)...

B: Um, that's so good.

SH: That have a person in there who thinks on lots of different ways
about things and is real thoughtful ...

B: She's funny.
SH: I like thoughtful kind of books.

B: This is going to be a hard question but what was your favorite book that you've read?

SH: Oh, that's unfair. If I could do ten favorites I'd be in better shape. Um.

B: What's one you've enjoyed a lot?

SH: In the past year?

B: Yup.

SH: It's one I don't think anybody in the class has read: The Wizard of Earthsea (LeGuin). It's one that Sherry would like.

B: Uh-huh. Sherry likes adventure. It sounds adventurous.

SH: It's science fiction or fantasy, too.

B: Nathan would like that. He's a science fictional freak. He's read books that ...

SH: Yeah, Dan might like it, too.

B: Yeah. He's read Hero from Otherwhere (Williams) and lots of others.

End of tape.
APPENDIX E

PARTIAL TRANSCRIPTION OF BOOK SHARING IN

FEBRUARY 1981
Context: It is the end of the school day. Children are grouped in the reading area, on the floor, sofa, chairs or on the steps to the loft. Linda has just finished a long and involved account of Armitage, Armitage, Fly Away Home (Aiken), laughing her way through funny parts but the group hasn't been able to catch the humor as Linda describes it. "Was it good?" asks one.

Lois: So lots has happened in the story already and you just got started in that story, didn't you? It's called Armitage, Armitage Fly Away Home, right? And it's a real funny story. And it's all fantasy but it's a funny story. (Lois looks around. Sounds of oh, me, can I? and lots of waving hands). Nathan?

Nathan: O.K. I'm reading Over Sea, Under Stone (Cooper). And there's this really good ... it's about these three kids and they take this big huge, like there's this. An old old city. They find this things, like a treasure map that goes all the way back to King Arthur. It was about King Arthur and this other guy. The writing was

Lois: Kelly and Tammy, will you join us, please? (They are returning from an errand).

Nathan: They think it's a treasure map. And they think it's in Latin. The oldest brother can read it but the other two can't really. And so their family's like really good friends -- they call him -- Uncle Merriweather and he's going to help them get some sort of ... There are these bad people always asking questions.

Lois: Jack? Jack. (He is flicking paper balls at Cary.)

Nathan: They don't know that they're bad yet. But like they're always asking questions. (sotto voice) "Oh, you've gone exploring in the house? If you find any secret places, please let us know." or they ask in inconspicuous ways, like.

Lois: So you are beginning the books by Susan Cooper.

Nathan: Yep!

Lois: Those are real special books.

Bill: Are you going to read the chronicles? Like The Grey King and all those things?

Lois: The Grey King is the last one. Margie's been reading them.

Bill: Yeah. They're great.

Lois: David is starting them.
Nathan: Do you have to read a series of them? It doesn't end in the one book?

Bill: No -- well, you can read one book but you get so fantasized in it that you got to go to the next --

Nathan: But it doesn't leave you in suspense, does it?

Bill: No. They get better and better each time.

Barb: (softly) Pick Christy, Mrs. Monaghan.

Lois: Have you read them all, Bill?

Bill: Yeah.

Lois: Neat. When did you read them?

Bill: Well, last year. I read all of them.

(Christy has raised her hand each time she thinks Lois is about to call on someone. She rarely shares or volunteers. Barb often shares but has now become Christy's advocate.)

Barb: Oh, take Christy.

Lois: Christy!

(There is some applause. The group recognizes this as a rare occurrence.)

Christy: (delivered very quickly with few pauses)
I'm reading Veronica Ganz (Sachs) and Veronica is a big bully and she always beats on little kids and there's this one new kid at school and his name is Peter and he's really short and she keeps on trying to beat him up but he keeps on running away from her and outsmarting her and everything. And so one day she follows him into a store and he was in this corner and she went over there and she tried to jump on him but he grabbed a bucket and put it over her head and it had all these fish scales in it and everything--

(Laughter and groans from several, including Lois)

Christy: He keeps on outsmarting her and she keeps, she tries to think up plans to get him back.

Lois: Is it good?

Christy: Yeah!

Tammy: Um, The Truth About Mary Rose. That's about Mary Rose but her mom was Veronica Ganz.

Lois: Oh, really? (The bell rings for dismissal.)

(Tammy and Christy stand at the book shelf working out the relationship of the two books as children move to desks and lockers and get ready to go home.)
APPENDIX F

PARTIAL TRANSCRIPTION OF A SMALL GROUP DISCUSSION ON

ESCAPE FROM WARSAW (SERRAILLER) IN

JANUARY 1981

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Four boys and two girls join Lois in the reading area with copies of *Escape from Warsaw* (Serraillier). Lois determines how much each person has read of the book and answers range from "just started. I was sick when you passed it out," through chapters 4, 5, 7, 12 and finished. Cary, who has finished the book, gets up and Lois reminds him to stay with the group.

Lois: Let's just sort of review. Chapter 1 was called "The Escape." It's been a while since I read this book. I started to reread it but I haven't read it all lately so you're going to have to help me understand where you are. Then I'll get it read. James, what's in the first chapter "The Escape?" What's going on?

James: Well, the father was Joseph. He was trying to escape and he got caught. (He describes part of the plot. Others chip in with phrases but James carries the main description.)

Lois: What was he before the war came and he was arrested and all? Do you remember what his job was? Was it a job with which he could be a dangerous person?

James and others: No. Oh, "headmaster of a primary school" (reading from text).

Lois: Yes. The headmaster is like a principal.

Students: That'd be like Dr. Goldsbury/yeah/was suddenly taken away/Didn't he turn a picture around of a Nazi or something?/Yeah/In the school?/yeah. That's why they took him away/a Nazi or some­thing.

Lois: So that's why this chapter "Journey Through the Air". That's where he's escaping? (students start to contribute) I'd like to hear what Cary is saying.

Cary: He gets in a truck with a man and the guy - a Nazi guard throws in these cases and it lands on his foot. He almost yells but he holds it back in and he's traveling and in a little while it stops and he has a bar of chocolate in his holster and he says "Hold it. I don't want to hurt you" and he's dressed up in a Nazi uniform and the guy spoke Polish and so...

Calvin: You're in Chapter 3 now.

Cary: I am?

Lois: "The Journey Through the Air" means what?

Barb: Like a cable. He goes up/yeah.

Lois: Goes up to the mountain (other voices) And then Chapter 3, "The Hiding Place."
Cary: Yeah and he goes...

Lois: Let's let Joe tell a little.

Joe: That's, yeah, OK. He meets this family and -- Do you want me to tell the whole chapter?

Lois: I just want to bring us up to a common place.

Joe: And they feed him and they tell him where to hide and these Nazis come and he has to hide up in the chimney and the Nazis, they look around and they go upstairs but they can't find him. So one of them asks if the other guy wants to go up in the chimney and check and he says "No." So they just fire two bullets up there and luckily he misses. It was really loud and when they fired the bullet it was so loud that he just couldn't stand it and he barely held on.

James: And he smelled ashes.

Joe: Yeah, after they had left.

Lois: Then Chapter 4 is called "The Silver Sword."

Many voices: Yeah, that's the good part/I know, that's where I am now/ But I don't know/I haven't read.

Lois: We won't go on from there because I think lots of you might want to read it for yourselves. I'd just like to take Chapter 4 and do some out-loud reading. Just a little bit. I just want to hear. Robyn, do you want to begin?

(The students take turns reading aloud through the chapter occasionally correcting a mispronunciation but letting some go by. At the chapter's end, I ask "Who's Joseph?" and Joe shows me a picture. "That's Joseph there and that's Jan. Here's another picture of Jan." Lois leaves the group. Barb, James and Calvin remain on the couch to continue reading. Throughout this worktime, Leah has been sitting on the couch, beside the group, reading Song of the Wild (Eckert). Joan is working on math nearby. The rest of the class is working on general work while the student teacher circulates.)
APPENDIX G

A BOOK LOG KEPT BY SIXTH GRADER, TOM,
FROM SEPTEMBER 1980 TO MAY 1981
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Month</th>
<th>Books</th>
<th>Authors</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>September</td>
<td>Tales of a Fourth Grade Nothing, Trapped in the Ice</td>
<td>Judy Blume, Ruth Hamilton</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>October</td>
<td>Nine True Dolphin Stories, Great Quarterbacks of the NFL (unfinished), Kavik, The Wolf Dog (unfinished), The TV Kid</td>
<td>-, Morey Byars</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>November</td>
<td>Keep Stomping 'Till the Music Stops, Ben Franklin, Encyclopedia Brown Solves Them All</td>
<td>Pevsner, - Sobel</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>December</td>
<td>How to Eat Fried Worms, Superfudge</td>
<td>Rockwell, Blume</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>January</td>
<td>Freckle Juice, Pinballs, Around the World in 80 Days, North of Danger</td>
<td>Judy Blume, ?, Dale Fife</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>February</td>
<td>Hey, B.C., Champ, Black Rock Cave, Blubber, Then Again Maybe I Won't, The Night Swimmers</td>
<td>Johnny Hart, Patricia Lauber, Judy Blume, Betsy Byars</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
May:  Mr. Radagast Makes an Unexpected Journey  Nastick
      The Cartoonist  Byars
      I, Trissy  Norma Fox
      Lizard Music  Pinkwater
      Anastasia Krupnik  Lowry
      Yobgorgle  D.M. Pinkwater
      Jelly Belly  R. Smith
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