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FIRST GRADE CHILDREN'S RESPONSES
TO TEACHER CHANGE IN LITERACY CONTEXTS

DISSERTATION

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

By

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The Ohio State University
1986

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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VITA

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"Survival Themes in Current Children's Literature for Middle Grades," The Ohio Reading Teacher, 1985, 20, 11 - 16.

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CHAPTER 1
THE NATURE OF THE PROBLEM

Background of the Problem

The context of language serves to shape the forms, meanings and purposes of that language. Sociolinguists and school ethnographers have demonstrated that classrooms are settings which involve context-specific social and language events, ones that place unique sets of demands on children (See Gilmore and Glatthorn 1982; Wallat and Green, 1981 and Wilkinson, 1982 for collections of such studies). In those studies, as in this one, the term context refers not only to the physical setting, but also to the people within the setting, what those people are doing and saying and where and when they are doing it (Erickson and Shultz, 1981).

In the various communicative events which take place in the classroom, teachers and students are constantly establishing and reestablishing contexts and negotiating meanings. However, classroom communicative events are unique in that the social rules which apply here are different from those which apply in other settings. For example, students generally must raise their hands and be recognized by the teacher who, along with governing turn-
taking, also determines the subject matter of discussion and how it is approached. In this sense then, the teacher plays an asymmetrical role in these events, for it is her responsibility to determine the timing, subject matter and character of the interactions which occur (Green and Harker, 1982; Mehan, 1979).

The primary goal of this study was to make visible the theories and assumptions of one first grade teacher as she created and carried out literacy instruction over the course of one school year. The ways in which she made use of space, time and materials and the nature of the interactions which took place during literacy events were carefully recorded and analyzed. In addition to describing the literacy learning context within this classroom, the study also investigated the theories and practices of six children in this classroom, three of the lowest and three of the highest readers and writers in the class. Particular attention was given to the ways in which the teacher and the children together created these literacy learning contexts and how these contexts influenced the meanings and patterns of the language used by these children.

The low readers and their teachers were participants in the Ohio Reading Recovery Project, an early intervention program designed to give first graders who
are at risk of failure a second chance at success. Developed by New Zealand educator and researcher Marie Clay, the program targets the children ranked lowest in their class according to a comprehensive battery of instruments which measure their competencies with reading and writing (Clay, 1979).

In addition to their regular classroom activities, these children were provided with intensive one-to-one instruction for thirty minutes per day by teachers specially trained in Reading Recovery procedures. During each of these daily lessons the children read several little books which were carefully selected to be readable and easy, and one new book which provided some challenge and new "reading work." Every day children were helped by the teacher to write a story consisting of a sentence or two (Pinnell, 1984).

An important aspect of the Reading Recovery Project is an intensive inservice program for teachers. Throughout the school year and alongside of their daily work with children, teachers attend weekly inservice sessions. In these sessions the teachers are taught to make detailed observations of children's reading and writing behaviors and to implement Reading Recovery procedures. The primary vehicle for this instruction is
demonstration lessons in which the teachers take turns conducting lessons with children while their peers observe. Later the teachers discuss the lesson together, raising questions, sharing insights and providing critical feedback. Through these activities teachers are helped to become sensitive observers of children and to develop understandings about learning and reading theory.

Most research involving Reading Recovery has dealt with the teaching of the lesson or the children's achievement. This study was developed to follow a teacher utilizing Reading Recovery procedures into the classroom environment. How would involvement in the intensive on-the-job Reading Recovery training influence the ways in which this teacher viewed children and their reading and writing or the ways she interacted with the students as individuals and the class as a group? Further, how would this special instruction and the boost in literacy learning which was likely to occur impact on the behaviors, attitudes and beliefs of these children? These were important questions which had not been explored by previous researchers.

As this study is basically an exploration of change in teaching and learning, three important aspects of learning and change must be presented to provide a basis for departure: 1) Language as a personal and social
construct, 2) Classrooms as social settings, and 3) Instructional influence and teacher beliefs. These will be discussed below.

Language as a Personal and Social Construct

A central assumption undergirding this study is that children, and indeed all humans, are active constructors of knowledge and constantly seeking to make sense of the world around them (Kelly, 1955; Piaget, 1970; Smith, 1982). Smith suggests that each of us develops a theory of the world, and that this theory - this tacit knowledge, enables us to generate understandings about our world of experience. He writes:

What we have in our heads is a theory of what the world is like, a theory that is the basis of all our perceptions and understandings of the world, the root of all learning, the source of all hopes and fears, motives and expectancies, reasoning and creativity. And this theory is all we have. If we can make sense of the world at all, it is by interpreting our interactions theory. (1982, p. 54)

To be human, then, is to constantly seek to make sense of our experience in the world, and language is the primary vehicle for organizing and shaping our representations of that experience (Britton, 1970). In this light, Smith's (1984) conceptualization of literacy
as the construction of worlds, real and imaginary is particularly appropriate.

Children have often been described as scientists, forming tacit theories about language, testing those hypotheses in the course of day to day living and then weighing up the evidence in order to refine or reconstruct their theories (See Clay, 1975; Ferreiro and Teberosky, 1983; Read, 1975, among others).

However, children are not "flying solo" in their theorizing and meaning making (Bruner, 1980). Literacy involves language, and language is not learned or used within a vacuum. It is a crucial part of the social interaction between and among human beings. Children learn language in countless interactions with adults and peers who include them in their conversation and respond to what they are trying to do and say.

In short, language is learned in social contexts and in meaningful interaction with other language users, but at the center of these contexts is the active child, seeking to make sense of the world and using language for his or her own purposes. Children construct operational models of oral and written language for themselves within specific social contexts and with the help of more proficient language users (Vygotsky, 1962, 1978). Thus, language is both a personal and a social creation.
A number of studies have documented the uses of literacy knowledge in the home (e.g., Bissex, 1980; Harste, Woodward and Burke, 1984; Heath, 1983; Taylor, 1983; Wells, 1981, 1986). These studies have indicated that there is considerable diversity in patterns of using reading and writing across cultural groups, communities and language situations. Such findings led Cochran-Smith (1984) to conclude that, "particular orientations to literacy cannot be approached as universal, but instead need to be investigated as culture-specific." Cochran-Smith's (1984) observational study of the adults and children who were part of a private nursery school offers a fascinating description of the ways in which children were socialized into particular patterns of literacy use by their parents and teachers.

Ethnographers use the term "thick description" to refer to careful, detailed and concrete accounts of particular events and situations (cf Lofland, 1971; Wolcott, 1975). The thick descriptions in the studies mentioned above offered some unique perspectives on literacy in the home. That same richness of data is necessary to build understandings of children's literacy learning within a classroom context.
Classrooms as Social Settings

Classrooms are fundamentally social settings within which teachers and students engage in a complex web of interactive communicative events. Teachers, as well as their children, bring to the classroom a personal history of previous encounters with people and situations from which they have generated explicit as well as tacit expectations, attitudes and beliefs about language and print and how they are to be used in social and linguistic interaction. The expectations and beliefs of the various participants in the classroom community interact to mutually shape the course of ongoing classroom activity. In addition,

the participants in school routines together build a new history through the dynamic patterns of interaction which develop among them, and these patterns can support or alter prior expectations, beliefs or attitudes. (Pace and Powers, p. 99)

In short, no investigation of teaching or learning in schools can adequately capture classroom phenomena without taking into account the essentially social nature of the classroom and the meanings that the participants, teacher and students alike, bring to that setting.
Ten years ago McDermott (1977) pointed out that educational researchers had, "virtually ignored the social context of reading activities" (p. 154). Important work along these lines has been carried out since that assessment (i.e. Cochran-Smith, 1984; Collins, 1981; DeFord, 1981, 1985; Eder, 1982; Mehan, 1979). However, more work which explores reading and writing contexts as specific and varied events is needed. In view of this characterization of classrooms as complex and multi-layered social settings, any effort which serves to uncover and illuminate "the work that teachers and students do together to construct, maintain and modify their definitions and conceptions about reading (and writing)" (Anang, 1982, p.1) would yield contributions to both theory and practice in the area of literacy learning.

**Instructional Influence and the Impact of Teacher's Beliefs**

Numerous researchers have investigated and debated the advantages and disadvantages of various approaches to reading instruction, but seldom have they produced clear results beyond the conclusion that approaches and materials are less important than the skills of the particular teacher who makes use of them (Bond and Dykstra, 1967; Early, 1976). Every day in their
classrooms teachers make decisions about how to organize their literacy instruction, how to define and evaluate growth in reading and writing, and how to make use of materials and print in their classrooms, along with a myriad of other decisions related to instruction and classroom management.

The decisions teachers make, the ways in which they interact with their students and the literacy tasks and activities which they provide are all influenced importantly by what they believe about children, about learning in general and about reading and writing. After a massive attempt to compare various approaches to reading instruction Carrol and Chall (1975) concluded that the teacher's "system of beliefs about how different children learn to read" is crucial. Harste and Burke (1977) have argued that teachers make decisions and operate in their classroom reading instruction in light of the theories or assumptions they have about reading and learning. These theories or belief systems are deeply held but often implicit. Little is known about how teachers generate theories, how they implement them in classroom practice and how they evolve and change. New knowledge in this area would have important implications for teacher education and staff development.
Statement of the Problem

In spite of the considerable body of information available on literacy learning in the primary classroom, we know relatively little about the attitudes, tacit theories and school experiences of teachers and the ways in which these beliefs and the resulting instructional approaches and practices may influence students. It was the purpose of this study to 1) conduct a systematic exploration of the literacy learning contexts created by a teacher and her children in one first grade classroom over the course of a school year, and 2) to explore the relationships between these classroom contexts and the oral and written language used by a representative group of the lowest and highest readers and writers within that classroom. Such a study could provide clues to ways in which teachers, administrators and policy makers could create and maintain classroom literacy environments which would support and facilitate the literacy learning of all children.

The following questions guided the collection and analysis of data:

1) WHAT ARE THE LITERACY CONTEXTS IN THIS CLASSROOM?
   -What are the tasks of literacy?
   -How do these tasks remain constant or evolve across the school year?
   -How do these tasks remain constant or vary across children of different ability levels?
2) WHAT ARE THE THEORIES AND ASSUMPTIONS ABOUT LITERACY AND LEARNING HELD BY THIS FIRST GRADE TEACHER?
   - How do these theories remain constant or evolve across the school year?
   - What are the sources of change and influence on these theories?

3) WHAT DIFFERENCES OR SIMILARITIES ARE THERE IN THE WAYS CHILDREN VIEW THE TASKS OF LITERACY AND MAKE USE OF THEIR LITERACY KNOWLEDGE IN THE CLASSROOM WHEN THEY ARE: 1) LOW READERS RECEIVING READING RECOVERY LESSONS AND 2) GOOD READERS NOT IN THE PROGRAM
   - How do they talk about reading and writing?
   - How do they carry out literacy tasks?
   - How do they make use of their knowledge of literacy for their own purposes in the classroom?
   - How do their behaviors and/or statements relating to literacy tasks remain constant or vary across different classroom contexts?
   - How do their behaviors and/or statements relating to literacy tasks change over time?

4) WHAT ARE THE IMPLICATIONS OF THE INTERACTION BETWEEN THIS TEACHER'S THEORIES AND PRACTICES AND THOSE HER STUDENTS?
   - What aspects of this interaction support growth in literacy learning?
   - What aspects of this interaction undermine growth in literacy learning?
   - What are the relationships among the ability levels of the children and the influence of the teacher?

Reflecting the exploratory nature of all qualitative research, these questions were viewed as initial framing questions. As the study progressed, some of these questions assumed more importance than others. Also, as the meanings and actions of the participants within this classroom were observed, recorded and analyzed new
questions emerged as part of a typical reactive-
interactive ethnographic research cycle.

**Approach to the Study**

The study was concerned with a wide range of teacher
and student behaviors and how they evolved over the
relatively long period of a school year, as well as the
meanings these behaviors had for the participants
themselves and the influences of context of these
behaviors. Given the nature of these questions and the
view of the classroom as a social setting a qualitative
approach to research seemed warranted.

According to Clark (1979), qualitative studies of
classrooms share two basic assumptions: "Teachers and
students are seen as purposive agents whose thoughts,
plans, perceptions and intentions influence their
behavior and moderate its effects," and, "the social
context in which teaching and learning take place is
considered an important source of explanations for
classroom phenomenon" (p. 5). In order to get at the
"thoughts, plans, perceptions and intentions" of the
participants in this classroom and the fullest possible
understanding of the complex and shifting classroom
contexts for literacy learning, ethnographic techniques
were utilized. These techniques include participant
observation over a long term, formal and informal interviews with teachers and students, video taping and subsequent analysis of key literacy events and the collection of naturalistic writing samples.

Scope and Limitations of the Study

An obvious limitation of this study, and indeed much ethnographic research, is the difficulty in generalizing findings and conclusions to other classrooms and other settings. The present study was intended to explore literacy learning in a particular setting, involving particular children and their teachers. Clearly, some of the elements of this classroom environment for literacy learning might not be observed in other first grade classrooms.

A particularly distinctive element in this classroom is the involvement by the teacher and three of the six student subjects in a special early intervention program involving reading and writing instruction, the Reading Recovery Program. There are certain identifiable ways in which this program influenced the ways in which these children and their teacher approached literacy tasks in the classroom, and these will be discussed in Chapters IV and V. However, it is seldom easy and often impossible to sort out all of the ways in which this participation
in Reading Recovery influenced the subjects of this study. Further, as the researcher was often reminded by the teacher in this classroom, the nature of classroom interaction, organization and climate will change in observable as well as more subtle ways as a result of the system in which the school is housed and the interchange between the teacher and the particular group of children who make up the class in any given school year.

Still, a great many of the kinds of literacy tasks, teacher-child and child-child interactions and various elements of the classroom's social and instructional organization were typical of those which can be observed in first grade classrooms across this country. Thus, the conclusions generated by the study should offer a useful comparison for researchers and practitioners concerned with other classrooms.

Further, this researcher has attempted to present as much detail as possible about the phenomena under study in an effort to provide a "thick description" which will allow readers to make judgements for themselves about the representativeness of this classroom and the prospects for generalizing to other settings.

A second limitation of the study relates to the fact that the data in a qualitative study such as the present one must "go through" the researcher's mind before it is
put on paper. As described by Schwartz and Schwartz (1969), the researcher is subject to distortions in observations, anxieties and personal affinities for certain types of data. In fact, another investigator with different theories about literacy learning and different concerns about learning in classrooms might have "seen," recorded and analyzed events in this classroom in quite different ways. In this sense, the present study is revealing of the investigator's frame of reference and theories about the world as well as those of the subjects.

Another possible source of distortion is the physical impossibility for any observer of seeing all there is to see in any social setting. Much that occurred in the classroom was not reported in this study because it was forgotten, dismissed or simply not observed.

An effort was made to reduce these potential limitations by observing over a long period (throughout the school year), by observing in multiple ways and by cross-checking data about the same phenomena gathered in different ways and at different times. Also, many of the ideas formed and conclusions reached were discussed with the teacher in order to check the observer's
interpretations against those of one of the key participants in this classroom. However, the fact remains that this study rests upon the perceptions and interpretations of a single investigator.

A third limitation concerns the effects of the researcher's presence as a participant observer in the classroom. It is clear that the researcher influenced the contexts and the participants in this classroom, and indeed, became part of those contexts. This was true from the first day of observation in September, but particularly in February and March when the researcher collaborated with the teacher in planning and implementing the literacy learning curriculum.

The qualitative researcher has several tools which may help to counter this researcher/subject reactivity, including an extended period of time in the field, multiple repeated observational techniques and the triangulation of data from different sources. Further, every attempt has been to present a "thick description" of the phenomena under investigation. Thus, in some sense it is up to the reader to make judgements about the ways in which this researcher may have influenced the findings of the study. Efforts have been made to report these influences when they were known, but it is impossible to be aware of all of the ways in which the
"Hawthorne effect" might have been operating in this study.

**Summary**

The present study was designed to study the ways in which one first grade teacher and a representative group of the lowest and highest readers and writers in her class organized and made use of their literacy knowledge, their theories about language and their knowledge of the world in the course of carrying out the daily tasks of doing school. Using an ethnographic participant-observer perspective, these theories and resultant behaviors were examined 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. Chapter IV describes the teacher's theoretical framework and the resultant organization of classroom literacy events while Chapter V describes and analyzes the theories, behaviors and written products of the six subject children as they worked and interacted within these contexts. Chapter VI summarizes the findings and then suggests implications for classroom practice and directions for further research.
CHAPTER TWO
REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

Introduction

In any investigation, the understandings and theories brought to the study by the researcher play an important role in determining what is observed and how it is understood and reported. This researcher's personal experience, readings and conversations prior to the study and through the phases of collecting and interpreting the data provided lenses through which he viewed and made sense of the data.

In this chapter, issues and findings from the literature most relevant to the study will be addressed. There are three such areas, all of them relating to the issue of context as the basis for understanding any event, action or unit of language. First, the notion of context will be discussed and defined as it is used in this study. Then selected studies from the literature on school contexts for reading and writing will be presented, with an emphasis on studies involving primary grade classrooms. Investigations of the impact of these contexts on children's theories about literacy and their oral and written texts will also be discussed. Though
learning contexts, it is teachers who are largely responsible for planning and maintaining them. The third area of research concerns teacher's implicit theories and the impact of those theories on classroom practice.

The Importance of Context

Hymes (1982) notes that "context has had a constant meaning, yet a changing content." The term has been used in different ways by different theorists and researchers. However, regardless of differences in definition, a common thread in this literature is that the meaning of any action or language is contained in its context. Thus, according to Roberts (1982), "we have no adequate knowledge of an event . . . until we know the context in which it occurs" (p. 279). Context is especially important in understanding language learning and language use. The development of the field of sociolinguistics is evidence of a growing realization of the importance of context within linguistic and educational circles (Shuy, 1984).

There has been a shift in language research to an emphasis on function over form and on process as well as product. Thus, researchers have looked closely at children as they talk and read and write in natural settings and examined the wider contexts which give rise to language use. These studies have demonstrated that
specific contexts give meaning to all modes of communication and that these contexts enable children to understand what others mean as well as to communicate their own meaning to others (e.g. Bruner, 1975; Clay, 1975; Ferriero and Teberosky, 1982; Halliday, 1974, 1975; Harste, Woodward and Burke, 1984; Hymes, 1972; Snow, 1977).

Graves has led the way in research which attempts to consider the "fullest possible contexts" of children's writing in classrooms. Here he outlines his use of the term:


Graves' notion of context is one that appears to be generally accepted in the recent literature on language and literacy learning. That is, the term refers to the broader social and cultural milieu of children's lives at home and at school as well as the immediate physical and situational contexts of the classroom (cf. Bissex, 1980; Cochran-Smith, 1984; Heath, 1983; Taylor, 1983).

However, researchers and theorists in the fields of sociolinguistics and the ethnography of communication, add a further dimension to our understanding of context.
They argue that contexts are not static or predetermined "givens." Rather, they are created by and part of the ongoing interactions between participants in any given setting. Erickson and Schultz (1981) offer the following conceptualization of contexts as dynamic processes:

Contexts are not simply given in a physical setting . . . nor in combinations of personnel . . . Rather, contexts are constituted by what people are doing and where and when they are doing it. As McDermott put it succinctly . . . people in interaction become environments for each other (p. 148)

In other words, context is viewed as the physical setting, the people within the setting, what those people are saying and doing and when and where they are doing it. Participants within any given situation fit their language use to a pre-existing context. However, they also actively use language to create and change the context. Thus, in school settings teachers and children create, transform and recreate contexts innumerable times each day by means of oral and written language (Cazden, 1986).

Harste and his colleagues (Harste and Carey, 1984; Harste, Burke and Woodward, 1982; Harste, Woodward and Burke, 1984) argue that in order to understand the cognitive and linguistic processes involved in reading and writing we must look at the linguistic, situational
and cultural context in which the processing occurs, and at the ways these contexts are perceived by the language user. They suggest that the components of the situation outside of the reader/writer and the text form "contextual constraints" which are interpreted by the reader/writer as "cognitive constraints."

In this study, context is defined as the cultural, social and situational elements surrounding and created by acts of reading and writing, as well as the constraints of the situation as perceived by the participants in those literacy events.

**School Contexts for Reading**

It is often assumed that what children learn about reading in primary grade classrooms is a function of their instructional experiences with written language. However, reading researchers have given little attention to describing and analyzing those experiences. In a recent review, Allington (1980b) concluded that, "Though much research has been conducted in the area of reading instruction, we know little yet about the nature of reading instruction provided to students" (p. 372).

The data we have indicate that the nature of reading instruction is unique across classrooms, across different reading events within the same classroom and across the individual children who are participants in those
contexts. These studies will be discussed below starting with studies of the formal reading instruction which takes place in small ability groups since this is how most American elementary teachers conduct much of their reading instruction (Pikulski and Kirsch, 1979; Seltzer, 1976). This will be followed by studies of two other important classroom reading contexts: whole group reading aloud (i.e. story time) and informal or "unofficial reading events."

**Formal Instruction in Ability Groups**

The processes and interactive patterns at work in small teacher-directed reading groups are complex indeed. Several aspects will be discussed here, including the allocation of time, instructional emphases and teacher/child interaction patterns.

A number of studies have found that the amount of time children spend in teacher-directed reading groups is related to reading achievement (e.g. Berliner, 1981; Guthrie, et al, 1979; Pikulski and Kirsch, 1979; Stallings, 1976). The available data on how teachers allocate their time to reading groups of different levels is unclear. Though several researchers have reported that teachers spend more time with good readers (McDermott, 1976; Rist, 1970), other studies revealed the opposite
(Weinstein, 1976) or inconsistent patterns of time allocation (Allington, 1983; Grant and Rothenburg, 1981).

Thus, high and low readers seem to generally receive equivalent instructional time in small groups. However, it is revealing to note how that time is used and the kinds of tasks that are emphasized in instruction for children of differing ability levels.

Allington (1983) concluded that the instruction provided good readers is oriented toward reading contextualized text and to meaningful discussion of stories while low ability reading groups tend to receive instruction that is letter and word based. This was true even when comparing older poor readers and younger good readers who were using the same instructional materials. Poor readers spent less time than good readers actually reading; instead they worked on worksheets and skills-based activities.

Other researchers have joined Allington in the suggestion that teachers have differing instructional emphases with students of differing abilities. Gambrell, Wilson and Gantt (1981) reported that contextual reading accounted for 57% of the instructional time provided for good readers, but only 22% of the time allocated for the poorest readers. In contrast, instruction on isolated words and decoding skills consumed 17% of the poor
readers' time and only 7% of the good readers' time.

Similarly, Collins (1981) found that in high group lessons teachers focused on the "purposive, meaning-directed nature of reading", emphasizing content and meaning and often ignoring errors. In low group lessons teachers focused on fluency and accuracy to the neglect of meaning, emphasizing instead single word decoding, pronunciation and grammatical errors. Other researchers have reported similar trends (Alpert, 1975; Eder, 1982; Hale and Edwards, 1981; McDermott, 1976).

Allington (1977; 1980a; 1980b) conducted a series of studies examining the amount and mode of reading assigned to children of different ability levels and reached the following conclusion:

Good readers read about three times as many words per day in reading groups as poor readers. Additionally, about 70% of this reading is done silently by the good readers but orally by the poor-reader groups. (1983, p. 551)

These data are verified by other descriptions of primary classroom reading instruction (e.g. Gumperz and Hernandez-Chavez, 1972; Rist, 1973, 1978).

Several implications follow from this inequity in the use of oral and silent reading, one of which is the obvious fact that silent reading is a more efficient mode of reading and thus allows children to read more text in
any given situation. Heap (1980) argues that oral reading involves "someone seeking to produce (a text) specifically for the hearing" (p.281). In this case, the primary audience is the teacher and the teacher's major concern is likely to be one of accurate reproduction of text (Allington, 1983; Hale and Edwards, 1981; Rist, 1978). Durkin (1981) suggests that an over-emphasis on oral reading may give readers the mistaken impression that reading is a "performing art" rather than a "meaning getting process."

An element which may further detract from the "meaning-getting" function of reading is the fact that oral reading in low ability groups is often repetitive. Grant and Rothenburg (1981) found that poor readers frequently reread text which other members of their group had already covered. In contrast, when good readers read aloud, each child typically read new material.

Another significant element of oral reading performance is teachers' responses to readers' miscues. This is a critical aspect of the reading context in that teacher responses and prompts are a key source of information about the reading process for the reader (Goodman, 1973). Allington (1980b) found that teachers were more prone to interrupt poor readers who made oral reading errors than they were good readers who made
similar errors, whether the miscue was semantically appropriate or not. Further, teachers tended to draw poor readers attention to graphemic and phonemic characteristics of the text or to simply pronounce the word, whereas more of their prompts for good readers referred to syntactic and semantic information. These findings have been confirmed by other investigators (Eder, 1982; Gumperz and Hernandez-Chavez, 1972; Pflaum, Pascarella, Boswick and Auer, 1980).

Frequent teacher interruptions have the obvious effect of disrupting and fragmenting the reader's attempt to make sense of the text. Allington points to another potential consequence:

More frequent interruptions would likely encourage slow readers' reliance on an external monitor and reinforce the view that reading is a performance meant to please someone else. As a result the importance of student self-monitoring and even its availability as an option would be decreased. (1983, p. 552)

There is ample evidence in the literature that there are differences in the reading instruction offered to good and poor readers during formal instruction in small ability groups. Such inequities have important consequences for children learning to read, especially because ability groups are a daily and major part of the reading programs created by teachers in the vast majority of American primary classrooms. This data points to the
need for careful and complete descriptions of teacher-student interaction within groups of different ability levels. One aspect of this study was an exploration of the ways in which a teacher and her students worked together in reading groups and how those interactions changed or stayed constant across time and across children.

**Storytime**

A consistent finding in studies of children who learn to read early and easily is that these children come from homes where books and various kinds of text are easily available and where they have been read to (Clark (1976); Durkin, 1966; Thorndike, 1973; Wells, 1986). Cohen (1968) demonstrated that the positive affects of hearing stories read aloud continue through the school-age years. In her study, a year-long read aloud program for second graders in an inner city New York school had a significant impact on the reading vocabulary and comprehension of those children. A replication study by Cullinan, Jaggar and Strickland (1974) involving children in kindergarten through third grade produced similar results.

Applebee (1978) found that many children develop the beginnings of a sense of story before age three.
However, for many children school may be their first introduction to books and stories. For this reason, the storytime in which the children gather around the teacher as she reads aloud and discusses stories with them is a crucial context for literacy learning. Despite its importance as an arena for literacy learning, few studies could be found which describe and analyze the use of storytime in primary classrooms. Studies by Wells, et al., Cochran-Smith and Short will be discussed below.

Gordon Wells and his colleagues (1981, 1986) followed a representative sample of thirty-two children from their first words at home through to the end of their elementary education at age ten. They analyzed thousands of recordings of children's naturally occurring experiences with oral and written language in their homes and classrooms. Wells and his team found that the children all followed essentially the same sequence of development, though some made more rapid progress than others. What accounted for different rates of progress? Along with the quantity and quality of children's conversational experiences, a key factor in this progress and eventual success in literacy learning in school was the opportunities the children had to listen to stories.
A somewhat disturbing finding of Wells and his colleagues was that by the time they came to school, the rank order of the children in their study was already firmly established:

All the children made considerable progress during the five years of school through which we followed them. But because the schools provided rather similar learning environments, individual children did not change their relative position in the rank order very much. . . there is little doubt that, in accounting for individual differences between children, the major influence was that of the home. . . (1986, pp. 193, 194)

Wells and his team did not make in-depth observations or analyses of the kinds of experiences their subjects had with literacy learning and especially story reading with adults in school. However, their work emphasizes the importance of story time as a rich opportunity for literacy. It also points to the need for further explorations of the interaction between teachers and children as they work and talk together in the classroom.

Cochran-Smith (1984) carried out just such a study. She explored the development of literacy learning of students in a nursery school over the period of eighteen months. Though formal reading instruction was not a part of the curriculum, print was an important aspect of ongoing daily life in the classroom. Cochran-Smith
identified contextualized literacy events, in which print gets meaning from its context of use (i.e. stop signs, envelopes, labels), and decontextualized literacy events which involved a focus on print itself.

The nursery school children's primary experience with decontextualized print was daily group storyreading or "rug-time." In this nursery school stories were never simply read to children; rather, storyreading was embedded within adult/child social interaction. Both the adult-reader and the child-listeners played active and verbal roles in making sense of the text. However, the storyreader played a vital role in this cooperative negotiation of meaning, serving as a "mediator" between the children and the text. Cochran-Smith elaborates:

> Adult-child interaction around storybooks essentially created a context for reading and interpreting the decontextualized print of storybooks. That is, in the verbal interaction around books, the storyreader instructed her listeners in how to make sense of texts by helping them to use - or using for them - various kinds of world and literary knowledge. She also guided the children in ways to use book knowledge in their lives. (1984, p. 6)

Cochran-Smith's work has accentuated the central importance of the social interactions that surround storyreading in "the making of a reader." However, her study took place in a pre-school setting where formal reading instruction was not a concern. What is the place
of storyreading in the more formal literacy learning contexts of kindergarten and first grade? This was one aspect of a study by Short (1986) and a concern of the present study.

Like Cochran-Smith, Short found that collaborative meaning-making was an essential ingredient of story reading, book discussions and extensions in a first grade classroom in which she was a team teacher and researcher. According to Short, interaction between teachers and students during storyreading and in open-ended discussions in "literature circles" provided an arena within which the participants made connections, or intertextual ties, between past and current literacy experiences. These literacy events were characterized by the shared negotiation of meaning as group members—teachers as well as children—"responded to and built from each other's comments about the story in collaboratively developing their own interpretation of the story." (1986)

In their report of the ways that preschool children learned language in daily interactions with their parents and care-givers Wells, et al (1981, 1986) characterized this learning as spontaneous and unplanned and eminently social and functional. Further, "because it arises out of activities in which one or both of the participants
are engaged, it is focused and given meaning by the context in which it occurs” (1986, p. 67).

The studies carried out by Cochran-Smith and Short demonstrate the commonalities between early language learning in the home and the social interaction which characterizes the storyreading context in certain classrooms. In classrooms where storyreading is a daily and interactive event it may be a literacy event of equal importance to formal instruction in groups. Such storyreadings offer new and different ways to interact with people and with texts and new kinds of understandings about literacy. As such, group storyreading is a literacy event which merits close and careful study. The dearth of literature in this area further underlines this need.

**Informal Reading Events**

In an ethnographic study carried out in a first grade classroom Griffin (1977) described two types of reading activities which she called formal and informal reading events. Formal reading events were those labeled by the teacher and/or students as reading instruction (i.e. reading group). In contrast, informal reading events were occasions in which reading was a means of obtaining information. For example, outside of formal
Griffin found differences in the processes and practices of the reading which took place during formal reading instruction and the informal reading which was part of other classroom activities. She found that in this classroom "phonics was an overriding concern" during formal reading instruction. In contrast, informal reading was used as a tool rather than "a set of skills or concepts to be learned or taught for its own sake" (1977, p. 381). Griffin also found that a great deal of teaching and learning about reading occurred in these situations where reading served a variety of purposes rather than being itself an object of study.

Bloome (1981) came to similar conclusions in his study of reading across the curriculum in junior high school classrooms. He found that in order to study reading in these classrooms he had to expand his definition of reading to include "a variety of forms, modes, settings, social organizations and group formations." Reading often occurred with or was embedded within other language processes and other activities (i.e. reading directions for a writing assignment, reading a teacher's note, etc). When he moved beyond the
traditional definition of reading and viewed it from the perspectives of his junior high informants, Bloome found that individuals and groups of students interacted with and interpreted printed material outside of official reading time with great frequency.

The work of Griffin and Bloome demonstrate that in order to obtain a complete and valid picture of literacy learning in any classroom, researchers must go beyond the study of formal reading instruction and classroom events identified as "reading time" by participants and examine the larger classroom setting for informal or unofficial reading events. Conclusions about the processes and results of literacy learning that do not account for both formal and informal reading events may be incomplete and misleading.

In this study an effort was made to cast the net widely in order to capture informal as well as formal literacy events which were significant aspects of the literacy learning that took place in the classroom under investigation. This was especially important because the teacher under observation was making a deliberate attempt to move her classroom literacy program away from a formal teacher-directed and toward a "whole language/literate environment" similar to the one described by Short. The ways in which she carried out these changes toward more
functional and collaborative literacy learning, the responses of the subject children and the interactions between teacher and children within these shifting and evolving literacy events were of crucial interest to the researcher.

**Impact of Reading Contexts on Students**

The studies discussed above indicate that all reading events are not equal, and that even within a single classroom different children may receive what amounts to a different program of reading instruction. Some researchers have speculated that how students read and what they think of reading may depend on the nature of the reading instruction they have received. For example, Harste and Burke (1977) contend that children's theories about reading and their reading performance are "an artifact of instructional history" (p. 33).

A number of studies address the issue of the links between instructional environments and emphases and children's reading behaviors. Many are correlational studies which explore the influence of instruction on children's use of text information. Barr (1974-75) was one of the first to demonstrate that the primary method of reading instruction used in their classrooms influenced the kinds of strategies children used in identifying words. For example, she found that the
children from a classroom with a "sight-word" emphasis tended to make whole word substitutions using words that had been previously introduced during instruction.

Barr's findings are supported by others who have examined the oral reading responses of children from classrooms with different instructional approaches (Andrews, 1976; Cohen, 1974-75; Dank, 1976; DeLawter, 1975; Mitchell, 1980). Often these investigators have used the Reading Miscue Inventory (Goodman and Burke, 1972) as a tool for analyzing children's error behavior. Generally these researchers have focused on error type (omissions, insertions, substitutions, etc). Often substitutions are further analyzed for their graphophonemic, syntactic and semantic links to the text and sometimes self correction behavior is examined as well. Board (1982) provides a concise summary of the findings of these studies:

Generally, these studies reveal characteristic error patterns to be associated with the different instructional approaches. . . . Children taught by programs emphasizing the use of letter-sound cues tend to make fewer non-responses to text. Their substitution errors tend to be more of a non-word nature, resembling the graphic features of text, but having little meaning. Children in such programs also tend to make relatively fewer correction attempts. On the other hand, children exposed to instructional methods that place greater emphasis on meaning (or words as a major unit of print) are more likely to omit unfamiliar words, or to
draw from a set repertoire of words previously taught. Their substitutions are also more likely to be real words, many of which retain the semantic properties of the story, but which bear only minimal graphic resemblance to the text item. They also tend to correct more frequently than do children exposed to phonics-based programs. Their correction behavior also tends to be guided more by the syntactic-semantic than by the graphic properties of errors. (1984, p. 9)

The data collected in these studies seems imposing, but caution must be exercised in assuming simple and direct links from classroom instruction to student behaviors and theories. Board (1982) points out that the descriptions of instruction have been too global and vague to be useful. This is especially true in light of the previous discussion of differential instructional emphases within the same classroom.

An even more telling difficulty with these studies is the fact that they tend to assume that classroom influences are unidirectional, and that differences in observed reading behavior stem from instructional sources. Board (1982) speaks to this issue:

The studies take instructional influence as a given. They begin with the belief that instruction does, in fact, influence all children, and that children are passive recipients to all instructional directives. The possibility that observed differences may stem from what children themselves may bring to the instructional situation, that children may make qualified use of such instructional emphases, and that they may be taking an active role in determining their
own destiny as competent readers, is often overlooked. (p. 7)

Indeed, the latter possibility was one of the key conclusions drawn by Board (1982) in his comprehensive description of the reading behaviors of two high and two low first grade readers and the reading instruction they received. Board found that in both of the classrooms studied teachers were very directive in the children's use of information given in the text and that, "they frequently used decontextualized language, devoid of syntactic-semantic information . . . even when such information was available in text they emphasized the use of graphic information and ignored information from text."

However, Board found that his high and low ability subjects did not demonstrate the same degree of instructional influence. While the reading behaviors of the low readers reflected their instructional experiences, the high readers exercised considerable freedom and flexibility in their use of reading strategies. Board concluded that, "children are selective in using instruction to guide their own reading development," He speculated that proficient readers tend to be "instructionally independent" while low readers may be "instructionally dependent." Interestingly, support for this notion comes from Dyson's (1981, 1983) studies
on the development of children's writing in primary grade classrooms. Dyson found that as her subjects became more proficient as writers they demonstrated less context-dependence.

Further support comes from a recent investigation by Bondy (1984) in which she attempted to identify the definitions of reading constructed by students in a first grade classroom. Several researchers have suggested that the elementary grade children in their studies adopted their teachers' definition of reading (i.e. Roth, 1980; Mosenthal, 1983; Cohen and Mosenthal, 1983). However, Bondy found that the high and low children in her study constructed multiple definitions of reading and not all children developed the same definitions.

While the teacher's practices represented all six of the identified definitions, the children responded differently to her practices. The low children tended to adopt definitions of reading which viewed reading as an externally imposed task: reading is saying words correctly, reading is schoolwork, and reading is a source of status. Three other definitions were used almost exclusively by the high group subjects. Along with one or more of the definitions given above, they also saw reading as a way to learn things, a source of private pleasure and a social activity.
The work of Board, Dyson and Bondy suggests the need for caution in assuming direct, universal or unidirectional links between teacher's practices and instructional emphases and the theories and behaviors of their students. Poor readers and writers seem to be more influenced and constrained by immediate classroom literacy learning contexts than their more proficient peers. However, many questions remain about how and why children develop the theories and practices of written language use that they do. Furthermore, we know little about the role of children's theories of reading and writing in their ongoing life and work in the classroom. This study represents an attempt to explore some of these issues and to gather further information on the ways low readers and their high achieving peers respond to the theories and practices of their classroom teacher.

**School Contexts for Writing**

Any examination of children's literacy learning would be incomplete without considering school contexts for writing which complement and often overlap with school contexts for reading. Since writing is a language process, the structure and content of written language varies within particular contexts (Whiteman, 1981). Young children learn about the purposes, processes and specific
features of written language as they encounter it in the familiar settings of home, family and community. (Cochran-Smith, 1984; Harste, Woodward and Burke, 1984; Heath, 1983; Taylor, 1983). These recent studies have demonstrated that children's knowledge of written language is variably affected by their encounters with written language. Still, despite certain personal and cultural differences, all children come to school with considerable knowledge and understanding about written language.

However, school represents a significant change for children in that, "written language is no longer a part of the everyday world, but becomes an object to be examined in teacher-structured tasks, within which children are required to display their written language competencies" (Dyson, 1984, p. 234). Graves (1978) found that these teacher-structured tasks typically consist of workbook exercises and drills on isolated aspects of penmanship, spelling, punctuation, vocabulary and grammar, and that these activities require very little actual writing. In a similar vein, Dyson (1985) notes that, "observations of early childhood classrooms and conversations with in-service teachers in methods classes suggest that copying the daily news, charts, poems and rhymes continues to be the mainstay in many
early elementary classrooms" (p. 497).

Graves and his colleagues (Calkins, 1983; Graves, 1983; Sowers, 1979) have carried out extensive examinations of children's writing processes in schools and classrooms which are thought to be facilitative for growth in writing processes. However, there is merit to studies which explore and analyze children's reading and writing processes within classroom environments which are more typical of the norm. As Dyson (1983) points out:

Critical studies in traditional school settings will allow insight into children's success and failure in schools, and, in addition, provide data that are immediately meaningful to teachers, data that start from where teachers are (p. 510)

The present study represents an attempt to gather such data, being an examination of the interactions of children and teachers during the literacy contexts in a typical classroom.

Much of the work of Dyson (1981, 1983, 1984) has dealt with the ways in which children make sense of writing in primary grade classrooms. In a study (1984) in which she focused on the relationships between learning to write and learning to perform school writing tasks, Dyson found that the writing events in one kindergarten classroom could be clustered into four categories: copying (words and sentences), selecting and copying words, fill-in-the-blank and free writing. Free
writing was the only writing context in which the children selected their own topics and formulated their own meanings.

Dyson found that the children in her study interpreted and carried out school writing tasks in varying ways, but they all evidenced a concern with meeting the requirements of the writing tasks as conveyed by the teacher. A concurrent study of the writing events in a second grade classroom uncovered an even stronger trend in this direction: a major school goal of these seasoned veterans was to figure out the patterns in the ways literacy tasks were to be completed and to avoid "messing up."

Arguing that "classrooms all over the country have within them writing curricula that are largely informal and unarticulated," (p. 129) Florio and Clark (1982) conducted a year-long ethnographic study in a second/third grade classroom in order to gather the perspectives of the children and their teachers on writing and its communicative functions. They identified four primary functions of writing within this classroom, one of which relates to the traditional teacher-directed and evaluated writing activities noted above: writing to demonstrate academic competence.
However, Florio and Clark found that writing did not only take place during these official writing events; it also served several more personal functions during the school day. For example, the children wrote in diaries, created letters and cards, recorded class rules, Thanksgiving dinner menus and recipes and wrote class books recounting their experiences on field trips. Florio and Clark created three categories for these less academic classroom writing occasions: writing to participate in community, writing to know oneself and others and writing to occupy free time.

Importantly, Florio and Clark found that writing for different functions was characterized by different sociocognitive features, including the initiator of the writing, the composer, the actual writer, the intended audience, the format of the product and the presence or absence of an evaluation of that product. They concluded that many assigned writing tasks restricted children from engaging in the whole writing process.

The Florio and Clark study points to a key finding in recent examinations of writing in schools: much of the writing that children do in schools is embedded within social interactions. This is true even of the formal teacher-directed writing events, but even more so in the many unofficial writing events through which children
establish and maintain connections with their peers, teachers and families (cf. also Fiering, 1981).

Dyson (1981, 1983) found that her primary grade subjects talked incessantly as they wrote: asking for help, rehearsing ideas, planning their creation of texts, directing their own behavior, questioning each other about their products, sharing and reading their work to each other and simply socializing.

Dyson's findings are corroborated by Lamme's (1983) description of the composing processes of three pre-school children and by Platt's (1982) ethnographic exploration of the contexts for writing in a family-grouped, informal first and second grade classroom. Platt found that these children and their teacher "created their own culture" which they represented in varying communicative modes, including writing, and that this writing often occurred within the context of "doing things with friends."

Fiering (1981) focused her attention on unofficial child controlled writing in two fifth grade classrooms and suggested that this self-sponsored writing was quite different from children's regular assigned writing. Researchers who have described the different processes and written texts which result from self-initiated writing or self-selected topics (Birnbaum, 1980 Bissex,
1980; Emig, 1971; Graves, 1973) have found that self-sponsored writing is generally lengthier, more varied and more reflective of the thoughts and feelings of the writer. For example, in a longitudinal study of her son's development as a writer from preschool through grade five, Bissex (1980) found that her son wrote short monotonous sentences for his second grade teacher, while his self-initiated writing at home was far more inventive, mature and communicative. Harste, Woodward and Burke (1984) noted a similar disparity between the texts Harste's daughter Alison produced at school and those she initiated on her own at home.

Hudson (1985) asked 20 "avid self-sponsored writers" in grades 1 through 5 to collect their written products at home and at school. In interviews scheduled every three weeks Hudson asked each child to label each piece of writing for ownership (Who decided you should do this?), setting (Where were you when you wrote this?), audience (Who saw this?), purpose (What were your reasons for writing it?) and genre (What kind of writing is this?). Hudson found that at all grade levels the children cited more audience, purposes and genres for their self-sponsored writing.

The research discussed above suggests the importance of examining at least two important aspects of classroom
writing contexts: 1) the "underlying task structures" (Erickson, 1982) set in place by teachers and 2) the social interactions in which writing events are embedded and the intentions and purposes of the writer. Writing which occurs between the cracks of the official curriculum is of interest because it offers an important arena for observing the ways in which children organize their understandings and uses of writing. All of these kinds of contexts for writing will be explored in the first grade classroom which is the site of the present study.

Because writing is a mode of communication and embedded within social interactions as described above, children in classrooms are exposed to numerous "demonstrations" of writing as they observe others write (Smith, 1981). Other significant demonstrations are provided by the experiences that children have with written texts. Investigations of the writing of primary grade children has revealed the impact of the kinds of literacy activities offered in the classroom and the materials the children are given to read on the writing produced by these children.

DeFord (1981) compared the reading instruction and written products of children in three classrooms with different instructional emphases and materials (i.e.
phonics, skill based and whole language). An examination of the children's writing revealed that the children borrowed and improvised on the vocabulary, language structures, formats and literary styles found in their reading materials. Similar findings were reported by Eckhoff (1983).

This discussion of classroom contexts for writing has demonstrated that each classroom provides certain kinds of opportunities for writing and certain demonstrations of writing in use and in written texts and that all of these demonstrations take place within the social life of the classroom community. However, as in our discussion of classroom reading contexts, we must be cautious about oversimplifying the relationship between classroom practices and activities and student writing. Children bring their own experiences, abilities and interpretations to the writing tasks presented in the classroom and carry out those activities in personally meaningful ways. Thus, as noted by Dyson (1985):

The literacy curriculum is not controlled solely by the teacher because children interpret school experiences in light of their own understandings (p. 509)

In this sense, then, school contexts for writing are as varied as the children who participate in them. In light of this, the present study will explore the
understandings and practices of literacy learning of six individual first graders, representing a broad range of achievement.

**Teacher's Implicit Theories**

Teachers make a multitude of decisions and judgements every day. They base those decisions on their interpretations of their experience in the world and their implicit theories about child development, learning, classroom management and literacy learning to mention just a few areas of concern.

In recent years there has been increasing interest in the nature of teacher's implicit theories and the decision making aspects of teaching (cf. Clark and Peterson, 1986; Shavelson, 1983; Shulman and Elstein, 1975). For example, researchers have focused on teacher's general conceptions of their role as teachers (Janesick, 1977; Munby, 1983), their principles of practice (Connors, 1978; Marland, 1977), their practical knowledge (Elbaz, 1981, 1983) and their beliefs about curriculum (Munby, 1983; Olson, 1982; Swanson-Owens, 1986).

A study that led the way in this area of inquiry was that of Bussis, Chittenden and Amarel (1976). Using in-depth interviews with sixty "open classroom" teachers,
they examined the personal constructs (cf Kelly, 1955) relating to curriculum, child development, and learning that these teachers brought to their work.

In their analysis Bussis, et al organized the teachers' understandings of curriculum and children's learning into two categories: surface curriculum (i.e. the organization of the classroom, activities, materials, themes and topics of study that the teacher plans and provides for children) and the organizing content of the curriculum (i.e. the teacher's rationale, purposes and learning priorities for children). The researchers were interested in the connections perceived by the teachers between these two aspects of curriculum.

Their analysis of the teachers' "curriculum construct systems" revealed a tension between the press to emphasise "grade-level facts and skills" and teachers' understandings of the importance of broader developmental and process goals for learners. Bussis and her colleagues identified four orientations among these teachers ranging from heavy and exclusive emphasis on grade-level facts and skills to primary emphasis on broader developmental goals.

This work by Bussis, Chittenden and Amarel was important in laying conceptual and methodological foundations for subsequent research in this area. They
assumed that personal meanings, beliefs and intentions play a significant role in driving human behavior and "the environments people create." Their study provides insights into the ways teachers make sense of their teaching role and their curriculum priorities.

However, their study did not go beyond the self-reports of their subjects; they did not attempt to describe classroom life or teacher-student interaction in the classrooms. Other researchers have begun to provide some of these missing pieces. One of the areas of this research which is especially pertinent to the present study is the work that has examined teachers' implicit theories about reading and the ways in which these theories relate to the "surface curriculum" revealed in their classrooms.

Interest in teachers' conceptions of reading and principles of practice in reading instruction is partially due to the growing realization that, "the most significant educational variation exists at the level of the individual practitioner - not at the level of instructional materials, packaged programs, or the like (Bussis, et al., 1976, p. 1).

Harste and Burke (1977) argue that teachers make judgements and decisions about reading instruction in light of the theories, beliefs and assumptions they hold
about reading and learning. They claim that these theories, though often never articulated, guide teachers in their selection of goals for the reading program, the procedures and materials they use for diagnosis and instruction, the classroom environment they perceive to be facilitative for reading growth, their expectations for "good" reading behaviors and their criteria for growth in reading (Harste and Burke, 1977; DeFord, 1985).

Using teachers' responses to students' oral reading errors as one indication of theoretical orientation, Harste and Burke identified three "representative" views of reading: 1) sound/symbol or phonics, 2) skills, which considers language activities to be composed of a discrete subset of skills, and 3) whole language, in which systems of language are seen as interactive and interdependent and in which meaning is the focus of all reading activities. Subsequent studies by other researchers (i.e. DeFord, 1981, Gove, 1981) have demonstrated the utility and validity of this clustering of theoretical orientations and DeFord (1978) created an instrument designed to measure teacher's theoretical orientations which used the same framework.

A different approach to the exploration of teachers' theories about reading was taken by Duffy and his colleagues in an extensive program of research conducted...
at the Institute for Research on Teaching (Bawden, Buike and Duffy, 1979; Buike and Duffy, 1979; Duffy and Methany, 1978). They measured teachers' conceptions of reading in two ways: 1) a "Propositional Inventory" designed to provide exploratory information about teachers' conceptualizations about reading, and 2) a naturalistic field study of twenty three classrooms using formal and informal interviews, observation and selective tape recording in order to see if teachers views about reading were reflected in their decision making and classroom practice.

In the first phase of research they administered the Propositional Inventory to 350 teachers, and found that teachers do have conceptions of reading, and often multiple conceptions, but that they rarely fit into the purely theoretical positions suggested in the literature. The research team concluded that teachers' conceptions of reading could be placed on a continuum ranging between two orientations which they labeled "content-centered" (i.e. basal text and linear skills) and "pupil-centered" (natural language, pupil interest and integrated curriculum) (Duffy and Methany, 1978).

The observational phase of the study indicated that there are flexible and complex relationships between teachers' implicit theories about reading and their
classroom practice. In addition to multiple ideas about reading, teachers operated on the basis of many non-reading concepts such as classroom management and the instructional needs of children of different ability levels. Indeed, when reading and non-reading principles conflicted, teachers' decisions tended to be influenced more by such non-reading factors than their ideas about reading.

These studies suggest that constraints such as mandated curriculum materials, grade level, the press of time, teacher habits and personality and their assessment of student ability may "interpose between theory and action and account for observed discrepancies" (Clark and Peterson, 1986, p. 289).

Barr came to similar conclusions in her work on the impact of curricular materials on instructional interaction and learning (Barr, in press; Barr and Dreeban, 1983). Barr places instructional contexts within the broader organization of school systems, arguing that many aspects of life in classrooms are "givens" rather than the result of teacher's theories and decisions:

Teachers do not create instruction from scratch. The conditions of the class -- its students and their competencies, the curricular materials, and instructional time represent the "hand" teachers are dealt. These conditions are established by decisions occurring at the school and district levels of organization. (p. 8)
Another piece of this complex puzzle is teachers' perceptions of the decision and policy makers who are "above them" in the system's organizational hierarchy. Several investigators have noted the impact of teachers' perceptions of the beliefs of school system officials on their conceptions of reading and resulting classroom practice (Ross, 1979; Gove, 1981).

Another aspect of the complex relationships between teachers' theories and their classroom practices is teachers' self-awareness of those beliefs. Besides the perceptions-of-administrators factor mentioned above, Ross (1979) found three other factors to affect the ability of teachers to implement their beliefs: (1) the clarity of the beliefs, (2) the ability to perceive a connection between beliefs and practices previously identified as important, and (3) an awareness and thorough understanding of possible alternative practices. This was also hinted at in the previously described study by Bussis, Chittenden and Amarel (1976). They found that some teachers were more able than others to articulate the connections between their "surface curriculum" and "the organization of the curriculum."

A study by Pinnell and Woolsey (1985) of the impact on teachers of their involvement as teachers and co-researchers in the Ohio Reading Recovery Project
indicated that as teachers were involved in weekly training sessions in which they observed Reading Recovery lessons in progress and discussed them in detail with their peers they became more articulate not only about what they did in instruction, but also why.

In the initial stages of the year-long effort teachers tended to concentrate in formal and informal discussions on the logistic and practical arrangements involved in the day to day implementation of the project. However, as they continued to implement Reading Recovery procedures with children and the weekly inservice training sessions, teachers were able to talk about their own understandings and theories. It seems that the intensive year-long training process and interaction with peers and trainers provided teachers with a supportive environment within which theoretical as well as practical learning took place.

It is apparent that the study of teacher theories and practice in classrooms must take into account aspects of the classroom and the instruction which are part of the teachers "hand." An exploration of the ways in which different teachers deal with these givens and work within the system could shed further light on teachers' theories and how teachers make sense of life in the classroom.
Summary

This review of the literature started with a discussion of the importance of context in making sense of any event, action or unit of language. The term "context" has been widely and variably used in the literature and several important definitions were discussed. In this study the term refers to the cultural, social and situational elements surrounding and created by acts of reading and writing as well as the constraints of the situation as perceived by the participants in those literacy events.

The work of researchers who have described and analyzed school contexts for reading was considered next. Selected studies of the reading which takes place in formal instruction, all class storytime and informal reading events were reviewed. A key finding in these studies is that formal as well as informal reading events must be understood within the larger social interactional processes at work in the classroom. The studies also indicate that the nature of reading instruction is unique across classrooms, across different reading events and across the individual children who are participants in those contexts.
Studies which addressed the links between instructional environments and emphases and children's reading behavior have indicated that the ways that children approach and carry out reading tasks reflects the nature of the instruction they have received. However, these links are not simple or universal and several investigators (Board, Bondy, Dyson) found that poor readers and writers are more influenced and constrained by immediate classroom literacy learning contexts than their more proficient peers.

The relevant literature on school contexts for writing revealed an emphasis within typical primary classrooms on teacher-structured tasks which often involve little meaning-making and little actual writing on the part of students. However, like reading, acts of writing are embedded within social interaction and many classrooms evidenced a host of unofficial and self-sponsored writing occasions. The research suggests the need to examine two important aspects of classroom writing contexts: 1) the "underlying task structure" set in place by the teacher, and 2) the social milieu and the intentions and purposes of the writer.

The research also indicates that each classroom provides certain kinds of opportunities for writing and certain demonstrations of writing in use and written text
which create constraints within which children's writing occurs. However, because "children interpret school experiences in light of their own understandings," children may respond in different ways to those constraints.

Studies of teachers' cognitive processes indicate that teachers plan and implement instruction and make daily decisions on the basis of their theories and assumptions about children, learning and literacy processes. However, the link between these implicit theories and actual practice are complex and flexible and influenced by the mandated curriculum, teachers' assessments of students' abilities, the press of time and the clarity of those beliefs.
CHAPTER THREE

METHODOLOGY

Introduction

The purposes of this study were: 1) to describe and analyze the literacy learning contexts created by a first grade teacher and her students over the course of one school year and 2) to explore the relationships between these contexts and the oral and written language used by a representative group of three of the lowest and three of the highest readers and writers within this classroom. The exploratory, descriptive nature of the study suggested a research methodology which was more qualitative than quantitative in nature. Thus, the study employed an ethnographic participant-observer perspective, the development of which will be described below. First, however, the nature of research carried out from an ethnographic perspective will be described.

The Nature of Ethnographic Research

Bogdan and Biklen (1982) have outlined a number of characteristics of qualitative research:

1) Research is conducted within the particular setting under study
2) The researcher is the main research instrument
3) Data are descriptive
4) The focus is on ongoing processes rather than products.
5) Data are analyzed inductively.
6) The researcher is concerned with understanding the perspectives of the people under study.

This particular study is an example of qualitative inquiry which is carried out with an ethnographic perspective. The ethnographic perspective is a way of looking at and interpreting a culture, with the central aim of understanding the social group under study from the "native point of view" (Spradley, 1980). The use of this approach can yield "a literal description that figuratively transports the readers into the situation with a sense of insight, understanding, and illumination not only of the facts or the events in the case, but also the texture, the quality, and the power of the context as the participants in the situation experienced it" (Owens, 1982, p. 8).

As he attempts to understand and describe the social group under study, the ethnographer identifies key incidents or "recurrent events", describes these events and their meanings for the participants and places them in relation to the wider social context (Erickson, 1977; McClure, 1985).

Spradley (1980), an anthropologist, has organized traditional ethnographic methods into a systematic set of
procedures which he calls the Developmental Research Sequence. Spradley's ethnographic model is cyclical rather than linear in nature. The traditional experimental researcher engages in a linear process of defining a research problem, identifying hypotheses, gathering data to test these hypotheses, analyzing the data and then drawing conclusions. In contrast, the ethnographic researcher engages in a cyclical process of questioning, collecting data, recording data and analyzing data.

This cyclical process is recursive and interactive. Throughout the course of the study questions are refined and generated and the sequence of questioning, collecting, recording and analyzing is repeated. Questions serve to direct observations and from those observations questions emerge which guide further observation and analysis. Data analysis is not the culmination of the research act, but an integral part of the entire research cycle (See Figure 1 below)

The design of this study reflects this interactive and context-governed perspective in which the primary aim is to identify the meanings held by "natives" towards those events.
The report of the methodology of the study will start with a description of the research setting and population and the reasons for selecting this site. This will be followed by a discussion of the articulation of the research questions. Then the time frame and the organization of the study will be discussed with special attention given to the shifting roles of the researcher during different phases of the study. This will be followed by a discussion of the ways in which ethnographic data was collected and recorded, and finally a description of the analysis of the ethnographic data.
Setting and Population of the Study

The study took place in a first grade classroom in an inner-city school serving 735 children from kindergarten through third grade. It was located in an older working class area of Columbus, Ohio. The school was racially mixed, under court ordered busing for the past five years, and the classroom reflected this mix. It was composed in September of 28 children, 55% black, 41% white and 4% Asian. Though the classroom population shifted dramatically during the course of the year, with 9 of the original children leaving the room for various reasons and 8 children joining the class during the year, the racial mix remained consistent.

Initially, I observed all of the children in this first grade classroom as a group. By the end of September, I focused my attention on the activities of ten targeted children, five of the poorest and five of the highest readers and writers in the class, selected on the basis of the Clay Diagnostic Survey (Clay, 1979) and my own observation and in consultation with the teachers.

Though data was collected throughout the year on all ten children, it was not feasible to carry out in-depth analysis on all of these children or to report the data
on all ten children. Thus the researcher selected three of the lowest and three of the highest readers and writers who seemed to be the most representative of the particular group. Data on these six children is reported in Chapter V. Children were excluded from this in-depth study for various reasons. For example, one of the low readers was Cambodian and struggled throughout the year with learning English as his second language, and one of the high children had been advanced to first grade after two weeks in kindergarten because she was reading at a second grade level at the age of five.

The class was team-taught by two teachers who were both participants in the Reading Recovery Program during the second year of its implementation in the school system. As was the norm in the Columbus Reading Recovery Program, Mrs. Dee, a first grade teacher, was teamed with Miss Morris, a reading specialist. Both teachers worked with individual children using Reading Recovery procedures for half a day and then they worked with the whole classroom for the other half of the day. In the morning Mrs. Dee directed the classroom, taking responsibility for reading and language instruction, while Miss Morris worked individually with four children. In the afternoon the roles were reversed: Miss Morris took over the classroom, teaching Math, Social Studies
and Science while Mrs Dee worked with four other children.

Because the focus of my interest was the theories and uses of literacy of these children, the bulk of my observation was in the morning and the first grade teacher who is one of the key subjects in this study was Mrs Dee. However, there is no doubt that Miss Morris had an impact on these children during the course of their afternoon work. The children also had special instruction once a week in the areas of library and physical education. However, every ethnographer has to make important decisions about ways to "bound" the data (Guba, 1978), and the decision was made to observe only those contexts where formal and informal literacy instruction took place (i.e. during the morning hours and while Mrs. Dee was in the classroom).

Of course, this classroom was also a part of a school and the school was part of a school district. The effects of these larger contexts, both in terms of support and constraint, are only hinted at here. Other crucial contexts which are not considered here are the communities from which these children and their teacher came and the all-important "communicative worlds" (Hymes) of their families. Considerations of the
Influences of these complexly interacting contexts are beyond the scope of this study and will be left to other investigations (i.e. Holland, in progress).

**Reasons for Choosing this Setting**

There were several reasons for selecting this particular research site for this study. The study was carried out in a first grade classroom to ensure that all children would be engaged in formal reading instruction from the beginning of the year.

This particular first grade room was chosen for several reasons. First, the researcher was acquainted with both of the teachers as a result of working together on the Reading Recovery Project during the previous year. During that year, the teachers and the researcher had established a congenial working relationship. According to Lofland (1971), access to desired information is more easily gained when the researcher uses "preexisting relations of trust as a route into the setting, rather than 'going in cold'" (p. 95). It was felt that a harmonious and productive researcher/teacher relationship would result in richer and more meaningful data, especially as the teacher's personal belief system was an important element of the phenomena under study.
Another important reason for the selection of Mrs. Dee and her classroom was the fact that classroom observations and structured interviews carried out as part of another investigation (Pinnell and Woolsey, 1985) indicated that Mrs. Dee was going through important changes in the ways she thought about and implemented literacy instruction in her classroom. A comment made by Mrs. Dee at the end of the previous school year hints at her self-awareness of those changes:

> When I started I followed the (basal reader) manual verbatim. No books in the child's hands until January, just letters and sounds. Now I put books in children's hands immediately and do writing immediately. (peer debriefing session, Pinnell and Woolsey, 1985, p. 12)

Mrs. Dee's efforts to change the ways in which she organized and carried out literacy instruction were of great interest to this researcher. It was hoped that the present study would yield insights into the ways that teachers go about making innovations in their classroom teaching and the impact of these changes on the students in their classrooms.

The study was limited to a single classroom for several reasons. The phenomena under scrutiny were understood to be an extremely complex ones. It was felt that the only kind of study which could hope to come to
terms with the intricate ways in which teacher and student beliefs and actions interacted and were related was one which was carried out over the long term and in depth. Such a study would have the potential to yield a more "fine-grained" understanding of the phenomena. Seemingly minor, but ultimately significant, events could easily be ignored or lost in a more quantitative comparative study. The intent of this researcher was to become a member of this single classroom over a long period of time and thus to be privy to events, comments and actions which might otherwise be overlooked.

Articulating Ethnographic Research Questions

Questioning is a critical element of the research cycle. The nature of these questions directs data collection and leads the researcher closer to the perspectives of the people being studied. However, it is not a simple matter to identify where and how the particular questions which framed this study emerged. The ethnographic perspective on research acknowledges the dynamic and evolutionary nature of knowledge and reflection. This researcher shares Platt's (1982) assertion that "this study has roots in many earlier, unreconstructible experiences of the researcher - reading, writing, observation and conversation" (p. 139).
Further, because of the nature of ethnographic research, the researcher's questions and foci of observation and analysis were gradually reformulated through the course of the study. This progressive reformulation continued through the data collection process, and on into the process of interpreting and reporting the data in its present form.

**Time Frame of the Study**

Anthropologists often work for at least a full year in the field (and often much longer) as they seek to understand and describe a cultural setting or social group. The collection of data for this study took place over the course of one school year, from September, 1985 through the end of May, 1986. Due to other responsibilities, it was not possible for the investigator to visit the school site every school day or all day. The investigator visited the classroom at least twice a week whenever this was possible, and sometimes three times a week. The researcher observed over 200 hours of classroom activity across the nine month duration of the study and on 63 different days.

Although observations in the first two months were directed toward a general description of the classroom
and often extended throughout the school day, the majority of the observations were made during the morning hours between 8:45 and 12:00 during which literacy instruction and learning was the primary focus. These literacy events were varied, but relatively predictable from day to day through the school year.

**Phases of the Study and Changing Roles of the Researcher**

The study was composed of four interactive phases reflecting the ethnographic research perspective described above. In these different phases, the role of the researcher took on different dimensions. This section will provide an overview of the data collection methods and the researcher's evolving role as the study progressed. See Table 1 for a schematic representation of the phases of the study. More detailed descriptions of the data collection methods will be provided in a later section.

Spradley (1980) has described the various roles which are available to the participant observer on a continuum of involvement with the people and activities which comprise the social situation (see Figure 2).

In the process of carrying out the present study, the researcher engaged in different degrees and forms of participation, thus assuming different roles at different
# Table 1. The Phases of the Study

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Phase</th>
<th>Phase II</th>
<th>Phase III</th>
<th>Phase IV</th>
<th>Phase V</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Primary concerns of the Researcher</strong></td>
<td><strong>Focused observation of teacher and students and their participation in literacy events</strong></td>
<td><strong>Collaboration with teacher in planning and implementing instruction in literacy</strong></td>
<td><strong>Verification of data on key literacy events</strong></td>
<td><strong>Post-site analysis, interpretation and reporting of findings</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Participant Role</strong></td>
<td>Passive</td>
<td>Moderate</td>
<td>Active</td>
<td>Moderate</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Data Collection</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Participant Observation</td>
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<tr>
<td>Writing Samples</td>
<td>X</td>
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<tr>
<td>Formal Interviews w/ Mrs D</td>
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<tr>
<td>Reading and Writing Interviews</td>
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<td>Video Taping</td>
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<td>Diagnostic Survey</td>
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points in the process of data collection. It is important to make note of these role shifts because the roles claimed by the participant observer or the roles the subjects assign to him have consequences for what he is able to learn (Bondy, 1984).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>DEGREE OF INVOLVEMENT</th>
<th>TYPE OF PARTICIPATION</th>
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<tr>
<td>High</td>
<td>Complete</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Active</td>
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<td>Moderate</td>
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<td>Low</td>
<td>Passive</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(No involvement)</td>
<td>Nonparticipation</td>
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</table>

Figure 2. Types of Participation (Spradley, 1980, p. 58)

In the earliest stages of the study this researcher's role could be characterized as passive participation in which, "the ethnographer . . . is present at the scene of action but does not participate or interact with people to any great extent" (Spradley, 1980, p. 59). Field notes recorded on the first day of observation which occurred on the fourth day of school indicate that Mrs. Dee introduced the researcher to the children as "someone you'll see a lot of this year because he's interested in the good work you do"
During these early observations the researcher sat quietly on the fringes of the group during whole class or small group activities, quietly observing and making notes.

During this first phase (August to September), primary areas of emphasis were gaining entry, acclimation to the setting and the collection of contextual data on the classroom as a whole. The questions which initially framed the research gave a general framework for what to observe. Some areas of focus included classroom routines and activities, recurring literacy events, print available in the room and teacher-child and child-child interaction around literacy tasks. Samples of the writing which took place during these observations were collected for target children, and sometimes for the entire class.

Interviews were conducted with the teachers in order to get their perspectives and insights into the organization and character of classroom literacy contexts, the children who made up the classroom and personal views on literacy learning and instruction. Discussions with the teachers as well as the data from observations and writing samples were considered in selecting the target children for the study. In late September videotapes were made of particular aspects of
classroom life. Designed to ensure accurate recording of contextual data at this early point in the school year, the video tapes captured recurrent "key literacy events" which had been identified during the first month of the study. Anderson, Teale and Estrada (1980) defined literacy events as "Any action sequence involving one or more persons in which the production and/or comprehension of print plays a role" (p. 59). Three types of literacy events were taped in September: group story time, group writing and teacher-directed reading groups.

This initial phase of entry and general observation provided important contextual information which led to the more focused observations which characterized the second phase of the study. During phase II (October through mid-February) the student subjects, Mrs. Dee and the literacy events in which they participated were the object of purposeful, focused observation.

At this point, the role of the researcher shifted to what Spradley calls moderate participation, where the researcher shifts back and forth between observation and participation trying to maintain a balance between the insider and outsider experience in the social setting. During this period, the researcher made an effort to avoid taking on the typical adult roles of teaching,
supervising and evaluating. However, there were many occasions when direct observations needed to be supplemented with information from the subjects. Thus, the researcher began to ask questions and converse with the children in order to gain more insight into their perceptions and meanings in the literacy events as they occurred. In other instances the researcher served as "receiver of the good," listening to children read books or their own stories and providing support through simple interest and attention.

Special observation forms were created in order to frame the process of gathering data on the ways in which the targeted children made use of their literacy knowledge in formal and informal literacy events. All written work produced by these students was recorded in some fashion, either transposed directly into the investigator's field notes or borrowed, copied and returned as soon as possible. Another source of information during this phase were the reading and writing interviews conducted with individual children. In an effort to detect the ways in which these children were changing and growing, these interviews were in December and in March with some modification to reflect shifting classroom literacy events.
During this phase formal interviews continued with Mrs Dee, and brief informal discussions were a common occurrence during observations. The video tapes recorded during phase I were viewed together with the teachers in order to gather their perspectives on these literacy events. Video tapes of the reading groups and story time were recorded in December and again in March, and tapes were also made of new literacy events which had been introduced to the classroom, namely journal writing and peer shared reading.

In the early spring the researcher's role shifted again as he assumed the more involved role of active participation in phase III. For six weeks, in late February and March, the researcher collaborated with the teacher in planning and implementing literacy learning activities during the morning hours. This new role was assumed for two reasons. From the viewpoint of the researcher the new role was crucial in gaining an understanding of the experience of creating and carrying out literacy-related curriculum in this first grade classroom and with this particular group of children. The move was also welcomed by the teacher. She was attempting to implement new ways of structuring her literacy instruction and the researcher's participation
gave her psychological and temporal "space" which facilitated her move toward new ways of doing things.

The final phase (April-May) of data collection focused on the verification of data through additional observations and interviews with both teachers. During this phase the researcher reassumed a role of moderate participation which was primarily observational, though laced with brief conversations with children where it was deemed necessary and appropriate. This was done to provide time for objective analysis and to allow the researcher to once again get the sense of "the whole." During these observations an attempt was made to confirm or disconfirm trends and patterns which had emerged from preliminary analysis.

The data collection period was followed by a final phase of post-site analysis and ultimately the interpretation and reporting of findings. During this period the data coding and reduction which had begun during the data collection period was continued with more intensity. As the investigator worked within the data and back and forth between the data and the literature, conclusions were formulated.

According to Schwartz and Jacobs (1979):

Who you are and where you are within such a world have a role in creating that world and in fashioning the
colored glasses through which you see it and it sees you. (pp. 50,52)

The different research methodologies and the different roles assumed at various stages of this study allowed the researcher to gather different kinds of information and to gain a more complete and rich understanding of the meanings that Mrs. Dee and her students created within the literacy learning contexts that were observed.

**Collecting Ethnographic Data**

The object of this investigation was to make visible the theories and uses of literacy of one first grade teacher and a small group of her students. These theories were not easily observed as tangible, concrete phenomena, but they could be inferred through careful examination and analysis of several kinds of data. According to Spradley (1980), all people make use of three types of information to make inferences about what others think and know:

- We observe what people do (cultural behavior); we observe things people make and use such as clothes and tools (cultural artifacts); and we listen to what people say (speech messages). (1980, p. 10)

Such inferences are a routine and generally unselfconscious element of everyday life. However, ethnographic researchers attempt to make such inferences
in a careful, systematic and fine-grained way in order to attain the insider's perspective.

Barton and Lazarsfeld (1969) provide the rationale for this practice:

The underlying assumption ... is that a phenomenon which cannot be directly observed will nevertheless leave traces which, properly interpreted, permit the phenomenon to be identified and studied.

(1969, p. 170)

In this study the researcher used the speech messages of Mrs. Dee and the targeted children about literacy and literacy learning, their behaviors and actions as participants in literacy events, and their use of literacy materials as indicators of the "less easily observed phenomena" of their theories and assumptions (Becker, 1970).

In this study the researcher made use of several methods of collecting evidence and making inferences, including participant observation and the creation of field notes; audio and video taping of literacy events; formal and informal informant interviewing; the collection of written artifacts; and two formal measures: the Diagnostic Survey for the children and the Teacher Orientation to the Reading Process (DeFord, 1978, 1985) for the teacher. Each of these methods of data collection will be described in terms of how it was
carried out and how the particular technique provided
data which was relevant to the study.

**Participant Observation**

Participant observation is the principal tool of the
ethnographic researcher (Schwartz and Jacobs, 1979).
This field method requires that the researcher:

directly participate in the sense that
he has durable social relations in the
social system under investigation. He
may or may not play an active part in
events, or he may interview participants
in events which may be considered part
of the process of observation.

(Zelditch, 1969, p. 9)

Spradley (1980) points out that doing participant
observation has a great deal in common with what everyone
does in newly encountered social situations. However,
there are several ways in which the role of participant
observer in an ethnographic study differs from that of an
ordinary participant in a social situation.

Most importantly, the participant observer comes to
a social situation with a dual purpose. Like other
participants, he wants to engage in activities
appropriate to the situation. At the same time, however,
the participant observer wants to observe and record the
activities, people and physical aspects of the situation.
The participant observer must engage in mental processes beyond those required for successful participation in a social situation. He has to attempt to make explicit aspects of the context and social situation which ordinary participants take for granted. He needs to periodically distance himself from that situation in order to review the data from a neutral position (McClure, 1985). As he reflects on the ethnographic record he has made, the participant observer attempts to search out patterns and trends and to relate the data to theoretical understandings.

Finally, the participant observer must constantly look within himself and search out personal bias and prejudice. Personal bias is a reality of all research, but especially in ethnographic research where the researcher is himself the primary research instrument. Thus, the participant observer must strive to be aware of personal bias, attempt to minimize its influence, and understand and interpret the data in light of that awareness.

Field Notes

During and after every observation in the classroom an ethnographic record was made in the form of field notes. During the actual observation rough notes were
made in which the researcher attempted to record classroom events, the behaviors and speech acts and interactions of the teacher and students in this first grade classroom with as much completeness and detail as possible. These field notes represented a "condensed account" (Spradley, 1980) of what actually occurred in the classroom. That is, due to the speed and complexity of the recurring and co-occurring literacy events available for observation, the researcher typically recorded phrases and unconnected sentences which would help him to later recall the details of these events. See Appendix A for sample pages of the field notes.

Following the observational period, the researcher filled in details in order to create an "expanded account" (Spradley, 1980). The rough notes taken during the observation were transcribed onto the word processor as soon as possible, usually the same day. During this transcription process the notes were elaborated and amplified as the researcher reflected back on the observation and additional details were recalled. This process also allowed the researcher to muse about personal reactions and questions, to make links to theories and patterns garnered in reading of the related literature and to make note of methodological and
procedural concerns and issues.

As such, these field notes served several purposes. First and foremost, they were a record of what actually happened in the classroom and how its members interacted and responded to each other and the activities. However, they also served as a forum for planning the progressive and emergent stages of the research and to carry out preliminary analysis of the data. These "notes from the researcher to himself" (Platt, 1982, p. 147) were kept separate from descriptive observational notes through bracketing and the use of abbreviations borrowed from Corsaro (1981, 1984). Thus, the abbreviations PN, TN and MN were used to signal personal notes, theoretical notes and methodological notes respectively.

While rough notes taken during the observation were collected on a clipboard, these elaborated field notes were kept in large 3 ring binders, one for each month of the study, which served as a cumulative record of observation.

Another form of recording data from observations was the checklist. During the initial month of observation the researcher generated a list of the various literacy events and activities available to the children during the large block of individual work time at the end of the morning.
morning.

A wide range of activities were listed on a checklist, including Seatwork (i.e. copying off the board, filling in blanks and coloring dittoes, writing and illustrating stories, etc) Reading Group Activities (i.e. oral or silent reading, skill games, worksheets, discussion, etc) and Independent Work (i.e. reading trade books, peer shared reading, listening center, talk with a neighbor, drawing, etc) (See Appendix B for the complete checklist). The checklist also had an ample supply of blank spaces in order to record new or unusual activities.

On most observation days (approximately 80%) the researcher used this checklist to make note of what the targeted children were doing at fifteen minute intervals during the last two hours of the morning. The data collected on this checklist was intended to provide another measure of the literacy activities in which these children were involved. In many ways this data was not as rich or as meaningful as the detailed anecdotal records made in the field notes. However, a calculation of the percentages of time spent at different activities at the end of each month provided the larger picture of how these children were occupied during literacy instruction.
Audio Taping

It was often difficult to capture in field notes the exact content of teacher-child and child-child conversation and interaction during literacy events. Thus, audio tapes were made of selected literacy events at several points in time through the study. These tapes provided an accurate record of the oral language which surrounded these events and allowed the researcher to capture more subtle nuances of the literacy contexts under investigation. A second use for these tapes was to supplement the presence of the researcher and to allow the researcher to record events (i.e. peer shared reading) which were taking place while the researcher was observing elsewhere in the room.

For making these audio taped records a small handheld cassette tape recorder with a built-in microphone was used. Though they were not recorded in any systematic fashion, various literacy events were taped at one time or another through the study: reading groups, story reading and the discussion which followed, peer tutoring and peer shared independent reading and writing.

These tapes were reviewed by the researcher and excerpts which seemed to exemplify certain kinds of interaction and activities were transcribed. As would be
expected, small group and whole group activities were
difficult to transcribe because of problems with
multiple, overlapping and inaudible voices. Still, when
the transcribed excerpts were placed side by side with
participant observation notes and writing samples, a more
complete record of the subject's activities and the
literacy context could be created.

Video Taping

Recordings of the literacy events and phenomena of
interest in this study allowed the researcher to obtain a
permanent record of those events so that they could be
studied in greater depth at a later time. A taped record
allows the researcher the opportunity to view phenomena
repeatedly with different purposes and at whatever pace
is deemed necessary to see and understand that
phenomenon. Erickson and Wilson (1982) summarize these
advantages:

Audiovisual documentation . . . permits
the researcher and the researcher's
audience various kinds of vicarious
"revisiting" at later points in time.
Because settings of social life are so
complex and their details are so numerous
the ability to revisit an audiovisual
record enables us to compensate for our
limited human information processing
capacities and to discover, after the
fact, new aspects of meaning and organ-
zation that we did not realize at first.
(p. 40)
The use of video taping as well as audio taping as a data collection procedure has obvious advantages in terms of the completeness and the character of the data captured (i.e. inclusion of non-verbal behaviors and the proxemics of a given interaction, capturing the physical setting and the print environment of the room, etc.). Video tapes provided valuable information about the complex literacy events which were part of life in the first grade classroom under investigation.

The events to be videotaped were selected purposefully from patterns emerging from an initial analysis of data collected in the first month of the study and with the consultation of the teacher. Because of the potential of video taping to interfere with the regular classroom activities, it was decided to tape selected literacy events at three points in time through the study rather than making extensive use of this method.

Though the researcher tried to minimize the intrusiveness of video taping, there were inevitable consequences of bringing the bulky and novel video apparatus into the classroom. For example, the normal seating arrangement for the group story time had to be readjusted somewhat in order to get a good quality tape which would include the teacher and as many of the
Initially, some of the children were very aware of the filming and often stared at the camera rather than participating in the ongoing literacy activity. One strategy used to minimize this effect was to have the camera set up in the room for several days prior to taping, though actual tapes were not made. This familiarizing strategy seemed to minimize the excitement and self-consciousness of the children. Another technique which proved to be very useful in compensating for the effects of the video camera in the room was possible when the literacy activity was relatively stationary, such as the reading groups. In this case the researcher would often frame the activity in the camera and then walk away to make observations elsewhere in the room.

That children often forgot about the presence of the camera at these times is evidenced by the number of times children walked in front of the lens and obscured the picture or tripped on the cords. Though these strategies tended to reduce the quality of the tapes, it was felt to be worthwhile in the effort to produce tapes which were as natural as possible. Indeed, when these tapes were later compared with similar events in field notes and
audiotape transcripts, the taped literacy events proved to be "typical."

All video tapes were reviewed several times by the researcher and excerpts were chosen which represented exemplary and typical literacy events at various points in the year. These were transcribed professionally and the researcher later reviewed the tapes to add nonverbal and paralinguistic information, correct any inaccuracies and fill in missing data whenever possible.

The video tapes were used primarily in two ways by the researcher: as a form of stimulated recall and as a source of triangulation. In October and again in January the tapes were viewed with both teachers. As they viewed the tapes teachers were asked to verbalize their perceptions of the recorded activities, the role and intentions of the teacher, the behaviors and speech acts of the children and the like. The ongoing discussion was audio taped and transcribed for further analysis. This member check (Miles and Huberman, 1982) proved to be a useful and productive way of checking researcher perceptions against those of the teachers as well as providing new insights into the assumptions and intentions of the teachers. The tapes also provided a means of examining the same phenomenon with a variety of different approaches. This method of triangulation
enhances the credibility of research results (Denzin, 1978).

**Interviews**

Interviews were conducted with the teachers, selected support staff and the targeted children for the purpose of eliciting insider perspectives against which to check the direct observations and interpretations of the researcher. There were two kinds of interviews: formal interviews which took place at the request of the researcher in a separate room and brief spontaneous exchanges carried out in situ. Over the course of the study twenty three formal interviews were conducted (see Table 2 for a summary of the dates, participants and primary subject matter of these interviews). Spontaneous interviews took place on every day of observation. These two types of interviews will be described in more detail below.
## TABLE 2. SUMMARY OF FORMAL INTERVIEWS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Participants</th>
<th>Content</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>9/25/85</td>
<td>R,D</td>
<td>Describe literacy environment in classroom; theories of literacy learning; describe children</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9/25/85</td>
<td>R,M</td>
<td>Same as above</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10/9/85</td>
<td>R,D</td>
<td>Video Review: reading groups</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10/10/85</td>
<td>R,D</td>
<td>Video Review: Storytime</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10/30/85</td>
<td>R,D,M</td>
<td>Target children's progress</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11/7/85</td>
<td>R,D,M</td>
<td>Home visits; Mrs. Dee's use of seatwork and journals; children's responses to trade books</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12/2/85</td>
<td>R,D,M</td>
<td>Observed changes in morning literacy instruction; report of home visits; children's progress</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1/13/86</td>
<td>R,D,M</td>
<td>Logistics of the research study; problem solving</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1/28/86</td>
<td>R,D</td>
<td>Changes in literacy instruction; reasons for move toward more structure</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2/13/86</td>
<td>R,D</td>
<td>Researcher's observations about shifting literacy learning contexts; teacher's frustrations; plans begun for collaboration</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2/17/86</td>
<td>R,D</td>
<td>Discussions about jointly created and implemented literacy instruction; planning for following days and weeks</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2/21/86</td>
<td>R,D</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2/27/86</td>
<td>R,D</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3/4/86</td>
<td>R,D</td>
<td>Mrs. Dee's literacy autobiography</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3/6/86</td>
<td>R,D</td>
<td>Observed changes in Mrs. Dee's approach to literacy instruction; impressions about the target children</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3/14/86</td>
<td>R,D</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3/20/86</td>
<td>R,D</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3/5/86</td>
<td>R,D</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3/25/86</td>
<td>R,S</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3/28/86</td>
<td>R,P</td>
<td>School-wide literacy learning program; Principal's expectation for first grade instruction in reading and writing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4/17/86</td>
<td>R,D</td>
<td>Present organization of literacy instruction; self-perceived changes and reasons for changes; status of target children</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5/1/86</td>
<td>R,M</td>
<td>Changes in Mrs. Dee's approach to literacy instruction through the year; status of target children</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6/25/86</td>
<td>R,D</td>
<td>Member check on categories and themes extracted during analysis</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note on abbreviations: R-Researcher; D-Mrs. Dee; M-Miss Morris; S-Substitute teacher; P-Principal
Formal Interviews

In the formal interviews the researcher had general questions prepared in advance. These questions were used to generate discussion and as a framework only. In other words, these interviews took the form of "guided conversations" as described by Lofland (1971):

The aim is . . . to provide for oneself a list of things to be sure to ask about when talking to the person interviewed. . . . One wants the interviewee to speak freely and in his own terms about a set of concerns you bring to the interaction plus whatever else the interviewee might introduce. (p. 84)

A core of questions provided a framework for formal interviews, but the conversational nature of these interviews often led to additional questions and to unanticipated information volunteered by the interviewees. In this way information and perceptions of the informants which may have otherwise gone unnoticed or overlooked were brought to the attention of the researcher.

Formal interviews with the teacher generally took place during lunch or after school in the classroom, which allowed the teacher and the researcher to make reference to and examine together student work which was displayed and on desks. Due to the busy and complex schedules of the teacher as well as the researcher,
formal interviews were scheduled as the need arose and at a mutually convenient time. They tended to take place on the average of every three weeks during the first five and a half months of the study. In mid-February and through March when the teacher and researcher were collaborating in planning and carrying out literacy instruction, meetings took place at least once a week and often twice a week.

Several of the interviews included both teachers in order to get the perspective of Miss Morris who taught the same children in the afternoon and worked closely with Mrs Dee in Reading Recovery. At the beginning and again at the end of the study Miss Morris was interviewed individually. Additionally, several other adults who had links to the classroom were interviewed in March. These were the principal and a substitute teacher who worked in the room at least once a week while Mrs. Dee and Miss Morris were involved in inservice training relating to the Reading Recovery Project. This substitute teacher knew the children very well, but she also had worked closely with Mrs Dee for some time, having served as a student teacher in her room two years previous to the study. As a result, she was in an excellent position to give the researcher insights into ways in which Mrs Dee
was growing as a teacher and how her classroom organization had evolved. The perspectives of these other adults were of great interest to the researcher who searched for ways in which their perceptions and conclusions agreed or differed from his own.

The sessions were audio taped and later transcribed by the researcher. These transcripts were filed along with the questions and notes made by the researcher at the time of the interview.

Formal interviews were also conducted with the targeted children at three points in time: late September, December and March. These interviews were held in a quiet area away from the classroom so that they could be audio taped, and generally they took from 10 to 15 minutes. The intention of these interviews was to probe for the children's understandings and perceptions of the nature and uses of literacy tasks at home and at school. The researcher attempted to create an atmosphere which was informal and conversational and to follow the children's lead whenever possible. However, in these interviews more than in those with the teacher, an attempt was made to stay close to the prepared questions so that data could be compared across children and across time. Although many of the questions were repeated in the three interviews, some questions were asked only in
the initial interview and others were added which reflected the evolving nature of the classroom literacy program (see appendix C).

Informal Interviews

The teacher and the targeted children were also engaged by the researcher in brief, spontaneous exchanges that occurred within ongoing literacy learning activities. Sometimes these informal interviews were necessary in order to check children's understandings of literacy events in progress; on other occasions they were useful in discovering the messages and intentions expressed in writing by the target children.

Similar interchanges occurred with the teacher throughout the study, but almost always these conversations took place during breaks in the school day, rather than as questions occurred to the researcher. The researcher realized early in the study that it was important not to consume an undue amount of the teachers planning, preparation or rest time, so an effort was made to minimize these informal interviews with the teacher. Sometimes these questions were put "on hold" and discussed in the next formal interview; on many occasions answers emerged from ongoing observation.
Informal interviews were not audio taped. Rather, data gleaned in these conversations was recorded in the rough notes and then included in the daily field notes.

**Collection of Writing Samples**

On each day of observation an attempt was made to obtain a record of all of the written artifacts of the target children's involvement in literacy events. It was judged to be important to do everything possible to preserve the context in which the writing was produced, whether it be ditto sheets, copying off the board, free story writing or journal writing. Often these papers were collected while the children were in the lunch room, photocopied on the school's xerox machine (through arrangement with the principal) and returned to the room before the children returned from recess.

A major source of children's writing was journal writing which Mrs Dee instituted as a daily ritual at the end of October. Each child had a booklet containing about 20 blank sheets of paper and covered with folded and stapled construction paper. Each month the children were given a new blank journal and Mrs Dee gave the researcher the completed ones.

A file was created for the written work of each of the target children. Within each child's folder writing
samples were filed chronologically. Where necessary, notes were attached to the writing samples in order to fill in contextual information. If any interaction between the researcher and the child had occurred about the written work this was recorded as well. On rare occasions, samples were collected from the entire class in order to give the researcher a sense of how the target children stood in relation to their peers. These papers were filed separately and by date and subject matter.

Formal Measures

Several formal measures were administered to the teacher and to the target children during the course of the study. These selected instruments added different kinds of information which complemented the data gathered in participant observation. In September and again in June the teacher was asked to complete the Teacher Orientation to the Reading Process (DeFord, 1978). The Clay's Diagnostic Survey (Clay, 1979) was administered to the target children at three points in time: September, December and March.

Teacher Orientation to the Reading Process

The DeFord Teacher Orientation to the Reading Process is an instrument which makes use of a Likert
scale response system to determine teacher beliefs about practices in reading instruction (DeFord, 1985). A copy of the instrument is included in appendix D. The TORP is based on the premise that a teacher's theoretical orientation in reading (i.e. "the particular knowledge and belief system held toward reading") will guide the ways in which they organize reading instruction and "establish expectations about student behavior and the host of decisions they must make as they teach reading lessons" (DeFord, 1985, p. 353).

The TORP had been administered to Mrs. Dee and Miss Morris as part of another research study connected with the Reading Recovery Project (Pinnell and Woolsey, 1984). The teachers had completed the instrument before and after their first year of training as Reading Recovery teachers. This provided baseline data for the present study which indicated some important changes in the theories about the reading process held by Mrs. Dee. During the present study, Mrs. Dee was given the TORP in September and again in June in order to track further changes.

In completing the TORP for the final time a new dimension was added to the instrument which was designed to enhance the researcher's ability to make visible the explicit theories and assumptions of Mrs. Dee. This was
the technique of the think-aloud borrowed from research on teachers' planning and thought processes (i.e. Yinger and Clark, 1982; Peterson, Marx and Clark, 1978) and research on writers' thought processes while composing (Emig, 1971; Hayes and Flower, 1980).

Mrs. Dee was given a copy of the TORP and a blank tape and asked think out loud into a tape recorder about her reasons for selecting certain responses as she proceeded through the form. It was assumed that this would prevent the researcher from making unfounded assumptions about why Mrs. Dee had selected certain answers. This data along with the scores on other administrations of the TORP provided another form of triangulation with data gathered from direct observation and from interviews.

The Diagnostic Survey

As part of their duties for Reading Recovery, Mrs Dee and Miss Morris administered Clay's Diagnostic Survey (Clay, 1979) to their entire first grade class. This was the primary means by which decisions were made in selecting children for the Reading Recovery Project. The Diagnostic Survey is a battery of diagnostic measures designed to provide a comprehensive picture of the child's literacy development. It involves a Letter
Identification test, a Word Identification test consisting of 15 high frequency words, the Concepts About Print test which explores children's understandings about the conventions of print and of book handling, a Writing Vocabulary test in which the children are given a blank sheet of paper and asked to "Show me what you can write," and a Dictation Test in which the child is asked to write a sentence read by the tester. An important additional component of the Diagnostic Survey is an assessment of reading level as measured by running records (Clay, 1979) of children's oral text reading.

As indicated above, the targeted children were administered the Diagnostic Survey in September along with their peers. In late March the targeted children were once again given this instrument by the researcher. The Diagnostic Survey was used to give the researcher another measure of the children's literacy knowledge which could be compared and set alongside of data garnered in participant observation.

Analyzing Ethnographic Data

The choices made by the researcher in the selection of analytic strategies were influenced by "the general purpose of the research, the nature of the research
problem or question, and the theoretical perspectives that inform the research problem and intrigue the researcher" (Goetz and LeCompte, 1981, p. 64). The researcher's task in the analysis of data has been compared to a child's play with building blocks (Burton, 1985; LeCompte and Goetz, 1983) and the task of putting a jigsaw puzzle together (Smith and Geoffrey, 1968). The researcher conducted a systematic search for order and understanding by "working with data, organizing it, breaking it into manageable units, synthesizing it, searching for patterns, discovering what is important and what is to be learned, and deciding what you will tell others" (Bogdan and Biklen, 1982; p. 145). This analysis took place throughout the study, but most intensively following the data collection period.

Daily participant observation inevitably involved opportunities for analysis as well as observation. Some of this analysis occurred at a submerged tacit level. During observations the researcher was constantly making decisions about where to focus his attention and what elements of the scene were noteworthy.

The elaboration of the field notes at the end of the day of observation afforded the researcher with opportunities to reflect, identify, make explicit, raise questions, propose possible categories and the like. As
he worked within the data through the processes of transcribing and expanding the field notes, the researcher began the process of understanding how things were done in this classroom and what these routines meant to the participants. Such notes, and the reflection involved in making them, served to help the researcher to process his experiences by helping him to "cope with the multiplicity of detail encountered in a new setting, to become familiar (participating as a native) with the ways of the classroom, but also to make these ways explicit (as an outside observer)" (Platt, 1982, p. 165).

The In-the-field analysis was facilitated by the stages of the ethnographic research cycle which was described in a previous section of this chapter. The cycle of questioning, observing, collecting and analyzing was repeated throughout the study.

Spradley's (1980) model of data analysis was helpful in guiding the search for patterns and meanings among the hundreds of pages of field notes, transcripts and writing samples. Spradley breaks the data analysis into four phases, each relating to certain kinds of questions. The first phase in the search for patterns is called domain analysis. Spradley (1980) identifies nine types of questions which are useful in sorting seemingly unique
objects and events into categories. These questions include the following:

- Are there kinds of things here?
- Are there places here?
- Are there ways to do things?
- Are there results of things here?
- Are there reasons for things here?
- Are there stages in things?
- Are there characteristics of things?

These questions suggested categories, though they were not intended to restrict the researcher's openness to other kinds of categories. Examples of some of the earliest domains explored by the researcher were "Ways children Were Taught to 'do School'" and "Uses for Writing in the Classroom."

The search for domains continued through the study and new domains assumed importance while some of the earlier ones were dropped or absorbed into other domains. For example, "Ways Children Were Taught to Do School" became less important after the first few weeks in September when this was one of the teacher's primary objectives. As more data was collected and reflected upon and as the researcher continued to read in the related literature, other domains emerged which were more sharply defined. For example, the domains "Ways Children are Taught to Act Like Readers" and "Ways Children are Taught to be Writers" (cf Cochran-Smith, 1984; 1985) became central ones in the final analysis.
After several months of study in this classroom the investigator realized that one of the most important questions to be asked and pursued in further observation and interpretation was "What are the kinds of Literacy Events in this Classroom?" Results of this analysis are reported in Chapter IV. The exploration of this question involved the next stages in Spradley's (1980) framework, that of taxonomic and componential analysis.

During taxonomic analysis the researcher selects several domains and makes focused observations to find out how they are organized, the relationships among the elements of that domain, and the relationships between this domain and other domains. Componential analysis involves the search for characteristics of identified domains. If an object or event has meaning in the setting, it has certain attributes regularly associated with it.

For example, the exploration of the important recurrent literacy events in the classroom required a catalogue of those events. Subsequent analyses explored how those events were structured, the roles taken by children and the teacher, the kinds of interaction that occurred within those events, the kinds of oral and written texts that were produced during those events, the
ways in which each literacy event was different from or similar to other literacy events, and the ways in which those literacy events remained the same or evolved over the course of the study.

The final kind of analysis discussed by Spradley is theme analysis which involves the search for "any principle recurrent in a number of domains, tacit or explicit, and serving as a relationship among subsystems of cultural meaning" (Spradley, 1980, p. 141). Once discovered, these themes provide patterns and frameworks which show how the social setting under study works together as a whole. They have a high degree of generality and serve to link a number of domains together.

For example, one theme which emerged from the data on this first grade classroom was that of "freedom versus constraint." Both the teacher and the children seemed to be able to learn and grow with more vigor when they were given some degree of autonomy coupled with a reliable, though subtle support system. Conversely, when participants perceived that they were working within undue constraints, their efforts were sometimes channeled in less-productive ways which often led to frustration.

Simultaneous with the various phases of data collection and then more intensively following the data
collection period in May, the researcher read and reread field notes. Transcripts from interviews with children and teachers were prepared, reviewed and summarized. The video tapes were reviewed and key segments were selected for transcription and more in-depth analysis. Writing samples collected throughout the year from the target children were also reviewed, and again, samples which were exemplary and helpful in filling out the emerging picture of literacy learning in this classroom and what it meant to the participants in the room were set aside. These samples were examined in more detail for linguistic complexity, the social and instructional setting surrounding the writing and the intentions of the writer.

During these readings and observations recurrent patterns and motifs were noted and checked across the various forms of data. For example, the motif of "student attitudes toward the independent reading of trade books" was first noted in field notes. Other potential sources of information about these attitudes, such as interviews with children and the checklists which would reveal how often the target children chose to read trade books independently were then checked for confirmation and extension or disconfirmation.

The analytic strategies utilized in this study
constituted a systematic organizational process. Data were analyzed to identify categories relating to the kinds of literacy events which occurred across the course of one school year in this first grade classroom, and the meanings that the teacher and five of her students brought to those events.

Summary

The study employed an ethnographic participant observer perspective to explore the literacy learning contexts created by a first grade teacher and her students over the course of a school year and the relationships between these contexts and the oral and written language used by a representative group of the lowest and highest readers and writers within this classroom. Data was collected over the course of a complete school year.

The study utilized the cyclical phases of the Developmental Research Sequence (Spradley, 1980), moving through the recursive and interactive processes of questioning, collecting data, recording data and analyzing data. Data was collected through field notes, audio and video taping of selected literacy events, formal and informal informant interviewing, the collection of writing samples, the Clay Diagnostic Survey (1979) and the DeFord's Teacher Orientation to the
Reading Process (1976).

Primary analysis suggested certain recurrent literacy events which were important occasions for literacy learning in this classroom. Continued data collection focused on these events in order to gain an adequate understanding of the ways in which these events were organized and the roles and interactive patterns of the teacher and her students. In subsequent analysis of field notes, writing samples, transcripts from taped literacy events, and interviews with the teacher and children, motifs and themes which emerged within and across literacy events were indexed, coded and interpreted in a systematic fashion.

These literacy events are described in chapter IV, along with a discussion of the theories, assumptions and beliefs which guided the teacher in her long-term and daily decision making. The meanings and understandings of the six target children and their subsequent actions and language use in these literacy events are described in chapter V. This chapter also includes a discussion of the ways in which teacher and student theories, actions and language interacted. Finally, in chapter VI a summary, conclusions and implications for research and for teaching are reported.
CHAPTER FOUR
CHANGING CONTEXTS FOR LITERACY LEARNING

Introduction

In order to understand how this teacher and her children worked together in literacy learning it is necessary to examine the larger classroom context for teaching and learning. The teacher is a crucial aspect of the classroom context, for she has the primary responsibility for orchestrating the use of the available resources of time, space and materials in the classroom and for establishing the classroom climate for learning.

In this chapter various aspects of the larger context for learning in this first grade classroom will be described, including the teacher, the ways in which time, space and materials were used and the major literacy events which took place during the morning hours when Mrs. Dee worked in the classroom. The ways in which each of these aspects of the classroom context evolved over the course of the school year will be a focal point of the discussion. In chapter V the spotlight will shift to the six students, their literacy learning within this context and the ways in which they interacted with their peers and the teacher.
Mrs. Dee: Creator of the Context

In primary classrooms, it is the teacher who creates the classroom learning environment and makes decisions about how to maintain or to change that context. The choices that she makes in setting up the classroom and planning for daily lessons and then the spontaneous, on-the-spot decisions she makes throughout the school day have important consequences for what the children learn and how they learn it. These choices and decisions emerge from her theories and assumptions about children, teaching and learning and her previous and ongoing experiences as a teacher. New experiences may result in new ways of understanding and carrying out instruction with children, and these, in turn, may have an impact on children's work and learning in the classroom.

Data on Mrs. Dee will be presented in three parts: 1) personal history of literacy learning, 2) professional experiences, and 3) change prior to the study.

Personal History of Literacy Learning

The bulk of the data collected for this study concerned the ongoing interaction of Mrs. Dee and her students as they carried out school tasks in the classroom. However, at several points during the study Mrs. Dee recalled her own experiences with literacy
learning and reflected on how they influenced the ways in which she structured literacy learning for her students.

Mrs. Dee had tremendous empathy for the low and struggling readers in her classes because of her own struggle with learning to read. She described her childhood home as one with parents who were loving and attentive, but who read little themselves and seldom to her. School was difficult for her in general, perhaps partly because, "I was the largest in size but youngest in age all the way through grade school" (interview, 3/4/86).

In several interviews she reflected back on her difficulty with learning to read in school:

I went through school at the time when they taught no phonics, and everything was supposed to be sight words and I didn't have a lot of support from home because my family didn't realize that it was important, so I floundered for many years . . . (interview, 10/15/84)

I was always a poor reader. I still remember in 2nd grade a teacher said to me, "If you read as well every day as you did today I'll move you up to the next reading group. Of course, I didn't do as well the next day or ever again. I know what it's like to have those hurts. I had those problems all the way through school. (interview, 9/15/85)

In my childhood I was a poor reader. I was always in the bottom reading group. I concentrated on every word,
and I was a poor speller . . . I gained my first understanding of phonics when I took a Teaching of Reading course in college . . . and I hung on tight to what I learned because it was the first time I was able to unlock a lot of things that I couldn't unlock before. I mean, in high school I went through the trauma of sitting upstairs trying to read my history out loud so that I could make more sense of it . . . It was painful, just painful! (interview, 3/4/86)

These comments are interesting in that they emerged consistently throughout two years of contact and always spontaneously and at Mrs. Dee's own initiative. These childhood struggles clearly had a role in shaping the ways in which Mrs. Dee thought about literacy learning (for example, note the emphasis on phonics). At least, these experiences instilled within her a determination to provide different kinds of literacy learning experiences for her students:

> I was a lousy reader as a child, so I know all of the tricks. I know all of the hurts that go along with it . . . I think it really enhances my dedication to keeping at a child (to prevent them) from having to go through this pain. (interview, 10/15/84)

Thus, childhood experiences with literacy learning were important in shaping the ways Mrs. Dee thought about and carried out literacy instruction.
Professional Experience

At the time of the study Mrs. Dee had fourteen years of experience in full-time and substitute teaching in the elementary grades. She received her Bachelor of Arts Degree from State University of New York at Geneseo. After teaching for one year in New York state, she was married and moved to Ohio where she has taught for thirteen years in three different school systems. For the last ten years Mrs Dee has been employed by the Columbus Public Schools, teaching in grades one through six and at four different buildings. The year in which the study was conducted was her fifth year of teaching first grade and her third year in the present school building.

Mrs. Dee was highly regarded by her administrators and peers as an effective teacher. She had a reputation for being well organized and for maintaining an efficient and orderly classroom. The principal described Mrs. Dee this way:

Now you've worked with the ideal classroom, where the structure is there and the students are on task, regardless of where they are on the spectrum of reading . . . All of them know who's in charge . . . They know what the teacher wants of them, what she expects of them. (interview, 3/28/86)
Another indication of her colleagues' regard for her was Mrs. Dee's election as chair of the Principal's Advisory Committee, in which she helped to resolve grievances and deal with the concerns of the school staff.

Despite her reputation for running an orderly and well managed classroom, Mrs. Dee maintained warm and loving rapport with her students; her sense of humor and optimism were frequently expressed in her work with students and peers. The same warmth and openness was reflected in her relationship with this researcher. However, she made her priorities very clear at an initial meeting prior to the opening day of school:

I'm a teacher first and responsible to help those children. Second, I'll be glad to do whatever I can to help you with your study. (interview, 9/15/85)

In short, Mrs. Dee was a hard working and conscientious teacher who created a classroom climate which was efficient and business-like, but warm and inviting. Her primary motivation was to do whatever was necessary in order to serve the best interests of her students. As Miss Morris, her team teacher, put it, "She always has a very strong need in her to do what she thinks is best for the children. That overrides everything she does." (interview, 5/1/86).
Another quality that characterized Mrs. Dee as a professional was her eagerness to learn and her openness to new ideas and ways of doing things. Prior to and during the study Mrs. Dee was working towards a Masters Degree at the Ohio State University. She took classes through the summer as well as during the school year, mostly in the areas of Reading, Literature and Language Arts. Frequently Mrs. Dee appropriated ideas presented in these classes or garnered from fellow students and tried them out in her classroom with the children. Examples are the journals and the Christmas Elf letters which will be described below.

In the year previous to the one in which the present study was conducted Mrs. Dee had volunteered to be a part of the Reading Recovery Project, a venture which required that she participate in weekly inservice sessions after school hours throughout the school year. In an interview conducted at the outset of the project, Mrs. Dee was asked what she expected to gain from her involvement in Reading Recovery. Her answer reflects her desire to be a more knowledgeable and effective first grade teacher:

I expect to gain more understanding of the process of reading, and how children employ it. (interview, 10/15/84)

There is evidence that Mrs. Dee did, indeed, grow in her understandings during her first year as a Reading
Recovery teacher and that many of these new understandings were translated into changes in her approaches to literacy instruction. These changes will be considered in the next section.

**Change Prior to the Study**

In order to put into perspective the changes in Mrs. Dee's beliefs and practices during the year of the present study, it is useful to consider the changes that were observed and reported during the previous year, her first in the Reading Recovery Program. This baseline data is extracted from a larger study which explored the impact of involvement in Reading Recovery training and teaching on the fourteen teachers who were part of the initial year of the program's implementation (Pinnell and Woolsey, 1985). That study utilized regular classroom observation, structured interviews and the administration of DeFord's Teacher Orientation to the Reading Process instrument (1978) at two points in time.

These three sources reveal a picture of a teacher and a classroom in transition. Table 3 presents the results of the TORP as completed in September and in June. At the first administration, Mrs. Dee's score of 65 hovered between the phonics and the skills orientations. However, in June her responses to the items
on the TORP indicated a significant move in the direction of the whole language orientation, with a total score of 96. It is interesting to note that Mrs. Dee's scores demonstrated more change than any of her peers, shifting 31 points in the whole language direction while the average change in her peers' scores was 11 points.

Table 3. September and June Scores on the TORP (Pinnell and Woolsey, 1985).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>R.R.* Teachers</th>
<th>Sept. Scores</th>
<th>June Scores</th>
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<tr>
<td>WM</td>
<td>115</td>
<td>116</td>
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<tr>
<td>OD</td>
<td>110</td>
<td>104</td>
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<tr>
<td>GR</td>
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<td>GJ</td>
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<tr>
<td>KJ</td>
<td>74</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WD</td>
<td>71</td>
<td>89</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mrs. Dee</td>
<td>65</td>
<td>96</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

*Reading Recovery

The interviews indicate a pattern of change similar to that noted in Mrs. Dee's responses to the items on the TORP. Mrs. Dee reported a movement away from a traditional phonics/skills approach to reading instruction and towards a more meaning-based and whole
language approach. Near the end of the present study, Mrs. Dee described her literacy learning program prior to involvement in Reading Recovery:

In September of 1984, when I started out in Reading Recovery, I always wanted a quiet, controlled classroom. . . My attitude was, that's the only atmosphere you can read in . . . I was a firm believer in the Ginn approach. I frequently did not have time to read stories to the class. We did all the dittos. The children copied words, sentences and paragraphs from the board, but were not encouraged to do any invented spelling or any of their own writing. (interview, 3/4/86)

Examination of the two interviews from the Reading Recovery Teacher Study reveal a shift away from this traditional skills approach. Table 4 provides a juxtaposition of September and May responses to selected questions in order to demonstrate this shift during the first year of her involvement in Reading Recovery.

These excerpts indicate that in September of 1984 Mrs. Dee's theories and practice of reading instruction were very letter and word based and heavily reliant on the basal series to provide a "step by step sequence." In May she continued to make considerable use of the basal series to structure reading groups and independent work time. However, she was thinking of reading as a language process, emphasizing the value of placing new
<table>
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<th>INTERVIEWER'S QUESTION</th>
<th>OCTOBER, 1984</th>
<th>MAY, 1985</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Could you describe the way you teach reading in your classroom?</td>
<td>I first begin with letter recognition, and from there we go to words. Of course, we follow the Ginn series, so there is some formal format... I do work on rhyming word families aside from that, but basically, I follow the text that the school has selected.</td>
<td>I have five reading groups that I meet with. We read from the basal readers usually. Before we read a new story we talk through it, looking at the pictures and introducing words in conversation. I never isolate words. The children each read a page, and no one can interrupt or correct. That way I have a chance to watch them work through it. In the group we also discuss worksheets and then they go back to their desks and do them on their own.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What kinds of reading take place in your room outside of formal reading instruction?</td>
<td>Of course, I read stories to them, and if a child picks up a book from the reading shelf and they really show enthusiasm about it then they read it aloud to the class. This way I try to build a more positive attitude about the book shelf</td>
<td>The children read aloud to each other in pairs. They can read anything they want to -- it could be a basal reader or a book off the shelf. They just read whatever is comfortable for them. They've also written their own books, and they've been reading these to each other in small groups of 5 or 6. Some children have read their books out loud to the whole class too.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What kinds of writing did children do in your classroom last week?</td>
<td>Writing? Well, a lot of them are no farther than the A,B,C's. We did a lot of copying of color words and number words from the board. I had one girl write for me the beginnings of a good Halloween story</td>
<td>We built sentences using word families, and they're writing individual stories every day. They also wrote entire books for the first time this week, with a beginning, middle and end - one sentence on each page</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
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texts and words in meaningful contexts and the sheer pleasure of reading.

Pinnell and Woolsey (1985) concluded that change in ideas and the ability to verbalize those ideas usually precedes tangible changes in actual classrooms, but classroom observations from the Reading Recovery Teacher Study indicated that some of Mrs. Dee's new ideas and understandings were indeed being realized in her classroom.

Observations in the Fall and Winter revealed an emphasis on skills work in small ability groups and independent seat work and extensive use of the Ginn basal readers and supplementary worksheets. Dittos were a staple part of reading time and often centered on phonetic and word analysis (i.e. circling words with certain short vowel sounds, matching words to pictures, etc.). There was a collection of approximately 100 trade books in the room, but this was available to the children only when their assigned tasks were completed.

In January and February the reading program remained much as it had been, but there were indications that Mrs. Dee was incorporating other literacy activities into her curriculum. Observational notes recorded activities involving free writing and story writing rather than
copying or filling in blanks. In March it was noted that Mrs. Dee set aside part of the Reading time to allow children to read self-selected trade books with a partner. This practice continued regularly but not daily throughout the remainder of the school year.

After her final observation in late May the Reading Recovery staff member who had made the bulk of the visits to Mrs. Dee's room summed up the changes she had noted over the course of the year:

I was thinking about the first time I came into (Mrs. Dee's) room--it was so regimented and basal and phonics oriented. Between that time and this last time I have seen much more whole language reading and writing: composing stories daily and now authoring books, reading with partners and SSR. Also in the hall there was a display "Our Zoo Books" and a class mural with cut out animals and labeled names. (observation 5/15/85)

Finally, there was evidence of change during the first year of Reading Recovery during the initial meeting for this study which took place in mid-August. When asked whether she had noticed significant changes in the ways last year's Reading Recovery children had worked in the classroom, Mrs. Dee replied, "The kids did change, but the real changes were in me. The kids just responded to my changes and how I handled the low group." She referred specifically to an increased use of children's
literature, individual and peer-shared reading and less reliance on the basal series.

**The Teacher's Use of Resources**

Barr (in press) argues that many aspects of the classroom setting are part of the "hand" dealt to teachers, referring to curriculum materials, the physical features of the classroom, time schedules and the like. Within these systemic constraints, however, individual teachers make long-term and daily decisions about how they will make use of the allocated resources of space, materials and time.

In the first section of this discussion, the general room arrangement, the availability of literacy learning materials and the structuring of time will be presented. Despite certain features which will be noted, these aspects of the larger classroom context remained relatively stable throughout the school year. In the section that follows, attention will be given to the major literacy events occurring in the classroom and how they evolved over the course of the year.

**The Arrangement of Space**

The physical features of Mrs. Dee's classroom were similar to those found in most self-contained primary classrooms in this country. Much of the classroom space
was given to individual student and teacher desks and to storage space for books, materials and supplies. The room also had certain areas which had specific functions such as the table for reading group instruction, the listening center, the rug for storytime and class meetings and the reading center.

The classroom itself was a large rectangular room with chalkboards across almost the entire front wall, windows all along the opposite wall and a cloakroom attached to one side. The room had one entrance to the hallway and was surrounded on one side by three other first grade rooms and on the other by three second grade rooms.

The bulk of the space in the middle of the classroom was devoted to individual desks and chairs assigned to each child, and here the children spent much of their time in the classroom. Seating arrangements were determined by the teachers and were subject to some variability, for discipline reasons or to accommodate individual needs, such as hearing loss.

There was a significant change in the configuration of the desks which took place in December. For the first three months of the school year the desks were lined up in two snake-like rows which resembled the letter U nesting in a capital L (see Figure 3).
Figure 3. Classroom Floor Plan.
The two semi-circular rows of desks faced the chalkboard where most all-group instruction took place and surrounded a large rug which served as the location for storytime and independent reading. The original intent of this arrangement was so that, "they can see each other and see us too; it's a little better for conversation." However, the long rows made it difficult for teachers and students to move around the room or to work together.

Thus, in December, Mrs. Dee and her team teacher abandoned this arrangement in favor of three large clusters of nine or ten desks, moving the rug over between the front door and the cloakroom. The new arrangement allowed for more collaborative work and provided a natural way of managing the children (i.e. "Group one can come line up for restroom break now.")

The storytime rug was a large green rug, approximately 15 x 18 feet in dimension, which had been donated by Mrs. Dee. All of the children could fit comfortably on the rug for storytime if they all sat Indian style. Mrs. Dee had an adult sized wooden chair with an attached arm which was kept at the front of the room and pulled over next to the rug for storytime. Both the rug and the wooden chair were favorite spots for individual free reading or for reading books with a
friend in peer-shared reading.

Just outside of the cloakroom and off to one side of the room there was a long low table and a set of eight to ten chairs. It was at this table that formal reading instruction took place, but the table was used at other points in the day for various small group projects and activities.

Each teacher had her own desk in the room as well as shelving and cabinets for books, instructional materials and supplies. While the children were in the classroom, Mrs. Dee spent very little time at her desk, preferring instead to work with individuals and groups of children at their desks or work areas around the room. Thus, the teacher desk served mostly as a convenient repository for materials and children’s work. The children often left items such as notes from home which required the teachers’ attention on the desks, but generally these areas were off limits to the children.

Between the teachers’ desks and next to the bank of windows was the reading center. Two sets of book cases enclosed a small rug where children often sat or sprawled to informally read and talk about books. Books were often displayed on top of the shelves and along the window ledge. A small semi-circular table set back by the windows served at various points in the year as a storage
area for alphabet games and puzzles, a place to carry out
dramatic play with cardboard figures and a display area
for special book collections.

Two other literacy learning centers in the room were
generally used only after assigned work was completed.
In a back corner of the room there was a listening
center, stocked with a tape recorder and four attached
headphones and two boxes full of books with accompanying
teacher-made tapes. Children often used the listening
center in groups of two or three. This activity was often
initiated by the children rather than being assigned, and
generally the center was in use during the Reading
Worktime.

On another table the teachers placed a Language
Master machine borrowed from the Title I reading program.
The children could push cards created by the teachers
across the top of the machine and hear a word or letter
on headphones. This center was used only by children
whom Mrs. Dee felt needed work on word and letter
identification. It was little used after January and was
eventually removed to provide another work table.

The displays that hung on the walls and bulletin
boards were another aspect of the use of space. Early in
the year the bulletin boards were filled with commercial
displays depicting the basic colors and shapes and a "Hooray for School!" motif. However, these bulletin boards were changed every month and though they generally related to seasonal themes or to areas of current study, most of the later displays were evenly divided between teacher-made arrangements and the work of the children. By October and thereafter, at least one of the bulletin boards was given to work done by the children in extensions of various children's books. For example, in April Mrs. Dee read Roger Duvoisin's *Petunia, I Love You* to the class. After several readings the children collaborated with her in creating a retelling of the story. Mrs. Dee wrote the children's version of the story on sentence strips and mounted these on the bulletin board with accompanying illustrations created by the children with magic marker and cut paper.

One of the classroom's small bulletin boards was devoted to the calendar and generally utilized a combination of commercial and teacher made materials on seasonal or holiday themes. Another small bulletin board was known as the "Behavior Board," and was part of a classroom management scheme created by Mrs. Dee. It related to an area of the chalkboard depicting a happy face and a sad face. Under these two faces the teachers wrote children's names as appropriate in order to
discipline children or to reward desired behavior. On the Behavior Board each child had a construction paper cut-out related to the month (i.e. apples in September, pumpkins in October, etc.). Children whose names appeared under the happy face at the end of the day received a sticker from Mrs. Dee.

In late February the Behavior Board was removed, though the use of names on the chalkboard continued as a classroom management device. For six weeks, from mid-February through March this bulletin board space was used to provide children with a "Message Board" which they used to post messages for their friends and teachers. After the Easter break, the board became an area in which children's stories and illustrations were mounted.

Availability of Literacy Learning Materials

Every Monday afternoon the children in this classroom walked up to the school library on the second floor of the school building. There they generally were shown a filmstrip based on a work of children's literature by the library aide. Then they selected one book to sign out for the following week. The children prized these books highly and the book selection period was punctuated with cries of delight and discovery and the hum of children busily reading their books to themselves.
and sharing their books. The books did not go home, but they remained in the children's desks during the week and children often turned to them when they had free moments.

Because they had library period only once a week and could only select one book, a more important source of books for these children was the classroom book collection. The collection was mostly housed in the reading center, but there were two more shelves of books on a library cart in the front of the room where children often browsed. Data on Mrs. Dee's classroom from the Reading Recovery Teacher Study indicated that in the previous year there were about 100 books in the classroom collection. Over the summer, however, Mrs. Dee had taken a course at the university in children's literature. Convinced that she needed to provide more reading materials on various topics and at various levels of difficulty, she worked with her team teacher to add to the classroom collection.

During the present study, the classroom book collection totalled some 400 books. Mrs. Dee and Miss Morris had gathered these books from various sources. Some of the books were classics of children's literature (i.e., *Mike Mulligan and the Steam Shovel*, *The Snowy Day* and *The Story About Ping*) which had been borrowed for
the year from the school system's central library. These tended to be hard cover books with rather non-descript permabound covers and a well-used appearance. Other books were ones that Miss Morris had used during her former assignment as a Title I teacher. Many of these were paperback books and designed especially for emergent readers (i.e. The Price-Milburn "Instant Readers," the Breakthrough to Literacy books (Bowmar), and supplementary materials from various basal reading series. A third source of books was the private collections of the two teachers. Some of these were from the "I Can Read it All by Myself" series and other similar series which offer limited vocabularies, rhyming text and funny cartoon characters (e.g. Dr. Seuss, Berenstain Bears, etc.).

At various points in the year special collections of books which complemented certain areas of study were on display in the room. For example, in October Miss Morris taught a unit on bears for which she brought in twenty related books from the public library, including fiction and non-fiction. In May the class was invited to a special assembly conducted by Donald Crews, the author and illustrator of numerous picture books. Before the assembly, the two teachers and the children carried out special activities with Crews' books and with the books
of his wife and fellow picture book creator, Ann Jonas. Most of the books of these two artists were available in the room during the month of April.

Other special collections of books were those brought into the room by the researcher during the six weeks of collaboration with Mrs. Dee in February and March. These assorted collections were designed to provide predictable books and recent fiction and non-fiction which were thought to be of special interest to first graders. They were displayed on the table in the reading center.

Another special display of books was created on the spot by Mrs. Dee and the children and was constantly changing. These were the books that were displayed on the tray of the chalkboard in the front of the room. Usually after reading a book in storytime or using a book for a class activity Mrs Dee would leave the book on the chalk tray for general use by the children. Children often added books that they had particularly enjoyed and wanted to bring to the attention of their peers. The books on the chalk tray sometimes numbered as many as 15, and there was seldom a day when no books were displayed at all.
Children had ready access to all of these books. They were allowed and encouraged to keep books of their choice in their desks for a reasonable amount of time. Children often browsed for books when they first arrived at school and before the official business of the day had begun and during Reading Work Time when their assigned tasks were completed. Mrs. Dee described this aspect of classroom life this way:

The children are at ease to take any reading book that they want off the shelf, whether it's above their level, below their level, whatever, and they are frequently taking books that are above their level and either getting others to read it to them or sitting down and sharing stories . . . They're allowed and encouraged to keep lots of books in their desks . . . one of my big things for literacy is to have a big flow of books to try to meet everybody's interest and everybody's needs. (interview, 4/17/86)

Clearly Mrs. Dee's goal was to make a wide variety of books readily available to her children and to encourage them to read them often, either individually or collaboratively with a peer. Most children had at least one or two books in their desks and several of the avid readers had private hoards of 12 to 15 books. Periodically the desks were cleaned and all classroom books were returned to the general collection.
In formal reading instruction the children almost always read texts which were part of the Ginn basal reading series which the school had recommended for use in all classrooms. Though the various readers from the Ginn series were used almost every day in reading instruction, children seldom read these books during free reading time until February. At this point in the school year several children began to ask Mrs. Dee if they could read from their current basal reader during free reading. Mrs. Dee readily agreed, and encouraged them to read these books together with a friend. Several days later she made a point of making the basals available to all children, placing the various readers on the reading table before children entered the room in the morning and telling children that they could take any reader they wished and not just the one they were currently reading in. Though they were using the same texts that they read in formal instruction, children used the basals for their own purposes during informal reading. These different uses will be discussed in Chapter V.

Another sort of literacy learning material deserves mention. This is the art and writing supplies necessary to create texts and pictures. In September each child was required to bring in basic school supplies, including a school box, several pencils, crayons, glue and
scissors. These materials were kept in the individual desks.

Writing paper, scrap construction paper and extra dittos were stored within easy reach of the children. However, children seldom chose to write on their own and these materials were seldom used outside of teacher-directed activities. This may be a reflection on the emphasis on reading in this classroom. Given free time children were more likely to read or talk about books with their friends than to do self-sponsored writing.

Arrangement of Time

The teacher made decisions about the use of time within the constraints of the schedule set by the organization of the school building. Thus, the teacher conformed to certain givens such as arrival and departure times, lunch, recess and special classes such as gym and library. Special schedules of children who had regular sessions with other teachers (i.e. the speech teacher, ESL tutor, school psychologist, Reading Recovery) also had to be accommodated. However, within the blocks of the school day that remained, it was the teacher who decided how to use time.

During the first weeks of observation, patterns of recurrent events that comprised a typical morning were
evident. These patterns remained somewhat stable throughout the year though the literacy activities within them evolved and changed during the year. Figure 4 below outlines the organization of a typical morning in this classroom.

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<tr>
<th>Time</th>
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<tr>
<td>8:55-9:20</td>
<td>Arrival/Classroom Business</td>
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<td>9:20-9:50</td>
<td>Group Story Time</td>
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<td>9:50-10:00</td>
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<tr>
<td>10:00-11:50</td>
<td>Reading/Language Activities</td>
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<tr>
<td>12:00-1:00</td>
<td>Lunch and Recess</td>
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Figure 4. Typical Organization of Morning Time.

As the day began most of the children were led from the playground into the classroom by Mrs. Dee. Other children straggled in from breakfast in the gymnasium or from home. The children immediately settled their belongings in the cloakroom or on their desks, chatting quietly with friends and neighbors. Often, children browsed in the reading center or in their desks for books to read before Mrs. Dee began to conduct routine classroom business such as attendance and lunch count. Typically the children were all in their seats and Mrs. Dee was carrying out her business by 9:05. When these housekeeping tasks were complete, the daily ritual of
Calendar took place.

These routines of classroom business were followed by Storytime in which Mrs. Dee called the children over to the rug. There they huddled close together sitting Indian style and facing the teacher. On a typical day Mrs. Dee commenced story time with the reading of several poems or had the group recite poems previously read and memorized. Then she would read one or two stories to the children, pausing often during and after the readings to make comments, raise questions or respond to spontaneous comments from the children.

After storytime and a short rest room break the children returned to their desks where Mrs. Dee described and explained the morning "jobs" (i.e. assignments for the morning work time to follow). Typically the remainder of the morning was devoted to group and individual work on reading and writing activities. While Mrs. Dee met with small reading groups, the rest of the children worked individually at their desks. As children completed their assigned tasks, they made decisions about how to use the remaining time. Their choices included independent reading, reading and talking quietly with peers, working on literacy games and puzzles or utilizing the listening center.
This summary describes the outlines of a typical morning in this classroom. Within these larger structural patterns many different literacy events took place, and these will be considered in detail in the section which follows.

**Changes in Key Literacy Learning Events**

Though the basic elements of the daily morning schedule (i.e. Storytime, Reading Work Time, etc.) remained fairly stable throughout the school year, the nature of the literacy instruction and literacy learning events that took place within these larger structures evolved naturally and was altered by the teacher at certain points in time.

The recurrent events that comprised the literacy learning program within this classroom were extracted through careful reading of the field notes. By tracing those literacy events across the field notes, videos and interviews that were recorded throughout the year, major and more subtle shifts were detected in the ways the literacy events were framed by the teacher, carried out by teachers and children and interpreted by all of the participants in the classroom.

In looking at the literacy events that took place throughout the morning and across the year, it is
possible to sort the classroom literacy learning program into five phases in which the teacher operated on the basis of different priorities and intentions. A title was created for each of these phases which conveys the essence of each phase. Table 5 depicts the five phases and the months in which they occurred. Note that despite the linear appearance of the diagram there was considerable overlap.

Table 5. The Phases of the Literacy Program.

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Phase I: New Beginnings
Phase II: Expanded Opportunities
Phase III: Retreat to the Familiar
Phase IV: Collaboration
Phase V: Consolidation

N.B. Dotted lines indicate overlapping phases

In the following sections of this chapter, each of these phases and the literacy events within them will be described in turn.
Phase I: New Beginnings (September)

The name of the first phase of the literacy program refers to two separate but overlapping kinds of new beginnings which were the concern of this teacher and her students: 1) learning to "do school," and 2) learning to be readers and writers.

September represents a host of new challenges for teachers and for their students. Aside from getting to know each other and their teacher as persons, students are faced with the task of understanding how and when to take part in the wide range of events that occur in the classroom. For their part, teachers must establish and maintain instructional goals and communicate expectations for behavior and participation to the children. This is an especially taxing task in the lower primary grades where children may have had little experience with the formal activities and expectations of schooling.

Thus, it is not surprising that an examination of September field notes reveals a great deal of time and effort expended in teaching and learning how to "do school," how to become natives in this particular classroom culture. There was an emphasis on establishing classroom discipline and on creating daily routines for carrying out mundane activities such as lunch count and
sharpening pencils as well as important literacy events like Storytime and Reading Group. Over and over children were reminded of the proper ways to do things, led step by step through them and given verbal rewards for being "super listeners" and "good helpers."

Such concerns and activities are not surprising or atypical of the first few days and weeks of life in a first grade classroom. Indeed, rituals and routines are the glue that holds the classroom together. They allow teachers and students to know how they are expected to interact and how to make sense of their work together.

During these early weeks of the school year Mrs. Dee worked hard to establish and maintain the ground rules for participation in literacy events. In order of their typical occurrence, these were Calendar, Storytime, Group Writing, Reading Worktime and Reading Group.

**Calendar**

The first thirty minutes of the school day were filled with the routine housekeeping tasks of any classroom: getting belongings and supplies settled, collecting official papers and notes from home, taking attendance, collecting lunch money and sending materials to the front office. Calendar was a routine which generally followed this official business. It is a good
example of a routine which involved both learning to do
school and learning to be readers and writers.

As the name suggests, this ritual involved the
classroom calendar bulletin board. Early in the year
Calendar usually began with Mrs. Dee asking the class,
"What is the name of the day of the week today?" and then
"What is the date today?" A student volunteer would be
called up front to select a paper cut-out with the
appropriate date. As Mrs. Dee stapled this on the
bulletin board, she led the children in a ritualized
format for stating the day's date: for example, "Today is
Monday, September 9, 1985."

Mrs. Dee now turned to the chalkboard and asked the
children "Help me to write the date on the board." The
following excerpt from field notes is representative of
the kind of dialogue which usually ensued:

Mrs. D:  What is the name of the day of the week?
Children (chorus):  Monday!
Mrs. D:  How do we spell Monday?  What do you hear at
the beginning?
Scott:    M!  I hear an m!
Mrs. D:  (writing a lower case m on the board) Is
that the kind of m you mean?
Joyce:    No.  It gots a capital
Mrs. D:  OK, capital m.  A tall stick and then
two sticks to make a valley and then
another tall stick.  Now, what else can
you hear in Monday?  Stretch it out. Say
it slowly.
DeAngela:  o - n
Mrs. D:  (as she writes the letters ) All right, o
and then n.  /m-o-n/.  Now what little word
comes at the end of Monday?
Tim: Day
Mrs. D: All right. How do you spell day?
Tim: d-a-y
Mrs. D: Good! d-a-y (she writes these letters to complete the word) That's a little word that we've written up here before, isn't it? Now what is this little mark that I'm writing after the word Monday?
Joyce: A comma
Mrs. D: OK, we need a comma, and then what number do we need for our date?

And on it goes, with various children suggesting letters which Mrs. Dee recorded on the board while providing very specific prompts and explicit instruction in sound analysis and various aspects of letter formation and punctuation. After the entire phrase was transcribed on the board, the class would be asked to read it back in unison while Mrs. Dee pointed to each word. Often individual children were asked to read the phrase a second time. In fact, by the end of September all of these duties were discharged by individual children while the rest of the class watched.

Though Calendar only lasted several minutes a day, it provided a daily opportunity for Mrs. Dee to show the children "how letters go together to make words." It also fulfilled her other intention of drilling the children on the names and spellings of the days of the week and the months. Calendar continued through the first three phases of the school year. In early February Mrs. Dee decided that the routine had outlived its
usefulness. After this point, she simply wrote the date on the board before the children entered the room.

**Storytime**

Storytime was a literacy event which remained rather stable throughout the year. It was an activity which Mrs. Dee considered to be essential in helping children to become readers. Storytime took place on the large green rug in the front of the room. While the children seated themselves Indian style and close together on the rug, Mrs. Dee pulled the wooden teacher chair with an attached writing arm over to join them.

Generally Storytime included the reading and/or joint recitation of several poems by Mrs Dee and the children as well as the reading of one or two stories. The poems were generally taken from one of several large anthologies of poetry and usually were linked to the story thematically. For example, Mary O'Neill's poem "What is Brown?" was read prior to the reading of a picture book entitled *Brown is a Beautiful Color*. Almost invariably Mrs. Dee read poems several times when they were first introduced. Usually the first reading was followed by several "comprehension questions" or work on certain vocabulary, but subsequent readings were simply shared and savored. Frequently poems were read and
reread for several days and Mrs. Dee had the children echo each line after her in order to memorize it. A poem which the children learned and recited often in September was Ruth Dixon's "Teddy Bear's Dance" which they learned secretly in order to surprise Miss Morris.

Mrs. Dee also selected poems and books which were linked to an area of current study in the classroom. For example, the two selections mentioned above about the color brown, along with another picture book, *Color my World*, were chosen to accompany work on color words which occurred during Reading Worktime. At other times the selections related to ideas and topics that Mrs. Dee wanted to discuss (e.g. *Best Friends*, *Timothy Goes to School*) or they were chosen simply because of their proven appeal to children (e.g. *Brown Bear*, *Brown Bear, What Do You See?*, *Are You my Mother?*). Mrs. Dee also selected read-aloud books from the classroom library, highlighting books that she thought children would be able to return to and read on their own. Thus, for example, she read *Hop on Pop* because "the kids love them, and the rhyming words help so they will go back to them in their free reading."

Just as Calendar included explicit teaching about the forms of the written language, Storytime involved a
great deal of explicit teaching about books and book handling as well as demonstrations about the act of reading. The following excerpt is taken from a Storytime involving the picture book *Are You My Mother* which took place near the end of the first week of school:

Mrs. D: I need your help. What does this title say? (holding up the book)
Arthur: Can I find my mom?
Mrs. D: Close, Art. You know this book, don't you.
Taundria: It says "are you my mother"
Mrs. D: Good, Taundria, That's right. Just look at this illustration on the cover. (points to the bird) This is the silly bird who goes around talking to everyone.
Bill: He's silly
Mrs. D: Now, the person who wrote this book--the one who gave us the words--is P. D. Eastman, and he was the illustrator too. He drew the pictures. (She turns to the first page and holds the book so all can see). There are no end papers in this book, but here's the title page. It's not bright and pretty like the one in *Brown Bear*, is it?
Connie: Are/ you/ my/ mom ("reading")
Mrs. D: Yes, the title is "Are you my mother" (emphasizing last word). Now sit up straight and tall so we can read the story. (field notes, 9/5/85)

Especially at this early point in the year Mrs. Dee often talked about the books and certain aspects of book handling with the children. She noted authors and illustrators, pointed out cover illustrations and endpapers and their connection to the impending story, and sometimes helped the children to make links and comparisons to other books (i.e. "It's not bright and
pretty like the one in *Brown Bear, is it?*). Later in the reading excerpted above Mrs. Dee even demonstrated the proper way to turn the pages: "Notice how I turn the pages very carefully from the bottom corner or the top corner so I don't hurt the pages."

This brief excerpt hints at the fact that children were actively involved during Storytime. Though she maintained control over who talked and when, Mrs. Dee valued and openly encouraged certain forms of participation. In the segment quoted above she asked if anyone could help her to read the title, perhaps because she knew that many of the children were familiar with the book. When reading a text such as this one with its repeated refrains and predictable language patterns, she often paused and nodded to children, thus encouraging them to join in. For example, later in this reading many children chimed in on the question repeated by the baby bird: "Are you my mother?"

Mrs. Dee encouraged and rewarded this participation, carefully holding the book so that the children could see the text and making comments such as, "My, but you're being good helpers on this story. Do you know what you're doing? You're really reading along with me!"

Mrs. Dee sometimes paused in her readings in order to help the children to think about the characters and
their motivations and to ask them to make predictions about what was to come in the text. When the hapless baby bird in *Are You My Mother?* finally alighted on a giant steam shovel, Mrs. Dee took the opportunity to ask the children several questions which a proficient reader might ask: "How do you think the baby bird feels?" "What's going to happen to him?"

Thus, the substantial teacher/student interaction of Storytime was that which took place during the actual reading itself, while Mrs. Dee and the children responded to the text and to each other. The discussions which followed story readings were generally brief and not unlike those following the reading of a story in the basal reader. Sometimes Mrs. Dee asked questions or asked the children to recall key events in the story. Often they discussed vocabulary and concepts which she thought might be new for some children. One of the most frequent points of discussion was whether the story was real or a fantasy. This was a distinction which was stressed in Ginn basal series at this level.

However, from the beginning of the school year Storytime provided the children with opportunities for interaction with texts, with each other and with Mrs. Dee which were seldom available in the more formal
instruction in reading groups. Though there were certain
ground rules such as raising hands and taking turns,
children often made spontaneous and unsolicited
contributions to the reading and discussion as well as
responding to the teacher's questions and prompts.
Spontaneous comments and questions were much less in
evidence during reading time. Further, Storytime
involved all of the children in experiences with real
stories and whole texts. As will be discussed below,
this was not always the case with the lower readers in
reading group at this early point in the year.

**Group Writing**

Storytime provided the base for another literacy
event which I have called Group Writing. Here the
children and Mrs. Dee collaborated to generate a story of
two or three lines which was based on the story they had
just read together. Starting the second week in
September and continuing through most of October, Group
Writing was a daily classroom literacy ritual. The
content of the story was drawn from the Storytime text.
However, the format and interactional patterns have more
in common with the process of writing the date in
Calendar where the children dictated words and chanted
letters while Mrs. Dee wrote them on the board. Later the
children copied the group stories onto handwriting paper.

After reading and discussing a story in Storytime, Mrs. Dee would have the children move from the rug back to their desks. Here she would ask them to generate ideas for sentences which they might include in a story of their own (i.e. "Who has some good ideas of what we might write about Corduroy and his pocket?").

As the children contributed their ideas, Mrs. Dee made on-the-spot editorial decisions about what should go in the story. According to Mrs. Dee, "Picking sentences from their suggestions is always hard. I try to choose ones with words that I think they can reread" (field notes, 9/19/85). It is interesting to note the suggestions that were not accepted in the following excerpt, as well as the one which was:

Mrs. D: All right, who can make up a sentence about the story we just read? Tommy.
Todd: He asked the grandfather would he fix his bear.
Mrs. D: OK, who else has an idea?
April: Where that boy comes again and they snuck out the back door.
Mrs. D: Oh, was that your favorite part? All right. Who else?
Joyce: I will help my daddy with my bear.
Mrs. D: Well, there have been lots of neat sentences, but that one has lots of words that we can write. Let's start with that one. (field notes, 9/19/85)

In this instance, the sentences which were bypassed were very conversational in nature, reflecting the particular
dialects of these children. Mrs. Dee acknowledged that these are "neat sentences," but instead selected a sentence which was not unlike the sentences in the basal reader, having a simplified sentence structure and a restricted vocabulary.

By this time, Mrs. Dee would have made the special set of lines typically used in handwriting instruction in the primary grades. After writing the word 'name' on the top line to remind children to include their name when completing the writing assignment, Mrs. Dee would ask them, "Help me to write this sentence on the board."

In this literacy activity, "helping the teacher" involved saying each word slowly in order to listen for the sounds in a word and then suggesting to Mrs. Dee the letters that corresponded with those sounds. Off to the side of the lines for the story, Mrs. Dee would make spaces for each letter in a given word. Then the children and Mrs. Dee would go through a ritual of "stretching it out," articulating the word slowly and making hand motions as if they were pulling the word between their fingers. As they were called upon, children suggested the letters they heard while Mrs. Dee wrote them in the spaces in a format not unlike the game of "hangman." Wrong answers were rejected simply ("No, there's no k in there") and Mrs. Dee often added letters that the
children did not call out.

When all the spaces had been filled, Mrs. Dee would ask the children, "Now, what word do you get when you put those letters together?" After responding in unison, the children would comply with Mrs. Dee's request, "Help me as I move it over into our story," by chanting the letters in sequence as Mrs. Dee wrote them in the lines on the board.

It should be noted that this method of "stretching the word out" and asking children to listen for the sounds and then to identify the corresponding letters is a technique which Mrs. Dee borrowed directly from Reading Recovery procedures and adapted for her own uses. There are several important differences in the sound analysis in Reading Recovery and its use here. First, in Reading Recovery the teacher makes boxes (rather than spaces) for each distinct sound, rather than for each letter as Mrs. Dee does here. In both instances, the teacher accepts whatever the child can give and then provides the remaining letters. However, in Reading Recovery children would simply copy the word into his story rather than chanting the letters in sequence as we see in the classroom.
In this methodical fashion, Mrs. Dee and the children moved through the sentence, stretching out and then writing each word on the board. As she wrote the words, Mrs. Dee made numerous comments about the formation of certain letters (e.g. "Now see! My little e only takes up half the space") and drew the children's attention to various aspects of the punctuation and layout of the sentence (e.g. "Who can remember from Friday how to make a stop sign at the end of a sentence?", "Now, why did I put a capital C at the front of Corduroy?"). As such, Group Story provided Mrs. Dee with opportunities for direct instruction about the conventions of print.

After the one or two sentence story was finally written on the chalkboard in this fashion, Mrs. Dee would ask the class to read the story back to her in unison as she used a pointer to keep them together, and often several children were asked to do solo readings as well. The story was left on the board for the morning and the first of the "morning jobs" during Reading Worktime was to copy the story from the board. In this writing the emphasis was placed on well-formed letters, neat papers and accuracy in the use of the conventions of print. For example, one day Mrs. Dee made the following comments and questions while talking about their writing of the day's story:
Mrs. D: Now I want you to take your time today so you can write the most beautiful stories you've ever written! What do we want between each word?

Child: Finger space!

Mrs. D: That's right. We don't want our letters all touching and jumbled up do we? Now you be careful and put that period in there where it belongs.

Mrs. Dee acknowledged that her intentions in this activity were primarily concerned with helping children to learn the forms and orthography of written language:

Right now we're working on the concept that letters go together to make words. I have them say the letters as I write to help them with letter recognition, and we say the words together to help them with their sounds. Of course, during the writing we also work on punctuation and letter formations.

(field notes, 10/10/85)

Thus, Group Writing falls somewhere between a handwriting exercise and true story writing on the part of the children. It is a more authentic act of writing than staple first grade writing activities such as copying poems from the board or filling in blanks on a ditto. Here the children were encouraged to create a story based on the shared experience of written texts that were read aloud and the oral texts created by the teacher and children around those readings. Thus, the writing activity was rooted in a meaningful shared
context. Further, the ideas were generated by various children and many of them were actively involved in suggesting spellings for various words, needed punctuation and the like.

Still the activity was highly controlled by the teacher. She selected texts which served as the basis for the writing, and though the children suggested potential sentences for the group story, she served as an editor, deciding which suggestions to follow up on and which to put off for the time being. Sometimes she altered children's language to use their basic idea but in a more conventional or simpler form. Further examination of many such events indicates that generally a small core of children accounted for most of the participation. The result was that, though it was a group story in one sense, many of the children did not have any great sense of ownership in the story.

However, from Mrs. Dee's point of view many of the children were "not ready" to write more independently.

I don't want to give this up for right now. As soon as we have a better understanding of our letters than I see right now--I mean, I've seen progress in that area, but not enough. I'd rather just read them a story and give them a turn to say what they wanted to say about the book . . . when they have such a good repertoire that they can pull the words themselves, I'd like to have them do it by themselves. (interview, 10/10/86)
Thus, she saw the Group Story as a supportive activity and one which would "get them started with the idea that they can stretch out words and they can try (on their own)" (Interview, 4/17/86). Indeed, very near the end of October, as a result of the progress that she saw in the children, but also due to her changing ideas about literacy learning, Mrs. Dee gave her students the opportunity to "do it by themselves" in daily journals in which each child generated and recorded a story.

Reading Worktime

The Group Story was soon to disappear, but another key literacy event in this classroom, the Reading Worktime, was one which remained in place and almost unchanged for the first six months of the school year. Typically Reading Worktime took up the bulk of the school morning between 10:00 and 12:00 o'clock, and within this time children worked individually at their desks on assigned tasks, in small groups with the teacher in reading groups and in independent reading alone or with peers following the completion of their assignments.

Typically after the transcription of the Group Story on the chalkboard and a short restroom break the children would return to their desks and Mrs. Dee would stand at
the front of the room explaining the "morning jobs" for the day. During Phase I the first job was always to copy the story from the chalkboard, and Mrs. Dee often made comments reminding the children that she was looking for neat, accurate work. After the writing, there were usually 3 other tasks and these were almost always worksheets. There were three primary emphases in the worksheets during the month of September: the identification of shapes and color words, and the formation of letters. Almost all of these tasks involved tracing and/or coloring and some involved cutting and pasting.

During Worktime there was a constant buzz in the room as children worked at their desks and sometimes consulted neighbors in order to ask questions, make comments, borrow crayons or simply socialize. Often Mrs. Dee would make comments to reward children who were working diligently and doing careful neat work (e.g. "I see some people who are such good workers. They got right to work and aren't talking to their neighbors" (field notes, 9/5/85); "I'm really proud of you! You're so nice and quiet and working so hard" (field notes, 10/9/85).

The writing of names on the board under the happy or sad face was a frequently used method of classroom
management during Reading Worktime. However, in a real sense the tasks themselves were a form of classroom management as well. This was evident one day at lunch when Mrs. Dee reflected on her frustration over a somewhat noisy and disruptive worktime:

This hubbub has got to stop. It's really driving me crazy. It was my fault today. I didn't give them a paper I intended to use because it was cut and paste and they didn't have enough time to get it done, but then they wasted their time playing all sorts of silly games. (field notes, 9/16/85)

A part of the Reading Worktime that tended to be somewhat noisy was the independent reading that children were allowed to do once the day's assignments were completed. At this point children could read their library books or select books from the classroom book collection. Children could choose to read individually, but more often they read and talked about books together with their classmates. Below is an illustration of the nature of independent reading:

11:20: The children who are done with their jobs are beginning to find books to read. April and Scott sit at the table in the reading center quietly sharing a book. Todd stands leaning against the window sill looking at his library book. Connie and DeAngela lie on the rug in the front of the room. They each have two or three books from the reading center and are taking turns sharing them. Several children are browsing at the library cart in front of
the room and Kelly clears extra dittos off Mrs. Dee's storytime chair, perching there to leaf quickly through Good as New, the story Mrs. Dee read to them this morning and left on the chalk tray. (field notes, 9/19/85)

One implication of this approach to independent reading was that certain children seldom had the opportunity to take part because they had difficulty in completing their assignments. During the eleven mornings observed in September, 41 incidents of independent reading were recorded. These incidents involved seventeen of the twenty-seven children in the room, but five children accounted for almost fifty percent of these incidents. This indicates that many children in the classroom never or very seldom enjoyed this opportunity to read independently. However, a literacy event that children seldom missed was work in reading groups.

Reading Groups

As indicated above, Mrs. Dee carried out formal literacy instruction in small ability-based reading groups which met during the Reading Worktime in the last two hours of the morning. For the first two weeks of the school year Mrs. Dee assessed the children's reading levels by observing their oral reading. She also considered their work on the Diagnostic Survey (Clay, 1979) administered to the entire class as part of the
Reading Recovery research project, and a building-wide screening test which involved the identification of letters and numbers and the recognition of words from the Ginn pre-primer and color and number words.

By the end of the second week of school Mrs. Dee had grouped her students into three large groups of six to eight children. There were also two girls with very high reading levels (including Taundria, one of the subjects in the study) who read individually with Mrs. Dee. Thus, she essentially had five groups.

Work in reading groups was highly structured and routinized. Typically, oral reading from the basal readers alternated with skills work. Depending on the ability level of the group, skills work consisted of playing games involving letter recognition and letter/sound correspondences, orally working through worksheets designed for use with the Ginn texts or using large sheets of chart paper draped over an easel on which Mrs. Dee wrote letters, words and sentences. In the case of the worksheets, children completed them at their desks when their reading group was finished.

Whether they were reading orally or talking through worksheets, the children took turns, always working "round robin" around the table starting with the child on Mrs. Dee's left. On worksheets they took turns orally
responding to each of the items on the page. In oral reading, each child read one page of text while all of the other members of the group read along silently, pointing to each word as it was read. However, if the reader stumbled on a word or was stuck, other children were highly discouraged from piping up with the correct word.

Mrs. Dee had several reasons for these "rules" which she discussed as we viewed a video tape of the reading groups together:

The bad part of the children coming out of kindergarten is that there hasn't been the discipline -- and of course, I'm a stinker for discipline. That's goes along with reading. They can't sit there and just stare into space while somebody else is reading. . . . I don't like to let the children correct each other because that does not give the child that's making the mistakes the opportunity to process the mistake. I feel that it makes the reading group very poor and herky-jerky. It takes away from their individuality. When it's somebody's turn to read, it's their turn and no one else is supposed to interject . . . because then no child is threatened by another child. (interview, 10/9/85)

Clearly, these rules stem from a variety of sources, including Mrs. Dee's views on managing instruction, and her ideas about how children learn and about the importance of helping children to maintain positive
self concepts.

Mrs. Dee applied the same rules to herself in working with children who were struggling. When children were stuck Mrs. Dee would allow a few moments to let the child "do his own reading work," but if they continued to need help, she had several approaches which she described in the same interview:

If a child gets stuck I try to think through what I know, how that child has processed what he already has read, and I see if I can help him dig the word out for himself. I'll try everything that I can think of without getting too laborious for the rest of the children, to try to find something, some way to help the child dig that apart rather than just tell.
(interview, 10/9/85)

Review of field notes from observations of reading groups indicate that Mrs. Dee usually waited until a child had read the entire page before she interrupted with prompts or questions. According to Mrs. Dee, "This gives them every opportunity that the page will give them to correct their own error." At this point, Mrs. Dee often asked children to reread a sentence or the entire page. If the child made the same miscue, Mrs. Dee asked questions designed to get children to attend to certain aspects of the text (e.g. "Does that look like went?"; "Does that sound right to say 'Came Ana said Grandma'?"; "You read 'Do not make it in said Grandma.' Does that
make sense? " — all taken from video transcript, 9/25/85). As a last resort Mrs. Dee would simply provide the correct word and allow the oral reading to continue.

One final feature of Reading Groups as they were observed during Phase I is the fact that sometimes the tasks and activities which comprised instruction in the groups were quite different depending on the ability level of the children who made up the group. This is exemplified in the activities observed across the different groups on a single day in mid-September. The following summary is extracted from field notes recorded that day:

Mrs. Dee met first with Joyce who had been assessed as reading at a second grade level. Joyce reads four or five pages from Make Way for Ducklings and then she and Mrs. Dee chatted amiably about the plight of the ducklings for several minutes. Mrs. Dee met next with Taundria, her other high reader. She had Taundria read to her from Inside My Hat, the third first grade primer and then they discussed the directions for two Ginn skillsheets which Taundria took to her desk to complete independently. Next Mrs. Dee turned to the lowest reading group. Rather than doing any text reading, they played a game with flashcards in which they took turns identifying letters and their accompanying sounds, keeping the cards on which they were successful. When the middle group is called to the table, Mrs. Dee pulls the chart over and writes the names of the "Ginn kids" one at a time, asking the children to identify them. Then she uses these names and several basic words to write short patterned sentences (e.g. Jim is here. Here
is Beth) which the children read in unison. Finally, she meets with the high group, using Fish and Not Fish and having the children read an entire story orally. (field notes, 9/19/85)

Clearly, on this day at least, children of different ability levels within this classroom were involved in very different kinds of reading experiences. Different groups received instruction that was based on very different kinds of texts, ranging from letters to words and sentences, to basal texts to children's literature texts. Though the range was not always this wide, this diversity of instruction and texts across reading groups tended to be the norm during Phase I.

Phase II: Expanded Opportunities (October-December)

Phase I represented a period in which routines, rituals and patterned forms of interaction were established in this first grade classroom. During the ten weeks which followed, many of the literacy events which had been observed during the first six weeks of the school year were still in place. Some of these events, notably Calendar, continued virtually unchanged. Other important literacy events, such as Storytime, Reading Worktime and Reading Group, continued but with important changes. Mrs. Dee also introduced several new activities into the curriculum.
The label "Expanding Opportunities" indicates the essence of the changes observed in the literacy learning program during Phase IV. As will be evident in the descriptions below, there was a general sense of opening up and new freedom in literacy learning. Children were given more opportunities to read and write for their own purposes and they enjoyed more independence in selecting texts to read and topics about which to write. New activities were incorporated into the curriculum which allowed children to work independently or with peers rather than being directed and closely supervised by the teacher.

A tangible symbol of this new freedom and the value placed on collaboration with peers was the re-arrangement of the students' desks which took place the first week in December. The desks which had been arranged in long rows were pulled together into three large clusters. This made it easier for children to talk and read and write together, and facilitated movement within the classroom.

However, change in a complex setting such as a classroom is seldom unidirectional or consistent. Simultaneous with this new emphasis on individual choice and collaboration, Mrs. Dee was feeling extreme pressures which worked against these changes. These counter-
pressures against change were internal as well as external.

Mrs. Dee worked within a school system and a school building which had invested heavily in a basal reading series which required frequent testing of the skills and concepts taught in the programmed instruction. Time devoted to other literacy activities was time stolen from work in formal reading instruction and on the skillsheets which prepared students for the similarly formatted tests. For the first several months of school Mrs. Dee had simply not administered the tests. However, by mid-November she was beginning to receive pressure from the front office for test results.

When she began to administer the tests, Mrs. Dee observed that her students were not doing as well as she had hoped they would on the tests, perhaps because their literacy instruction had been somewhat non-traditional. This served to intensify the pressure to do away with innovation and conform to the school sponsored reading program. Thus, to some degree in Phase II, and to a much larger degree in Phase III, there was a current of change flowing in the direction of a return to a traditional skills approach to literacy instruction.

Since the general trend toward increasing freedom is most evident in writing activities, it is here that we
will start our description. Up until the last week in October, Group Stories continued to be a daily classroom routine. At that point, however, they were dropped and replaced with several other kinds of writing: Individual Stories, Journals, and Personal Messages. These new writing activities all had one element in common: they allowed students to generate and record their own messages.

**Individual Stories**

Mrs. Dee took advantage of the children's excitement about Halloween in several ways during the month of October. She read stories and taught the children poems about witches, ghosts and jack-o-lanterns. One book, *Trick or Treat*, was a particular favorite and at the request of the children Mrs. Dee read it on two separate occasions. As would be expected, the book naturally led the children to spontaneous discussions about their own trick-or-treating plans and the costumes they were planning to wear.

Mrs. Dee responded to their genuine interest and enthusiasm by abandoning the Group Story for the day. With Mrs. Dee recording their suggestions on the board, the class compiled a long list of the various characters they planned to portray, from vampires and ghosts to Rose
Petal and He Man. Their writing assignment for the day was to write a complete sentence starting with, "I want to be . . ." and ending with whichever name they selected from the board. Mrs. Dee encouraged the children to "do your best at stretching it out and writing down what you hear," rather than writing the first four words on the board for the children to copy.

She followed up with another writing activity which allowed the children to convey their own messages. In the week that followed the trick-or-treat stories the class continued to do special Halloween activities, including a field trip to a pumpkin farm where they all got a small pumpkin to take home. On the day before Halloween Mrs. Dee guided the students in creating a large class book entitled **What I Will Look Like on Halloween** to which each child contributed a story and illustration on a large sheet of orange construction paper cut in the shape of a pumpkin. The book was laminated and placed in the Reading Center, where it was frequently the center of attention and discussion as children read and reread it, finding their own contributions and those of their friends.

Despite the obvious constraints of these writing activities, the Halloween stories represented an advance
from the earlier group stories written by the teacher and mechanically copied by the children. Here they were expected to create their own spellings and forms for writing. When talking about these stories with the researcher, Mrs. Dee was very clear about the reason for this change: "Well, I'm like a sponge! Dr. DeFord said (in Reading Recovery class) that children will write what we expect and allow them to write—so I came back and I did it!" (field notes, 10/23/85).

**Journals**

At this point in the school year, Individual Stories were one-time events rather than a consistent way of structuring writing in the classroom. A more recurrent literacy activity, which also "expected and allowed" more from the children, was Journal Writing. Beginning on October 28 and extending throughout the remainder of the school year, with the exception of a brief hiatus in April, the children wrote daily in journals consisting of a sheaf of twenty some pages of blank paper stapled together with a large sheet of folded construction paper.

Though it was more open than the Group Writing it replaced, Journal Writing was still highly structured by the teacher. Mrs. Dee's expectations are apparent in the
following brief discussion, recorded two days after the journals were introduced:

Mrs. D: Now, we're going to go back and turn to page 3 of your journals. Now, what's the first thing we put in our journals? (Many hands, but Kelly is called upon)

Kelly: The date

Mrs. D: That's right. You'll copy the date right off of the board just like we wrote it this morning in Calendar. What's the second thing you need to put in your journal in order to get a sticker?

April: A picture

Mrs. D: Oh, but what comes first, before the picture?

Chorus: Story!

Mrs. D: OK. Before you make the picture, you need to write a sentence. Now what will your story be about?

Connie: The story you just read

Mrs. D: That's right. Your sentence will be about that book about ghosts we just read together. Now I'm going to look for some beautiful writing and for some nice, colorful pictures, so don't you be in a big hurry.

(field notes, 10/30/85)

In short, in each daily entry the children were to copy the full date written on the board during Calendar (i.e. "Today is Wednesday, October 31, 1986"), write a sentence or two which related to the day's Storytime text, and then illustrate their story with their crayons.

There are significant ways in which Journal Writing at this stage was similar to the previous Group Writing. In recording the date, the children were required to copy from the board and here, as in Group Writing, accuracy and neatness were valued and expected (cf. above, "I'm
going to look for some beautiful writing”). In both writing events, "story" generally meant one or two sentences. Further, the story topics in both events were restricted to responses to the book read in Storytime.

Despite these restrictions, Journal Writing presented the children with a more challenging and open-ended task in that it required them to generate their own ideas, spellings and forms rather than simply copying from the board. Thus, Journal Writing was another way of "opening up" writing instruction and giving the children more freedom and more responsibility.

From the beginning, Mrs. Dee valued the children's individual and collaborative efforts on the journals. Often Mrs. Dee would delay meeting with reading groups for 15 - 20 minutes in order to circulate around the room to talk with children about their journals. Children were encouraged to make their own attempts at spelling by "stretching it out" as they had done en masse in Group Writing. If they asked Mrs. Dee for assistance, and the word was one she felt they could work on, her first approach was generally to ask the children, "Stretch it out. What do you hear?" Sometimes she would make spaces in their journals as she had done on the board, filling in the letters as children suggested them and then completing the word herself. If the requested word was
unusual or irregular she generally simply wrote the word for the child.

The children had been given Pictionary which were kept in their desks, and these were another source of help which Mrs. Dee often asked children to use. Peers were another source of assistance frequently recommended by Mrs. Dee, especially when she was meeting with reading groups. There was evidence of children making use of all three of these sources of information - Pictionary, teachers and peers - in every observation.

In early December, Journal Writing was opened up further. Now children were allowed and encouraged to write about topics of their own selection as well as the Storytime book. Mrs. Dee reported that this change came from another class session at the University where ideas about writing in primary classrooms had been shared:

In listening to the results that (they) have seen in following children's writing, I very definitely felt that I was narrowing them too much in what I was asking them to write . . . and so I wanted them to write a lot and to write about something that they were comfortable with. But if they don't have any ideas, then they can use the story. (interview, 12/12/85)

Responding to this concern that she was "narrowing them too much," Mrs. Dee allowed the children the choice of writing about a topic of personal interest or responding
to the Storytime book as before. They continued to be required to copy the date and to illustrate their story. Mrs. Dee viewed Journal Writing as a crucial aspect of the classroom literacy program. Journal Writing was invariably the first "job" which children were to complete during their morning work. In several instances where reading instruction was cut short by special events, worksheets and reading groups were displaced for the day, but Journal Writing remained as the primary focus of work for the remainder of the morning.

**Personal Messages**

During the first few months of school there were several instances in which children initiated the creation and delivery of personal messages. These were written at home and intended for the teachers. Some of these unsolicited "messages" resembled traditional school papers, with rows of letters, words or sentences. These may have been prompted by a parent's desire to help with "homework." Others, such as April's message to Mrs. Dee, "I like you. Do you like me?" which was scrawled with a pink crayon on the back of an envelope, seemed to be spontaneous outpourings of affection. All such "homework" and messages were posted by the teachers on the wall near their desks.
In November Mrs. Dee made use of message writing to tap into the intentions of the children and to provide them with a meaningful purpose for writing. Antwonne was a quiet, but amiable child who had several illnesses and injuries which forced him to miss a number of school days. November 11 was his birthday, but he was home with the chicken pox. As she discussed the "morning jobs," Mrs. Dee asked the children to "do something to cheer him up," and showed them how to fold white construction paper in half in order to create cards. However, rather than allowing children to write their own messages, Mrs. Dee fell into the Group Story format, telling the children:

You can decide whether you want to make a get well card or a birthday card. I'll write two messages on the board and you can choose the one you want to use. (field notes, 11/11/85)

On the chalkboard Mrs. Dee wrote "Dear Antwonne, Happy Birthday and Get Well Soon," while the children called out the necessary letters as they did in Group Writing. Interestingly, most of the children also wrote the cards as they did Group Writing: they copied the entire message verbatim and then added their own illustrations. Thus, although the task was rooted in real intentions and meaningful purposes, the format and the final products were not unlike Group Writing.
It is interesting to compare this activity with a similar one which took place three weeks later when Antiwonne was in the hospital for knee surgery. Again the children wrote messages for him as one of their morning jobs. However, in this instance, the teacher presented the task very differently though the social situation surrounding the writing was almost identical:

I'm leaving some white paper up here.

If you are interested and you would like to, you can write a letter to Antiwonne. I think we could really cheer him up by writing notes to him. Now you can write whatever you want to. You can write about something special to you or about something here at school or, "We hope you feel better" or whatever. (field notes, 12/3/85)

The differences in the ways the teacher framed these two writing events illustrates Mrs. Dee's growing effort to provide children with choices and the freedom to decide how, or if, they would carry out certain writing tasks. The second note to Antiwonne was the first time that the researcher observed a writing task which the children were invited, rather than assigned, to carry out.

During December Mrs. Dee followed through on this method of inviting children to write personal messages in an ongoing activity known as "Christmas Elf Letters." One Monday in early December, the children entered the
classroom to find a huge sheet on white paper taped to the board containing the following message:

Dear Boys and Girls,
Are you getting ready for Christmas? I am very busy helping Santa.
Santa asked me to help him answer all his letters. Please write to me and tell me your thoughts about Christmas.

Love, A Christmas Elf

Of course, Mrs. Dee helped children to read the message and nurtured their excitement about the Elf's visit, and during Reading Worktime she provided unlined paper and invited the children to respond to the Elf's letter.

About half of the children accepted the invitation and the next morning these children discovered a personal letter from the Elf on their desk along with a little candy cane. Again, Mrs. Dee invited the children to respond to the Elf's letters:

Lots of you got notes from the Christmas Elf yesterday. Some of you wrote back. If you wrote to him, he wrote back to you. Now I noticed that lots of you had questions that he asked you, so you'll probably need to write back to him. If you didn't write to him yesterday, maybe you'll want to write to him today. Remember, if you want to get a letter from the Elf you need to write one to him.

(field notes, 12/10/85)

And so it went through the next two weeks before Christmas break. Children who chose to write to the Elf received a personal letter the following morning in which
Mrs. Dee responded to their letter in some fashion and then raised some questions (e.g. Are you helping your mother make cookies for Christmas? What do you want Santa to bring you for Christmas?) in an effort to further induce children to write back.

Of course, this activity resulted in a great deal of reading as well as providing children with a natural and meaningful purpose for writing. Arrival time during these two weeks resembled mail call at camp. Children eagerly ran to their desks to see if the Elf had once again left a note for them, and the air was soon filled with excited voices as the children read their letters out loud to themselves or shared letters with their friends. Many children asked Mrs. Dee to help them read their letters, and so the arrival time was transformed into numerous brief tutorials in which Mrs. Dee helped individual children read their letters.

Clearly, there were major changes during Phase II in the kinds of writing that children were expected and allowed to do, with an emphasis on the messages intended by the children as well as the forms and conventions of written language. Children were given more choices about when to write and what to write. The scenario for reading during Phase II is more mixed. Consonant with the new opportunities in writing, new elements were
added to Storytime and blocks of time were devoted to independent reading of trade books. However, work in Reading Worktime and Reading Groups reverted more and more to the traditional skills oriented approach which had characterized Mrs. Dee's reading instruction in previous years.

**Storytime**

In many ways Storytime in Phase II followed the routines established during the first Phase. Every day Mrs. Dee would read several poems and one or two stories. Often the books would be from the classroom library and related thematically to the season, an impending holiday or a current area of classroom study. Mrs. Dee continued to do explicit teaching about books and authors and illustrators and often encouraged the children to join her in "reading" repeated or predictable phrases and in discussions about the stories.

However, there were new elements added to Storytime in Phase II and more variety in the ways time on the rug was used. Poetry assumed a larger role in this phase. Rather than simply being read by the teacher, poems were learned and recited by the children, and often Mrs. Dee led them in dramatizations or choral readings of their favorites. For example, in October the children learned
the poem "A Halloween Tale," replete with witches and
goblins and ghosts, and they enjoyed chanting the poem
together using voices appropriate to the various
characters.

On one particular day in late October, Mrs. Dee
varied Storytime dramatically by telling a story she had
invented rather than reading from a text. Earlier in the
week she had placed a set of stand-up cardboard figures
with a Halloween motif on the table in the reading
center. The set included a large haunted house with
accompanying ghosts, witches, bats, and the like. Using
these figures as props Mrs. Dee wove a spooky tale which
she punctuated with scary noises and eerie sound effects.
After the story Mrs. Dee told the children, "Now this
morning I did what I hope you will do sometime—turn on
your imaginations and make up some stories of your own."
The children responded with great glee and excitement and
the haunted house figures were a popular focus of
attention and dramatic play in the following days.

Another new aspect of Storytime was the variation in
the way the story was read. In early October Mrs. Dee
allowed Todd to read to his classmates a book which he
had brought from home. While his peers listened
attentively, Todd sat in the official Storytime chair
taking the role of the teacher, reading the text and showing the illustrations around as Mrs. Dee did. Mrs. Dee sat close by prompting him in a soft voice when necessary, but allowing him to do the reading.

Another new wrinkle was the reading of favorite stories several times over, thus approaching the closeness and shared purpose of bedtime reading at home as the teacher and her children shared and talked about a familiar text. Sometimes Mrs. Dee also varied her approach in order to provide the children with different kinds of experiences with texts. For example, though she usually read individual picture books, she also read Lobel's *Frog and Toad Together*, reading a chapter a day over four school days. This text allowed the children to become familiar with the same characters over a period of time and introduced them to chapter books. In other Storytime sessions she worked at helping the children to be critical and thoughtful readers by reading Mother Goose rhymes from various books and helping the children to notice variations in the texts. This was a prelude to work she would do later in the year with comparing different versions of certain folk tales.

Many of these variations in Storytime were rooted in Mrs. Dee's desire to provide her children with many and varied experiences with literature and literacy
activities, experiences which she was quite sure her children would not get otherwise:

I think that their basic problem is not ability like it might be for other children. I think some of them have a deprived situation, living situation. Not enough experiences, not enough exposure in their early years. But when we expose them and the materials are there for them to use, they can grasp on and really go.

(interview, 10/30/85)

Independent Reading

One of the ways in which Mrs. Dee attempted to give children rich literacy experiences and access to reading materials during Phase II was Independent Reading. This took place at two points in the morning: just after arrival and simultaneously with classroom business, and during Reading Worktime.

Starting the third week in October, children found a book on their desks when they entered the classroom in the morning. Most of these were the little paperback books from the classroom library, including the Price-Merrill Instant Readers, Breakthrough to Literacy books and supplementary readers from various basal series, and Mrs. Dee selected them especially for each child with the intent of providing recreational reading.

As the children settled into their desks they were encouraged to read their books to themselves and to their
neighbors, and they were allowed to continue while Mrs. Dee took lunch count. A steady hum filled the room as children read and talked about their books, and many children exchanged books or selected other books from the chalk tray.

Mrs. Dee referred to these as "practice books" and the children were encouraged to make use of them at several points in the morning. One of the "jobs" often assigned during the Reading Worktime was to read these books again by themselves or with a friend. On several occasions, though exclusively with the two lower groups, Mrs. Dee had children bring their practice books to Reading Group where they took turns performing their books.

In using the books during Reading Worktime children were encouraged to read with friends and to use peers as a source of support and information. For example, Mrs. Dee told the class, "Now, I want you to practice the book that you have on your desk again. If you have trouble with a word, why don't you quietly ask your neighbor? I'll bet somebody around you can help" (field notes, 10/23/85). Often Mrs. Dee facilitated this sharing process by circulating among the children, listening while they read their book to her and then suggesting
that they read it once more to another child (i.e. "Oh, Kelly, you're awfully good at reading that book! Why don't you read it to Todd. Todd when she's done you read your book to her").

Independent Reading provided a special time when all children were encouraged to engage in reading and was an advance from the previous when-your-work-is-done method. Though the task was initially constrained by the fact that Mrs. Dee selected the books for the children, the children often took matters into their own hands, trading books with friends and selecting other books from the classroom collection.

As in the writing activities, the children were given the opportunity to make their own selections as the year progressed. In December, Mrs. Dee allowed the children to select books from the classroom library to keep in their desks. From this point on children read self-selected books during Independent Reading.

Reading Worktime and Reading Groups

In many respects it is difficult to distinguish between the Reading Worktime observed during Phase I and Phase II. Children typically worked on three or four "morning jobs" while Mrs. Dee met with different small groups. Group Stories and then Journals were always the first priority among the jobs. Often there were also two
or three dittos to complete. These generally involved traditional skillsheet activities (i.e. letters, numbers, word recognition, rhyming words, phonics, alphabetizing). As mentioned above, another regular job was independent or shared reading of the "Practice Books."

In the Reading Groups, Mrs. Dee continued the practice of alternating between oral reading from the basal text and skills work, either from Ginn worksheets or on the chart. In the two lower groups each basal story was read orally at least twice and sometimes three or four times. The more capable children often read a story once to themselves at their desks and then aloud with Mrs. Dee. Mrs. Dee's rules for oral reading and her practices in prompting and questioning children as they read continued as described in Phase I.

One of the few ways in which Reading Groups were more open in Phase II was Mrs. Dee's work with the low group. This group seldom read whole text during Phase I, concentrating instead on letters and sounds. By early October all of the children were reading whole texts during formal instruction in Reading Groups. In October the lowest reading group often read from their practice books rather than the basal reader. Sometimes, they engaged in enthusiastic choral readings of well-known
and loved Storytime books, such as *Brown Bear*.

By early November all of the reading groups were working their way through the basal series. Though most groups still read orally for at least part of the group time, more time was devoted to skills work utilizing the skillsheets provided by the Ginn series. Typically, Mrs. Dee would work orally through one or two sheets with each group and the children would then return to their desks to complete them.

Conversations with Mrs. Dee during this part of the year revealed that she was consciously giving more attention to skills work, acutely aware of the forces that drove her to it, and torn by it all:

> You know, I was trying to decide what worksheets the various groups would do, and I realized that Ginn has you with a ring in your nose. I kept saying, "I won't do that one or that one," but then I realized that I had to do some of them or these kids would never be able to take the tests. So there are things I don't like in the way I teach reading, but you have to realize that I'm living with what's been crammed down my throat!
> (field notes, 9/16/85)

Part of what we've had to be working on right now goes back to Ginn and report cards. We've been working on alphabetical order on some of those seatwork papers because that's one of the things we're responsible for on the report card.

(interview, 11/7/85)

There is a real pull here. You know, you're a hypocrite because you're doing one thing
because you're expected to and then you're torn to do another. Now I've had to zip back to more of those dittos in Ginn because I am to a testing point now because it was just said in a staff meeting the other day that we've got to send Ginn blurbs on each child. I've not turned a Ginn test in to be checked. I've given the tests and I've graded them myself, but I haven't handed any tests in, so the heat's starting to come on, like where are your tests? . . . I would much rather spend all of my time reading with these kids but I can't get them through. I can't get them through what they have to know for that stupid reading series.

(interview, 12/12/85)

Data presented above indicate that in many areas of the literacy learning curriculum in this classroom Phase II was a period in which Mrs. Dee gradually turned more freedom, responsibility and time over to the children. Especially in the early part of Phase II there was a similar trend in Reading Groups. However, this trend soon reversed itself as Mrs. Dee began to experience more pressure from the front office to carry out testing for the basal reading series and as she saw the children struggling on the tests. This reversal soon spread to other parts of the literacy learning curriculum; this will be chronicled in the description of Phase III.

Phase III: A Return to the Familiar
(January - Mid-February)

After Christmas the trend toward a more traditional skill-oriented approach to literacy learning intensified
and spread from reading group activities to other aspects of the curriculum. This reversal affected Reading Worktime as well as several of the new activities introduced in Phase II, such as Journals and Independent Reading. Message writing and individual stories disappeared and were replaced with a very traditional writing activity called Boardwork. The one exception to all of this was Storytime which remained fairly interactive, focused on whole texts and sensitive to the children's responses. Even here, however, there were some signs of a new emphasis on the forms and conventions of written language and on decoding.

Retrenchment

During Phase II several new literacy learning activities had been introduced which served to provide children with more personal choices and opportunities to carry out literacy tasks for their own purposes. One of these, Independent Reading, was severely curtailed in Phase III. In October children had been given the opportunity to read and share trade books with their peers at three points in the morning: Arrival, Reading Worktime and Reading Group. However, the field notes recorded during Phase III reveal no evidence of the use
of trade books in these last two activities.

On most of the days observed children were still allowed to read books of their choice just after Arrival and while Mrs. Dee conducted classroom business. However, there was an increased emphasis in Phase III on discipline and on "being good listeners" and less noise was tolerated during this time. Though she allowed Independent Reading during Arrival, Mrs. Dee seldom encouraged the children to do it, and on several occasions she stated unequivocally, "I want all desks clear and all mouths closed."

More often Mrs. Dee would simply ask children to "get out whatever you're working on." Typically five or six of the children who were avid readers would get out a book from their desk, but most of the children preferred to simply wait quietly or to draw on the large sheets of manila paper made available by Mrs. Dee. As a result, though Independent Reading was nominally still a part of the classroom literacy curriculum, it was not part of the school morning for most children in this classroom.

Reading Worktime was not much different from what was observed during the previous two phases, though certain routine assignments were different. Pride of place as the first "morning job" every day went to Boardwork, which will be described below. Journals were
thus demoted to second place. After Journals the children usually had two dittos which continued the skills work of the previous phases, but at a more sophisticated level. Thus, during this phase children completed worksheets dealing with rhyming words, compound words, alphabetizing and following directions as well as the typical phonic and word recognition work.

Table 6. Summary of Reading Group Activities, 1/28/86.

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<tr>
<td>Taundria (Indiv.)</td>
<td>Go over directions on three Ginn worksheets; do several examples; She completes at her desk</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jackie (Indiv.)</td>
<td>Go over directions on Ginn tests; completed at her desk</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chipmunks (high group)</td>
<td>Rereading of story introduced the day before with few comments or questions; work on compound words and contractions on chart leads to two worksheets on same at desks</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bluebirds (middle group)</td>
<td>Introduced to basal story &quot;Dogs, Dogs, Dogs&quot; by looking at illustrations, questioning and discussion; round robin oral reading of story</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Smurfs I (upper low)</td>
<td>Chart work on words ending with -e (he, me, she, we, etc); work on ditto where these words go in blanks in sentences; entire ditto completed orally, then completed at desks</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Smurfs II (lower low)</td>
<td>Round robin oral reading from basal; (time for lunch after 6 minutes)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 6 demonstrates that this re-emphasis on decoding and skills work was especially apparent in Reading Group, providing a summary of the work of the various groups on a single day. With a few exceptions, skills work with worksheets or the chart was a part of every reading lesson with children at all ability levels. There were now six reading groups in the classroom and due to the constraints of time, work on skills frequently usurped time previously given to oral reading and discussion.

These Reading Group activities are typical of those observed throughout Phase III. On this particular day, the time of three of the groups was entirely devoted to skills work and a fourth group did both skills work and oral reading. In all of the groups, materials from the basal series, readers, worksheets and texts, were the exclusive material used in reading instruction.

In some ways, Storytime was the exception to the rule in Phase III. It was the literacy learning activity least affected by the trend toward a skills emphasis. It continued largely as it had for the first four months of the school year, including chanting and reciting poetry together, learning new poems every week, and a highly interactive story reading time. During and following these readings Mrs. Dee and the children talked about the
stories and made links to their own personal experiences and to other stories they knew.

Mrs. Dee continued her effort to get the children to think critically and to deepen their appreciation for literature by reading several versions of "Little Red Riding Hood" (De Regnier, Galdone, and Martin) and then leading the children in discussions of how the stories were similar and how they diverged and how the illustrations from the three books compared. She also introduced them to longer and more complex books by reading Mr. Popper's Penguins aloud over the course of the first two weeks in February.

However, even in Storytime there were traces of the current curricular emphasis, as evidenced by the following excerpt from field notes:

The children are called to the rug for Storytime. Mrs. Dee reads a poem, "Out in the Rain," which she introduced yesterday. She tells them she wants them to learn it so they can say it "with boy parts and girl parts." Before reading the poem she writes the names of the two main characters on the board: Wallie Duck and Willie Duck, and asks how those names are alike or different. Torie points out that their last names are the same, and Antwonne says they're the same except for the a and the e. Mrs. Dee brings the point home by drawing lines between the matching letters, once again working a decoding lesson in where I wouldn't expect it.

(field notes, 1/28/86)

Another ripple of the skills emphasis was seen in the books and poems chosen by Mrs. Dee. Some of these were selected for utilitarian reasons rather than for
their aesthetic value. For example, one of the poems learned early in January and often repeated over the next two months was designed to teach children the order and names of the months. On another day Mrs. Dee told the children, "We've been working on alphabetizing, so I thought it would be fun to read this book, Alphabet People." The book had undistinguished illustrations and worse verse (e.g. A is for Alice/ washing her hair/ B is for Benjamin/ drawing a bear"), and not surprisingly, it elicited little response from the children except when the name of a classmate was discovered.

Boardwork

As described above, a skills emphasis was very evident in reading activities during Phase III. However, this emphasis is epitomized by the new writing activity called Boardwork which replaced most other kinds of writing and overshadowed the Journals.

Like Independent Reading, Journals suffered during Phase III from a lack of emphasis. Not only were they removed from the first slot on the daily list of morning jobs, they were seldom discussed in any detail and never celebrated as they had been in Phase II. When they were mentioned, it was generally a simple plea for "nice stories" or for beautiful writing. Thus, Journals became
just another routine seatwork task, rather than fulfilling their potential as an arena for significant inventiveness or personal expression.

Boardwork was essentially a fill-in-the-blank exercise which required children to copy four sentences from the board and insert one of four words also written on the board. The four words were members of a given word family (i.e. words ending in -at, -og, etc), thus forcing the children to attend closely to the words themselves. Boardwork was written on the lined paper that had been previously used for Group Stories and which signalled to children the importance of neat and accurate letter formation and lay out. In short, this task required children to copy four sentences carefully and accurately from the board, make fine discriminations among visually similar words and insert the words in the appropriate slots.

Mrs. Dee explained her intentions in the Boardwork in this way:

Well, number one, I felt a great need for doing a better job on handwriting, and I didn't think that it would hurt to do just a little bit with word families, so they are sentences that use high frequency words, and the idea was to introduce the children to . . . the process of word families. It also helps us build meanings and understanding of words . . . My intention in doing this is to put the words up there, recognize the words, let them use them in sentences, and then have them put them into my sentences. (interview, 1/28/86)
Despite her intention to build meanings, the ways in which Mrs. Dee framed the Boardwork tended to focus on phonetic and word analysis. Every morning during the explanation of the morning jobs, Mrs. Dee spent almost fifteen minutes (and sometimes up to 30 minutes) in working through the Boardwork orally with the class. The nature of these introductions is illustrated by the following excerpt:

10:35—T. introduces seat work, referring to sentences she wrote on board before children arrived:

Name
sit  1. Please_____ here.
sat  2. I have a _____ of dishes.
set  3. That is a good _____ for you.
seat 4. The cat _____ on the mat.

Mrs. D: "We have to be good detectives if we're going to figure out what these words are and where they should go because they look very much alike except for the letters in the middle."

She points out that all of the words have one vowel except for the last word "Where the e and a work together to say long e." After reviewing the sounds made by the other vowels, she has various children identify the four words. This is a very traditional, phonics-type lesson.

She selects some of the better readers to read the sentences saying the word blank. After each sentence she stops, repeating it 4 times and inserting each of the words, like so:

Joyce: Please blank here
T: Good Jackie. Now, Which one sounds right?
   please sit here, please sat here, please set here or please seat here?
Kelly volunteers the please set here sounds right to her (perhaps a dialectical difference). Mrs. D. goes on to another child for the answer she wants. They go through all four sentences this way.

(field notes, 1/9/86)
Later in Phase III another dimension was added to the boardwork in that Mrs. Dee had the children identify the four words and then asked them to generate sentences of their own for each of the words. She insisted that these new sentences had to be different from her use of the word on the board. This was designed to "help us to build meanings and understandings of words."

However, the children found it difficult to create sentences which were different from the ones on the board and often their sentence revealed confusions. Observe, for example, the confusions in sentences suggested by the children for a group of -in words, possibly stemming from dialectical differences:

I need a pin to write on the paper
The win is cold.
The win will blow.
I can ride a tin speed bike.
I am tin today.
(field notes, 2/4/86)

Even when children were able to generate sentences which made the correct use of the word, this was merely an oral exercise, and they still were required to copy the sentences on the board, thus further working against meaning building and making Boardwork a vehicle for instruction about phonetic and word analysis and a handwriting task.
Thus, Boardwork serves as a symbol for the general trend during Phase III away from the meaning- and child-centered literacy learning seen in Phase II and towards the traditional approach to literacy learning which Mrs. Dee had utilized prior to her involvement in Reading Recovery and the Master's Program at Ohio State University.

When asked later about the reasons for these reversals and the renewed emphasis on skills work, Mrs. Dee gave three reasons:

1) her desire to prepare children for doing these kinds of tasks in second grade and on through school:

I know that lists aren't the thing to do, but Dan, these kids are going to be expected to read lists of words from here on out. I don't like lists either, and I've really been frustrated with this . . . but I've got to prepare them for what is ahead. (interview, 2/4/86)

2) the fact that her children were not doing as well as she would like on the Ginn tests, and 3) systemic pressures to produce results within the basal reading series:

The reason that I went back to the boardwork stuff was because I became frightened. To be very honest with you I became frightened with the fact that the children were not doing a good job of working with isolated words. And it's not something I agree with . . . but to prepare them for what they've got to face in another year, I felt that I had to go back to this. (interview, 2/13/86)
It just tears me apart. It really does! I tried what we learned at the University. I know that the children are not learning from those dittos, so we went to other things that they could do. But then in December the heat got put on me. You know: "Where are your Ginn tests?" Well, in order to prepare them to pass the decoding on those Ginn tests you have no alternative except to go back to the dittos and teach them the dittos that prepare them for the tests . . . And so we've seen them again, and every day I sit here and Ohhh!, I could pull my hair out! But we're locked in!
(interview, 2/13/86)

As evidenced by these quotes, the tensions and conflicts which Mrs Dee had referred to in December had reached a peak intensity by early February. These rising tensions and efforts to relieve them resulted in a crucial turning point which changed the school life of the children, the teacher and the researcher considerably.

The Turning Point

In a very real sense, Mrs. Dee was being "torn apart." She was torn between her old ways of thinking and doing things and the new insights and practices gained in ongoing professional experiences. She worked within a school system and socio-cultural milieu which valued the move "back to the basics," but her inner feelings, supported by the research she read and heard about, told her that children learn "the basics" best when they are allowed to use real language in meaningful
ways.

She had tried some new ideas and activities in her classroom for a short time, but she soon became discouraged by the students' work on more traditional school tasks. Driven by her overriding desire to do what was best for her students and perhaps unsure of her footing, she retreated to the comfort of a more familiar approach to literacy learning. But this soon became uncomfortable too, for now these teaching practices were in conflict with her new ideas about literacy learning.

This inner turmoil and tension was heightened by the heavy demands made on Mrs. Dee during this particular school year. Aside from her classroom responsibilities, she worked intensively with four low achieving readers every day and carried out the many duties of a Reading Recovery teacher. Additionally, the research reported here inevitably placed demands upon her time and good will, though the researcher made every attempt to avoid unnecessary intrusions.

Tension was high in and out of the classroom. The researcher, too, faced some difficult decisions and inner conflicts. His background in children's literature and training at the Ohio State University had predisposed him to favor the child-centered and whole-language kinds of activities which began to appear in the classroom during
Phase II. Thus, it was frustrating for him to see the new approaches to literacy learning disappearing and the return to highly teacher-directed activities which focused on the surface features of language rather than on meanings and messages.

Even more disturbing, however, was the ethical and personal problem of the mounting frustration and tension evident in Mrs. Dee. The researcher couldn't avoid wondering if Mrs. Dee's turmoil was further exacerbated by the fact that her tumultuous school year was being closely observed and recorded by a colleague. Up to this point in the school year the researcher's role had been more observer than participant, though he had frequent conversations with the children and Mrs. Dee. This had allowed the researcher to make long-term, focused observations, but it also meant that Mrs. Dee coped alone with twenty-seven children while another able-bodied adult sat and did little. How could the researcher just sit and watch while children and teacher alike evidenced real frustration?

Something had to be done to relieve the mounting tension. In the end, there were two ways in which a turning point was reached. Wisely perceiving the need for some "personal space," Mrs. Dee took three personal days just before Valentine's Day. She spent the time at home,
relaxing, reading and reflecting. But most of all, she simply "got away from it all." In a conversation soon after she returned, Mrs. Dee mused, "One of the most beautiful things that I was able to do in the space that I had in these last few days was to get away from the needles that are at you all the time."

When she returned there were immediate and tangible differences in Mrs. Dee's approach to the children and the literacy program. With Valentine's Day coming on the following day, she had the children make card holders, encouraging them to decorate and write messages on them. The children carried out the task with great industry and enthusiasm, writing the familiar phrases associated with the holiday: I love you, Happy Valentine's Day, Be my valentine, and the like. Another immediate change was the reinstatement of Independent Reading. As the children settled into their desks Mrs. Dee encouraged them to "get your books out and read while we do lunch count" and after her business was done she allowed a few extra minutes of time for further reading.

Storytime was highly interactive on this particular day, as Mrs. Dee asked the children to help her to "catch up" on the events she had missed in Mr. Popper's Penguins. The ensuing discussion, with various children collaborating to fill Mrs. Dee in, was animated and
genuine and not at all like a typical school discussion (e.g. was this a real story or a fantasy?). Reading Worktime still involved Boardwork and Reading Groups operated as they had since Christmas, but Mrs. Dee was visibly more relaxed and flexible in the ways she worked with the children and made use of time.

This brief hiatus proved therapeutic, but it was not enough. Both the researcher and the teacher felt that deeper and more lasting changes had to be made. After school on the day Mrs. Dee returned from her break, she and the researcher had a long and frank discussion. They discussed the shape of the classroom literacy program as it had been realized over the first six months of the school year and shared their mutual and personal frustrations, concerns and dreams.

What emerged from this summit was a mutually agreed upon decision to work collaboratively in planning and implementing the classroom literacy program over the next six weeks until the Easter break. This would allow the researcher the opportunity to "step into Mrs. Dee's shoes" and to gain new insight into her and her students, but it also would provide Mrs. Dee with assistance and support in planning and carrying out non-traditional literacy learning activities. The outcome of this decision to collaborate will be described in the
following section.

Phase IV: Collaboration (Mid-February - March)

The thread which unites the many literacy activities and events observed in the classroom during Phase IV is collaboration, not only that of the teacher and the researcher, but collaboration between adults and children and among children themselves.

Collaboration with the Researcher

There were essentially three elements in the six-week collaboration between Mrs. Dee and the researcher: 1) discussing and planning daily and weekly literacy activities, 2) implementing those activities and, 3) building the literacy environment.

Planning was done in meetings after school or over lunch. These were held weekly in order to accommodate the busy schedules of both parties. In addition much planning was done in brief interchanges during the school day or by telephone at night. Basically, discussions involved deciding what the priorities were, how those ideas could be realized in the classroom and what the respective roles would be. For example, it was decided that one priority was to provide the children with experiences with Big Books during the Storytime and throughout the day. Since the researcher had access to
several Big Books and was familiar with their use, it was decided that he would introduce them to the children.

Generally, the researcher took three roles in the classroom in working together with Mrs. Dee to implement the ideas and activities they had planned together: 1) leading Storytime on alternate days, 2) serving as a general resource and facilitator for individual children during Reading Worktime, and 3) working with small groups on special projects and shared writing. Though the work with small groups occurred mostly near the end of Phase IV, the first two roles were played throughout this period. During this phase the researcher participated in the classroom at least three days a week, and often four.

The researcher also collaborated with Mrs. Dee in building the literacy environment, largely by making new and more varied reading materials available to the children. Near the beginning of Phase IV, and again three weeks later, the researcher brought special collections of forty picture books into the classroom. These were displayed in the Reading Center, on the chalk tray and on window ledges to ensure the maximum visibility and accessibility.

In gathering the book collections the researcher looked for books with strong characters and appealing plots (e.g. *Sylvester and the Magic Pebble*, *Sam Who Never*)
Forgets, Mr. and Mrs. Pig's Evening Out), books with predictable structures and language (e.g. The Napping House, Oh-A Hunting We Will Go, Mr. Gumpy's Outing) and high quality non-fiction books with topics of natural interest (e.g. Airport, Freight Train).

The researcher also contributed to the classroom literacy environment by supplying several "big books" which were stored in the Reading Center and often used during Independent Reading, Storytime and Peer-Shared Reading. Finally, he assisted Mrs. Dee in creating displays of children's work, posting the various texts created by the children in shared writing and compiling class-made books for inclusion in the classroom library.

Phase IV also evidenced a great deal of collaboration among students and between the teacher and the students. Throughout the morning, children worked among themselves and with the adults in the room to read and talk about books, to generate texts in shared writing and to celebrate texts jointly in shared reading.

Independent and Peer-Shared Reading

As indicated in the previous section, Mrs. Dee reinstated Independent Reading during classroom business when she returned from her hiatus. As in Phase II, children were encouraged to select books from the
classroom library or their desks and then to read to
themselves or quietly with a neighbor while listening for
their names and responding appropriately when necessary.

New to Phase IV, however, was the fact that the
children were given extra time which was devoted entirely
to reading and sharing, rather than having to carry on in
hushed tones and a divided ear while business was
conducted. This special time for reading generally came
during classroom business and before Storytime. Though it
was called Sustained Silent Reading, it seldom was.
Children were allowed to move about the room as necessary
to look for books or other literacy materials. There was
a special emphasis on reading with a friend, though
individual reading was also valued, and a steady buzz of
voices filled the room. Mrs. Dee and the researcher moved
among the children, helping them to locate books,
receiving their performances of texts and encouraging
them to continue on in other literacy activities.

This extra time devoted exclusively to independent
literacy activities was set aside by Mrs. Dee, but in a
very real sense the children simply appropriated this
time. After the morning bell rang and the children
gradually arrived, the room would suddenly be filled with
the chatter of the children as they exploded into all
sorts of reading and sharing and talking.
An excerpt from notes will give the reader some sense of this busy and exciting time of the school day:

April uses a pointer to read the Velveteen Rabbit captions, moving left to right across the length of the bulletin board and reading out loud. She is soon joined by Connie. The two read in unison with April still wielding the pointer. Arthur does not read with the two girls, but he follows along behind them pointing with his fingers and reading to himself what he can.

Steven, Kelly, Randy, Antiwonne and Cindy crowd around the new book collection in the reading center, pulling books out, glancing through them, exclaiming about what they're finding and then going on to browse in other books.

Scott, Angela and Todd are looking at books at their adjacent desks. They have stumbled on three copies of Little Bear. They exult in this discovery, flipping through the books, finding illustrations that interest them and making an effort to stay on the same page. They point out that they have the same book to everyone who comes by, and eventually settle down side by side on the front rug. Scott, who is clearly the leader, begins reading out loud while the others follow in their copies. Their reading is excited and noisy and soon attracts others. Mark squats beside them holding a book he has borrowed from the chalk tray, but mostly he is interested in what the trio is doing.

Carlos and Steven are back in the reading center. Steven is sitting on one of the chairs with the big book of Mrs. Wishy Washy on his lap. Carlos stands beside him and both children read the text aloud.

Jenny sits at her desk undisturbed by the frenzy of activity swirling around her. She has also chosen a book from the chalk tray (yesterday's read aloud book Dr. De Soto) and as usual she is totally absorbed in her reading. Very little mere browsing through books for this child!

Torie sits at her desk with a pad of lined paper, her own from home. She has written her name in large letters with a crayon at the top. Below this she has written the following text "The sun is in the sky. All day long so it got
hot and it got hot r and hot r. The cat wit to the house. the dog wit to the house." Below this she has drawn a picture of a girl smiling happily and holding her arms out. Torie tells me she wrote the story at home, but is adding to it here.

9:10-Mrs. Dee is excited by all the reading that's going on. She has been talking with various children and reading with them. As she walks by me she mutters, "Do you think it's really important for me to take lunch count? I hate to cut this off." A few minutes later she turns the lights off to call the children to order, telling them, "I hate to stop all this beautiful reading and sharing, but we have to take lunch count. We'll do some more after that." She takes a very quick lunch count while children continue to look at books and chatter at their desks. After 3 or 4 minutes, she turns them loose on reading again, and the children respond with continued enthusiasm.
(field notes, 4/5/86)

And so it went. Morning after morning children would enter the room knowing that there would be special displays of books on the shelves and in the Reading Center, and that these books were readily available to them as were the Big Books and the texts that were posted on the walls. Most of all they knew that Mrs. Dee valued their work with these literacy materials, and that as long as they were really working at literacy activities she would be flexible in allowing them the time.

Scenes like this one took place at least two times during the morning: just after arrival and before Storytime, and once again towards the end of Reading Worktime. Thus, on most days the morning would begin and end with this Independent and Peer-Shared Reading.
Storytime was an important forum for literacy learning throughout the school year. However, during Phase IV it assumed even more importance because many of the literacy activities which occurred throughout the morning were rooted in texts that were read, discussed, reread and created during Storytime. Especially after the first week in March, when Reading Groups were temporarily abandoned, Storytime served as a gathering point and a place where direct instruction about literacy took place. The presentation of data on Storytime will begin with a discussion of the criteria for book selection during Phase IV. Because Storytime has been extensively discussed in previous sections, only activities which were new to Phase IV will be treated here. These are Shared Reading and Comparison Charts.

The texts that were used in Storytime were carefully selected for the quality of the writing and the illustrations as well as for specific purposes within the curriculum and activities planned for the day. Often in the past, Mrs. Dee had selected books thematically and because of some link to a current season, holiday or area of study. She also tended to choose many books with rhyme and limited vocabulary in the belief that this would make them easier for children to eventually revisit and reread them independently.
During Phase IV the researcher and Mrs. Dee operated on the assumption that other elements of literature would make children want to revisit books and capable of doing so, including well-structured plots, strong characters, vivid and memorable language and high predictability. During every Storytime at least one of the texts read became the basis for writing or some other activity later in the morning. In order to support these various extension activities, texts had to be strong.

Other books were simply shared for the pleasure of the story, the language or the pictures and did not lead to other activities. A final kind of text that was frequently read during Storytime were stories written by the children. This sharing of individual stories gave children a larger audience for their writing and allowed children to get ideas as well as support from each other.

**Shared Reading**

One reason for the effort to select texts that had memorable and predictable language was that a great deal of shared reading took place during Storytime. Shared Reading was the jointly performed reading of familiar texts. Typically it involved the use of enlarged texts, often called "big books," or song charts, though on occasion very familiar regular sized texts, such as *Rosie's Walk* and *Brown Bear, Brown Bear, What Do You
Due to the size of the books, all of the children as well as the teacher could see the print and the illustrations. This allowed them to discuss details in both the illustrations and the print, much as a parent and child share books at home. This allowed the teacher to demonstrate effective strategies for reading, while children were also naturally picking up many understandings about the conventions of print. An essential ingredient in Shared Reading was the frequent repetition of texts, with children joining in as much as they wanted to and were able.

During Phase IV five different big books were shared in Storytime: *Titch*, *Mrs. Wishy-Washy*, *Sing a Song*, *The Dark*, *Dark Wood* and *The Big Toe*. The following excerpt illustrates one way in which *Titch* was used. Along with the sheer enjoyment of revisiting a familiar and satisfying story, the session was designed to get children to think about prediction as a reading strategy:

"We started out today by rereading the Big Book of Titch which was introduced two days ago. Before we read the book I asked them to tell me who Titch was and what they could tell me about him. Connie volunteered,"He always got the little stuff." I used the slippers and the clothes on the clothesline on the title page to illustrate this. I asked how many of them were the littlest in their families and we talked a little bit about how sometimes older and bigger siblings got to do things we couldn't do. Before we read the"
book together I warned the children that I had done some special things to the book and that they would have to really be watching and thinking as we read it together. (The children knew the text quite well at this point because we had read the book together several times and the children had been using it constantly during independent reading.) In order to get them to think and talk about making predictions I had masked a few words or parts of words with small slips of paper and tape. On the first page I masked all but the first letter of 'little'. I covered the word 'big' in several places, and on another double spread I masked all but the first letters of 'houses' and 'trees'. The Big Book rested on the chalk tray and I used the pointer to keep us all together. As we read, we paused as appropriate to talk about the predictions that they made for the words which were masked and how they knew what to predict. For example, when the children chanted the correct word on the first page, I asked how they knew, and they told me the I. I asked why they didn't say Titch was lonely because lonely starts with the same letter. Arthur replied simply and to the point: "Because he ain't!"

After the page with the bikes where I had masked the entire word 'big' two times, I asked them to put their fingers on their noses whenever they saw the word big again. Many of the children were able to do this each time as we read on. Often they would touch their noses as soon as the page was turned. Many of them had read this repeatedly since I first shared the book last Tuesday, and they were very familiar with the text. The children enjoyed this activity, and though at this point they weren't always able to articulate how they made the predictions, it got them thinking about it. Later in the day as children shared the book independently many of them continued to use the masks.

(field notes, 2/20/86)

An essential part of shared reading was the self-directed practice that took place when the enlarged texts were made available for independent reading after they
had been shared with the group. Small versions of the books were also available, and children often used these along with the enlarged versions during independent reading. As they sprawled on the floor with the large texts the children would take turns wielding the pointer while the others joined in the reading.

Similar to Shared Reading was the use of song books or song charts. Mrs. Dee was required to teach a certain amount of music during the year. During Phase IV she accomplished this through the use of picture book versions of songs, including *Roll Over*, *Sing a Song*, and *Oh, A-Hunting We Will Go*. In some cases, charts were made from the books and posted so that children could revisit them independently throughout the day.

One final aspect of Shared Reading was the creation of big books by the children. *Mrs. Wishy Washy* was an early and consistent favorite of the children, so when it was due to be returned to the library, the children worked to create a version of their own which could stay in the room. Carefully following the layout of the original book, the researcher wrote the text on large sheets of blank white paper. The children selected the pages they wanted to illustrate, and worked in groups of two or three which decided how to share the illustration of each page. Working over several days, the children
drew and colored their illustrations on white paper, frequently looking carefully at the original. Their finished pictures were cut and pasted onto the actual page. After being bound and laminated the resulting big book was an often used part of the classroom library for the remainder of the year.

Comparison Charts

Another activity which took place in Storytime was an extension and formalization of Mrs. Dee's work in previous phases on comparing different versions of folktales (e.g. Little Red Riding Hood). Comparison charts were simply large sheets of paper on which the teacher drew a matrix, writing the names of the books to be compared down one side and various categories of interest across the top. Such charts were a culminating activity of sorts, and occurred after the children had enough knowledge and experience with a certain grouping of books to be able to talk about them in detail and in depth.

Although several charts were created during Phase IV, a description of the development of the "Tricksters" chart will illustrate the process. Like many of the activities seen in Phase IV, the idea emerged spontaneously from the children and then was seized upon and enlarged by the teacher. During one of several
readings of *Rosie's Walk* in which a hungry fox pursues the oblivious hen, one of the avid readers in the class, noted that this fox reminded her of the Wolf in "Little Red Riding Hood." Other children mentioned the wolf in "The Three Little Pigs."

Wanting to pursue and build upon this linking across stories, both the teacher and the researcher searched out and read books with similarly villainous foxes or wolves. Over the next week or so the children enjoyed hearing and talking about *Mr. and Mrs. Pig's Evening Out*, *Dr. De Soto* and a South American folktale anthologized in the Ginn readers, "How Senor Lamb Tricked the Coyote." After the stories had become well known to the children, they worked together with the researcher to create a chart, using categories such as "What was the trickster like?" and "Who tricked the trickster?" The children suggested the words and phrases as the researcher recorded them on the chart. At the children's request they added illustrations to the chart much as they had created their own big book of *Mrs. Wishy Washy*, and this was posted on the wall for later reference. For example, the children referred back to this chart later in the month when they came upon a more subtle trickster in *The Gingerbread Boy*.

As described above, Storytime was an especially important arena for literacy learning during Phase IV.
As a result it tended to take up more of the morning than it had in previous phases. The rest of the morning continued to be taken up with individual and small group work in Reading Worktime, but the nature of this particular part of the morning changed drastically. There were three factors in this change: the researcher's active involvement with children during this time, the nature of the jobs assigned, and the decisions made by Mrs. Dee about the way she handled reading groups. Reading Worktime during Phase IV was similar to that seen earlier in the year in that the children continued to have three or four "morning jobs." However, many of these jobs were quite different from those assigned in previous phases. The major difference was the absence of dittos and skills sheets. Instead children wrote in their journals, carried out other kinds of writing as will be described below, and read with their peers. Sometimes they worked in small groups with the teacher, as in shared writing experiences.

Mrs. Dee made important decisions about her handling of reading groups during this phase. Early in the phase she continued to meet with reading groups. However, the ways in which she made use of that time is reflective of her renewed shift away from the skills approach. When reading groups met, they tended to read orally from the
text rather than working on skillsheets or chart work and drill. Often Mrs. Dee would meet with one or two groups and then work individually with the more needy children in the bottom range of the class.

By the end of February, Mrs. Dee met less and less with the reading groups, preferring instead to circulate around the room and work with individual children. One day as they stood in the room looking at children busily at work all around them, she commented to the researcher, "Why should we have reading groups? The children have already done all kinds of reading today" (field notes, 2/25/86). Rather than meeting with reading groups she worked with individual children all morning, hearing them read their stories to her and helping them to do further work on them.

Several days later, in the first week of March, Mrs. Dee decided to do away with reading groups for the three weeks that remained before Easter vacation. She explained to the researcher that she felt she was sending mixed messages to the children:

I'm sending them the wrong message every day. Last Friday went great when I was very involved with the children, but yesterday didn't go so well and part of it was that I was not involved. I was doing something else with the reading groups. It's sending them mixed messages about what I think is important.

(field notes, 3/5/86)
Thus, for the remainder of this phase, Mrs. Dee and the researcher both worked with individual children and sometimes with small groups on special projects such as the shared writing. The remainder of this section will describe the activities which took place during Reading Worktime: Journals, Writing from Literature, Shared Writing and Writing from Experiences.

Journal Writing

Journal Writing was an activity which carried over from previous phases. Children continued to make daily entries in teacher-made blank books which were collected every day at lunch and returned the next morning, and entries still included the date, a written text and an illustration.

However, there were important changes in the way the journals were handled. One was the removal of the tedious task of copying the date from the board. Instead, the children circulated a rubber stamper and ink pad and simply stamped the date at the top of the day's entry. Thus, they could focus their attention entirely upon the creation of a written text.

Another important change influenced the character of these written texts. In an effort to give children a real purpose for writing and to help them focus on the meaning and content of their written texts, the teacher
and the researcher began to make written responses back to the children. When she introduced this new practice, Mrs. Dee focused on the notion of writing and receiving messages, reminding them of their exchange of letters with the Christmas Elf. As in that activity, the children were offered a choice in the matter: "If you want us to read your story and write you back about it or if you have a question and want us to write back with an answer, just draw a circle at the top of your page and write our initials in it."

The children responded with great enthusiasm and on that first day many of the children requested responses. On a typical day ten to fifteen of the children would initiate a response from one or the other adult, and there seemed to be a new enthusiasm and purpose in Journal Writing on the part of some children who had previously been writing very mundane, patterned stories.

At first, the novelty of writing messages to Mrs. Dee or the researcher seemed to constrain some children, and they made rather trite, but personal entries such as "Mr Wlz is nis" or "I love you." However, the adults responded with longer messages, making comments about what children had written and topics known to be of interest to the child and raising questions.
Some children continued to write brief slogans for several days, but as they began to receive different kinds of replies from the two adults, changes were apparent in some of the entries. Many children returned to familiar patterns established earlier in the year, either responding to books read in Storytime or writing about personal experiences, but these seemed to have a more personal and authentic flavor. For example, after a shared reading of *The Dark, Dark Wood*, Arthur wrote "I like the scaredy book," and during the discussions about tricksters Tim wrote, "I do not like coyotes and foxes because they eat people."

Another inevitable result of the teachers' written responses in the journals was that the first part of Journal Writing involved the children in reading the responses before they began their own writing. Often after writing a new entry, the children would take the journal to one of the adults in order to receive a same day response, and this sometimes resulted in two or three exchanges on a given day. In other instances interchanges about the same topic carried over the course of several days, such as a dialogue that went on for a week between Mrs. Dee and Mark about his stuffed animals.

The use of riddles was an interesting outgrowth of the message emphasis in journals which serves to
underline the genuine social nature of the new format.

Earlier in the year Mrs. Dee had made a great hit during
the Storytime with a book of Halloween riddles called
\textit{Spooky Riddles}. The book was still in the classroom
library and actively circulating during Phase IV. One
morning April made a riddle for Mrs. Dee to answer: "She
is in table 3. Who is my friend?" Mrs. Dee penned her
answer, but she guessed wrong and so Ann wrote another
cue. Their exchange went back and forth several times,
and Mrs. Dee mentioned this to the class the following
day, reading their exchanges and feigning chagrin that
"Ann really tricked me!" Of course, this started a fad
of trying to trick the teacher, and some children created
similar riddles off and on for the rest of the month.

\textbf{Writing from Literature}

Other important kinds of writing also took place
during phase IV. Many of these involved individual
children in writing stories which stemmed from
experiences with children's literature.

Sometimes texts with clear and repetitive language
patterns were used as models and the children were asked
to make innovations on those texts. Early in Phase IV,
these innovations were carried out as a group with the
whole class suggesting ideas and the teacher serving as
an editor and scribe. An early example was the group creation of *Room 108, Room 108, What Do You See?*, based on one of the class's favorite stories. In their version the children chose to slot in the names of various stuffed animals. Thus, their text read: "Big Bird, Big Bird, what do you see? I see a blue bunny looking at me/Blue Bunny, Blue Bunny, what do you see? / I see a teddy bear looking at me," and so on.

Some innovations on texts were written individually after a group introduction in Storytime. This was the case with *Dear Zoo* which was read in Storytime with the children chanting the patterned parts and providing the animal names before the flaps were opened. In an effort to free the children from the constraints of this book this was followed by a perusal of Wildsmith's *Wild Animals* and a discussion of whether these animals would be good pets. Then as part of their morning work children were given a sheet of white paper. Near the top of the paper were the words, "They sent me a __________." Most of the middle of the page was blank but at the bottom was more text from *Dear Zoo*: "He was too __________. I sent him back." The children's task was to fill in these lines with whatever animal they chose, to make up a logical reason why they should be sent back and then to draw an illustration in
the middle. Again these were laminated and collated into a class book with the addition of a final page describing the animal voted by the class to be the perfect pet, a kitten. Similar innovations on text utilized such texts as *Oh, A-Hunting We Will Go* and *Animals Should Definitely Not Wear Clothing*.

There were other activities with literature as well. Some stories were retold in a series of frames not unlike a cartoon strip (e.g. *Mr. and Mrs. Pig's Evening Out*, *Dr. DeSoto*) or from another character's point of view (e.g. *Rosie's Walk* as seen by the fox). Another example of writing based on literature was the familiar task of writing the conclusion to a story. After hearing the first part of *The Bear's Toothache*, the children wrote their own resolutions to the story in which a little boy attempts to help a huge bear remedy an aching tooth. Later in the day the conclusions created by various children were read along with the conclusion written by the author.

Certain books were used for a number of different activities. *Rosie's Walk* is a prime example. This book was read aloud numerous times. Sentence strips with the chunks of text from each page were used in a sorting and sequencing activity. Collaboratively and orally the children retold the story from the fox's perspective.
while Mrs. Dee manipulated a hand puppet of a fox. Later, the children discussed what would have happened to Rosie and to the fox if she had walked around the school and each created stories entitled "Rosie's Day at School." The children also made their own copies of Rosie's Walk using the original text and creating their own pictures out of cut paper and crayon. And finally, a small group of seven or eight children opted to work with the researcher in creating a large mural which mapped out Rosie's travels, with the hen house, the hay stack and all of the other sites Rosie visited made from fabric scraps. After the mural was completed the children collaborated in a recounting of her journey which was written on the mural by the researcher.

Writing from Experiences

Another kind of writing was that which emerged from various experiences and activities shared by the children and teachers in the classroom. The best example of this is the wealth of writing that resulted from various activities about The Gingerbread Boy.

At first, the book was simply intended to be used as another story with interesting variants for the children to hear and read and then compare and contrast. Thus, the Galdone version of the story was read several different times, as well as The Runaway Pancake and
Journey-cake Hol. An early piece of writing which came from these discussions was a retelling of the story.

The children were interested in the story and the teacher and researcher were looking for experiences which could lead to writing, and so it was decided to go through the process of making gingerbread boys with the class. Mrs. Dee worked with small groups around the reading table in mixing the dough one day and cutting out the cookies on the next. On the second day while children were not cutting out cookies they worked with the researcher in a shared writing activity which described how we had made the gingerbread boys.

Mrs. Dee had made arrangements to bake the cookies in the teachers' lounge, but she had also made plans of another sort, having connived to lead the children on a merry chase of their own. When a small group of children were sent to pick up the baked cookies they found the oven empty and a message left behind: "I have run away from the little old man, and I can run away from you, I can, I can. Before I leave I'd better check out at the office." The children burst excitedly back into the room and read the message to the class, and immediately the children lined up to head to the office in hot pursuit.

Of course, here they found another message directing them to the nurse's office, and on they went, making six
different stops around the school, each time finding new messages which the children took turns reading. Following the pattern of the book, the message was gradually accumulating. By the end of the escapade the children were all chanting together:

I've run away from the little old man.
I've run away from the little old woman.
I've run away from a cow.
I've run away from a horse.
I've run away from the children in Room 108
And I can run away from you too, Mrs. Dee,
    I can, I can!
I'm gone. Go back to the room and make cupcakes!

Of course, when they returned to their room the children discovered that the gingerbread boys had miraculously reappeared and they ate them quickly "before they got away again."

This activity spawned another writing activity in which the children wrote their own versions of "The Gingerbread Boy" based on the experiences of their cookies around the school. The various experiences and writing projects which were involved in the Gingerbread Boy activities are one example of the ways in which writing served a variety of purposes during Phase IV.

**Shared Writing**

At several points during Phase IV Mrs. Dee made use of a technique that she had seen demonstrated during a Reading Recovery training session. This was Shared
Writing, in which the teacher and a small group of students worked together to compose a text. The teacher led the children in generating ideas, and in discussing those ideas and how they might best be expressed in writing. When they agreed on a phrase or a sentence, the teacher transcribed the text as the children watched. As she wrote the teacher often made explicit what she was doing (for example, "Now I need to put quotation marks here because she's saying it").

The following excerpt illustrates shared writing in action:

After the children were well along on their individual projects Mrs. Dee asked the smaller group of 6 or 7 children who had said they didn't like bus rides to the front rug. (This is part of their work with Crews' School Bus). The group includes April, Jenny, Tim, Connie, and Joyce. Mrs. Dee writes the words 'Don't Like' on the top of a piece of chart paper and then invites the children to brainstorm what they don't like about bus rides. As they generate ideas she records them: too much noise, ice-wreck, hitting on bus, bumps the curb, you might bump your head, it goes on bumps, kids climb all over, kids might fall, the kids are naughty and bad, kids don't talk nice. As they generate these ideas Mrs. Dee serves as the editor, deciding how to summarize them on the chart paper, but often she asks, "Is that what you mean? Then she asks for ideas on how they can start their story. Different children make suggestions and Mrs. Dee always works to get group consensus before writing a sentence in the story. If there is more than one idea suggested at a given time, there is a vote and majority rules. They produce the following story which Mrs. Dee records for
them as they all kneel around the chart paper on the front rug:

It is not fun to ride on a bus. Sometimes the kids don't talk nice. The kids on the bus are crazy. They make lots and lots and lots of noise. Sometimes they throw paper airplanes. The bus might hit the curb and you will fly up and hit the seat. The bus might catch on fire and you have to go out the emergency door. The ice is dangerous. If the bus hits the ice it might wreck.

After creating this cautionary tale of the dangers of bus riding, Mrs. Dee asks the children what their title should be. Joyce suggests 'Buses are Dangerous' and Jenny wants 'I don't Like Buses.' Mrs. Dee asks, "Well should it be 'I'? A whole bunch of us wrote it." The group settles on "We Don't Like to Ride a Bus." The children have a real sense of ownership of this story and they all want to sign their names at the end. Mrs. Dee gives them a marker and while some are signing she puts the pages up on the board and gets other children going on reading the first page out loud together. When everyone has ceremoniously signed first name and last initial at the bottom Mrs. Dee gets them all to line up in front of the story which is now taped up on the board. She manipulates the pointer as the children read their story.

getField notes, 3/18/86)

Shared Writing is reminiscent of the Group Writing seen in Phase I, but there are important differences which are evident in this excerpt. Though children suggested ideas in Group Writing, their primary task was to copy from the board in a handwriting exercise. Often this text was never read again except by the teacher. In Shared Writing the children were involved in composing
and revising texts and then in shared readings of those texts. Further, in Group Writing the emphasis was on the surface features of the text - letter formation, spelling, use of punctuation and the like. In Shared Writing, though the teacher might make some explicit references to surface structures and conventions of print, the emphasis was on working together to generate a meaningful and well phrased text. The end result was something the children felt ownership over and cared about, whereas in Group Writing most of the children seemed to regard the finished product as a school task.

As such, Shared Writing serves as a symbol of many of the literacy learning activities planned and implemented in this classroom during Phase IV.

**Phase 5: Consolidation (April and May)**

After the Spring break the data collection schedule and the role of the researcher in the classroom changed considerably. The bulk of the data collection was completed, but in order to gain a sense of the ways in which the literacy program in this classroom evolved over the course of an entire school year, the researcher continued to remain in contact with the teacher and the children. Several times during Phase IV Mrs. Dee suggested that she had found the collaboration with the
researcher useful as a resource for ideas, materials and encouragement. For example,

I was teetering on the fence, you know, but you've been there to kind of show me, well, this is how you do this, and this is how you can do that . . . and it was just that extra little bit of a push that I needed to get, and the resource that you've had with the big books has been super too.  
(interview, 3/20/86)

The researcher was interested in what Mrs. Dee took away from the collaboration, and how she would continue to shape the classroom literacy program after his active support was removed.

Observations were made seven times over the last nine weeks of school. During this field work the researcher resumed the role of moderate participation, talking casually with children and the teacher, but not taking any part in planning or implementing literacy learning with the children.

As indicated in the heading for this phase, some areas of the curriculum continued much as they had in Phase IV. Work with children's literature continued and was broadened and deepened through an intensive study of the books of Donald Crews, an author and illustrator that the children had the opportunity to meet in May. However, in other literacy events, and most notably in Shared Writing, there was some reversion to earlier
priorities and ways of doing things.

**Continued Literacy Events**

Arrival and the first twenty minutes of school continued to provide wide opportunities for independent and peer-shared reading of library books, classroom and special collection books, big books, class-made books, basal readers and wall charts. As before, Mrs. Dee conducted classroom business during this time, but she always provided ten or fifteen minutes which was devoted exclusively to reading and interacting around books.

Mrs. Dee made an effort to continue to supplement the classroom collection with special collections of books. Throughout the month of April, she flooded the room with all of the works of Donald Crews. In May she brought in another special collection of library books which highlighted the work of several authors, including Eric Carle, Pat Hutchins and Ann Jonas.

During Phase V, Storytime continued as the centerpiece of the literacy learning program. However, perhaps because of the difficulty in securing big books, Storytime during this phase involved less shared reading. It looked more like the Storytimes observed in the first three phases of the school year, including the reading of several poems and a story or two, with children joining
in often and as they wanted to. Another way in which Mrs. Dee returned to previous practice in Storytime was that she sometimes allowed the children to select the books that she read aloud. As a result the quality of the read-aloud books was uneven.

Still, Mrs. Dee also made her own careful selections of books and authors she thought the children would enjoy and should know about. Frequently she returned to folk tales and nursery rhymes, often having children dramatize them as well as writing about them. One particular favorite of the children was *The Great Big Enormous Turnip* which Mrs. Dee had been able to borrow in big book form. Another favorite was *The Three Billy Goats Gruff*. After several readings Mrs. Dee led the children in a jointly created retelling which the children used as the script for a puppet show. The Donald Crews books were read and reread and discussed in Storytime, and resulted in numerous activities which will be described below. In May, the children made close observations of several of the books of Eric Carle and compared the styles of illustration and media used by Carle and those used by Crews.

The individual jobs assigned during Reading Worktime were similar to those observed earlier. After a brief hiatus in early April, the children resumed writing in
their journals on a daily basis and Mrs. Dee continued to respond to their messages at their request. As in phase IV, the other jobs often involved stories and texts that emerged from the literature they were hearing, reading, discussing and often dramatizing. The children were also assigned some more functional kinds of writing, such as the creation of bicycle safety posters for display in the halls around the school.

In early April, Mrs. Dee resumed work with the reading groups. On the researcher's first visit after the Spring break Mrs. Dee explained that, "I'm getting the word from up there (pointing to the principal's office) that I really have to dig in and see what these kids can really do in terms of what Ginn wants them to do" (field notes, 4/9/86). Generally, Mrs. Dee met with reading groups three days a week and concentrated more on small and large group activities on the other days.

Two basic activities were observed in the reading groups that met during the observation days. Children either read orally from the basals or worked on taking the required subtests and unit tests for the basal series. Often Mrs. Dee worked closely with individuals or small groups of children, administering the tests and then immediately giving the children feedback and further instruction in whatever seemed necessary. Thus, in a
sense Mrs. Dee was teaching the children to take the
tests as much she was teaching them various skills or
concepts.

This then, was the classroom literacy learning
program in Phase V. It was nicely summarized by Mrs. Dee
in an interview that took place during this phase:

What I basically have done is dedicate
the biggest part of the morning to
shared working together: stories, poems, shared writing, retelling of
a story, acting out nursery rhymes
- this type of thing, and then I put
the children to work on some kind of
a literature task, not a phonetic task
or a workbook task, and then as I can
I meet with reading groups.
(interview, 4/17/86)

Donald Crews: The Author Unit

There was one key way in which Mrs. Dee expanded
upon and deepened the collaborative efforts of Phase IV
and this was a month long unit on the books of Donald
Crews. The unit was partially a result of Mrs. Dee's
involvement in Reading Recovery and the fact that in
early May Mr. Crews was scheduled to conduct a program
for all of the children in Reading Recovery classrooms.
All of the Reading Recovery teachers were sent a thick
packet with information on Crews and ideas on ways in
which his books could be extended. They were also asked
to work with their class in preparing some sort of a gift
to honor the illustrator. Thus, once again Mrs. Dee had
an outside force which moved her in this direction and from which she could draw ideas.

During the month of April Mrs. Dee and Miss Morris worked with various books by Crews and led the children in a number of different activities related to the books. They gathered as many of his books as they could find in the local and school libraries, and these were read and reread several times and available for the children to peruse on their own as well. Certain books were selected for special emphasis and for extension activities which would take the children back into the books and then off in new directions.

Several activities emerged from School Bus. One activity which took place in March has already been described; that is, the shared writing in small groups by children who were divided according to whether or not they liked riding on the bus. A few days later the children made their own school buses using colored construction paper which was cut and pasted together, and then they wrote descriptive stories about their buses based on the text from the Crews book: Were they empty or full? Was it on the parking lot or was it stopped in front of the school? etc. The stories were put on the word processor and printed out by Mrs. Dee, and then the buses and accompanying stories were glued in an appropriate place
on a huge mural that covered the entire front chalkboard. The children spent several days adding scenery to the mural, including fast food restaurants and a county fair.

Another activity relating to School Bus involved the children in creating new verses for "The Driver on the Bus." They sang the complete song while pantomiming a bus ride by sitting in neat rows of chairs on the front rug.

Using the book Carousel as a starting point, Mrs. Dee constructed a carousel as another gift for the author. The children had posed individually for a photograph while holding onto the flagpole, and then they had consulted the illustrations in the book in order to get ideas on how to design a carousel horse. Mrs. Dee and her husband put the carousel together. They mounted the photographs of the children and their horses with straws around a small wooden spool and added a small motor and taped calliope music in order to create a small working carousel filled with the children in room 108.

Eventually the children collaborated on a Shared Writing activity which produced the following text to accompany their carousel:

Carousel

The kids are on the horses. The music is ready to begin. And the carousel starts to go around and we go up and down. The carousel is going a little bit faster. Now it is going fast. Soon the carousel will be slowing down. It will stop. The kids will get off. Now the carousel is empty.
Not surprisingly, when several children took a survey of their classmate's favorite book by Crews on the day before the assembly, *Carousel* was the one chosen by the most children. Of course, the bus trip to another school where the assembly was held and the experience of performing for and speaking with Mr. Crews provided other opportunities for writing about personal and shared experiences.

Activities like these provided the children with real reasons to write and real reasons to revisit books. They also provided opportunities for a great deal of language as the children worked together and with their peers and the teacher on the murals. The projects required the children to plan and work together and to sustain an effort on a group project over the course of several days rather than the usual one-time projects previously observed.

The Exception: Shared Writing

The general picture of the classroom literacy learning program during Phase V was one of continued broadening and consolidation, especially in the use of children's literature as a springboard for discussion, further reading and writing. However, there was one literacy event in which there seemed to be a regression
to earlier concerns and priorities and an earlier way of doing things. This was the Shared Writing.

In contrast to the Shared Writing observed during the previous phase, several instances of Shared Writing observed during Phase V were not unlike Group Writing when one probed beneath the surface. As in the earlier Group Writing scenes, these literacy events required the children to generate ideas from a certain work of literature. In this case, they worked on a detailed and lengthy summary of *Curious George Flies a Kite*, which extended over six chapters and two weeks. Each day as they resumed their summary Mrs. Dee would remind them where they were in the story and ask for their ideas on how to continue retelling the story. As in the group story Mrs. Dee selected and made editorial suggestions about their ideas and then recorded them on the chalkboard.

As she recorded the sentences Mrs. Dee asked, "Who can help me with this word?" and various children volunteered the spelling. Due to the children's progress, there was little of the laborious stretching out of words and using spaces for letters. Instead children simply dictated the letters and Mrs. Dee transcribed them.
However, as she had in Group Writing, Mrs. Dee often made explicit points about the surface structures of the written language as she recorded the sentences (e.g. "Now why did I put a capital G on George?"; "Now look, a sentence is not a line. This is a word and this is a word . . . and if I put all of those together I make a . . . . that's right, a sentence.") (field notes, 4/9/86)

Another indication of a move back to earlier priorities and ways of doing things was the fact that the story was written on the special lines which indicated that neatness was a priority, and then copied by the children. This emphasis on neatness and form, which detracts from the emphasis on meaning evident in Shared Writing, is obvious in comments made by Mrs. Dee as the children began to copy chapter one:

I want to see the most beautiful writing you know how to do. You don't have to worry about the spelling this time, so let's worry about making gorgeous letters. (field notes, 4/9/86)

The following week the children were working on another chapter and Mrs. Dee made the following comments to individuals and the group:

Don't forget your finger spaces in between those words . . . Oh, look at this paper (she holds Taundria's paper up). Isn't that beautiful writing? . . . Tim, that's nice writing too. . . Whoa, Kelly, that's
terrible writing. Turn it over and start again. (field notes, 4/16/86)

One difference between the Group Writing and this writing was that the children were writing these chapters every day into a little book which Mrs. Dee had made by sewing four pieces of heavy lined white paper onto a construction paper cover. They were planning to take the books home, and thus there was a natural audience for the writing and for reading it at home.

This brief overview of the classroom literacy program indicates that many of the teacher's priorities and many aspects of the literacy learning curriculum remained in place and were consolidated as the teacher continued to work on her own for the remainder of the year. Certain activities from Phase IV such as extensive work with big books were downplayed due to the lack of materials more than any lack of desire to use them on the part of the teacher. Conflicts over the use of the basal reading series which had been a major source of tension all year, were only partially resolved by slotting that work into particular days of the week. In the end the teacher compromised by going along with systemic pressures, but also teaching children to "play the game as well." In certain areas of the literacy program, such as Shared Writing, old biases such as a concern for neatness and accuracy resurfaced.
Trends in Teacher and Classroom Change

This detailed account of the evolution of the literacy learning program in this classroom reveals that there were many changes in the ways in which reading and writing was taught and carried out over the course of the year. As the year progressed certain new activities became a daily part of the curriculum and other activities disappeared. Within certain literacy events such as Journal Writing, there was a great deal of change across the year.

Some of these changes may be attributed to the growing proficiency, skill and enthusiasm with which the children were able to participate in these literacy events towards the end of the year. For example, it is unlikely that the children would have been able to examine and enjoy the books of Donald Crews with such breadth and depth had they not had many other experiences in hearing, reading, looking at and talking about other picture books earlier in the year. In the same way, the text which resulted from the collaboration of the teacher and children in the "Shared Writing" retelling of Curious George Flies a Kite was much more complex and lengthy than those that the group could have produced in Group Writing in September, though the interactional patterns were similar in both events.
Another way of explaining these changes is to look at the ways in which Mrs. Dee, the teacher who planned and guided these literacy events, was herself changing in the ways in which she thought about literacy learning. The first section of this chapter presented data on changes in Mrs. Dee's orientation to the reading process and classroom practice in the year previous to the study. The preceding discussion of the five phases of the classroom literacy program gave a detailed account of the ways in which the classroom literacy program unfolded during the year of observation. The concluding section of this chapter will provide a discussion of the general trends observed in teacher and classroom change.

Table 7 provides a comparison of Mrs. Dee's scores on the Teacher Orientation to the Reading Process from the beginning of the first year of her involvement in Reading Recovery to June, 1986 when the present study concluded. A comparison of the scores over the two school years reveals that during the summer of 1985 during which she was involved in graduate courses in Children's Literature and Language Arts, Mrs. Dee continued to make moves in the direction of the whole language orientation.
Table 7. Change in TORP Scores.

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<td>Phonics (0-65)</td>
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Her total score of 111 in June, 1986 was slightly lower than her total score at the beginning of the school year, but it was still within the range of the whole language orientation. It should be noted that the last instance of the administration of the TORP (June, 1986) was altered in that Mrs. Dee was asked to think aloud into a tape recorder as she completed the instrument. The effect of this new element is unknown.

In examining the data collected during the study it is possible to extract three general trends in the changes observed in the teacher's belief system and in the classroom literacy program: 1) the increasing utilization of real experiences with reading and writing rather than structured instructional materials, 2) an increased flexibility in the allocation of resources and 3) a steady move toward the empowerment of children.
Real Experiences with Reading and Writing

Perhaps the most obvious and pervasive trend observed in the study was the way in which the teacher placed an increasing reliance on a rich variety of genuine experiences with reading and writing and less upon the structured instructional materials provided by her school system.

Mrs. Dee spoke several times of the dramatic changes in the ways that she planned and implemented literacy instruction. In a conference presentation in which she spoke of the impact of involvement in Reading Recovery on her teaching, she described the ways in which she used to teach reading:

A student teacher that I had a few years ago happened to come into our classroom one afternoon and she looked at my lesson plans, and she said, "This doesn't look like it did two years ago. I remember how you used to sit here every Thursday afternoon and make out your lesson plans for the next week with page numbers and all." I no longer teach those individual skills. I do not have to fill my plan book with page numbers. At that time the teacher's manual was my Bible. If they suggested that I spend two or three days on an isolated skill, I did just that, and I found that my hands were frequently glued to the ditto machine.

(field notes, 5/9/86)

During the year previous to the study Mrs. Dee had made some moves away from this complete reliance on the basal series and worksheets, but it was still an important
aspect of her reading program.

In September, Mrs. Dee's approach to literacy learning consisted primarily of instruction on a sequence of skills which took place in teacher-directed events such as ability-based reading groups and group writing experiences and in independent work on dittos and worksheets.

Mrs. Dee became frustrated when children missed school and the planned instructional program and she told the children, "Learning is like a ladder. We have to be in school every single day so we can climb from ladder step to ladder step" (field notes, 9/25/85). All of these are indications that although she had serious reservations about the basal reading program, she continued to hold a skill-oriented orientation to instruction in literacy. Further evidence comes from the frequency with which Mrs. Dee expressed her frustration and concern over students who didn't have the "tools to dig out words."

However, with the exception of the dramatic shift back to a skills focus in January, as the study progressed, Mrs. Dee continued to move away from the traditional skill-oriented approach to teaching. She evidenced an increasing belief in the potential for literacy learning inherent in activities and experiences
which encouraged and allowed children to make use of reading and writing for their own purposes and in ways which were functional and meaningful for them.

Over the summer Mrs. Dee and her team teacher had worked hard to build the classroom book collection up to about 400 titles, and in contrast to previous years, Storytime was a daily event. In September, real books were read mostly in the free time following skills work, but soon they began to appear in reading group as well. Further, Mrs. Dee gave her children steadily increasing opportunities to select books and to read independently or with their peers.

A similar progression was observed in the writing that was expected and required in the classroom. Group Writing, with its requirement for copying from the board and emphasis on convention and handwriting soon gave way to writing activities which allowed children to generate their own messages and forms and emphasized the meanings intended by the writer. As the year progressed, writing emerged from shared experiences in the classroom, from the literature that was read, heard and discussed and from the need and desire to convey messages.

During the spring a great deal of the classroom instruction on reading and writing took place during shared reading and writing. Another important time of
instruction was Reading Worktime where children worked individually or with peers while Mrs. Dee circulated around the room listening, observing and talking with individuals and small groups.

Towards the end of the study Mrs. Dee discussed her own perceptions of the changes in the ways she organized the literacy program:

At the beginning of the year I was kind of torn between following the Ginn and following the whole language approach. Now I basically tolerate Ginn, but I've gone more to the whole language approach. You know: reading and shared writing letting the children do a lot of discussing and developing their own language, whether they discuss with me or whether they share books with one another. A lot of good critical thinking about good literature, and using big books. . . In September I felt it was mandatory to meet with every single group every day. Now I feel if we go through reading a story and do some kind of shared writing together - if we do this as a group, they've had one reading lesson already, so then if I only meet with two or three groups, that's perfectly all right. (Interview, 4/17/86)

Despite this progression away from the traditional skills approach which is confirmed through observation as well as interviews with Mrs. Dee's colleagues, the issue of the place of skill instruction was not totally resolved by the end of the school year and the study. As
she said above, Mrs. Dee managed to "tolerate Ginn" and she continued to make use of the readers, worksheets and tests, though she often expressed her dissatisfaction with them. Another discordant note was struck by the reappearance in May of copying and an emphasis on neatness and convention in the group writing about Curious George Flies a Kite. However, these are exceptions to the rule.

Flexibility in the Allocation of Resources

A second trend concerns the ways in which this teacher made use of the resources of time, materials and space that were available to her. In this regard, there was a noticeable increase in flexibility and adaptation in order to accommodate the needs and interests of the children.

This was an important change for a teacher like Mrs. Dee who was well known for being extremely orderly and efficient and for managing her classroom in the same way. Miss Morris, her team teacher, described her this way:

At the beginning of our first year of team teaching, she just didn't leave anything not totally planned out. She was an outstanding classroom teacher, but very controlled, and very by-the-book.

(interview, 5/1/86)

Especially in the first few months of the school year, this concern for order and control was apparent in the
emphasis on listening, and on establishing routines for participation in classroom activities and events.

Reading groups were highly structured and children were expected to work quietly and individually on their seatwork tasks. When journals were introduced, there was a definite framework within which children were expected to operate, and though there was increasing freedom in the choice of a topic, the three part structure continued throughout much of the year.

As the year progressed, however, Mrs. Dee began to depart from her conventional ways of doing things in order to respond to the needs and interests of the children. As she did so, she became more flexible in the ways that she made use of materials in the classroom. Rather than using only basal readers in reading group, she sometimes asked children to bring a book of their choice from the classroom collection. In turn, children were allowed to use the current basal readers at any level, as well as trade books of their choice, in independent or peer-shared reading. Mrs. Dee introduced new and different kinds of literacy materials to the children, including cards and letters, song charts, and big books.

Mrs. Dee also became more flexible in her use of space. In December the children's desks were moved from
the double U-shaped configuration which facilitated large group instruction and into clusters which encouraged and enabled children to work collaboratively. In March, when reading groups were temporarily discontinued, Mrs. Dee moved the reading table over against the wall to allow more space for individual and small group work on the front rug. Changes like these communicated the message to the children that they were allowed to talk and read and write whereever that work could be carried out most conveniently rather than always being required to be at their desks.

It will be clear from the discussion of the phases that Mrs. Dee also made flexible use of her time. As the children became involved and excited about the reading they were sharing during Arrival, Mrs. Dee began to delay the classroom business and then gave them more time for independent and shared reading before Storytime. Reading Worktime, which in the fall was very structured by the reading groups and assigned morning tasks, became more flexible and open after February as Mrs. Dee allowed the children to work on different tasks involving reading and writing.

As she indicated in the comments quoted above, Mrs. Dee began to feel less bound to follow the sequence of lessons and activities provided for her in the teacher's
manual or the school's course of study. Rather than planning and carrying out a detailed program of instruction for the week, she kept certain goals and priorities in mind, but then she allowed the children to guide her. The following quotes from interviews indicate these new practices:

I find myself not preplanning lessons as much, but listening more to what the children are talking about and keying in on teaching them right there and then when they bring it up. I do more teaching on the spur of the moment versus sitting here and saying, "Well, we have to teach them the -ing whether they need it or not."
(interview, 3/20/86)

In September every single thing that I was going to cover was written in my lesson plans. Now what happens in a day is quite frequently different from what I have mentally planned because I often just spontaneously pick up on something that the children want to talk about or a need they seem to have.
(interview, 4/17/86)

One of the reasons that Mrs. Dee gave for moving towards more reading and writing activities which were shared group experiences stemming from literature, was the freedom that it gave her to meet individual children at their point of interest, ability and need. In response to a question in the final interview about what she regarded as the most important thing in helping children to be successful readers and writers, Mrs. Dee replied:
Tickling their enthusiasm and thoughts and helping them to meet with success at whatever level they're at. In this type of thing that we're doing now (i.e. shared writing and reading), you accept from one child whatever his capabilities are. It's not dead wrong or right like a ditto paper is. Literature allows for more space, and more variability, and I like this because I feel that self-image is a very, very important thing in learning. (Interview, 4/17/86)

Mrs. Dee's comment leads to speculation that this new flexibility was a natural step for Mrs. Dee given the fact that one of the beliefs expressed most consistently throughout the data is the importance of positive self concept to children and their learning.

Empowering Children

The third unifying thread in the data is the theme was that of turning decision-making power and the control of literacy events over to the children.

As one would expect, in the early months of the school year a good deal of time was spent on establishing routines for classroom management and participation in classroom activities and literacy events. Almost all of the literacy events observed in the classroom were directed by the teacher. She was at the center of Calendar, Storytime, Group Writing, and Reading Group, and thus she determined who did what, with whom, and when
they did it. She selected the books they read and the topics they wrote about.

Increasingly Mrs. Dee turned the power of decision making and self-determination over to the children. By late October they were selecting their own books and keeping certain favorites in their desks. They were given increasing amounts of time in activities such as independent and peer-shared reading where they had opportunities to make decisions about how to make use of their time, what books to read and whether or not they wanted to read with a friend.

In December Mrs. Dee allowed children the freedom to choose what they wanted to write about because "I felt I was narrowing them to much in what I was asking them to write." In that same month there were daily assignments such as the letters to the Christmas Elf in which children could choose whether or not they wanted to participate. Again, Mrs. Dee explained her reasons: "When you mandate that something has to be done, it just shrinks."

Observations through the course of the year also revealed that Mrs. Dee gradually provided the children with more opportunities to interact and collaborate with their peers. Children were encouraged to read together, and to rely on one another as a source of information as
they were writing. Whether they were working together in reading or writing, in painting murals or creating illustrations for a big book, children had natural opportunities and real reasons to talk, to negotiate and to work through differences.

Two anecdotes which were recounted by Mrs. Dee illustrate the fact that she valued the learning that children could accomplish together as much as she valued her own work with children:

I called Joyce over for reading group, and she said, "I was just sharing a story with Carlos. I was reading to him." So I said, "Well, why don't you go right back over and read to Carlos and we'll take care of this tomorrow," because I thought she needs the opportunity to work with other kids. (interview, 2/13/86)

You know I wanted to jump all over Joe because I knew in the length of time he'd had that he could not have done his journal the way I want it done. Two years ago I'd have gone after him and taken him to the cleaners for not having finished his work. But I thought to myself, He's doing shared reading with Scott. That's lots more valuable than pushing a pencil over paper, so I let it go. (interview, 3/20/86)

Mrs. Dee reported that she saw positive results that stemmed from this new emphasis on collaboration between herself and the children and among the children:

They're more excited about reading than any other classes that I've had. And they're participating - they're taking
a more active part in their own learning. Instead of being passive and having everything dictated to them, they know that they have input every day. (interview, 4/17/86)

Summary

Under the assumption that the teacher played a crucial role in shaping the classroom context for literacy learning, the chapter commenced with a description of the teacher, her personal history of literacy learning, professional experience and the change observed during her first year of participation in Reading Recovery.

The next section described the ways in which Mrs. Dee chose to make use of the available resources of space, materials and time during the year of the study. A broad description of the activities which structured the morning hours was followed by a detailed chronicle of the shifting and evolving literacy events which were observed at different stages throughout the year.

Five phases of the classroom literacy program were identified. Phase I, "New Beginnings," was characterized by many all-group activities which were directed by the teacher and involved explicit instruction in being a student in this classroom, as well as in becoming a reader and writer. In Phase II, "Expanding Opportunities," there was a general opening up and new
freedom in literacy learning. Activities such as peer-shared reading and journals were introduced which allowed children to read and write for their own purposes. January saw the onset of Phase III, "Retreat to the Familiar," in which the pressures of the teacher's peers and the basal reading system were influential in moving her back to her earlier, more skills-oriented literacy program. In Phase IV, "Collaboration," Mrs. Dee and the researcher collaborated to plan and implement the literacy program. During this Phase, events involving a great deal of work with children's literature and opportunities to read and write collaboratively with peers were emphasized. Finally, in Phase V, "Consolidation," the teacher continued many of the literacy activities initiated in the collaboration and initiated an in-depth study of an author and his books.

Three trends were noted in the teacher's changing belief system and classroom practice: 1) an increasing utilization of real experiences with reading and writing rather than structured instructional materials, 2) an increased flexibility in the allocation of resources, and 3) a steady move toward the empowerment of children.
CHAPTER FIVE
ANALYSIS OF CHILDREN'S RESPONSES TO LITERACY LEARNING CONTEXTS

In the previous chapter data was presented on the teacher's theoretical framework and the ways that she allocated the available resources of space, materials and time in the classroom. Changes were noted in the ways that she thought about, organized and carried out literacy instruction throughout the year.

This chapter focuses on six children in this classroom and the ways in which they made sense of shifting classroom literacy events. These analyses are inferred from a close examination of the ways in which they interacted with the teacher and their peers during these literacy events, the ways they talked about reading and writing and the written texts that they produced.

First, the six children will be introduced and compared as a group. However, because they often responded in unique and individual ways to the shifts in literacy instruction, individual portraits of each of the children will also be presented. This will be followed by discussion of general patterns of response to the changing literacy contexts and an exploration of patterns
A Group Portrait

From the ten original subjects observed during the study, six children were selected for in-depth analysis because they represented a range of achievement levels within the class. Tim, Scott and Kelly were among the lowest readers and writers in the class in September and they participated in daily Reading Recovery lessons through much of the school year. In contrast, Taundria, Jenny and Chrissy represented the upper range of readers and writers in the classroom.

Before describing these children as individuals, it is useful to look at them as a group in September and again towards the end of the school year in order to gain a sense of how they compared in their proficiency in carrying out literacy tasks.

The Diagnostic Survey

One way of describing the literacy knowledge of these six children and capturing their growth over the course of the school year is to compare their individual scores on the Clay Diagnostic Survey, administered in late March. These scores are reported in tables 8 and 9 below.
Table 8. Results of September Diagnostic Survey.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Tim</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kelly</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Scott</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jenny</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>53</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chrissy</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Taundria</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>53</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>26</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Concepts About Print Test

Table 9. Results of March Diagnostic Survey.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
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<th></th>
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<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Tim</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>54</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>62</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kelly</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>51</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Scott</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>54</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>53</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jenny</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>54</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>48</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chrissy</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>54</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>56</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Taundria</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>54</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>62</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

There is an obvious "ceiling effect" on the results of three of the March tests: Letter Identification, Word
Test and Dictation Test. These tests have top scores of 54, 15 and 37 respectively.

Despite the limitations of the testing instrument, it is interesting to note the gains made by Tim and Scott, two of the low children. An examination of the scores on the two Surveys indicate that the differences between the high children and these two "low" ones were much less obvious in the spring testing. Due to tremendous personal efforts as well as involvement in Reading Recovery, Tim and Scott made accelerated progress during the year.

They equalled the scores of their higher achieving peers on three of the tests: Letter Identification, Word Test and Dictation and their Concepts About Print scores are very close to those of the high children. Even more impressive is their performance on the Writing Vocabulary where Tim equalled or surpassed all of the high girls and Scott scored within the same range as his higher peers. In fact, both boys were considered "recovered" and withdrawn from daily Reading Recovery lessons in March shortly after this test was given.

Kelly did not fare so well. Her performance in March was considerably below that of the other five children. Though her scores on the Letter Identification and
Concepts About Print tests were within the same range as her peers, the significantly lower scores in the other four tests reveal her continued struggle with reading and writing tasks.

The March text reading scores of the six children demonstrate that there continued to be a range in their ability to deal with text. The text reading score is the level at which the children were able to read with a 90% accuracy or above. The following table indicates the relationship of these March reading levels to the Ginn Reading Series in which the children were instructed:

Table 10. Relationship of Text Reading Level to Ginn Series.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Child</th>
<th>Test Level</th>
<th>Ginn Level</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Kelly</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>first pre-primer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tim</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>first grade reader</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Scott</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>first grade reader</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jenny</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>second grade reader (1)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chrissy</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>second grade reader (1)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Taundria</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>second grade reader (2)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Kelly continued in March to read below grade level, while Scott and Tim are right on grade level and the three high
children are reading at several steps above grade level.

Another way to look at the children as a group is to examine writing samples collected during the course of the year. The writing samples described below were collected in writing interviews in September and December. Journal entries were used for an end of the year sample.

**September Writing Interview**

At the beginning of each of the interviews the children were asked to "Show me what you can write" and allowed to select blank or lined paper and a writing instrument (pen, pencil or markers). The ways in which the six target children responded to this writing context provides an indication of the differences in their abilities at this point in the year. It also offers hints about the individual children and their particular strategies and approaches which will be elaborated further in the individual portraits below. Of course, each of them produced a written text. However, they produced very different texts and arrived at these texts in unique ways. Most of the children interpreted the task as a request for an inventory of their known words.
The one exception was Jenny, who spent much of her time creating an elaborate illustration and then quickly and effortlessly wrote her name and a brief sentence.

cat  glenda  cheniqau
qi ana  earl  michael
sandy  nikki  bj
Ben  Sankey  ade  and
Talavejn  things
Taundria responded by writing fourteen words, eleven of them being names of various family members and friends. Though she showed some inconsistency in her use of the lines in writing capital and lower case letters, Taundria demonstrated a willingness to make use of invented spellings on the last two words (television and things) telling me afterwards, "I just guessed and stretched it out."

Figure 7. Chrissy's September Writing Interview.

Chrissy responded by diligently setting down a list of words which she read back as follows: busy, you, at, is, it, for, me, love, are, Tina, Joe, it. She wrote these words in three waves of effort, and placed a period after each group of words, indicating an exploration of the conventions of print.

Figure 8. Tim's September Writing Interview.
Tim's work in the first interview revealed his limited text writing strategies at this point in the year. After writing his full name, Tim informed the researcher, "This one's a hard one that you can't read" and then wrote a word-like cluster of letters. (It is worth noting that all but one of the letters used in the second line are drawn from Tim's name) When he was asked to read what he had written, Tim responded by shrugging and then reciting the letters in sequence. Tim responded in the best way he could to the researcher's request to write, but he was aware that he has fallen short of the mark. A similar instance occurred in the classroom when Tim was asked by the researcher to read a text with similarly invented "words." Tim's response was, "I can't read that! I was just making letters" (9/25/86).

Figure 9. Kelly's September Writing Interview.

Kelly showed a similarly limited range of writing strategies. With no neighbor or chalkboard to provide her
with a copy, Kelly coped by copying the brand name from the box of Crayola Markers. She then glanced around the room until her gaze fell on a book entitled In Out, and then she wrote the cluster of letters on the second line. She read her text back as "crayon box."

*Figure 10. Scott's October Writing Interview.*

Of the low children, Scott's text is the most impressive, perhaps reflecting the fact that his interview was conducted several weeks after the other children's for various logistic reasons. Scott's first response to my request to "Show me what you can write" was to carefully draw a figure which he "read" as "My mom." Then without a word he proceeded to draw the clock. Clearly, for Scott the line between writing and
drawing is blurred. Scott produced the four words after the question was rephrased, "Are there any words that you can write?" Later in the interview, after telling me that his Mother wrote in cursive and that he could as well, Scott added the cursive version of his name. This influence of work with his parents at home was characteristic of Scott's work throughout the year.

The samples from the first writing interview illustrate the fact that early in the year and before their involvement in Reading Recovery and various classroom activities, the low children had an extremely limited repertoire of known words and strategies for writing texts when compared to the high children.

**December Writing Interviews**

The December writing interviews showed considerable growth in all six of the children. They also demonstrate the influence of classroom and Reading Recovery instruction. With the exception of Tim, all of the children wrote stories rather than word lists, most likely a result of the emphasis in the classroom on reading and writing stories.
Figure 11. Taundria's December Writing Interview.

Taundria wrote a story from her own experience which, as in her first interview, related to her family. The piece is very similar to her journal entries, and was written very quickly and with little thought or apparent effort.

Figure 12. Chrissy's December Writing Interview.

Chrissy's story showed the influence of several books and activities which she had encountered in the classroom. During the first two months of school the children had done a unit on bears with Miss Morris and both teachers had read many different stories involving
bears. Several different versions of "The Three Bears" had been read aloud and discussed and the children had dramatized the story numerous times. While the first line seems to be drawn from "The Three Bears," the rest of the story has obvious links to the book, *Are You My Mother?* which had been read aloud in Storytime and was often revisited independently by the children in room 108. Chrissy read the last two lines this way: "Are you my mom? No! If you are not my mom, you are a bird." In these lines, her story also hints at a writing technique which she used with great consistency throughout the year. That is, the use of dialogue to fill out a text.

![Figure 13. Jenny's December Writing Interview](image)

Jenny's December text revealed her strong sense of humor, her joy in playing with language and her
individuality. She started out with her name and then a series of rhyming words, which was not surprisingly since these were a frequent element in the books read aloud by Mrs. Dee. However, Jenny went on to use those words in a clever and well-formed story, involving a funny twist on *Cat on the Mat* which was available in the classroom library. Jenny also made consistent use of a number of invented spellings (SCWHT/squished; WUS/was; WUST/wasn't).

![Handwritten text](image)

Figure 14. Tim's December Writing Interview.

As mentioned above, Tim was the only child who wrote a word list rather than a story. However, the text demonstrates Tim's increased independence and growing repertoire of words. Consistent with classroom observation, Tim knew what he knew, recorded it
efficiently and quickly and then stopped, unwilling to take any risks on words of which he wasn't confident.

Figure 15. Kelly's December Writing Interview.

Kelly made a great effort in the December interview. Her piece is very much like the ones she wrote frequently in Reading Recovery and in her journal. She read the sentences as follows: "I like my Christmas. I see my sister. I like my brother." Note that Kelly's text is a series of patterned sentences rather than a cohesive story. The consistent confusions of mi/my and loke/like and the somewhat disjointed invented spellings hint at Kelly's continued confusions.
Figure 16. Scott's December Writing Interview.

Like Kelly's, Scott's effort in December revealed the impact of Reading Recovery. It was also consistent with his earlier performance in that he continued to make drawings when asked to write. Scott "read" his drawings back as "My mom and my cousin." When he was asked, "Can you show me some of the kind of writing that you do at school?" Scott responded by writing the short sentence. As will be seen below, Scott placed a heavy reliance on language patterns such as this one in almost every instance of writing observed during the year.

The December interviews revealed a great deal of progress in all of the children. What is most striking, however, is the ways in which all of the children, low as
well as high, made use of the oral and written texts they were accustomed to hearing, reading and writing in their classroom. Even more obvious is the power of the Reading Recovery context on the low children, a power which was also evident in their daily written work in the classroom.

**May Journal Entries**

This portion of the writing interview was not repeated at the end of the school year, in order to convey a sense of how the writing of the six children continued to develop through the year, representative entries from their journals will be presented. In many ways, this writing context was similar to the interview in that the they were completed independently and the children had complete freedom to write about any thing they wished. These entries were among the last ones written by the children, most of them being created during the last week in May. Finding a sample for Kelly presented a problem since she had moved from the classroom in early May and the children had not written in journals in April. Thus, her sample was written two months before those of her peers.

These journal entries are typical of the ones created by the six children at the end of the year.
Worthy of note is the predominance of personal messages among the high children and the ways that the three low children made use of language patterns in different ways.

Why do vampires drink blood?

Figure 17. Taundria's Journal: Vampire Riddle.

Taundria played the riddling game, started in March by asking Mrs. Dee a riddle. Most likely this riddle was borrowed from *Spooky Riddles* which circulated around the classroom for most of the year. Though she was extremely capable, Taundria's entries were often very brief; she tended to write them quickly and then spend as much time as possible in independent and shared reading.
Chrissy's entry covered two pages, and was a rambling narrative about her favorite Christmas toys and a family trip. In sharp contrast to Taundria's brevity, Chrissy often seemed determined to fill her pages and spun the writing out until she did so. As in this sample, Chrissy often made good attempts at spelling unknown words. She seemed more concerned with getting her story down and with the length of the story than with being correct. One consequence was that often there were missing words and grammatical inconsistencies as are apparent here.
Jenny's sample is interesting in that it is obviously a genuine message. The week before the entry, Jenny had used the journal to inform Mrs Dee that, "I am going to be gone till Wednesday." The entry above was her first since she had returned from the trip and Jenny told about her trip and even added a bit more information when it was requested by the teacher. Like Chrissy, Jenny was very free about using invented spellings.

All three of the low children continue to demonstrate the influence of Reading Recovery in their use of language patterns, but the degree to which they use them is indicative of their different levels of growth and maturity.
Figure 20. Tim's Journal: Three Billy Goats Gruff.

Clearly Tim showed the most growth during the year. In fact it is difficult to differentiate between his journal writing and that of his higher classmates. Tim often wrote from his personal experience, but he also sometimes responded to the literature he was hearing and reading in the room, as in this case. At this point in the year Tim could compose long, complex sentences and well shaped stories like this one which has borrowed its ending from many of the stories he has heard.
Scott was also writing much longer and complex sentences in May. However, his continued dependence on the repetitive patterned sentences he wrote in Reading Recovery cannot be missed. Also consistent with much of his other writing are the references to his mother and father; one can only surmise that his concluding sentiment is one that he has seen and heard at home.

Figure 21. Scott’s Journal: I like a House.

Figure 22. Kelly’s Journal: I Like to Read.
Though it is important to bear in mind that Kelly's entry was written two months before the others, it is apparent that her ability to generate text was fairly limited. Even more than Scott she continued to make use of comfortable and often-used sentence structure to create texts. Further, it can be observed that Kelly had some consistent unconventional spellings of high frequency words (RED/read; THET/that).

Results from the writing interviews, the end of the year journal entries and the Diagnostic Survey indicate the wide range in ability level which was apparent in September and the way in which that range was narrowed in the cases of Scott and Tim, but not Kelly, as the year progressed.

The Individual Portraits

The writing samples suggest the difficulties of assuming that the children responded en masse to the teacher and instructional contexts. In the section that follows, the work and approaches to literacy tasks of each of the subjects will be described through the use of metaphor and frequent illustrations from field notes, interviews and writing samples.
Taundria: The Matriarch

As indicated by the discussion above, Taundria was one of the most capable children in the class. Thus, she was an early and persistent leader in formal and informal literacy events in the classroom. Taundria eagerly and actively participated in Storytime, often making spontaneous responses during the reading of the story and offering frequent contributions to the discussions surrounding it. She was also a leader in the group writing which occurred during the first two months of the school year, suggesting sentences and often taking the lead in spelling the words as Mrs. Dee wrote them. This leadership role continued throughout the year in such activities as dramatizing stories and poems, shared reading and shared writing.

Mrs. Dee often took advantage of Taundria's skill and willing spirit by calling on her to make the first attempt at reading text from the board, to distribute papers, to tutor less proficient peers, and the like. For example, in December when Mrs. Dee was besieged by requests to read the Christmas Elf letters, she asked Taundria and another good reader, Joycie, to help the children near them to read their letters.
Taundria invariably completed her morning jobs quickly and efficiently, and so she had more opportunities for independent reading than some of her classmates. Especially in the first two phases Taundria was highly motivated to read, often gravitating to the books which Mrs. Dee had read aloud during Storytime.

Taundria was reading at a much higher level than most of her peers, and she met alone with Mrs. Dee for "reading group." Perhaps to compensate for this, Taundria engaged in a great deal of social interaction and shared readings with her peers throughout the year. In this vignette, Taundria shared a book with Chrissy, another one of the subjects and a frequent partner.

Taundria and Chrissy sit at their adjacent desks. Each has a pile of 2 or 3 books. Taundria has Where's Spot and Dear Zoo which she snatched from the reading center yesterday and has clung to ever since. Chrissy has 3 books about penguins that Mrs. Dee placed on the chalk tray. Both girls are pouring over their books, but this is not simply parallel play. As Chrissy finds a funny picture of a nattily dressed penguin she shows it to Taundria, and she reciprocates by asking Chrissy to predict what animals are hiding behind the flaps in Dear Zoo.

(field notes, 3/5/86)

Taundria also played the helping role on her own initiative. In January Taundria began to spend a good deal of time with Kelly during independent reading. Her interaction with Kelly was very different from that with
Chrissy and other similarly skillful peers. Rather than taking turns reading or reading simultaneously, she played a nurturant and teacherly role with Kelly. The field notes record frequent occasions in which Taundria read with Kelly or helped her with spelling in her journals. Often Taundria included Kelly in group sharing around books and when they were alone together she invariably read aloud to her. The following excerpt captures several of these kinds of interactions:

Kelly has been chumming around with Taundria since her work has been done. First they play a game with letters and matching objects which they take turns putting into the milk carton. Then Taundria takes Kelly to her desk and they look at her journal about her sister Cheniqua. They go on to Kelly's desk where she proudly shows Taundria her lengthy entry created with the use of the 'I like' pattern and her Pictionary. They go back to Taundria's desk where the two girls search for something. At last they find Taundria's library book. They hurry over to the reading center where they share the same chair while Taundria reads aloud. This is a very social reading, with the girls pointing at the pages and giggling together. (field notes, 2/4/86)

In fact, as the year progressed Taundria often put less time and effort into completing her morning jobs and more time into socializing and reading together with classmates like Kelly. Often in phase IV and V these were group events, organized around the reading of one of the basals, a big book or a popular trade book like Dear Zoo. These groups were orchestrated by Taundria who
would tell her peers where to sit, what to read out loud, who could participate and the like.

Taundria's growing interest in things social was indicated in the reading and writing interviews. For example, note the different ways she talked about her reading at school in September and March:

**September:** Well, I read some books like *Birds Fly*, *Bears Don't* and *The Bears' Picnic* when I get my work done because the teacher wants me to read so I can learn.

**March:** I read books when it's reading time. You can read to yourself or you can read to a friend, and Mrs. Dee reads to us... I don't like reading by myself 'cause it's boring!

Taundria's written products revealed a similar social bent. Many of them, like the following story, written during the reading of *Mr. Popper's Penguins*, were breezy and chatty and read very much like spoken dialogue:

![Image of Taundria's Penguin Cheniqua]

**Figure 23. Taundria: My Penguin Cheniqua.**
Though she was very capable, Taundria's journal entries were usually somewhat brief and often referred to personal experiences with her family or her friends. The following story about her Christmas shopping is typical:

Figure 24. Taundria's Journal: Christmas Shopping.

Only nine of Taundria's journal writings related to the books she had heard and read in the classroom after December when the children were free to select their own topics. Even when writing for other purposes Taundria often wrote about the people around her, as illustrated by the text she wrote about making gingerbread men.
Figure 25. Taundria: Making Gingerbread Men.

Consistent with observations in the classroom and comments in the interview, Taundria seemed as concerned here with the new child in the classroom as she was in creating a text about the class’s baking activity.

**Chrissy: The Socialite**

Like Taundria, Chrissy was very social in the ways she made use of print, but in a different way. Whereas Taundria was socially active in a nurturant way, Chrissy made use of print to gain status and maintain relationships.

Chrissy was a capable student, and she took part in group literacy events with enthusiasm, often volunteering answers and unsolicited comments. She was a member of
the top reading group, and though she held her own, she had to apply herself in order to stay with this top group. She tended to be a very careful and methodical worker during Reading Worktime so she seldom had as much time for independent literacy activity as Taundria.

When she did have this opportunity, Chrissy usually sat at her desk and read by herself with great intensity. In these instances it seemed that she was very consciously "practicing" her reading. After she was done she would sometimes make a comment to a peer or the teacher about the book (i.e. "That's a hard a book, but I read it"). That one of her primary motivations for reading was to practice and please the teacher is evident in Chrissy's responses in the December reading interview:

R: Chrissy, what is reading?
C: Fun
R: What do you do when you read?
C: I read nicely, and I don't make any noise, and if I don't know words I have to sound them out.
R: Do you like to read?
C: Yeah
R: Why?
C: Then if the teacher asks you to read . . . then you know how, 'cause you can read the book.

Chrissy also engaged in low key shared readings like the one with Taundria noted above. In these readings Chrissy and her partner (she seldom read with larger groups) generally sat close to each other, though they usually read different books. Often they read silently,
pausing now and then to share something. Another typical activity was to read alternate pages.

Chrissy was a sensitive child and had a great need for praise and affirmation. Often the researcher had the impression that she was "performing" for him in order to receive attention, as in the following episode:

DeAngela and Chrissy are browsing in the reading center and Taundria is sitting on rug reading *This is My Family* aloud. Apparently seeing my interest in Taundria's reading, Chrissy grabs *Brown Bear*, plops herself down beside Taundria and begins to read aloud. Midway through her reading the class is called to clean up for lunch. Chrissy walks back to her desk with the book still open and reading the final double page spread, looking my way to be sure I am watching.

*(field notes, 9/10/85)*

Chrissy also made use of writing to seek out the praise and affection of the adults in the classroom. On several occasions she spontaneously wrote messages for Mrs. Dee such as one saying, "I care for you so much. Do you care for me yes or no" which she left on Mrs. Dee's desk. She often wrote similar messages in her journal, such as the following entry addressed to Mrs. Dee.
Another characteristic of Chrissy's writing was an extensive use of dialogue, often it seemed, to spin out the text and make it longer and more impressive. The following journal entry is typical of many:

Figure 26. Chrissy's Journal: The Love Note.

Figure 27. Chrissy's Journal: The Party.
Chrissy also used this strategy for generating text in other writing contexts. For example, notice how she adds a dialogue with her reader onto the end of her retelling of *Caps for Sale*.

Figure 28. Chrissy: Caps for Sale

Chri ssy was also a great lover of stories. The field notes reveal several instances where she used part of the Reading Worktime to copy portions of stories she liked out of a book and onto her own paper. During Storytime Chrissy was an avid listener and a frequent responder. It was she who made the link between the wolf in *Mr and Mrs. Pig's Evening Out* and the one in "Little Red Riding Hood." On another occasion when Mrs. Dee read a picturebook version of *The Little Red Hen*, Chrissy made the connection between that story and an adapted version
called "The Hen and the Bread" in a basal reader.

One of the most fascinating and impressive pieces of writing produced by Chrissy during the year was her story about the gingerbread man. After reading the story several times, Mrs. Dee had given the children a picture of the gingerbread boy based on the Galdone cover illustration, and asked them to decorate the picture as they wished and then to write about him. Below is Chrissy's story, which she worked on for three days:

The Gingerbread Man
He is a man he is going to work he got to work hard. When you go to work don't you got to work hard? Give me an answer I will put yes and no down here. here is a real story

once upon a time there lived a old woman and a old man and lived in a little house. Then they went in there house and they bakeed a little boy and they nameed him the gingerbread man. She saide now me and you have gingerbread man all to our self. then why the gingerbread man was baking he was sweeping and cleaning and then she forgot all about the gingerbread man. Oh it's burning. and up JUMED the gingerbread man and ran out the door and on the road they went after the gingerbread man and he saide catch me catch me if you can. you can't catch me because I'm the g.b. man.

Chrissy's story opens with the almost nonsensical dialogue she often used in her journals. Soon, however, she moves into a retelling which displays considerable literary sophistication. She uses the conventional story opening and then sets the scene and introduces the
characters. She incorporates meaningful dialogue between
the characters, adds some character development (i.e. "Now you and me have a gingerbred man all to our self"), and then closes with language from the story.

Also noteworthy is the fact that Chrissy is very aware of the two writing styles she is using, as evidenced by her transition: "here is a real story." When she was questioned later, Chrissy explained by pointing to her illustration and saying, "I told the story about where he went, but then this is the real story from the book."

As indicated by this episode, Chrissy made use of print in order to enjoy stories she loved as well as to gain status and attention.

**Jenny: The Literature Lover**

Whereas the two high ability readers and writers already described made use of print for reasons that were largely social, Jenny's uses of print were primarily for her own personal pleasure.

Jenny took every opportunity offered to look at books, read books and talk about books. Though she sometimes shared books with certain friends, it was more typical for her to find a quiet corner and immerse herself in the solitary pleasures of silent reading. The
field notes are sprinkled with records like this one, written just before school started one February morning:

Chrissy and DeAngela are walking around together depositing valentines in the appropriate packets, and most of the other children are doing the same. Jenny is by herself back in the reading center totally absorbed in Just Like a Real Raccoon and oblivious to the commotion around her. When Mrs. D signals the start of school with a flick of the lights, Jenny moves back to her desk, but continues to keep her head buried in the book on the way there and after she sits down. She continues to read with great concentration though Abraham right next to her is loudly displaying his new library book to anyone who will look. (field notes, 2/13/86)

Though no formal count was made, it is likely that Jenny explored the classroom book collection more than any of her classmates. Even before it was an officially sanctioned practice she kept several favorite books in her desk, and at one point in May when the children were asked to clean out their desks Jenny was discovered to have no less than fifteen books in her desk.

Indeed, sometimes Jenny's written work suffered because she rushed through it in order to get the opportunity to do more reading on her own. In the final reading interview Jenny indicated that she did this very consciously, and went on to give a hint as to the reason for her hoarding of books:
R: Do you read here at school?
J: Yeah! All the time. . . like after we come in from recess, after we do our work and in the morning.

R: What do you do during the morning reading time?
J: The other people all work. Some people work, but I read.

A bit later in the interview, Jenny was asked if she had noticed any differences in the reading time since the first part of the year. She responded by talking about the days when a substitute took the class:

Yeah, it's different with Miss Thomas 'cause if it gets too loud everything gets closed and you're stuck in your seat. You have to read the books at your desk, and if you don't have any, too bad!

All of this reading along with a personal flair for the dramatic helped Jenny to be one of the most fluent and expressive readers in the class. When she did share books with her classmates it was invariably an event in which Jenny read aloud to or with the other child.

Jenny was also more able than any of the other children to talk about what she was doing as she read. For example, on one occasion where the researcher had been taping some of her oral reading, she stopped and asked to hear it back. Before she resumed reading she commented, "I want to make it sound more real than it sounds like on that."
An indication of her understanding of the reading process came when she was asked in the reading interview how she might help a new classmate who was having difficulty in reading:

If she came to a word she didn't know, I'd say, "Susie, that's pram" and she'd go, "Oh, I know carriage can't be right." And I'd tell her all the words she wants and when she knows all the words, she'll go, "OK, done with that book. I guess I'll go get another one."

This quote indicates Jenny's awareness of the cuing systems in written text. It also hints that Jenny's voracious appetite for books may have resulted from a desire to "know all the words" as well as her love for stories.

Jenny's sense of humor and penchant for language play were mentioned above in the discussion of the December writing interview. Jenny's familiarity and love for book language was also apparent in her writing. Early in the year Jenny made use of the familiar Brown Bear text when Mrs. Dee asked the children to write individual stories rather than the usual group story. In late March she was still "borrowing and improvising" on the language of literary texts, as exemplified by the conclusion to her book length story about the adventures of the class-made gingerbread men.
Figure 29. Jenny: Conclusion to The Gingerbread Man.

Literary language often found its way into Jenny's journal as well. Even after the children could choose their journal topics, Jenny generally responded to the story read by Mrs. Dee, and very often Jenny preserved the language of the original texts. For example, in December she wrote "I sprage frae my bed to see what was the mattr," a story as notable for its wonderful invented spellings as its faithfulness to the poem which inspired it. Another story which elicited a great deal of writing from Jenny was *Mr Popper's Penguins*. 
As the year progressed Jenny showed a growing trend towards the use of print in order to convey messages and to get things done. More and more she used the journal as a forum for self-expression. For example, note these two entries:

**January, 29, 1986**
- I know my ABCs
- I know my 123s
- I am 6 years old
- My mom is 28
- My dad is 30
- My brother is 3
- And I count to 100 and 90 and (that's) all
- I have to say

**February 11, 1986**
- It is a snow day.
- There is a lot of snow, probably a lot of accidents on the freeway.
- I hope my mom isn't stuck. My mom got a new car. April's feet were freezing.

Many of the children used the message board to write very trite "I love you/do you love me" messages,
but Jenny made use of the message board for genuine purposes as evidenced by the following two messages found on the board during the month of March.

```
taudria are you goowing to read a book
with m write bake Ples
```

Figure 31. Jenny: Real Messages.

In May Jenny used her journal to carry on complicated written conversations with the teacher which extended over many days. Note, for example the following interchange between Jenny (J) and Mrs. Dee (D):

April 28: J: Yesterday I went mushroom hunting but I didn't find any mushrooms All I found with my cousins for their club house was train track pices

D: Will you go mushroom hunting again?

April 28: J: I don't know probulye will I just don't know

D: What is it that you don't know?

April 29: J: I mean that I don't know if I'm going mushroom hunting again.
D: Jenny, do we need to have some rain before you can get good mushrooms?

May 7: J: I think I do need rain before I can go mushroom hunting again. The day I went mushroom hunting it was a rainy day. Oh I forgot to tell you my cousins came and we had fun. We went to two different places.

Jenny's ability to carry on this conversation over the course of two weeks is impressive, especially in light of the fact that there was no journal writing on many of the intervening days.

**Tim: The Careful Investor**

Of the six children, Tim was undoubtedly the one who demonstrated the greatest growth during the year. He accomplished this through intensive effort and a good deal of hard work. Partly, this work was the result of Tim's personality. He was a serious and intense child who tended to work very methodically and with great concentration. This was apparent during Reading Worktime where Tim completed the same work as his classmates though he left the room for thirty minutes every morning for his Reading Recovery lesson with Miss Morris. Mrs. Dee noticed Tim's work habits as well, noting that:

He reminds me of a little old man. He goes in and out of this room looking neither left nor right. He comes back in and gets right back into what he's got to do. (interview, 10/30/85)
Tim had a strong task orientation and a healthy dose of competitive spirit that resulted in a concern with completing his work before many of his classmates. The following episode is representative of numerous ones recorded in the field notes while observing the Reading Worktime:

Tim has completed his "purple page" and now carefully writes his name on top of the second paper. He works with great concentration and doesn't look up once he starts to write. Quickly he writes the four practice d's and then spends the rest of his time carefully coloring the picture and the letters in the puzzle. Tim looks over at his neighbor Carlos who is still working on his "purple page." "You're still doing that!" Tim says incredulously, "I'm almost done."

(field notes, 9/16/85)

As the year progressed and Tim gained new skill and proficiency in reading and writing he took great pleasure in performing for his peers, the teachers and the researcher. When she was selecting independent reading books for the children in October, Mrs. Dee was careful to give Tim books that he had already been successful with in Reading Recovery and he relished reading these little books aloud repeatedly for the benefit of his neighbors. On several occasions Mrs. Dee supported Tim in these performance by having him read his books aloud to the reading group.
Of course, Tim's skills in writing proceeded along with his reading abilities. Early in the year Tim was very dependent on having a model to copy, either on the board or from a neighboring paper. For example, when Mrs. Dee had the class write about a visit by some firemen during fire safety week, Tim generated a text by copying "The fireman was good" from his neighbor's paper and then six other words, "sat like down men slide truck," which had been written by Mrs. Dee on the board. Of course, the text made little sense, but it filled the entire page and this seemed to be Tim's focus. This is another demonstration of his use of literacy to gain status and affirmation.

As he took part in Reading Recovery lessons and wrote stories every day, Tim began to build a repertoire of known words and language patterns that he used to generate texts. Tim was not a risk taker, and he seldom was willing to attempt unknown words in his journal as Mrs. Dee encouraged the children to do. Instead, Tim would generally make use of one of his standard language patterns and then seek out help from a neighbor or the teacher on any words that were unfamiliar. Thus, during one week in January, Tim made the following entries in his journal:
As the year progressed and he gained more self-confidence and proficiency, Tim demonstrated more versatility in his journal writing, though he often continued to write of his mother and his dog. For example:

1/16 - I road with my mom in the car today
1/31 - I love my dog but he died and my other puppy died too

With increasing frequency Tim began to write about a variety of things including his personal experiences (e.g. I cut my hed on the groun today), school experiences (e.g. 3/25 - The gingerbread man ran away from us; 5/12 - Me and Antiwonne brung the pizza back to 108. I like the pizza), and his responses to the books and stories that he was reading and hearing (e.g. - 3/4 - I love Peter the Rabbit. It is good; 4/29 - Gus and ratcoon went across the tree and it broke apart and ratcoon fell in the water). In fact by the end of the year, Tim's journal demonstrated more originality and variety than those of the other five target children, though his entries were often shorter.

Perhaps his most impressive journal entry was this one, which Tim wrote after the class had read Duvoisin's
Petunia. I Love You and created their own big book version of the story.

Figure 32. Tim's Journal: Petunia

Though his writing improved immensely, Tim's desire to fill the whole page still emerged now and then through the year. In the following text, written in March, Tim underlined his accomplishment by carefully numbering his lines.
Once again we see Tim making use of his literacy skills in order to achieve status and recognition.

By the spring of the year, Tim was clearly no longer one of the low children in the class. He had been advanced to the middle reading group and was holding his own there. He tackled each individual and group literacy activity with the same intensity, concentration and efficiency he had demonstrated throughout the year. His investments of time and effort had paid off in a new found sense of self confidence and a joy in reading and writing tasks.
Tim's approach to writing took an interesting turn during the last two months of the year. On several occasions Tim was seen to work on a composition throughout the morning, coming back to it several times in order to revise and extend the story. This was a great contrast to his earlier tendency to rush through his writing tasks in order to be done first. A good example of this new practice of revision and extension is the story Tim wrote in two sittings after the field trip to see Donald Crews.

Figure 34. Tim: Donald Crews Trip, Part I
Figure 35. Tim: Donald Crews Trip, Part II.

Clearly Tim made great strides in literacy through the year. However, throughout the year he remained consistent in his intensity and careful hard work.

Scott: The Enthusiastic Entrepreneur

In contrast to the quiet, intense Tim, Scott was outgoing and enthusiastic. Although his personal style and approach to literacy tasks were quite different from Tim's, Scott's literacy growth through the year represents a similar rags-to-riches story. Though they were very dependent on their peers and the teacher early in the year, both boys grew tremendously and were classroom leaders in formal and informal literacy events by the end.
Scott's early dependence on others is illustrated by his performance on a writing task carried out during the first week of school. Mrs. Dee wanted to see what the children would write without guidance and so she simply asked them to show her what they could write. Scott wrote his name twice and then he made an exact copy of his neighbor's paper, complete with her misspelling of green (eneene).

Scott was assisted during the first two months of school by the fact that the daily writing activities tended to involve copying from the board. This he did diligently and carefully. Usually he could read these stories back as well, perhaps partly because he was an enthusiastic and attentive participant in the Storytimes from which these group stories emerged.

When journal writing was instituted Scott tended to write very short sentences with three or four words. He sometimes used his neighbors and the teacher as a resource for unknown words. Often, however, Scott's entries were difficult to decipher because he tended to use a combination of conventional words and his own spellings (i.e. 11/19 - he oel De usa a Peg). Further, Scott seldom could read his stories back when asked.
In early November Scott was selected for Reading Recovery lessons. Through these lessons and his work in the classroom, Scott's knowledge about the conventions of print and his repertoire of known words gradually began to grow. In December, Scott joined Tim in the discovery that he could generate texts by using variations of basic language patterns:

12/16 - I like the Christmas Elf
12/17 - I love my mom. My dad to
12/18 - I like to read
12/19 - I love to read
12/20 - I love to read to my dad

Like Tim, Scott was highly motivated by the desire to be done first and he would often rush through his work in order to spend as much time as possible socializing and reading. Typically Scott wrote these entries and the accompanying illustrations in less than two minutes.

As Scott grew more capable as a reader he often spent as much time as possible practicing certain books that he wanted to learn to read. During Reading Worktime Scott could often be found at his desk or in the reading center working his way aloud through a book.

Throughout the year, this solitary practice at reading took place alongside of and in between a great deal of social interaction around books, for Scott was a very outgoing and social creature. Early in the year
this often involved simply leafing through books together
and talking about the illustrations. However as Scott
became more fluent on certain books he often conducted
noisy performances of these texts for his friends and
neighbors like the one recorded below:

Mrs. D has placed *Traffic* on Scott's desk.
In a loud voice he reads the book to Mark who
sits next to him. On each page he turns the
book so Mark can see the photographs. Then
Scott reads Mark's book out loud, ending up
by asking him, "Did you read this one? I read
them both." (field notes, 11/11/85)

During phase IV when the children had many
opportunities for informal shared reading with their
peers, Scott was often found reading with a small group
of two or three other children. Scott often chose to
revisit the various big books in the classroom, and
usually he read them with a small group of classmates,
though he generally controlled the book and his voice led
the way in the reading. When the basal readers were made
available, Scott often took a leading role in groups of
children that played at reading group. He was generally
assisted in this by his friend Carlos, and these two boys
would tell the others what story they would read, and the
order in which they were to read aloud.

Though both Tim and Scott experienced this sudden
boost in their literacy learning, the nature of their
written texts differed greatly. Whereas Tim's literacy growth and increasing willingness to experiment resulted in texts that were longer, more complicated and more varied, Scott's approach was that of any good entrepreneur: once he found a good thing he stuck with it. Thus, he continued to make use of these language patterns in all of his writing in the classroom. By the end of the year, Scott used longer and more varied patterns, but he wasn't able to go beyond these patterns to truly original writing as Tim did.

Figure 36. Scott's Journal: Pizza Hut.

In fact, all of Scott's efforts at writing reflected this same approach. It seemed to be the only way that he knew to write stories. For example, in the following piece the children were to take the fox's perspective in telling about the end of Rosie's Walk where he is chased by the bees. The first three lines
represent Scott's first attempt. Mrs. Dee returned the story, reminding him that he needed to write about what the fox saw and how he felt. Scott quickly crossed out his first attempt and wrote three new sentences which responded to part of Mrs. Dee's assignment, but were equally patterned and repetitious.

Figure 37. Scott: The Fox and Rosie.

Scott's mother and father often were the subjects of his writing at school, and he often mentioned the reading and writing he did at home. It was evident that both of Scott's parents spent time with him in school-like literacy tasks at home. On several occasions he brought in writing he had done at home such as the example below. These evidenced the same sentence structures, leading the researcher to speculate that one reason for Scott's
wholesale use of common language structures was that this was what was taught at home.

Figure 38. Scott: Writing from Home.

Kelly: The Apprentice

Unlike the other two low children, Kelly did not make good progress in literacy learning during the year of the study, despite her special work in Reading Recovery. A major factor in Kelly's difficulties may have been her frequent absences. Hardly a week went by where she wasn't absent at least once; often she missed school for several days in a row. When she was in school Kelly often seemed very tired and somewhat distant.
The results were devastating. Often Kelly simply observed class activities such as Storytime and Group Writing; she was attentive, but seldom entered into discussions or offered comments. Like Tim, Kelly had her Reading Recovery lessons in the morning. This took her away from the Reading Worktime and often from Mrs. Dee's explanations of the morning jobs. When she returned Kelly usually worked very hard to complete her tasks, but many times it was apparent that she was carrying out the tasks with little understanding of what she was doing. In the following task, the children were to write sentences for four spelling words (two, and she, hop)

\[ \text{Write a sentence for each of these words:} \]

\[ \text{I'm twinning and my mom pen.} \]

\[ \text{She is six I hop.} \]

Figure 39. Kelly - Spelling Sentences

Kelly carried out the assignment by copying the directions from the board and then writing a series of words. Some of the words were copied from various places on the board and others were words she knew (i.e. my, mom). Kelly's confusion is underlined by the fact that
she included the suffix -ing which Mrs. Dee had written on the board as she explained another assignment. When Kelly was asked to read what she had written, she read it exactly as written, apparently unconcerned that it made little sense.

Despite these frequent confusions and struggles, Kelly was able to complete many school tasks with a fair degree of success through the use of a number of survival strategies. Often she coped by simply being a good listener and a careful observer of the teacher and her peers. Because she had excellent handwriting and was a careful and hard worker, Kelly often produced lovely writing which was copied from the print around her in the room. Of course, this worked well for Kelly during the first two months of school when she could simply copy the story from the board. On occasions where Mrs. Dee asked the children to produce their own stories, Kelly most often simply copied from her neighbor. Another favorite strategy was to copy a book title from one of the books displayed on the chalk tray, a practice she continued to use when journals were first introduced.

As she continued to work in the classroom and in Reading Recovery, Kelly began to build a repertoire of known words as well as the language patterns also acquired by Tim and Scott. She began to use these in her
writing in the classroom along with another survival strategy: moving to alternative forms of expression, such as art. The following journal entry is typical of many early ones in which Kelly wrote a very brief message based on the sentence structures which she read and wrote in Reading Recovery. Then she spent the bulk of her time creating an elaborate illustration.

![Figure 40. Kelly's Journal: The Bear Story.](image)

Another strategy very often observed in Kelly's writing was a dependence on other writers around her in the form of numerous requests for help. This is illustrated in the following vignette, where Kelly elicits help from Taundria, a peer who was later to become a good friend and frequent tutor:
Kelly very quickly writes the date in her journal and then the word 'the' without hesitation. Kelly asks Mrs. Dee how to spell 'boy' and she writes it into the sentence for her. Kelly knows what she wants to write but seems unwilling to attempt spellings on unknown words. She mutters "had, had, had," but writes nothing down. Finally, she turns to Taundria and asks her how to write the word. Taundria glances over at Mrs. Dee as if she's not sure she should help. Undaunted, Kelly digs in her desk and produces a scrap of paper. She flips it over to Taundria who quickly writes the word and then shoves it back. Kelly carefully copies the word and then quickly adds the word 'a' to her story. Again she is stuck and says "duck, duck - Taundria, how do you write duck?" slipping the paper back to her. Again Taundria complies and Kelly copies it into her journal, even making the misformed u that Taundria has scrawled in her haste. (11/11/85)

In Kelly's journal entries and her other writing in the classroom she tended to make use of all of these strategies: relying on peers for help, using known language patterns and focusing on artistic representation. Kelly's journal entries were even more formulaic than Scott's. For example, note her December entries:

12/2 - I see snowy
12/6 - I see my big
12/9 - I see the mas (mouse)
12/12 - I see Sprst (Santa)
12/17 - I see the cat
12/18 - I see Santa Claus

In these entries Kelly wrote the first several words independently and then received help on the last word
from her neighbor April (though obviously the help was somewhat unreliable). The spread between the dates of these entries were written illustrates the number of days that Kelly was not in school.

In January Kelly developed a new strategy for journal writing which she used throughout the next several months. This was to use the "I like ..." pattern and her Pictionary in order to create very long and often meaningless journal entries like the one below:

```
Today is Friday.
February 7, 1981.
I like my wife.
I like my clown.
I like my doctor.
I like my flag.
I like my ph.
I like my zip.
```

Figure 41. Kelly's Journal: I Like Sentences.

Like Scott, Kelly's writing in all contexts and for all purposes consisted of this repetitious patterned language patterns. Note, for example, Kelly's version of "Rosie's Day at School."
Figure 42. Kelly - Rosie's Day at School.
Kelly's reading of this story was as follows: "Rosie is in school. Rosie the hen goes to school. Rosie found a rabbit. Rosie found a book."

The final trend observed in Kelly's work in literacy activities was Kelly's close friendship and dependence upon Taundria which was described earlier. In these shared readings Kelly was invariably the apprentice, while Taundria read to her or with her, helped her in the creation of her written texts and simply talked with her. Their relationship is epitomized in the following scene:
Taundria and Kelly are reading a book together on the front rug, looking very much like a mother and child. Taundria is reading aloud and Kelly is curled up against her left arm and listening raptly. (field notes, 3/5/86)

Despite this supportive relationship, Kelly continued to struggle in carrying out school tasks, and when she moved to another school in early May there was some question of whether or not she would advance to second grade.

General Response to Changing Literacy Events

The individual portraits of the six children reveal that these six children were active and reactive in creating literacy experiences with their teacher and their peers. They made sense of the teacher, her expectations and the classroom literacy events within the framework of their own understanding. Each child brought an individual agenda and acted upon that agenda in the ways that they carried out literacy tasks.

Though it is important to see the children as individuals who made unique responses to the shifting literacy contexts in this classroom, certain patterns of response could be observed across children. These will be discussed under five thematic groupings: tracking the teacher, ways of talking about literacy, ways of making use of literacy, genuine literacy tasks and the appeal of the novel.
Tracking the Teacher

Clearly this was a year that was full of changes for this first grade teacher and for her children. Chapter IV has documented the ways in which Mrs. Dee's ideas about literacy learning and her ways of organizing literacy instruction evolved dramatically over the course of the year. Of course the teacher's cognitive and organizational changes resulted in the introduction of quite different literacy tasks at various points in the school year. As a result, the children in this classroom had to be flexible and to adapt to new routines, new expectations and new ways of doing things.

The children demonstrated little difficulty in tracking their teacher and her priorities and expectations. They easily adjusted to new formats and structures for literacy learning and for the most part, they detected what this teacher valued and gave her what she wanted.

This can be illustrated by a discussion of the children's ability to adjust to the different writing tasks observed through the year, for these shifted more than the reading tasks. At several points very early in the year, Mrs. Dee asked the children to write independently, to "show me what you can write." Despite
widely ranging abilities in writing, each of the subject children generated a text of some kind using different strategies to accomplish this goal. The three high children were able to write simple sentences of their own, usually writing about personal experiences. The low children coped with the demands of the task by using other texts around them - book titles, environmental print and neighbor's papers - as resources for their own writing.

Soon the daily writing routine became one of copying the group story from the board, and once again the children quickly adjusted to the new demands of this literacy task. Following the teacher, their focus shifted to the appearance of their papers and the conventions of print. Over the two months in which group stories were a daily event, the children became very proficient at carefully but efficiently making an exact copy from the teacher's text on the chalkboard. As they worked on their writing they often stopped, erased and rewrote letters in response to Mrs. Dee's emphasis on careful and accurate letter formation and spelling. The following note about Taundria represents many similar observations of the other subjects:

Taundria carefully writes her first name on the top line. At the end she goes back to make an exaggerated dot over the i and then she adds
her last name. Finally she gets to the story. She writes the first two words, 'I see' looking up at the board between each word, but she not satisfied with the two e's. She digs in her desk for her school box, pulls out an eraser and erases the offending letters. After two more attempts, each followed by more erasing, she is satisfied and proceeds with her copying.

The extent to which the children attempted to make an exact copy of the story on the board was demonstrated several times when Mrs. Dee underlined certain letters or words as she talked about them in her transcription of the children's sentences. Many of the children carefully included these lines on their own papers.

When the journals were introduced the children had to make other adjustments. Though the emphasis on neatness and accuracy persisted, they were now required to generate their own texts. As would be expected, many aspects of the group writing carried over to the early journals. The stories were invariably one sentence in length and often were remarkably similar across children, sounding very much like the kinds of "stories" they had written as a group. For example, following are the six journal stories for November 14:

Tim - He had a house
Scott - He had a haens
Kelly - I see a hors
Taundria - The hous wantn go away
Jenny - I have a hors in my room
Chrissy - Harry had a house. It cadt not be sall.

With differing degrees of sophistication the children all
produced stories with a similar focus. The various attempts at the word horse demonstrates that the children continued individually to do what they had done as a group; that is, to say the words slowly ("Stretch it out") and then write down what they heard. This was a major emphasis in the way the teacher presented journal writing.

When boardwork was introduced in January, the focus of the daily writing once again shifted to the surface features of the written text. Notice, for example, the approach taken by Tim to completing his boardwork on this particular day:

Tim returns from Reading Recovery and immediately begins to work on the boardwork. After quickly writing his name, he numbers down his page for each of the four sentences. Then working backwards from # 4, he writes the first letter of each sentence. When he arrives at the first sentence Tim proceeds on through the sentence, filling in the blank without a pause. As he continues, Tim glances up at the board frequently and carries on a steady monologue - chanting each letter as he is writing it. In this way he quickly and mechanically completes all four sentences. (field notes, 2/13/86)

Examples like these illustrate that these children were proficient in tracking the teacher's concerns and expectations in the writing activities and usually were quite capable of giving her what she wanted.
This phenomenon was evident in reading activities as well, though to a lesser degree since Storytime and Reading Group tended to stay fairly stable through the year. One reading activity which did change was the independent reading, which was highlighted and celebrated by the teacher at certain points in the year and neglected in others.

In Chapter IV data was presented on the ways in which independent reading was de-emphasized during Phase III. Though children were still allowed to make use of the classroom library after their work was completed, they were no longer given opportunities to read books and engage in literacy activities during the arrival time and and children no longer were asked to bring trade books to reading group as they had been in Phase II.

Except for a few avid readers (of the subjects, only Jenny), the children responded to these changes by doing much less independent reading, preferring to simply talk with their friends or to draw. This benign neglect also effected the children's attitudes about reading during Reading Worktime when their work was completed. Data from the checklist indicates that during December and January there was a considerable drop in independent and shared reading during Reading Worktime and a rise in other literacy activities such as use of the listening center.
and literacy games (see Table 11).

Table 11: Percentages of Time Spent in Self-Selected Activities During Reading Worktime *

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Reading independently</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Peer-Shared Reading</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Listening Center</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Skill Games</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* N = 10

Before leaving this discussion of the ways in which the children followed the teacher's lead, it must be noted that although they adjusted to changing formats and structures for literacy tasks, these six children tended to operate in individually consistent ways across literacy events and across time. As indicated in the individual portraits above, each child had favorite and often used themes and routinized ways of generating texts. Thus, Jenny's writings tended to be brief but genuine messages and to reveal her love for literature, while Taundria often wrote one or two sentences which referred to members of her family or her friends and Chrissy frequently created long texts by carrying on a written dialogue with her reader. The low children tended to make use of patterned language, though to
different degrees, as described in the portraits. Clearly, for these children the expectations and demands of the Reading Recovery setting were powerful and often carried over into the classroom.

Ways of Talking About Literacy

As described above the children made shifts in the ways they carried out literacy events during the year. They also evidenced some changes in their ideas about literacy as these were expressed in the reading and writing interviews conducted in September, December and March. Table 12 displays the children's responses to the researcher's questions "What is reading? and "What do you do when you read?"

Though the children continued to demonstrate their individuality, there were several general patterns which can be seen. In every case except Jenny, the children gave responses which were increasingly specific as the year progressed, and the low children focused increasingly on the decoding of words.

Scott was unwilling to respond to the questions at all until the final interview where he expressed the view shared by his Reading Recovery colleagues that reading is "stretching words out." Kelly showed a word emphasis throughout, but Tim made some interesting shifts.
### TABLE 12. READING INTERVIEW: WHAT IS READING?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>September</th>
<th>December</th>
<th>March</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Tim</td>
<td>You read books and you tell someone else</td>
<td>I put my finger under each (word) and hold the book down</td>
<td>Stretch it out</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Scott</td>
<td>No Response</td>
<td>No Response</td>
<td>You stretch the words out and stuff and then you might get it; you might be right</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kelly</td>
<td>You be sayin' the words</td>
<td>Say the words</td>
<td>You stretch out the words</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Taundria</td>
<td>It's books and stuff You look at the pages.</td>
<td>You learn some words</td>
<td>You can read to a friend or you can read to yourself</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chrissy</td>
<td>Sound words out</td>
<td>It's fun. I read nicely and I don't make any noise</td>
<td>You think of the words. You think a lot!</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jenny</td>
<td>A book</td>
<td>I don't know</td>
<td>You just read!</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
At first, he viewed reading as something you do for someone else. This was supported by another of his responses on the reading interview when the researcher asked why he was working so hard in learning to read: "so I can read to the teachers." By December, Tim thought about reading in terms of what he did as a reader and his focus had shifted to the words in the text.

Taundria and Chrissy also made shifts during the year, reflecting classroom reading contexts. At first Taundria gave a very global response, "you look at the pages," but by December she was focusing on words like her lower peers. In March she reflected the current classroom reading environment by stressing the options for individual or shared reading. Chrissy started out where the lower children ended up, with a focus on sounding words. However, in December she referred to her penchant for individual practice, and in March she returns to words, but at a deeper level which indicates her understanding of the importance of comprehension as well as word analysis.

Jenny's responses to these questions were not substantial enough to draw any conclusions. However, her response to other questions about what makes a book too hard to read and what she did when she came to something
in a text that she didn't know indicated that she was not focusing on words:

Oh, there's a lot of books that I can't read. I try and try, but then I just make 'em up until I know how to read 'em. I just say 'I don't know this word' and I go on.

Her response to the same question in March indicated a consistent emphasis on stories rather than words:

Like those big books that Joycie reads. They're hard to read 'cause there's lots of pages in 'em and you still can't get done in a day.

In this way Jenny differs from all of the other six children who in responding to this question talked mostly about words:

Taundria: Some books are hard, but I just stretch it out

Chrissy: Some books, they put too hard, some hard words in there. I sound it out, or a friend might know.

Tim: You can't read 'em 'cause they got hard words. You got to stretch 'em out.

Kelly: They got big words. I stretch out the words and I go ask a friend. I sit there until somebody comes and asks 'what are you having a problem with and then I say I'm having a problem with this word, and then they say, 'Really look at it and look at the picture and then maybe you'll find out what it is.'

Scott: If you don't know a word, you just stretch it out. Stretch it out and sound 'em out and then you might get it.
Despite all of the opportunities that these children had during the year to hear and talk about stories and to read and browse through books with their friends, their focus in all of the reading interviews tended to be on word analysis.

Perhaps this is a reflection of the fact that, despite a great increase in opportunities for informal literacy activities during the year, the formal reading instruction in which these children participated consistently involved oral reading and work on skills. As they read aloud the major goal was the accurate reproduction of text and there was an emphasis on the use of various strategies to work on unknown words. In much of their writing throughout the year, there was a similar focus on getting words down by "stretching them out" and accurately recording the words.

Not surprisingly the children's definitions of writing given in the writing interviews demonstrated a similar bias toward smaller units of meaning such as words and sentences, as well as the influence of daily writing events in the classroom. When they were asked "What is writing?" and "What do you do when you write?" in the first interview all of the children reflected classroom writing activities in their responses:
Jenny - You think and you draw pictures
Taundria - Write some words and draw pictures
Chrissy - You sound all the words out, and then you'll know how to learn
Tim - Write our name and color and do math and cut out
Kelly - Think and stretch it out
Scott - Write a picture and write a sentence and write the day of the week

It is interesting to note that four of the children seem to consider drawing to be part and parcel of writing. Indeed, very often the children in this classroom were allowed and encouraged to create illustrations to accompany their written texts. The handwriting ditto's which they did daily during the first six weeks of school also consistently involved coloring. Other clear examples of the influence of classroom literacy contexts are Tim's reference to completing ditto's and Scott's reference to journal writing.

The March responses to the same question continued to evidence a focus on words and the influence of classroom routines and emphases.

Jenny - I just think in my head and then I write stories
Taundria - You write something on a sheet of paper and you write anything you want, but when the teacher tells you not to write that stuff you got to start over
Chrissy - Like if the word that the teacher tells you and you don't remember it, you got to try and remember them and you gotta' write 'em down.

Tim - You put your name and write words and stuff

Kelly - You stretch it out and you write, like, I'd write, 'Mrs Woolsey has a baby'

Scott - You write a story or something; you spell words and write a whole bunch of sentences

Though these children had many opportunities during the school year to write messages - to absent classmates, through the message board and with the teacher in the spring journals - they continued to talk about writing, in these formal interviews at least, as a school task.

All three of the low children talked about writing words, and Kelly's example sounds very much like the simple sentences she invariably wrote. Though Scott talked about stories, it is in terms of "a whole bunch of sentences," a definition very much in keeping with his consistent approach to writing which was to write a series of patterned sentences. Again Jenny is the exception here, with her references in both interviews to thinking and to creating stories. In contrast, Taundria and Chrissy seemed to be very aware of the teacher's ultimate control over their writing. This may be a reflection of the fact that in the months prior to the
March interview Mrs. Dee had been trying to encourage the more capable children to extend themselves and write longer and more involved stories.

Ways of Using Literacy

The interview data provide a somewhat limited window into the ideas and understandings of the target children. They very likely understood and knew much more about literacy than they were able to articulate within the constraints of the interview situation. A more complete picture appears when this data is placed alongside of observational data about ways in which these children actually made use of literacy in the process of carrying out the daily life of the classroom.

In the individual portraits data was presented on the individual ways in which each of the children took part in literacy events and the ways they made use of literacy. It is also useful to explore general trends in the ways the six children made use of print. These uses may be sorted into five large categories: completing school tasks, mastering reading, gaining status, social interaction and personal pleasure. In actuality these categories each represent a complex of more fine tuned uses and they often overlapped with each other, but for the purposes of clarity they will be discussed
separately.

Completing School Tasks

Since the children and the teacher were in the classroom for the purpose of instruction and learning, it is not at all surprising that literacy was often used for the purpose of completing school tasks. This category includes all of the seatwork carried out by the children, including dittos, writing assignments, journal writing and the like. Though it will not be described in detail, it is included here because it was clear from the observations that early in the year this was one of the primary uses of print, especially for the low children. Obviously the use of literacy to complete school tasks was observed throughout the year.

Mastering Reading

Another frequently observed use of print is related to the first one in that print was used by individuals in order to carry out school-like literacy tasks. The key difference is that on these occasions children decided to engage in these literacy events on their own. This was the case in the self-sponsored practice on favorite trade books which was observed in all of the children at different points in the year.
For example, in September Taundria was often observed repeatedly reading a trade book called *This is My Family*. When her seatwork was completed she would sit by herself in the reading center and read the book aloud, carefully self-correcting when she made an error. Interestingly, after September Taundria was seldom observed to read trade books on her own with the same intensity, preferring instead to engage in more low-key socializing around books.

Jenny, too, was often observed reading the same book for a number of days in a row, usually one that Mrs. Dee had recently read in Storytime. We get a hint at one possible motive for these repeated readings in Jenny's final reading interview when she discussed how she would help a little girl who was having difficulty in learning to read:

> I would help her when she comes to a word she didn't know . . . . and when she knows all the words she'll go, 'OK, I'm done with that book. I guess I'll get another one.

One might surmise that Jenny's method was to reread a book until she had mastered most of the words, and then to move on to conquer new territory.

Indeed, all of the children engaged in this self-initiated practice with books, but the target children who made use of books in this way with the most
consistency through the year were Chrissy and Scott.

This episode reveals Scott hard at work practicing a book that he had read and heard numerous times since the beginning of the year, but that he still seemed to find appealing and satisfying:

Scott arrives at school late and the other children are already involved in various literacy activities. Immediately he takes Brown Bear from his desk and reads through it quickly, muttering to himself. His neighbor, Abraham, asks to borrow it and he too reads through it while Scott watches carefully, his knees on his chair and his elbows on his desk. As soon as A. is done, Scott takes it back and reads it out loud again. This time he is really attending to the print, hunching over the book and carefully coordinating his oral reading with his finger pointing to each word. (field notes, 12/3/85)

Clearly, Scott is reading and rereading this book for the purpose of mastering it, and not only because of the pleasure he gains from the reading.

Gaining Status

It should be clear from the individual portraits that another trend that was seen across children was the use of print to gain status. This was a tendency that was especially evident in the school life of all of the low children and in Chrissy.

It is not difficult to understand why the low children tended to make use of print in this way,
especially when they began to make important advances in literacy learning. Very often these children were observed as they carried out "performances" of known texts for the benefit of their neighbors and especially for the adults in the room. Several short scenes involving Tim, who often made use of literacy in this way, will illustrate the motivation behind these performances:

Tim brings Brown Bear back to the reading center where I am sitting. He reads it perfectly and afterwards beams up at me exclaiming, "I can read about a hundred books!" (10/17/85)

His work being all done, Tim picks up the book Mrs. Dee placed on his desk this morning, the PM Reader Traffic. He reads it out loud to his neighbor, Joycie, and seeing that I am watching he says, "Mr. Woolsey, I can read this!" and proceeds to do so. When he's done Tim turns around to the boys behind him and says proudly, "I can read, but you can't! I can read lots of books!" (field notes, 10/23/85)

Clearly, Tim was happy to display new-found proficiency in reading certain texts to all who would listen.

This pursuit of status was also observed in the ways that some of the children carried out writing tasks. Through much of the first part of the year, for example, both Tim and Scott seemed to carry out their literacy tasks as quickly as possible because they wanted to be the first ones done. Other times, children seemed to spin their stories out in endless repetition in order to
fill the page. This was discussed in the individual portraits of Tim and Chrissy, who were the children who used writing in this way most often.

Social Interaction

Perhaps the most widespread and persistent use of print in this classroom was as a vehicle for social interaction. From the first day of observation children were observed using print in the process of establishing and maintaining relationships. However, this use of print was especially apparent in Phase II, IV and V when the children were given special opportunities to read trade books and texts designed especially for emergent readers to and with their peers.

There were occasions when Mrs. Dee organized the children into groups of two or three for reading aloud, but the children hardly needed this push. Very naturally and on their own the children formed fluid and shifting partnerships with other children in order to take turns reading aloud or simply to browse though books together at a leisurely pace. Often these were books such as *Are You My Mother* or *Corduroy* which had already been shared collectively in Storytime. These books that had been highlighted through reading aloud were very often the most popular books in the classroom collection.
In the spring children often engaged in shared readings of familiar big books with their peers. Scott was particularly fond of big books and the following vignette provides a glimpse of what these small group readings looked like:

Scott sits on the front rug with the big book of *Titch* opened on the floor in front of him. His buddy Carlos is sprawled on the floor next to him holding the regular sized version of the book. The boys are reading loudly in unison; though each uses his own text they are careful to stay together and Carlos waits each time while Scott turns his bulky pages. Behind them both is Danyell who has the pointer and is trying to point to the words as the boys say them. They ignore him until one point where they are stuck on the word 'pinwheel.' Danyell stabs at the word with his pointer and calls it out correctly, and the boys repeat the word and then go on to complete the text.

(field notes, 2/25/86)

On other occasions the children used books as integral elements in games that they created. *Pictionary* were often used in spelling words in the journals, but an equally frequent practice was to use them in a game-like format. Several children would turn to the same page and then compete to see who could be the first to identify the various objects on the page.

Certain trade books were also used as vehicles for guessing games. This was an obvious use of *Spooky Riddles* and *Animal Riddles* which circulated around the classroom throughout the year. During Phase IV the pop-
up books of Eric Hill, such as *Nursery Rhyme Peek-a-book*, *Fairy Tale Peek-a-book* and *Where's Spot* were extremely popular and frequently used in impromptu games like this one:

Back in the reading center Taundria is holding court with the much loved *Where's Spot*. She sits cross-legged with the book in her lap and reads it to Antiwonne, Kelly, Steven, Carlos and Mark. A few minutes later she is observed on the front rug with Antiwonne and Kelly. This time she shows them each page and they take turns predicting what animal will be behind each of the flaps. (field notes, 3/5/86)

Another kind of social interaction around books must be mentioned and this is the common practice of trying out different roles such as taking on the teacher's style of Storytime reading. Children would sit in Mrs. Dee's Storytime chair or stand by the blackboard and hold a picture book out towards an audience that was imaginary as often as not.

Another practice which was more common towards the end of the school year was playing at reading group. Here children would get multiple copies of a book, often one of the basal readers, and then they would decide what story to read, who got to read and in what order. This independent literacy activity will be described in more detail below.

Of course, the message board and the various occasions in which children created cards and messages
for their teachers and their classmates offer other examples of social uses of print. Several children, such as Jenny, made use of the message board in order to get things done (i.e. "if ther is outdoor will you play with me April"), but most of the messages that were discovered in "spot-checks" were very social in nature, as evidenced by the following examples:

- Scott, I like you and you are my blast frind and I like you.
- To Conchata from Kelly. I like you conchata you are someone spea (special) to mee
- Dear Kelly, I do not like Christina. Don't talk to her and egnor her. Taundria

These children are clearly making use of print in order to accomplish their own ends.

**Personal Pleasure**

Closely entwined with the social uses of print are the ways in which children made use of print for their own pleasure. Often children read books simply for the pleasure they received from looking at the illustrations and enjoying the story. This was particularly characteristic of Jenny who often could be seen huddled with a book in a corner or at her desk immersed in a book and totally oblivious to the noise and activity around her. Children sometimes wrote for pure pleasure as well, such as the instances where Chrissy chose to copy
passages from trade books on to her own paper.

Sometimes books and texts provided a source of communal pleasure. Such was often the case in Storytime as Mrs. Dee and the children interacted around a text and the children spontaneously joined in and responded to the book. This was especially true of the multiple readings of texts the children knew well and loved, such as Brown Bear, Rosie's Walk, Are You My Mother? and Caps for Sale. Of course, joint readings of the big books such as Titch and The Great Big Enormous Turnip provided other instances of communal pleasure in familiar texts, as did the dramatic recitations of poems they had learned through the year. Joint readings also took place informally in smaller groups such as the following instance:

A huge gang of boys has formed on the rug under the direction of Scott and Carlos around Oh, A-Hunting We Will Go. These two boys are controlling the book, lying on their stomachs right in front of it and six other boys are sprawled all around the book like spokes in a wheel, their heads all clustered near the book. They sing the verses together, laughing loudly at the bear in his underwear, until several children complain and they are asked to tone down a bit. (3/25/86)

These then, are five large groupings of the ways in which the children in this classroom made use of literacy tasks and materials for their own purposes. In general
it can be said that the low children were more limited in the range of ways in which they used literacy. However, as they made steady progress in literacy learning, Tim and Scott demonstrated more versatility and complexity in their uses of print, while Kelly continued to use literacy tasks mostly to complete school tasks and to engage in social interaction with certain close friends. Another general trend is the fact that as the literacy learning program in the classroom was opened up and the children were given more time and materials for independent literacy activities (i.e. in Phases II, IV and V), the children demonstrated more flexibility and versatility in their uses of print.

**Genuine Literacy Tasks**

One of the changes noted in the ways that the teacher organized literacy instruction was her effort to move toward literacy tasks which tapped into children's intentions and to engage them in real, purposeful reading and writing. Examples of real writing tasks were the messages to absent classmates, the Christmas Elf letters, and the ways in which the journal writing format was altered in order to allow children to select their own topics and then to write messages to the teacher if they wished.
In general, it can be said that in genuine writing situations the target children tended to produce writing which was more varied, more complex and often longer. However, this seemed to be partly a function of the ability level of the particular children and the personal interest that they had in the task at hand.

An interesting illustration comes from the two occasions in which children wrote notes to their absent classmate, Antiwonne. As described in Chapter IV, in November Mrs. Dee required that the children create a card for Antiwonne as one of their morning jobs and she wrote a message on the board, "Dear Antiwonne, Happy Birthday and Get Well Soon," which many children simply copied. When Antiwonne was hospitalized in December, the children created cards again, but this time it was an optional activity and Mrs. Dee gave no guidelines as far as what to write. The responses of the six children to these two writing events are displayed in Table 13.

Clearly, the second task elicited genuine messages from four of the children. In December the three high children and Tim, who at this point in the year had made faster progress than the other two low children, wrote messages that were more personal, more varied and more complex.
Table 13. Cards for Antiwonne.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Taundra</th>
<th>Required Card (Nov.)</th>
<th>Optional Message (Dec.)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Happy Birthday Antiwonne. Eavrry one love you. Get well soon</td>
<td>Dear Antiwonne, I like you. Do you like me, I Don't no. Do you like me ride back. Erevey one loves you. I no them. Do you? Here is a paccre of Dear Garbage Man</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jenny</td>
<td>Happy Birthday Antiwonne</td>
<td>Dear Antiwonne, I hop you get Bettr. frme Jenny</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chrissy</td>
<td>Happy Birthday for you. If you like your Birthday Happy to you</td>
<td>Dear Antiwonne, I like you. I hope you will get well soon. If you get well soon I will like you. Hi Antiwonne. This is from Chrissy. I like you very muc</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tim</td>
<td>Happy Birthday Antiwonne. I lik</td>
<td>Dear Antiwonne, I mes yon. Get wal fom Timothy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Scott</td>
<td>Happy Birthday Get well Antiwonne</td>
<td>Dear Antiwonne Scott</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kelly</td>
<td>Happy Birthday</td>
<td>(No card created)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

However, Kelly and Scott responded differently. Kelly copied part of the message written on the board in the first note and opted out of the second writing activity. Scott actually wrote less in the second instance, including only a greeting and his name. In
fact, "Dear Antiwonne" was the only thing that Mrs. Dee had written on the board in December, so in both cases Scott carried out the tasks by copying from the board. One can only conclude that these two children continued to benefit from the close guidance and overt support given by Mrs. Dee in the first note to Antiwonne. In contrast, the children who had a fair degree of ability to generate text independently benefited from the second situation where they had more freedom to choose how to carry out the activity.

A similar phenomenon was observed in the journals as they went through several transformations. At first the children had to respond to the Storytime book, but after December they could choose what they wanted to write about and in February the task was opened up further in that children could opt to carry on a written dialogue with the teacher. Table 14 displays two journal entries from each child in each of these three journal formats. The entries were selected by culling every twentieth journal writing in order to provide something of a random sample.

The first two entries included on the table were written when the teacher's expectation was that children would respond to the book read during Storytime.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Event</th>
<th>Thought 1</th>
<th>Thought 2</th>
<th>Thought 3</th>
<th>Thought 4</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>10/29</td>
<td>He was scared</td>
<td>The witch took off her mist</td>
<td>She took off her mist</td>
<td>I do not have any powers</td>
<td>She tried to be magic</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12/2</td>
<td>I at sea too</td>
<td>They went to sea</td>
<td>I see Snowy</td>
<td>He and feel scared</td>
<td>No wait in the snow</td>
<td>His and his friends went to play</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1/15</td>
<td>I love my mom and my daddy and you to and Christmas</td>
<td>My mom is good to me and I be good to do my friends. And my mom love me. And I played with my sister</td>
<td>Who will be my mother? Will you</td>
<td>Absent</td>
<td>The old man said to his wife yes I will the cow today she was not moving I no what I can do I will tack her to Mr. Brown downtown and see will she be sick</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1/13</td>
<td>I got a valentine card for Mrs</td>
<td>I love my friends</td>
<td>I like my space</td>
<td>I like Bedragra</td>
<td>Mr. Popper got a new toy</td>
<td>Mr. Popper got a new toy. Captain Cook took a chest out of under under Greta, and Mr. Popper knew that one was Captain Cook or Greta so he put their names on their bails</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2/12</td>
<td>I hate the devil! He is bad</td>
<td>I like the rabbit</td>
<td>I have my sail</td>
<td>I like Bedragra</td>
<td>Today Mr. Popper got a new toy. The name was Greta, isn't that a good name that is a good name. Greta is a wonderful name</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3/15</td>
<td>I like to ride in a school bus and it is fun</td>
<td>Many volts you take me to Pizza but</td>
<td>He longer in the class</td>
<td>I did bring you and miss Morris a piece of cake because you are the best teacher on the whole school and you treat us so good so I love both of you. Love Teodria</td>
<td>Mrs. B I am going to be gone till Wednesday</td>
<td>Dear Mr. Moosey I love you so I missed you when you was not here at school. I really missed I am glad you came back to our classroom and to our school again</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Table 14. Representative Sampling of Journal Entries.**
It is apparent that all of the children were able to complete this task, though the journals show that Tim received help on several words from the teacher, Scott copied from his neighbor and Kelly copied a book title while the high children wrote stories that were more original. In the December entry the Storytime book was *The Snowy Day*, to which all of the high children responded. Interestingly, the low children all made use of the kinds of writing they were doing in Reading Recovery rather than meeting the teacher's expectations. Thus, Tim and Scott both wrote about their Thanksgiving turkey while Kelly made use of a pattern she used throughout December, 'snowy' being her spelling for snowman.

What is most interesting about the table is the fact that, especially among the three high children and the quickly progressing Tim, the journal entries became increasingly diverse and complex when the task was broadened. This is particularly seen in Chrissy and Jenny and less so in Taundria who seldom seemed particularly interested in writing. Both Chrissy and Jenny often chose to respond to books, though they also made use of the option to write personal messages as they did in the last entries. Taundria wrote her most involved
stories after March when the journals became a forum for written dialogue with the teacher. Though Tim's entries are generally shorter than those of the three high girls, the table demonstrates the diverse topics about which he wrote.

Equally apparent in the entries included in the Table is the fact that the new freedom in the journals had less impact on Scott and Kelly. Scott wrote his standard sentences regardless of the other options that were available to him, though his sentences at least were complete and meaningful. The same cannot be said for Kelly who continued to use her Pictionary and three or four language patterns throughout the year. Again, it appears that the new freedoms and options handed over to the children had the greatest benefit for the more capable children.

These low children benefitted more from opportunities to write in collaboration with other writers as they did later in the year in the shared writing experiences. In Phases IV and V the children also sometimes had opportunities to work with a partner in creating written texts. The benefits of this collaboration for a child like Kelly are apparent in the following message that Kelly created together with another child in the classroom.
The Appeal of the Novel

Another general trend in the ways the children responded to the classroom contexts for literacy learning was the impact of novel approaches to using literacy materials and carrying out literacy tasks. In general, the literacy work of the children was supported and extended when new structures were placed on familiar tasks, when new tasks or materials were introduced or when familiar materials were used in new ways.

Despite the importance in any social organization of routines and rituals, when literacy tasks became overly routinized the target children seemed to focus simply on the tasks and getting them done rather than on making use of those tasks for their own purposes. Thus, for
example, with the exception of Jenny, the avid reader, independent reading seemed to become somewhat routine and lifeless in December and January. Many of the children tended to make a perfunctory effort to read at Mrs. Dee's request, and then to plunge with more enthusiasm into drawing, phonics games or simply talking. In contrast, when the format was changed and children were given special opportunities to do shared reading of library books, wall charts, and big books with their friends, the activity seemed to regain life. Not surprisingly, new literacy materials such as big books and the new book collections brought in by Mrs. Dee and the researcher also had the effect of stimulating new enthusiasm for independent and shared reading.

Another example was the writing activities observed in the classroom. As Mrs. Dee varied the writing tasks, building from the familiar to the novel, the children's efforts at writing gained new impetus. Interestingly, each time Mrs. Dee altered the writing tasks she retained some elements of the older familiar tasks. Thus early journal writing shared with its predecessor, group writing, the routine of responding to the Storytime book, but added the new element of requiring individual stories. Then the journal format remained the same, but the range of topics was broadened. Finally, the purposes
for the journals were expanded in that children could use them to carry on dialogues with the teachers. However, even in this last format children were still free to make use of the familiar routines. Thus, many children continued to respond to stories read aloud when the books caught their attention, but they could also choose to write from their own experience, convey a personal message or carry on a written dialogue with the teacher. As was seen in the previous section, journal writing within this last format tended to be much more richly varied and complex than earlier journal entries.

Like independent reading, journal writing tended to suffer when children began to perceive it as simply a task to complete for the teacher. Observe, for example, the way in which Tim completed his journal in the following episode which is typical of numerous other instances:

Tim opens his journal and very quickly writes, 'I like to play' at the top. Abraham reminds him that he forgot his date, and Tim groans loudly as he erases his sentence. He quickly records the date, looking at the board only the month. Then he draws two lines to guide his writing and again writes his story saying each word aloud as he writes it. The sentence is obviously an old standby from Reading Recovery. The whole process lasts about 2 minutes, and Tim takes another 30 seconds to make a sketchy illustration of himself hanging from the monkey bars.
Immediately Tim moves on to his dittos.  
(field notes, 12/3/85)

This rote completion of the journal was observed most often in Tim, Scott, Kelly and Taundria, and only infrequently in Jenny and Chrissy. It seemed to reach it's height in December and early in the new year, when Taundria made the following journal entry, which epitomizes the fact that for some children the journals had become very routine:

\[ 
\text{Today is Thursday, February 13, 1982} 
\]

\[ 
\text{Today is Thursday, February 13, 1982} 
\]

\[ 
\text{Today is Thursday, February 13, 1982} 
\]

Figure 44. Taundria's Journal: The Protest.

As would be expected with her social bent, Taundria put considerably more effort into her journal entries when they were expanded to include written dialogues with the teacher.

In short, then, when literacy tasks became overly familiar and routinized, they tended to be carried out
simply as school tasks completed for the teacher with a minimum of concern and effort. However, very often when new elements were added to these literacy tasks and new structures were placed on familiar tasks, those tasks were rejuvenated at least for the short term.

Another interesting aspect of this phenomenon was the ways in which the children enjoyed making use of familiar materials in new ways. Thus, for example, the children showed immense interest when familiar texts such as Brown Bear and Mrs Wishy Washy were reintroduced to the class in the big book format. In the same way, the low children were thrilled when they discovered books in the classroom that were familiar from Reading Recovery.

Perhaps the most outstanding example of the powerful appeal of using familiar materials in new ways was the ways that children made use of the Ginn basal readers in Phase IV when they were allowed to select them at will during independent reading.

There were five ways in which the children made use of the basal readers in this informal independent reading time, some of which involved real reading (Practice, Shared Reading and A Compendium of Stories) and others which were primarily social occasions (Playing Reading Group and "National Geographic"). These uses, which were
quite different from the ways the books were used in reading group, will be elaborated further below.

One way in which this literacy activity differed from formal reading instruction was that children were allowed to select any of the basal readers, ones they had already read as well as the more advanced books. Many times the children who selected the higher basal readers used them to play at reading group. In these instances children would sit with a partner or with a small group with multiple copies of the same text. Often, the process of agreeing upon a story to read and then deciding who would read and in what order consumed considerable time during these events. In fact, as in the following case, the organizing usually took longer than the actual reading, and perhaps this was the point of the whole event:

Joyce sits on a chair clutching *Birds Fly* in her lap. Scott, Todd share the chair next to her and Carlos and Conchata are at her feet. As she starts to read Scott calls out, "Read it like the teacher" meaning that he wants her to hold the book so they can see it. Joyce complains that she can't read it that way, but then Taundria shows up with a copy of the book and she provides a solution: "She'll read and I'll point to the words." Though she has entered the group uninvited, no one makes any complaints and in fact, Todd and Scott give up their chair so the "teachers" can have their chairs side by side. Finally they are ready to read, but Taundria won't proceed until they are all sitting Indian style. Again, they are just about to start when Chrissy comes over. Joyce
asks her if she wants to listen but Taundria overrules her, telling Chrissy to go and get her own copy of *Birds Fly*, which she does. Again there are a few moments of organizing while a third chair is found and Chrissy gets settled, but remarkably the four "students" are sitting in the prescribed fashion and waiting patiently. At last they are ready to read, with the three girls side by side on the chairs and turned to the first page of "No Room." Perhaps in response to an admonition from Mrs. Dee to tone down all three girls read softly and not in unison. It is impossible to hear any of them, and at last part of the audience gets restless. Todd complains, "Anyhow, you ain't reading loud enough!" and he gets up on his knees and closer to Joyce's voice and book. Scott and Carlos simply turn around and look at the big book of *Sing a Song* which is behind them, and Conchata pulls herself up close to Taundria so she can hear. Soon the children are operating in three smaller groups. Todd and Joyce are reading together and taking turns, Taundria and Chrissy are reading in unison with Conchata kneeling on the floor in front of them and Scott and Carlos work through their big book on the floor. (field notes, 4/9/86)

Another way of using the readers was the informal browsing and sharing of points of interest that I have called "National Geographic" because it involved little actual reading of text. Instead the children would flip quickly through the basals (again they would often have multiple copies of the same text) and point out stories or illustrations that caught their attention, as in the episode below:

Scott, Mark, April and Antiwonne are busy exploring copies of *Across the Fence*. They make little exclamations as they find pictures that interest them (i.e. "Look! Hey look! It's Frog and Toad you guys"). April rushes over to the reading table
and exchanges books, picking up *Birds Fly, Bears Don't*. As she returns to her seat she is elated to find the story of Little Bear and immediately launches into a performance much to the delight of Mark. Antiwonne is more interested in pouring over the Beatrix Potter illustrations he's found, and he lingers over the pages examining them closely. Scott scurries back to the reading table and picks up *Birds Fly*, and flips quickly to the story April is reading, but he doesn't stay with it long, soon returning to the table to pick up *Glad to Meet You*. He is very aware that this is a more advanced book, and he never even opens the book but instead parades around with it: "Hey Carlos, Look what I got. See Angela? See what I'm reading?, etc"

(field notes, 3/4/86)

It will be apparent that both of these uses for basals - as "National Geographics" and as vehicles for Playing Reading Group - involve activities which are noisy and fast-paced and largely social; actual reading was generally quite incidental to these events.

The other three uses for basals spontaneously created by the children were generally much calmer activities and involved a good deal of self-sponsored reading work.

One of these uses, shared reading, was still highly social. In shared reading children worked with a single partner, sitting close together and reading aloud from the same story. Though these sessions were social in one sense, the children seemed most interested here in
actually getting some reading accomplished and there
often was a serious and business-like tone not unlike
that in formal reading groups. Some of the incidents
described previously in which Taundria read to Kelly are
examples of shared reading in which one child read to
another and this was always the case when Jenny took part
in shared reading:

Jenny is putting on a very dramatic reading of
*Don't Forget the Bacon* for the benefit of
Angela who stands near her desk and giggles as
as she reads the long lists in a motherishly
stern voice. Later the two girls are sprawled
on their stomachs on the front rug and Jenny
reads *Benny Bakes a Cake* aloud.

Most examples of shared reading, however, involved
both children in reading alternate pages and talking
about the story as in the following scene:

Taundria and Chrissy sit side by side, each
on the same page in their copies of *Across
the Fence*. As they read "Chicken Forgets"
they work with great concentration, reading
alternate pages and each following along with
a finger, very much as they do in reading group.
(3/4/86)

Shared reading with basals seemed to have two
important elements; the enjoyment of stories coupled
with a sense of shared joy in proficient reading and a
desire to further hone reading skills. These two
elements were also represented in the other two uses for
basals, Practice and *A Compendium of Stories*, which
usually were observed in children working alone.
Using the basals for practice involved the children in one of the uses for print described above as Mastering Reading. Several children, notably Tim and Chrissy, often selected the reader they were currently reading in for Mrs. Dee or the next level up. Then they would sit by themselves and pour over the stories in the book in what looked very much like practice. As will be observed in the two episodes below, practice was often tied up with the use of literacy in order to gain status:

Chrissy sits at the reading table reading from Across the Fence, her current reading book. As I walk near she shows me her book, then looks over at Taundria who is reading Glad to Meet You to Kelly and confides, "That's the really hard book! I can't read that one yet." (3/6/86)

Tim rushes over to me, thrilled with the discovery that "No Room," which Mrs. Dee read aloud several months ago, is in Across the Fence. He returns to his desk and works diligently at reading the story out loud. He seems to be practicing, for later he tells me, "After Birds Fly, I'm gonna be in this book!" (3/25/86)

The final use of the basals was as a compendium of stories. This was not observed often, and then only with Tim and with Jenny. Jenny's is an interesting case. Unlike the other target children, she very seldom elected to read basals, consistently preferring to read trade books. When she did read the basals it was to read stories that she knew in book form. That this was her
main reason for reading basals was verified in her final reading interview when she was asked if she liked to read the Ginn books on her own:

Yeah . . . books like Birds Fly, because Little Bear is in there and he's in the library, and so is Three Kittens. Remember, them two is in Birds Fly.

Tim also enjoyed finding and revisiting familiar and well loved stories in the basal, as exemplified by scenes like this one which occurred on the first day the basals were made available:

Tim has Across the Fence and is leafing randomly through it. Suddenly he comes to the Frog and Toad story "The Surprise" which is extracted from the Lobel book he got for Christmas, and he excitedly points the story out to his neighbors. Later he calls me over to announce another exciting discovery, "Look, Mr. Woolsey, it's got this in it! Look! Here's Peter the rabbit!" It's worth noting that Tim's journal entry for the day reads, "I love Peter the rabbit. It is good." (3/4/86)

Certainly, these informal uses of the basal readers provided the children with multiple opportunities to enjoy stories, to practice texts, to read together and to enjoy social interaction around texts. Interestingly, in the final interview when the children were asked to name their favorite books each of the six subjects named at least one of the basal readers along with trade books.
Patterns Across High and Low Children

Throughout this chapter references have been made to differences across children in responding to the changing literacy learning contexts in this classroom. Many references have been made to the ways in which individual children carried out literacy tasks in ways and for purposes that were their own. In this section, patterns that seemed to differentiate the children of high ability from the low achievement children will be discussed.

Generally, differences across all six children which stem from personality traits and previous experiences were a more powerful element than ability level in influencing how the children responded. However, several patterns were observed. These relate to the dependence or independence of the children in carrying out literacy tasks.

Early in the year, it was very apparent that the high children were generally able to conduct themselves in literacy activities with more autonomy and self-sufficiency than their low achieving peers. This was true in reading activities such as independent reading where the low children often simply leafed through books making no attempt to read them or listened while their more skilled peers read aloud.
However, the dependence of the low children was even more apparent in the writing tasks, and particularly at the beginning of the year. While the high children were able to create and record their own texts in unguided writing situations, the low children depended on the print around them to accomplish these tasks. They copied directly from the chalkboard, from the papers of their neighbors or from the environmental print around them on bulletin boards and books.

Of course, this dependence upon others meant that the low children had difficulty in creating texts that expressed their own meanings and ideas. Sometimes when they were asked to read what they had written they simply shrugged and said something like Tim who once told the researcher, "I can't read that! I was just making letters." More often, they had a text in mind but it did not match their written text. Frequently, the intended text was one that they had borrowed from the books they had heard in the room. This was the case when Scott wrote the words "write brown blue eneenre a" as his neighbor Donna had, and then read his story back as, "Brown bear, brown bear." In contrast, the high children seemed from the first part of the year to be capable of creating texts which were personally meaningful and
recorded with a high degree of convention and accuracy. One implication of this disparity was that for the low children writing tended to be a school task, something that they did for the teacher. All of them were capable of working very methodically and carefully and they quickly mastered the task of copying stories from the board. However, they seldom made use of writing for their own purposes at this point in the year. In contrast, all three of the high children were observed creating and conveying messages in the first several months of school such as the one below:

```
Love
Dear Teacher
I love you
and I no every one
by Taundria
Happy Birthday
```

Figure 45. Taundria's Message

However, as the three low children acquired more experiences with literacy in the classroom and in the intensive individual instruction of Reading Recovery,
they began to acquire a broader range of strategies for generating text and a firmer acquaintance with the conventions of print and orthography. The first major strategy to appear was the use of language patterns which allowed children to generate a variety of texts with the use of a limited number of known words.

The children evidenced this strategy at different points. For example, in the November journals Tim was already making use of language patterns (e.g. 11/1 - The ghost played; 11/25 - I like to play). At the same time Kelly continued to copy book titles (e.g. 11/4 - Hand Hand; 11/25 - Hairy Bear), while Scott created entries by copying from other papers as well as writing words that he invented (e.g. 11/1 - The wich was sud th rat; 11/12 - I like tak an).

As described above, Kelly and Scott eventually caught on to the use of language patterns and then used them almost exclusively for many months in journals and across many other writing activities. In contrast, Tim was increasingly able to move beyond these patterns in order to write stories that were more personally meaningful. It is interesting to note that Tim was also observed to write messages during the month of October. Tim had received a birthday card from the assistant principal and wanted to add his own message and pass the
note on to Miss Morris. Though he had some help from Taundria in recording the message, the ideas and the motivation were his own. Tim was beginning to make literacy work for his own ends:

![Tim's Message](image)

Figure 46. Tim’s Message

It is clear that, although the language patterns provided a support system for the low children at this early point in the year, they also created constraints when used exclusively as they were by Scott and Kelly. This was especially true for Kelly when she got in the habit during the months of January and February of using the "I like..." pattern and her Pictionary to create long texts which she could seldom read back and which had little meaning for her beyond the status gained from the long entry.

This seemed to be the progression made by the low
children in their writing: from copying, to reliance on language patterns and familiar sentence structures and then on to true messages. Kelly had not achieved this last stage when her family moved and she left the classroom in early May. As evidenced by her last two journal entries ("I like my mom Ben Ebes is cah;" "I like to see there"), she still used 'I like' as a crutch and she continued to use many spellings which were highly unconventional.

At the end of May Scott still showed a tendency to write rather repetitive and artificial stories, but the following piece of unguided writing demonstrates that he was beginning to move on to more original messages as his peer Tim had already done:

Scott

we had a picnic
we had good food
we like it
we had cake
we like we want to eat

Figure 47: Scott's Unguided Writing.
This discussion of the use of language patterns illustrates the power of the Reading Recovery context, a power which often overshadowed classroom writing contexts. This was manifested in several ways, though the use of language patterns stands out as the major effect. Another trend observed in the Reading Recovery children was that they seemed to feel less freedom to use invented spellings in their written texts than the high achieving girls.

Often during writing events the high children simply recorded their messages in the best way that they could. In contrast, all three low children would raise their hands and wait for several minutes for the teacher or check with a neighbor in order to get help in spelling certain words. In fact, this may partially explain their reliance on a small group of words and sentences which were well known. Of course, this is also another aspect of dependence/independence dichotomy.

Another element of difference between the high and low children relates to the issue of control. In the beginning of the year the high children tended to dominate all class literacy activities, being the ones to suggest sentences and spellings in group writing, the ones to take an active role in Storytime and the like.
They seemed to take a similar leadership role in independent literacy activities as well. As the low children gained more proficiency in literacy and more self confidence, they too assumed this more active role. This was especially apparent with Tim and Scott in January and February when their gains seemed to be consolidated and very apparent in the classroom.

Both boys were well liked and respected by their peers. The following vignette demonstrates the ways in which Tim had begun to assume a role of leadership and control among his peers in literacy events:

Donald sits at his desk for several minutes and works hard to create a message which he then hand delivers to Tim. As usual, Donald's message is filled with exotic spellings, extra words, and words created by repeating the same limited group of letters. Tim can't read the message and tells Donald so. He promptly gets out a pencil and an eraser and begins to make corrections. When I sidle over to them, Donald looks and cheerfully explains, "This is to him, but all the words aren't right." Tim asks Donald what each part says, and as Donald tells him his intended message Tim erases Donald's work, and writes the message in a form which is much closer to the conventional spelling, though still not quite conventional. The message translates out this way:

To my b frind (note that Tim leaves 'best' Tim play alone after just writing the with you first letter)
san Donald Adkins

Tim reads this last with a frown and an incredulous voice. Donald chirps up "Signed" and Tim fixes this too. Finally satisfied that the message is complete,
Tim tells Donald, "OK, now go and put it up on the message board." This, though he has already received the message and indeed, has just written it to himself. (field notes, 3/18/86)

As Scott and Tim became more proficient at literacy tasks and were no longer among the low children in the class, they assumed the leadership and helping roles as the higher achieving girls had done all along. Kelly never achieved this level of skill or leadership.

Summary

This chapter focused on the six targeted children in this first grade classroom, their growth in literacy and the ways they made sense of classroom literacy events.

First the children were viewed as a group. Results from the Diagnostic Survey, the reading and writing interviews and classroom observations indicated that late in the year there was much less contrast in the knowledge and uses of literacy of the six children than that observed in September, especially among the high children and the two rapidly progressing Reading Recovery children.

Individual portraits of each of the target used illustrations from field notes and writing samples to demonstrate that the children each brought a unique agenda and set of understandings to classroom literacy
events. Thus, they responded in individual ways to the changing literacy events of the classroom.

Certain general patterns were also observed. All of the children demonstrated that they were very adept at "tracking" the teacher through the various shifts in procedure and emphasis. As the year progressed, children were able to talk about literacy with increasing detail and specificity, but their responses in the interviews tended to be focused on words. Five primary uses for literacy were identified: completing school tasks, mastering reading, gaining status, social interaction and personal pleasure.

Finally, it was noted that genuine literacy tasks and novel literacy tasks were supportive of literacy growth of all the children; open tasks and self-determination were supportive for the progressing children, while the low child was supported by opportunities to collaborate.

Other differences across high and low children related to the fact that the low children were dependent upon their peers and the teacher as well as certain aspects of the literacy task itself, such as the use of language patterns, while well-progressing students were able to operate independently and use literacy for their own purposes.
CHAPTER SIX
SUMMARY AND IMPLICATIONS

The Problem of the Study

The study was an exploration of the theories and assumptions held by one first grade teacher as she planned and carried out literacy instruction over the course of one school year. Careful records and analyses were made of the ways in which she made use of space, time and materials and the nature of the interactions which took place during literacy events. The study was also an investigation of the theories and practices of six children, three of the lowest and three of the highest readers and writers in this classroom. Particular attention was given to the ways in which the teacher and the children together created literacy learning contexts and how these contexts influenced the children's understandings about literacy and the ways in which they made use of language in the classroom.

Procedures

The exploratory and descriptive nature of the study required a research methodology which was more qualitative than quantitative in nature. Thus, the
researcher employed an ethnographic participant observer perspective and data was collected over the course of a complete school year.

Data was gathered through field notes, audio and video taping of selected literacy events, formal and informal informant interviewing, the collection of writing samples, the Clay Diagnostic Survey (1979) and the DeFord's Teacher Orientation to the Reading Process (1978).

Primary analysis suggested certain recurrent literacy events which were important occasions for literacy learning in this classroom. Continued data collection focused on these events in order to gain an understanding of the ways in which these events were organized and the roles and interactive patterns of the teacher and her students. In subsequent analyses of field notes, writing samples, transcripts from taped literacy events, and interviews with the teacher and children, motifs and themes which emerged within and across literacy events were coded and interpreted in a systematic fashion.

Findings

The findings were presented in two chapters. The first chapter described changes in the teacher's theories
and assumptions about literacy learning and the ways in which these changes were manifested through her use of space, materials and time in the classroom. The second chapter described the target children as a group and as individuals, their understandings and uses of literacy and the ways in which they responded to the changing literacy learning contexts in this classroom.

**Change in the Teacher**

1) The teacher evidenced in her personal theories and classroom practices a movement away from a traditional, phonics/skills approach towards a more meaning-based and whole language orientation.

2) The teacher's ideas and practices relating to writing evidenced more change during the year than her ideas and practices in reading instruction. These changes in writing were largely the result of the teacher's work in graduate courses and in Reading Recovery.

3) The teacher's ideas and practices of formal reading instruction continued through much of the year to evidence a skill emphasis involving oral reading and work geared toward helping children to develop the "tools" needed for decoding.

4) New ideas and practices in reading were most apparent in the consistent use of daily Storytime as a forum for literacy learning and shared enjoyment of literature and in opportunities afforded for independent and peer shared reading.

5) A number of elements supported and facilitated these shifts to new ways of understanding and carrying out literacy instruction, including the following:

   - Involvement in the Reading Recovery Program, including daily work with students, formal training sessions and informal contacts with fellow Reading Recovery teachers
- graduate level University classes which provided access to current research and theories as well as practical ideas

- work with the researcher during the year which forced the teacher to examine and articulate her theories and practices

- collaboration with the researcher which provided demonstrations of new approaches to literacy instruction as well as moral and practical support

- the teacher's personal history of literacy learning and her overriding desire to create a classroom which supported the literacy learning of all children

- the teacher's eagerness to learn and her openness to new approaches and techniques

6) There were also elements surrounding this teacher and her classroom which worked against the move to less traditional literacy instruction. Chief among these were the following:

- peer pressure to maintain the status quo and to fit into an unofficial school-wide literacy program

- administrative demands for regular assessment and evaluation in the basal reading program

- the teacher's doubts and fears and her concerns that her students would be poorly served if they were not instructed in traditional skills

- the shifting population of children in the classroom

- the demands of multiple duties and the press of time

7) New ideas and ways of structuring literacy instruction were a source of discomfort when they conflicted with the teacher's former ways of thinking and doing things and when they cut across the grain of systemic expectations or the expectations of the teacher's peers.
Changing Classroom Contexts for Literacy Learning

1) The classroom literacy program evolved in natural and predictable ways as many of the children became more proficient and experienced in literacy. However, the classroom literacy program was also altered in important ways by the teacher as she gathered new experiences and new ways of thinking about literacy.

2) Through much of the year there was an increasing flexibility and openness in the ways in which the teacher allocated the available resources of space, time and materials.

3) In general, the literacy curriculum evidenced an increasing reliance on a variety of genuine experiences with reading and writing which encouraged and allowed children to make use of literacy for their own purposes. Concurrently, there was less emphasis on the use of structured instructional materials and activities directed by the teacher.

4) Early in the year almost all of the decisions about literacy use in the classroom were made by the teacher. As the year progressed, she increasingly turned the power of decision making and self-determination over to the children.

Children's Understandings of Literacy

1) As the year progressed the children were increasingly detailed and explicit in the ways in which they talked about reading and writing.

2) The children's definitions of reading and writing reflected the routines and emphases of contexts for reading and writing observed in the classroom.

3) The children demonstrated a focus on words in talking about reading and writing, with the exception of one child, Jenny, who emphasized stories.

Children's Uses of Literacy

1) All of the target children showed growth in literacy through the year. However, two children made accelerated
progress as a result of their work in Reading Recovery. Thus, by March they were operating very competently and similarly to their higher achieving peers. One child remained in the lower ranks of the class throughout the year.

2) The individual target children carried out literacy tasks in ways and for purposes that were their own. Personality traits and previous and concurrent experiences with literacy were important in determining the ways in which they made use of literacy.

3) The children made use of literacy for five purposes:
   - completing school tasks
   - self-initiated practice in mastering reading
   - gaining status and recognition from peers and teachers
   - social interaction; the establishment and maintenance of relationships
   - personal pleasure, both individual and communal

4) There was a progression in the writing strategies of the low children from the use of copying to a reliance on language patterns. As they became more proficient, certain children were able to make selective use of these strategies in the process of creating genuine and original messages.

5) High achieving children and those making rapid progress tended to dominate formal and informal literacy events in the classroom. They took charge of their own learning and often that of their peers as well.

6) High achieving children and those making rapid progress were able to conduct themselves with more autonomy and self-sufficiency in literacy events than their low achieving peers.

7) There was little difference between the high achieving students and those who were designated as low achieving, but making progress due to Reading Recovery, in the ways they made use of literacy.

Children's Responses to Changing Literacy Contexts

1) The children demonstrated little difficulty in tracking the teacher and her shifting priorities and expectations. They easily adjusted to new structures and
routines for literacy learning.

2) The children followed the teacher in her various emphases in the creation of written texts. When she focused on neatness and convention, and later, on personal messages, they focused on the same concerns.

3) When the teacher de-emphasized individual and shared reading in the classroom, there was a considerable decline in the children's use of trade books and an increase in the use of literacy games and the listening center.

4) Children's writing reflected the language and style of the written texts that they read and heard in the classroom. The texts which had the greatest impact on children's writing were those which children revisited often and for varied purposes.

5) When they were engaged in writing activities which were genuine and purposeful, the high achieving and rapidly progressing children tended to produce written texts which were more lengthy, complex and varied.

6) When writing tasks were broadened in order to allow individual choice and autonomy, the high achieving and rapidly progressing children tended to produce written texts which were more lengthy, complex and varied.

7) The low children gained less benefit from openness and autonomy in writing tasks. They tended to produce brief and highly patterned texts in all writing contexts.

8) The writing of the low children was supported and extended when they were given the opportunity to work in collaboration with other writers to generate and record a text.

9) The literacy progress of all of the children was supported and extended when new structures were placed on familiar tasks, when new tasks or materials were introduced or when familiar materials were used in new ways.

10) When literacy tasks became overly familiar and routinized, the children tended to carry them out in a perfunctory fashion, focusing more on the completion of the task rather than the reading and/or writing involved.
11) When they were given the opportunity to read the basal readers informally, the children made use of them for their own purposes, using them as vehicles for social interaction, role playing, shared reading, practice and a source of stories.

12) Reading Recovery lessons exerted a powerful influence on the reading and writing carried out in the classroom by the low children. This influence was especially manifested in their use of language patterns to generate texts and their reluctance to make attempts at invented spellings.

Although the findings of any ethnographic research are necessarily bound to a particular setting and the participants within that setting, generalizations can be made which are applicable to teachers and students in similar classroom settings. Implications for teacher education and the development of literacy are discussed below. These will be followed by suggested directions for future research.

**Implications for Teacher Education**

1) **If teachers are to make important and long-lasting changes in their ideas about literacy learning they need time.** For this teacher, significant changes extended over the period of two years and, no doubt, further changes are inevitable. The progress that she made toward non-traditional literacy instruction would not have been possible in short-term workshops or inservice. Teacher educators need to develop strategies for working with practicing teachers which allow for
continued contact over an extended period of time.

2) Teacher educators need to work with teachers in their classrooms on a regular basis. By its very nature the university presents students with bits and pieces of information. In order to help teachers to integrate the research, theories and teaching strategies presented in university classes and to make them their own, teacher educators need to be in classrooms - observing, questioning, discussing, demonstrating and collaborating. The experience can only provide benefits to both parties.

3) If change efforts are to have a significant impact and to endure, they must influence the entire school system. Work with individual teachers is not enough. All primary teachers should be included in efforts to disseminate current theories and approaches to literacy development. Educational innovations cannot succeed if they are limited to isolated classrooms. Change is difficult, but there is much more more potential that significant differences will be made if the school staff is informed and working in concert.

4) Administrators need to be educated in the area of literacy development. If administrators are to be instructional leaders, they need to be as familiar with current research and theories of literacy development as
they are with the basal reading program. As illustrated by this study, it is very difficult for teachers to bring about significant change without the support of those to whom she is responsible. Schools should be places where teachers are encouraged and supported in experimenting and searching for new approaches that will enhance their effectiveness.

5) **Teachers need to be assisted in the search for ways to make use of basal reading programs in ways which are creative but still meet the demands of the system.** In facing up to the current realities of public education in this country and the call for increased accountability, it is unlikely that we will soon see the demise of reading instruction which consists largely of the basal program. Thus, creative ways of meeting systemic demands while also teaching children to read and write with other kinds of experiences are needed. For example, Mrs. Dee's decision to allow children to read the basal of their choice and for their own purposes during independent reading provided considerable opportunities for self-initiated reading practice.

6) **Teachers should be assisted in developing support groups.** This teacher received great benefit from informal contacts with a network of fellow Reading Recovery teachers, many of whom were facing similar
problems and decisions. Teacher educators should support teachers in developing and maintaining relationships with peers who have similar needs and interests.

7) The struggle to articulate ideas and assumptions, justify teaching practices and describe observations of children is one that has great benefits. All of these exercises are crucial in helping teachers to enhance their professionalism and self-confidence. They help teachers to be more reflective and to be aware of what they are doing and why.

Implications for Literacy Development

1) A rich and varied collection of literacy learning materials should be readily accessible to students. The children in this classroom responded positively to the large collection of books and other literacy materials which were available to them. Literacy materials such as the listening center, big books and wall charts, as well as trade books, provided the children with hours of self-sponsored practice in reading as well as opportunities for using language with their peers and their teacher. Though there were clear classroom favorites, such as Brown Bear, Brown Bear, What Do You See?, the individual children in this classroom responded to different kinds of books, thus underlining the importance of variety in
the collection which will meet the needs and interests of a wide range of readers. Another key is visibility and accessibility. The books that the children read most were those which were read aloud, discussed, displayed, shared with friends and generally celebrated.

2) Children need opportunities every day to read books of their choice and for their own purposes. Opportunities for independent and shared reading must go beyond the typical "when you work is done" format which caters to the better readers who least need it and places and undue emphasis on skills work over real reading. When the children in this classroom were given certain blocks of time in which independent reading was the focal point, all of the children engaged in reading and in sharing books with their classmates, and this often took place spontaneously throughout the morning. Conversely, when independent reading was de-emphasized by the teacher, the children gravitated toward other activities such as drawing or playing games. There is evidence in the literature which suggests that time spent in silent reading is linked to gains in reading, whereas there is no evidence that such gains are correlated with time spent on worksheets (Anderson, et al, 1985).
3) The daily storytime is an essential ingredient in any classroom literacy program. Throughout the year, the storytime provided one of the most important arenas for literacy learning in this classroom. Aside from the communal pleasure inherent in hearing and talking about stories and in the joint performances of familiar poems and books, a great deal of instruction took place during storytime. Here children received explicit teaching about stories and about book handling, gained ideas for their own written texts and had their appetites whetted for books to which they later returned on their own. As such storytime helps children to build their knowledge about the world, about stories and reading, which will facilitate their individual construction of meaning in independent reading and writing.

4) In order to meet the needs of all children, primary grade literacy programs should offer a wide range of different kinds of writing opportunities. Some of the children, most notably the very low children, received great benefit and support from writing situations in which they had the opportunity to collaborate with other writers in creating texts. Although they also benefitted from such collaboration, high achieving children seemed to thrive in writing situations that were open and unstructured and provided them with choices about what to
write and how to write it. The classrooms which are the most facilitative of the literacy learning of all children are those which present opportunities for shared writing with the teacher and collaborative writing with peers as well as occasions in which children are given the freedom to structure their own contexts for writing.

5) **Literacy programs should consist of genuine reading and writing experiences.** The children in this classroom engaged in reading and writing experiences with enthusiasm and vigor and produced the most impressive oral and written language when literacy tasks were linked with their own purposes and intentions, as the message board and the written dialogue with the teacher in the journals did. When children read and write in the act of getting things done or engaging in social interaction, a great deal of literacy learning takes place as well.

6) **Children and teachers should have shared control of literacy events.** Teachers will always have the primary responsibility for planning, implementing and monitoring the various aspects of the literacy program. Still, the effective teacher is one who allows children a certain degree of self-determination and input into the activities which comprise the literacy program. When the children had a sense of personal ownership of literacy
events as they did in the shared writing, they took part with great enthusiasm and returned to the final products often and with great pride.

7) **Literacy activities should build on the natural developmental progressions observed in children's literacy growth.** In this study the low children all moved through progressive phases of copying, relying on patterned language and then on to true messages and original compositions. Especially at an early point in the year, teachers could build on these natural strategies by providing numerous opportunities for shared reading of predictable and patterned texts as well as shared writing events consisting of innovations on texts.

8) **Low children should be given the same opportunities to read and write as those given to their high achieving classmates.** In contrast to findings reported by Allington (1978, 1980) and many others, the teacher in this classroom did not treat low achieving children differently. Instead, she allowed them to read and write together with their more proficient peers who often offered assistance and self-initiated tutoring (i.e. Taundria and Kelly). This interaction between high and low children was beneficial for all the children.
Directions for Further Research

One of the most difficult aspects of any ethnographic study is the bounding of the data collection and narrowing the focus in order to ensure the manageability of the data collection and analysis. Inevitably, many of the original questions remain only partially answered and a multitude of new questions have arisen during the course of the study. The following suggestions for further research represent an attempt to articulate some of these questions.

1) Replication in other first grade classrooms. Would other teachers evidence similar struggles in implementing changes in the literacy program? The study indicated that the six subject children had unique and individual agendas for literacy learning. Would other high and low subjects evidence similar ways of understanding and carrying out literacy tasks?

2) Replication at other grade levels. First grade was chosen because it is the outset of formal literacy instruction. How would teacher attitudes, assumptions and practices and the children's responses be different if the children were older and more advanced in their literacy learning? Would the patterns of teacher/child and child/child interaction be different?

3) Case studies of Reading Recovery children which would document their participation in Reading Recovery lessons and in the classroom. This study indicated that Reading Recovery instruction had a powerful effect on the low children, one which sometimes overrode classroom practices and expectations. Most likely there were also ways in which classroom contexts for literacy influenced children's work in Reading Recovery. Observations of children in both settings could provide insights into these issues.

4) Longitudinal study of the subject children, their experiences and approaches to literacy learning as they
progress through the grades. What will happen to these children through the remainder of their formal schooling? Will they quickly adapt to the expectations and priorities of different teachers? Will they continue to demonstrate the trends of literacy use observed during first grade? Do children’s approaches to literacy change as they grow more experienced at "doing school"? Do their approaches to literacy change as they become more literate? Where are these children at the end of their schooling? Does their rank in the class change or does it stay the same?

5) Follow-up study of these children and their experience with their second grade teacher. Mrs. Dee created a literacy program which went across the grain of the traditional phonics/skills approach to literacy instruction. The children were part of this change, but the second grade teacher was not. Thus, she may have difficulty in building on what went before. Will this result in conflicts? Will the subject children have more difficulty in carrying out second grade literacy activities than their peers from other first grades, as Mrs. Dee feared?

6) Fine Focus on particular literacy events. In an attempt to be as comprehensive as possible, this researcher attempted to look at all of the literacy events in which these teacher and her children participated during the year. This provided the "big picture" at the expense of detailed analyses of the patterns of interaction and language use within specific literacy events. Most interesting and potentially productive would be investigations of children’s self-sponsored interactions and literacy use during informal reading and writing events such as peer shared reading and the message board.

7) Further investigations of the ways in which teacher theories and practices influence the theories and practices of their students. The children in the study were clearly influenced by their teacher in the ways in which they talked about and participated in literacy events. However, unlike other studies (i.e. Board, 1982), great differences were not found in the ways in which high and low children responded to the teacher and the classroom context. Perhaps Reading Recovery instruction was a confounding factor in this particular aspect of the study. More work is needed to explore the relationships between children's ability level and teacher influence.
8) **Studies of home influences on children's approaches to literacy.** There is no question about the fact that the experiences that children have with literacy outside of school have an impact on the ways in which they think about, talk about and engage in literacy activities. Tantalizing hints at home influences were apparent in children's responses in the reading and writing interviews and in self-initiated writing that children brought from home. However, little is known about the interrelationships among children's work at home and at school or the interactions among children, their parents and families and their teachers.

9) **Longitudinal studies of teachers.** Data collected over two years on Mrs. Dee and her classroom literacy program indicate that many of the practices observed in the second year had their roots in the previous year. Though demanding for teachers and researchers alike, detailed explorations of individual teachers and their instructional and personal practices, changes and struggles would provide information which could help teacher educators and administrators to create supportive inservice opportunities.

10) **Studies of the effect on teachers of intensive involvement in research.** What are the short term and long term results when teachers participate in research involving their classrooms and students? How does such participation affect their professional development or their personal self-confidence? What are the benefits for their students?

11) **Studies of elements which facilitate or undermine teacher change and educational innovation.** This study indicated that there were certain elements in this teacher's world which made change easy or difficult. Effective teachers are constantly growing and changing. How do they deal with the systemic pressures, peer pressure, administrative demands and the like? What are the most effective ways in which administrators and teacher educators could support and extend growth in teachers?
APPENDIX A

SAMPLE OF ELABORATED FIELD NOTES
9:00 - As I am setting up the video the children who have arrived are doing the usual things: milling about settling coats and stuff, discovering their letters from the Christmas Elf and sharing them with each other (though T. makes her usual offer to read the letters for them, I only observe one child--Charles--who takes her up on it)

While T does lunch count and the usual business, she invites the children to read the books that they have chosen for themselves. They had a library book and a self-selected class book in their desks as of yesterday, and then yesterday Sue asked them to chose two more books to keep in their desks. Thus everyone should theoretically have 4 books to look at as well as their Pictionary.

Below is a brief desciption of the children who choose to read:

Jenny - reads one of the RR books (Stop the Cat) with a very dramatic flair and a somewhat loud voice. She is performing for Abrahamn who listens raptly.

Kelly - quietly leafs through her library book (Big Sister and Little Sister) with great absorption despite Jenny's virtuoso performance just two seats away. After carefully looking through the entire book, she gives it to April, saying "This is my library book. Wanna' read it?" April takes the book and Kelly gets out her Pictionary and browses through it.

Antiwonne - quietly looks through a large and colorful picture book (can't see title). After a few minutes Tim leans over against Antiwonne's chair and the two of them look at the book together. Though few words are exchanged there is a nice warmth here.

Christina and Danyell - working together on a letter puzzle. Each letter has three pieces to fit together. On one is a lower case letter, on another a capital letter and on a third--a picture of an object which begins with that letter.

Joe - Reads through his chosen book (10 Little Bears) once very carefully, talking out loud and inventing text as he goes. However he reads in the halting word by word style he perceives to be reading and with lots of repetition and pattern to this language. Later he gets
up on his elbow on his desk, reads (or looks at) Jerimy's letter from the Christmas Elf and talks with Joyce and Cynthia

Scott spends most of his time just looking around and talking. Eventually he pulls Will You Go out of his desk and reads it aloud in a performance for April and whoever will listen. Abraham pulls out a large picture book and has it open on his desk. He has asked Scott, who is up on his elbows and knees, to help him. Scott is reading upside down but he identifies a few words this way as Abraham points to them. Whether they were correct or not I can't tell, but Abraham is certainly satisfied. At one point Abraham points to a word and Scott shakes his head with a laugh, saying, "That's too hard"

Note the subject children who chose not to read at all: Nin, Taundria, Joyce, DeAngela, Arthur. Tim only shared; he never pulled out his own book.

PN: Is the large number of RR children who took part in this due to their urgent desire to read and thus feeling of a need for practice?

9:20 - Calendar with Arthur is carried out in the usual fashion. Several times Arthur neglects to say capital and the class seems to get a kick out of these times when he catches himself and T. has to go back, erase and fix it.

9:30 - Children are called up to the rug for story time. As usual they begin with several poems. After reciting their favorite pillow fight poem, T. reads several others, one of which she introduced yesterday and two new ones. Children often join in on final words of a phrase, especially when there is a strong context (rhymes, etc). T. notes this and tries to get them to understand how they can do this with the question, "How did you know that way went in there?" Arthur provides the answer when Taundria gets bogged down trying.

T. reads "Wheezers the Sneezer" from an anthology of Christmas stories, about an elf who has allergy problems which cause him to give terrific sneezes which are constantly upsetting shelves of toys, etc.
APPENDIX B

CHECKLIST OF LITERACY ACTIVITIES
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APPENDIX C

READING AND WRITING INTERVIEWS
CONCEPTS OF READING INTERVIEW

1) Do you know how to read?
   If yes: a) How did you learn to read?
       b) Did someone help you to learn? Who?
           How did they help you?
       c) Do you like to read? Why?
       d) What do you like to read?

   If no: a) Would you like to learn to read better? Why?
       b) How do you think you'll learn to read?

2) What is reading? What do you do when you read?

3) Why do people read?

4) Do the people you live with know how to read?
   a) What do they read? When do they read?

5) Do you have a favorite story? Tell me about it.

6) Do you ever read here at school?
   a) What do you read? When? Why?
   b) how do you chose the books that you read?
   c) do you ever read reading books? Why?

7) What do you do during reading time in the morning?
   Have you noticed anything different in how you do reading?

8) Do you like to read with a friend? Who? Why do you like to read with a friend instead of by yourself?

9) Are there books that are too hard for you to read?
   What makes a book too hard to read?

10) When you are reading and you come to something you don't know, what do you do? Do you ever do anything else?

11) Who is a good reader in your class?

12) Why is _____ a good reader?

13) What does _____ do when s/he comes to something she doesn't know?
14) Let's say that a new boy/girl moves into your room and sits right next to you who is having trouble learning to read. How could you help him/her to learn to read?

15) How would Mrs. Anderson help him/her learn to read?
A variety of writing materials should be arrayed in front of the child, including lined and unlined paper, pens, pencils, markers and crayons.

1) Can you write?
   Show me what you can write. (Offer choice of materials)
   What did you write? Read it to me?
   How did you learn to write that?

2) What is writing? What do you do when you write?

3) Do you ever write here at school?
   What do you write? When? Why?
   Why do you think Mrs. Anderson asks you to write?

4) How do you decide what to write in your journal?
   a) what do you do when you want to write a word you don't know?

5) Do you ever write at home?
   What do you write? When? Why?

6) Does your Mom (or whatever caregiver) know how to write?
   Do you ever see her writing? What does she write?

7) If Mrs. Anderson asked you to help that same new little boy/girl to write a really good story, how would you help him/her?

8) Who's a good writer that you know?
   a) how do you know _____ is a good writer?


Brown is a Beautiful Color by Jean Carey Bond. Watts, 1969.


Don't Forget the Bacon written and illustrated by Pat Hutchins. Greenwillow, 1976.


Make Way for Ducklings written and illustrated by Robert McClosky. Viking, 1941.

Mike Mulligan and the Steam Shovel by Virginia Burton. Houghton Mifflin, 1939.

Mr. and Mrs. Pig's Evening Out written and illustrated by Mary Raynor. Atheneum, 1976.


Trick or Treat by Louis Slobodkin. Macmillan, 1957.


Roth, R. (1980). *A study of the meanings ten children take from the schooling process as they are taught to read in the first grade* (ERIC document No. 194 207).


