

1997

Diverse Roads to Literacy: Examining the Literacy Learning of Six First Graders.

Deborah Rickards
Louisiana State University and Agricultural & Mechanical College

Follow this and additional works at: https://digitalcommons.lsu.edu/gradschool_disstheses

Recommended Citation

Rickards, Deborah, "Diverse Roads to Literacy: Examining the Literacy Learning of Six First Graders." (1997). *LSU Historical Dissertations and Theses*. 6515.
https://digitalcommons.lsu.edu/gradschool_disstheses/6515

This Dissertation is brought to you for free and open access by the Graduate School at LSU Digital Commons. It has been accepted for inclusion in LSU Historical Dissertations and Theses by an authorized administrator of LSU Digital Commons. For more information, please contact gradetd@lsu.edu.

INFORMATION TO USERS

This manuscript has been reproduced from the microfilm master. UMI films the text directly from the original or copy submitted. Thus, some thesis and dissertation copies are in typewriter face, while others may be from any type of computer printer.

The quality of this reproduction is dependent upon the quality of the copy submitted. Broken or indistinct print, colored or poor quality illustrations and photographs, print bleedthrough, substandard margins, and improper alignment can adversely affect reproduction.

In the unlikely event that the author did not send UMI a complete manuscript and there are missing pages, these will be noted. Also, if unauthorized copyright material had to be removed, a note will indicate the deletion.

Oversize materials (e.g., maps, drawings, charts) are reproduced by sectioning the original, beginning at the upper left-hand corner and continuing from left to right in equal sections with small overlaps. Each original is also photographed in one exposure and is included in reduced form at the back of the book.

Photographs included in the original manuscript have been reproduced xerographically in this copy. Higher quality 6" x 9" black and white photographic prints are available for any photographs or illustrations appearing in this copy for an additional charge. Contact UMI directly to order.

UMI

**A Bell & Howell Information Company
300 North Zeeb Road, Ann Arbor MI 48106-1346 USA
313/761-4700 800/521-0600**

**DIVERSE ROADS TO LITERACY:
EXAMINING THE
LITERACY LEARNING OF SIX FIRST GRADERS**

A Dissertation

**Submitted to the Graduate Faculty of the
Louisiana State University and
Agricultural and Mechanical College
in partial fulfillment of the
requirements for the degree of
Doctor of Philosophy**

in

The Department of Curriculum and Instruction

by

Deborah Rickards

B. S., University of Minnesota, 1975

M.Ed., Louisiana State University, Shreveport, 1983

Ed.S., Louisiana State University, 1996

August 1997

UMI Number: 9808772

**Copyright 1997 by
Rickards, Deborah**

All rights reserved.

**UMI Microform 9808772
Copyright 1997, by UMI Company. All rights reserved.**

**This microform edition is protected against unauthorized
copying under Title 17, United States Code.**

UMI
300 North Zeeb Road
Ann Arbor, MI 48103

**©Copyright 1997
Deborah Arbs Rickards
All rights reserved**

DEDICATION

To Kerry, for giving me the inspiration

To Noxema J., for being a wonderful teacher

To Dan, for sharing all the rest of what makes life worthwhile

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I owe a large debt of gratitude to my friends and colleagues who have helped me on my long professional journey to this dissertation. Here I thank just a few of the many people who have strongly influenced the creation of this work.

I appreciate the cooperation of the district and the school personnel who allowed me entrance into such a wonderful first grade classroom. I am especially indebted to Pat, a gifted and caring teacher, for her openness, trust, encouragement, and friendship. This research could not have been conducted without Pat and her remarkable first graders. Many thanks go to Aaron, Ben, Calvin, Chris, Josh, Trevor, Aimee, Cedrick, Marcy, Tameka, Melanie, Lacey, Clint, Kevin, Chuck, Ashley, Allison, Albert, and James. In this work, I have tried to capture a small part of the many joyous and amazing efforts of these young learners as they became readers and writers.

I also acknowledge the members of my dissertation committee, all of whom brought a wide range of professional experience and wisdom to my work. Dr. Earl Cheek, as my major professor, helped me through numerous hurdles and extended unwavering trust in my abilities. Thanks also to Dr. Jan Stuhlmann, Dr. Gary Rice, Dr. Diane Burts, and Dr. Victoria Rodrigo for their continued support.

I am most fortunate to have had the assistance of exceptional friends and colleagues. Thanks to my doctoral study group, Gypsye Bryan, Pat Caillouet, and Fran Crochet, for sustaining me through many lonely hours of study. I am

also grateful for the contributions of my good friend, Joanie Melancon, who helped put the polish on my rough draft and who helped ensure the trustworthiness of my work. Sincere appreciation is due to one of my dearest friends, Dr. Kerry Laster, for her encouragement, support, professional expertise, and helpful suggestions.

I could not have reached this position without a firm foundation. I acknowledge and deeply appreciate the contribution of my parents, Martha Arbs and the late Robert Arbs, for their love, trust, and high expectations. They always had faith in my abilities, supported my professional efforts, and took pride in my achievements. It was their nurturing and love that helped make this dissertation possible.

Most of all, I am profoundly thankful for my husband, Dan Rickards, who offered his constant love, support, and patience. Words are inadequate to express his contribution to my professional and personal life. Thanks for making, in so many ways, all my dreams come true.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

DEDICATION	iii
ACKNOWLEDGMENTS	iv
ABSTRACT	ix
CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION	1
Statement of the Problem	1
The Purpose of the Study	2
The Setting	3
The Teacher	3
The School and Community	6
The Classroom	8
Significance of the Study	9
Research Questions	10
CHAPTER 2: REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE	11
Best Practices in First Grade Literacy Instruction	11
A Balanced Reading Program	15
A Balanced Writing Program	29
Curricular Integration	33
Social Interaction	34
Grouping	35
Assessment	36
Best Practices for At-Risk First Graders	37
School Responses Related to Curriculum and Instruction	39
School Responses Related to Early Intervention	43
Summary	48
CHAPTER 3: METHODOLOGY	50
Research Design	50
Multiple Case Study	50
Qualitative Component	51
Pilot Study	53
Selection of Participants	54
Data Collection	56
Data Collection Techniques	56
Data Analysis	61
Constant Comparative Analysis	61
Cross-Case Analysis	62
Trustworthiness	62
Credibility	63

Transferability	64
Dependability and Confirmability	64
CHAPTER 4: THE CLASSROOM CONTEXT	66
The Classroom	66
A Day in Pat's Classroom	72
CHAPTER 5: CASE STUDIES OF INITIALLY SUCCESSFUL STUDENTS	81
Categories	81
Three Case Studies	85
Chris	85
Josh	102
Trevor	120
CHAPTER 6: CASE STUDIES OF INITIALLY LOW-ACHIEVING STUDENTS	133
Three Case Studies	133
Ben	133
Calvin	157
Aaron	171
CHAPTER 7: TEACHER INTERACTIONS	192
Interaction with All Six Students	193
Basal Text Instruction	193
Phonemic Awareness	194
Explicit and Scaffolded Reading Instruction	194
Independent Reading	195
Demonstrations of the Writing Process	195
Assessment	195
Opportunities to Respond	196
Summary	197
Interactions with Initially Low-Achieving Students	197
Additional Guided Reading Instruction	198
Additional Opportunities to Read Whole Texts	198
Additional Phonemic Awareness Activities	198
Additional Opportunities to Respond	199
Additional Explicit and Scaffolded Instruction	199
Assessment to Determine Teaching Points	200
Information for Parents	200
An Excerpt from Field Notes	201
Summary	211

CHAPTER 8: GROUP SIMILARITIES AND DIFFERENCES	213
Analysis	213
Similarities	214
Differences	215
Discussion	218
CHAPTER 9: FINDINGS, IMPLICATIONS, LIMITATIONS, AND FUTURE RESEARCH	220
Findings	220
Educational Implications	222
Implications for Instruction	222
Implications for Policy	226
Limitations	229
Future Research	230
Personal Reflections	231
REFERENCES	234
APPENDIX A: CLASSROOM PROFILE	251
APPENDIX B: INITIAL AND FINAL SCORES OF PARTICIPANTS	252
APPENDIX C: LETTER TO SCHOOL DISTRICT	253
APPENDIX D: LETTER FROM SCHOOL DISTRICT	254
APPENDIX E: PARENT PERMISSION LETTER	256
APPENDIX F: PHONETIC ANALYSIS	257
APPENDIX G: STUDENT INTERVIEW QUESTIONS	259
VITA	260

ABSTRACT

The purpose of this descriptive multiple-case qualitative study was to observe six students -- three students who initially experienced difficulty with early literacy tasks and three who initially encountered success. It was conducted in a classroom with an exemplary teacher using literature-based instruction, the writing process, integration across curricular areas, and an intervention strategy designed to accelerate the learning of the students who encountered difficulties with literacy tasks. This research was conducted to examine the following questions: (a) How did each child interact with reading/writing materials and with other readers and writers within the classroom? (b) how did the teacher interact with each child? and (c) what were the similarities and differences between the school experiences of the initially successful and initially low-achieving students in a developmentally appropriate classroom?

Results of the case studies showed that the six children followed diverse paths to literacy. At the end of the research, two of the students excelled at reading and writing tasks, three performed at a level comparable with others in the class, and one remained significantly at risk of reading failure. The most notable differences between the two groups of learners were that (a) the initially low-achieving group had significantly more opportunities to interact with texts and the teacher, and (b) the initially successful group remained superior to the low-achieving group in each student's oral reading accuracy, error rate, and self-correction rate on grade level basal reader selections.

By providing an in-depth description and analysis of six students as they interacted with texts, other learners, and their teacher, this study provided insights into how literacy learning for first graders might be supported in other instructional settings. Specifically, implications for instruction and policy were examined.

CHAPTER 1 INTRODUCTION

Statement of the Problem

This study originated from my concern for children who find learning to read difficult. Children who perform at the bottom of the class at the end of first grade remain in that position by the end of fourth grade (Juel, 1988) and beyond (Stanovich, 1986; Wells, 1986). These children are ultimately more likely to drop out of school, be retained, or receive special education placement (Allington, 1991a, 1995). They are also more apt to struggle with literacy tasks throughout their school careers and into their adult lives.

Numerous studies have documented the differentiated instruction provided to children who find learning to read difficult (Clay, 1985; Idol, West, & Lloyd, 1988; Knapp, Shields, & Turnbull, 1995; McGill-Franzen & Allington, 1991; Ysseldyke, Thurlow, Mecklenburg, & Graden, 1984). Instruction for at-risk literacy learners has traditionally focused on rote learning, basic knowledge, and skills in isolation (Knapp, Shields, & Turnbull, 1995; McGill-Franzen & Allington, 1991; Means & Knapp, 1991; Moll, 1991). A growing body of research suggests that reading problems are preventable for the vast majority of students who encounter difficulty with literacy acquisition (Allington, 1996; Clay, 1985; Hiebert, Colt, Catto, & Gury, 1992; Taylor, Short, Frye, & Shearer, 1992; Wasik & Slavin, 1993). However, unless instruction is specifically designed to accelerate learning, school responses do not reliably improve children's status as poor readers.

For example, Hiebert, Colt, Catto, and Gury (1992) report results of one early intervention project. While 77% of the students in their program were reading at the primer level at the end of first grade, only 18% of a comparison group who participated in a traditional Title I program achieved that same level of reading skill. Forty-seven percent of the students in the traditional program remained nonreaders at the end of first grade. In contrast, at the end of first grade only 7% of the early intervention students were nonreaders. Thus, research suggests that most reading problems in young learners can be prevented if given timely and appropriate instruction.

The Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study was to explore the literacy progress of students in a classroom with a teacher using best practices (Zemelman, Daniels, & Hyde, 1993) for first grade literacy instruction. The teacher used an intervention strategy designed to accelerate the progress of at-risk readers based in part on the works of Marie Clay (1982, 1985, 1991a, 1991b, 1993) and a study by Taylor, Short, Frye, and Shearer (1992).

The participating teacher followed the recommended standards and developmentally appropriate practices offered by the International Reading Association and the National Council of Teachers of English (*Standards for the English Language Arts*, 1996) and the National Association for the Education of Young Children (Bredekamp, 1987). I examined six students in this classroom-- three students who entered first grade able to successfully complete early literacy tasks (such as reading a familiar predictable text and using phonetic

spelling) and three students who were initially unsuccessful--as they interacted with texts, other learners, and the teacher.

Ethnographic methods informed this research by providing case studies of six first graders, giving detailed accounts of the classroom dynamics and instructional opportunities that affected their literacy learning. I also examined their learning through an additional perspective. By having three students who entered first grade able to successfully complete early literacy tasks (such as reading a predictable familiar text and using phonetic spelling) and three students who initially had difficulties with these tasks, the data were analyzed for similarities and differences in the classroom interactions between these two groups of learners.

Although I do not discount the impact of students' home lives on their academic achievement, the focus of this research remained on the school. "The focus is on children's lives at school and on offering new perspectives for understanding and supporting children in the spaces that educators control" (Dyson, 1993, p. 242).

The Setting

The Teacher

When considering the type of classroom in which to conduct my research, I purposely selected a classroom that simulated a natural learning environment (Harste, 1989). I assumed I might learn more by studying a classroom that provided a rich literacy environment rather than a classroom in which literacy was narrowly defined. A former principal recommended Ms. Pat

Alexander (pseudonym) for this study because she was an exemplary teacher who utilized developmentally appropriate teaching and kept abreast of research and current practices in the field of early literacy.

Pat, a European American woman, was in her mid-thirties. She had been a teacher for 15 years, 11 of those years in a first grade classroom. She had also taught second grade for three years and third grade for one year. Pat had worked in a variety of educational settings. She taught in a parochial school, rural pre-kindergarten through eighth grade school, and an inner city pre-kindergarten through first grade school. Pat began the research year teaching at the inner city school, but she was reassigned to a rural elementary school in mid-September due to limited enrollment. She held a B.S. degree in elementary education from a southern university.

Though Pat had not enrolled in a Masters degree program because of the demands of her two small children, she remained committed to professional development. She was a member of the local, state, and international reading organizations, and she served as president of the local reading council during the research year. She served on the Board of Directors of the state reading association. Pat attended state and international reading conferences and had given presentations at several state conferences. She routinely read *The Reading Teacher* and pertinent professional books. In the spring of 1997, Pat was selected by the state reading association to be one of 11 teachers statewide to appear in a video production on best teaching practices in a balanced literacy program. Besides seeking professional growth in the field of

literacy, Pat had attended and presented at state math conferences. She was also trained in the Louisiana Systemic Initiatives Program, a statewide initiative for the improvement of math and science teaching.

To confirm the developmentally appropriate practices employed in Pat's classroom, I used the *Teacher Beliefs and Practices Survey, First Grade Version* (Buchanan, Burts, White, Bidner, & Charlesworth, 1997) and the *Checklist for Rating Developmentally Appropriate Practice in Early Childhood Classrooms* (Charlesworth, et al., 1993). The first instrument measures the developmental appropriateness and inappropriateness of a teacher's beliefs and practices on a scale from 1 (most inappropriate) to 5 (most appropriate), and the second instrument confirms the developmental appropriateness or inappropriateness of a teacher's practice. On the section of the first instrument that reported her beliefs, Pat scored a mean of 4.7 for developmentally appropriate beliefs and 1.7 for inappropriate beliefs. These scores indicated Pat had a strong belief in the value of using developmentally appropriate practices in a first grade classroom. On the same instrument, Pat's self-report of her practices scored at 3.9 for developmentally appropriate practices and 3.1 for inappropriate practices. These scores signified that Pat did not consistently use practices that correlated with her beliefs. As I analyzed the items correlating with inappropriate practices Pat reported she employed, many items were related to reading instruction. Burts (personal communication, October 29, 1996) reported that reading-related items on this survey seem to cause the most controversy in interpreting the appropriateness of a particular practice. To

confirm the appropriateness of the practices used in Pat's classroom based upon my extended observations, I used the Charlesworth, et al. (1993) instrument. On this checklist, Pat obtained a mean score of 4.7, indicating that her practices were highly developmentally appropriate.

The School and Community

Randall Elementary School (pseudonym) was a 15-year-old rural elementary school in a south Louisiana school district. As of November 1, 1996, the district had 30,480 students. The ethnic makeup was 64% European American, 34% African American, and 2% Hispanic American, Asian American, or Native American. Fifty percent of the students within the district participated in the federal free/reduced lunch program.

As of October 16, 1996, Randall Elementary had a school population of 831 students: 676 European American students (81%), 145 African Americans (17%), 5 Asian Americans (< 1%), and 5 Hispanic Americans (< 1%). Fifty-one percent of these students participated in the federal free/reduced lunch program. The school had one Headstart class, seven kindergartens, eight first grades, eight second grades, nine third grades, five fourth grades, one mild/moderate special education class, and one severe/profound special education class. There were also two physical education teachers with assistants, one music teacher, one librarian with a clerk, two resource room teachers (one full-time and one part-time), two counselors (one full-time and one part-time), two part-time French teachers, and one computer proctor.

Ms. Joanne Palmer (pseudonym) was Randall's principal. It was her first year in this position. She previously was an assistant principal at another elementary school within the district and was a former kindergarten teacher at Randall. Ms. Palmer had an assistant principal, one secretary, and one part-time office clerk.

Randall's mission statement was displayed in the school's office. "The staff at Randall Elementary believes that all students can learn and can achieve mastery of essential skills. We accept responsibility to foster positive growth in social and emotional behavior and attitudes so that each child may reach his full potential."

The community surrounding the school was rural. Randall had the largest number of buses of any school within the district. The population was stable, except for families at one apartment complex who were generally transient. Parent support was good, and the community was family-oriented. Even the poorest families provided sufficient funds so their children could participate in school-sponsored activities. Since Ms. Palmer assumed leadership at Randall, parent volunteerism increased significantly.

Teachers at Randall were expected to use the basal reader, but Ms. Palmer supported the use of other materials for supplementing the basal program. The first grade teachers were required to administer the end-of-the-book tests for the primer and first grade level basal reading texts. Preprimer end-of-the-book tests were optional.

When students encountered academic problems at Randall, the classroom teacher or parents referred them to the School Building Level (SBL) committee. The SBL committee met weekly to consider whether individual students needed a special education evaluation or classroom instructional modifications under Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973. Parents were also given a form in October and January of each school year to report on health-related or academic concerns. The school participated in the federal Title I program as a *targeted assistance school*. Monies from this program were used to provide supplemental assistance to students having academic difficulties. At Randall Elementary School, Title I provided funds for a proctor who monitored the computer use of qualifying students in a Title I computer lab.

The Classroom

The students in this classroom were assigned to Pat in mid-September when a new first grade class was formed at Randall due to increased enrollment. The children were selected so the class would be grouped heterogeneously. Their first day with Pat was September 20, 1996. One student enrolled at Randall on November 6, 1996, and one withdrew on January 9, 1997. I did not receive parental permission to work with one of the students, so all reports are on the remaining 19 students.

Of the 19 students, 12 were boys and 7 were girls. Fifteen were European American, 3 African American, and 1 Asian American. Fifty-three percent of the students participated in the free/reduced lunch program. Three of the children had been previously retained in either kindergarten or first grade.

On October 1, 1996, the students ranged in age from six years, one month to seven years, eight months (see Appendix A for a classroom profile). No students received Title I services. One student qualified for a mild/moderate special education class late in the school year and was placed in a self-contained special education classroom on April 7, 1997.

Significance of the Study

Allington states, "we must create schools that provide children who need more and better instruction with that instruction" (1995, p. 11). Past research provides evidence that the literacy development of initially low-achieving first grade students can be accelerated if these students receive substantial amounts of more intensive instruction (Allington, 1995; Clay, 1991c; Lyons, 1991; Wasik & Slavin, 1993). This study explored the progress, instruction, and learning opportunities of six students in a first grade classroom with a teacher using developmentally appropriate teaching practices and her own intervention strategy, but with no additional instructional support or special acceleration program.

This research first used thick description to portray the literacy learning of six first graders and then examined the similarities and differences between the initially successful and initially low-achieving students. By studying the complex interactions in an enriching, developmentally appropriate first grade classroom, I offer insights into how other educators, in other places and with other children, might take advantage of the instructional implications gained from this research.

Research Questions

I examined the following questions in an effort to better understand (a) how each child participated in reading and writing acts in a literacy-rich environment, (b) the actions of an exemplary teacher as she attempted to accelerate the learning rate of at-risk learners, and (c) the similarities and differences in learning experiences of the students.

1. How did each child interact with reading/writing materials and with other readers and writers within the classroom?
2. How did the teacher interact with each child?
3. What were the similarities and differences between the school experiences of the initially successful and initially low-achieving students in a developmentally appropriate classroom?

CHAPTER 2 REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

What is the nature of effective first grade literacy instruction? What instructional adaptations are successful with low-achieving readers and writers? In the review of the literature for this study, these questions were addressed by focusing on the following areas: (a) effective instructional practices for first grade literacy instruction, and (b) effective practices for at-risk learners.

Best Practices in First Grade Literacy Instruction

Over the last several decades, the views of researchers and practitioners in the field of literacy have changed dramatically. Most educators now believe that learning, rather than being a sequential bit-by-bit process, is constructive, recursive, and context-driven. From the curriculum reports, research summaries, and position papers of many educational disciplines (National Council of Teachers of Mathematics, Center for the Study of Reading, National Writing Project, National Council for the Social Studies, American Association for the Advancement of Science, National Council of Teachers of English, National Association for the Education of Young Children, and the International Reading Association), Zemelman, Daniels, and Hyde (1993) identified the common features in these reports that define "best educational practice" related to current definitions of teaching and learning. Curriculum reports from these various disciplines share several assumptions characterizing the contemporary paradigm of education. According to these reports (Zemelman, et al., 1993, p.

7-8), learning activities should be (a) child-centered, soliciting the students' own interests; (b) experiential, with students learning by doing whenever possible; (c) reflective, with opportunities for students to look back and debrief; (d) authentic, with real ideas in purposeful contexts; (e) holistic, with instruction proceeding from the whole to its parts; (f) social and collaborative; (g) democratic; (h) cognitive, with activities designed to develop true understanding of concepts and higher order thinking; (i) psycholinguistic, with language being the primary tool for learning; (j) rigorous and challenging, with students making choices and accepting responsibility for their own learning; (k) developmental; and (l) constructive, where students gradually construct their own understandings in a productive learning environment.

In addition to the recommendations listed above, the National Association for the Education of Young Children offers a position concerning appropriate practices for the primary grades (Bredekamp, 1987, 1997; Bredekamp & Copple, 1997; Bredekamp & Rosegrant, 1995). These developmentally appropriate literacy practices for first graders include these key components: (a) Curriculum is designed to develop children's knowledge and to help them learn how to learn; (b) curriculum and instruction are designed to develop self-esteem, feelings of competence, and positive feelings toward learning; (c) each child is viewed as a unique person with an individual pattern and timing of growth; (d) curriculum and instruction are responsive to individual differences in interests and abilities; (e) different levels of ability and development are expected and accepted; (f) curriculum is integrated so that

learning in all traditional subjects occurs mainly through projects and learning centers that reflect children's interests; (g) the classroom environment allows children to learn through active involvement with each other; (h) children work and play cooperatively in small groups; (i) learning materials and activities are concrete, real, and relevant to the children; (j) the goal of the literacy program is to expand the children's ability to communicate orally and through reading and writing; and (k) social and cultural contexts influence all children's development.

These recommendations from Zemelman, et al. (1993), the National Association for the Education of Young Children (Bredekamp, 1987, 1997; Bredekamp & Copple, 1997; Bredekamp & Rosegrant, 1995), in addition to recent standards from the International Reading Association and the National Council of Teachers of English (Crafton, 1996; *Standards for the English Language Arts*, 1996), suggest a classroom that is print-rich and filled with books of various levels and genres. Whole texts are read and written by students and adult models. Teachers in literacy-rich classrooms communicate the importance of real reading and writing by engaging children in a variety of print activities in every aspect of the school day. The recommendations encourage meaning-making, student choice, student talk, and socialization. The teachers in these classrooms facilitate learning and are keen observers of students' interests and needs. One would see learning centers, cooperative groups, quality children's literature, an assortment of writing materials, and phonetic spelling. Subskills such as phonics and word recognition would be taught as needed to accomplish larger goals, not in isolation or as the primary

goal. Literacy activities would be seen in content areas such as math, social studies, and science. Each child's progress would be assessed at regular intervals primarily through teacher observation and the use of anecdotal notes, checklists, and rubrics. Parents would receive narratives of their child's progress and performance. Many educators would characterize these classrooms as "whole language" or holistic, language-based environments.

The term "whole language" has sparked controversy in the reading field, and many teachers and researchers have debated the efficacy of whole language versus traditional approaches (Smith, 1994). There is evidence that whole language practices stimulate children's understanding of and positive attitudes toward reading and writing, but there is also evidence that traditional skills-oriented approaches increase scores on standardized tests (Pressley, Rankin, & Yokoi, 1996). Mosenthal (1989) advises literacy educators to focus on how traditional and whole language perspectives can complement each other and be integrated to meet the academic needs of students. More educators are now calling for a "balanced" reading program--one that integrates whole language with explicit instruction in word recognition and comprehension strategies (Cunningham & Allington, 1994; Delpit, 1986; Manning, 1995; Pressley, Rankin, & Yokoi, 1996; Routman, 1991, 1996; Spiegel, 1992; Strickland, 1996; Vacca, 1996; Wharton-McDonald, et al., 1997).

Teachers who are developing a balanced literacy program in a first grade classroom deal with many instructional issues and program components. Reading and writing will be separated in this review for purposes of

organization and clarity, but in reality there is little separation between these areas. Issues in reading include the various dimensions of reading development seen in first graders, phonemic awareness, concepts about print, appropriate book selection, and the development of inner control. Components of a balanced reading program include reading aloud, book introduction activities, shared reading, guided reading, independent reading, repeated reading, and teaching skills and strategies. In writing, issues include characteristics of first grade writing, spelling stages, and phonetic spelling. A balanced writing program includes writing aloud, shared writing, independent writing, and spelling instruction.

A Balanced Reading Program

Reading Issues

Dimensions of reading development. In a first grade classroom, one would see students at various points in their reading development (Walker, 1992). As first graders acquire a growing understanding of graphophonics, print conventions, the use of context, and the structure of stories, they shift their focus to using this knowledge so that their fluency in word identification integrates with their fluency in developing ideas (Walker, 1992).

Though some researchers disagree (K. Goodman & Y. Goodman, 1979), it appears that young children pass through stages in reading development (Juel, 1991). In her review of the literature on beginning reading, Juel (1991) determined that most research supports at least three qualitatively different stages. Juel's terminology for these stages is (a) selective-cue stage, (b)

spelling-sound stage, and (c) automatic stage. After a child discovers that print itself carries meaning, the individual begins to identify words by attending to random features of either the environment in which the print occurs or to some features of the print itself. In this selective-cue stage, the child attends to minimum graphic information and maximum contextual information. Sulzby (1985) identified this as *aspectual reading* because the child focuses on one or two aspects about print to the exclusion of others. As the child becomes more aware of print conventions, he or she enters the spelling-sound stage. In this stage, the child gains use of sound/symbol relationships to decode unfamiliar words and to aid in using context cues (Juel, 1991). In the automatic stage, most words are identified automatically and there is increased speed of word recognition. Words are recognized either through automatic phonological recordings or on the basis of visual features (Juel, 1991).

Phonemic awareness. Phonemic awareness refers to the ability to deal segmentally and explicitly with sound units smaller than the syllable. The relationship between phonemic awareness and learning to read is important--research suggests that it is the best predictor of early reading acquisition (Adams, 1990) and appears to play a causal role in the acquisition of reading (Stanovich, 1993/1994). Phonemic awareness skills enable children to use letter-sound correspondences to read and spell words. It is important because it is linked with the ability to decode, which is linked with the ability to comprehend what is read (Juel, 1991).

Often phonemic awareness develops satisfactorily in children as they interact with the sounds of language before they enter first grade, but phonemic awareness skills can be taught if needed (Lundberg, Frost, & Peterson, 1988). If entering first graders require more exposure to activities promoting phonemic awareness, several activities are appropriate (Adams, 1990; Griffith & Olson, 1992). Read-aloud books that emphasize speech sounds through rhyme, alliteration, phoneme substitution, or segmentation offer students an opportunity to play with language (Griffith & Olson, 1992; Richgels, Poremba, & McGee, 1996; Yopp, 1995). Writing experiences can promote phonemic awareness because children must deal directly with segmenting the sounds of spoken language. Teachers use Elkonin boxes (Clay, 1985, 1991a; Gaskins, Ehri, Cress, O'Hara, & Donnelly, 1997) to guide students to segment words into sounds and to help them visualize the match between each sound and a letter or letters. Children are given a series of connected boxes drawn across a page, with the number of boxes corresponding to the number of phonemes in a given word. The teacher first models moving a chip into each box as each sound is articulated. The children eventually take over this task, and then ultimately write the appropriate letters in the boxes instead of using a chip.

Concepts about print. A critical insight that children must gain before becoming readers is the communicative function of print (Juel, 1991). Children develop concepts about print as they are read to and as they experiment with writing. Some concepts include whether a child can identify the front of the book, that print tells the story, where the first letter in a word is found, what a

letter is, and some punctuation marks (Clay, 1989). Johns (1980) found that above-average first graders were superior to below-average readers in print-direction concepts, letter-word concepts, and advanced-print concepts. First grade teachers assess and teach print concepts during shared and guided reading sessions.

Book selection. The physical design of books for beginning readers and the text of their stories can support the changing needs of first grade readers (Peterson, 1991). Teachers who are aware of factors such as familiarity with the story, the match between the illustrations and the text, and the predictability of language patterns and story episodes will better ensure the success of beginning readers. Clay (1982) found that children have more opportunities to develop useful strategies when they read from books that reflect the language they speak fluently.

Primary grade teachers can select books sorted along a gradient of difficulty for use as instructional materials for early readers (Peterson, 1991). Books at the easiest level will have consistent placement of print, repetition of one or two sentence patterns with one or two words changing, oral language structures, familiar objects and actions, and illustrations providing high support. Texts at the next level of difficulty will repeat two to three sentence patterns with phrases changing, varying opening and closing sentences, oral language structures, familiar objects and actions, and illustrations providing moderately-high support. Books at the third level of difficulty function as a bridge between lower-level, patterned books and the texts at the highest level of difficulty.

These books repeat three or more sentence patterns, have varied sentence patterns, blend oral and written language structures, provide fantasy in the framework of familiar experiences, and have illustrations providing moderate support. Books at the fourth level of difficulty have a variety of sentence patterns, use written language structures, use dialogue, tell a conventional story, contain some specialized vocabulary, and have illustrations that provide low-moderate support. At the final level of difficulty, books contain elaborated episodes, extended descriptions, links to familiar stories, literary language, unusual and challenging vocabulary, and illustrations providing low support. Books at lower levels can be used for guided and independent reading tasks; higher level books can be introduced early in the first grade year for shared reading or as read-alouds.

Development of inner control. Teachers aim to produce independent readers who apply strategies to solve word recognition problems. Clay refers to this as "developing inner control" (1991a, p. 232). Students who are developing inner control (a) monitor their own reading; (b) search for cues in word sequences (syntax), in meaning (semantics), and in letter sequences (graphophonics); (c) cross-check one source of cues with another; (d) repeat to confirm their reading; and (e) self-correct to make cues match. A flexible use of multiple sources of information allows the independent reader alternative approaches to solving problems with text. A range of approaches for problem-solving include strategies such as (a) anticipating a sentence or discourse pattern, (b) using prior knowledge about the world or about stories, (c) using

previous experiences with print, (d) recognizing most of the salient features of most of the words encountered in a particular text, (e) using clusters of letters from known words to determine new words, (f) using phonetic analysis, and (g) using picture cues (Clay, 1991a).

A running record is "a tool for coding, scoring, and analyzing a child's precise reading behaviors" (Fountas & Pinnell, 1996, p. 89). A running record of students' oral readings shows the teacher whether individual students are actively sorting and relating cues (Clay, 1991a). An analysis of students' miscues can help the teacher detect the kinds of information (semantic, syntactic, or graphophonic) each student is using to work through a text. The analysis also aids the teacher in examining whether students are monitoring their reading to correct their miscues. Efficient self-correction is an important behavior in good reading (Clay, 1993).

Novice readers making good progress have miscues but build error-correcting strategies to deal with them. Low progress readers make many miscues and have no efficient or effective strategies for dealing with their errors. Clay's research has shown that there are large differences in the rates of errors among students (Clay, 1991a, 1993). The best readers made one error in 100 words; low progress children made one error in three words.

Reading Program Components

Reading aloud. The reading aloud of quality children's literature is often seen as the single most powerful influence in children's success in learning to read (Anderson, Hiebert, Scott, & Wilkinson, 1985; Cullinan, 1992a; Friedberg &

Strong, 1989; Mason, Peterman, & Kerr, 1989; Trelease, 1989, 1996). Reading aloud powerfully influences language and literacy development (Cullinan, 1992b). It provides children chances to make connections with other books and between books and their own experiences. Reading aloud is the first opportunity for children to begin developing a sense of story so that they can have certain expectations about how a story is constructed and how characters act. It also enriches imaginative and critical abilities (Friedberg & Strong, 1989). One valuable effect of children being exposed to stories and poems is the sense of wonder and enjoyment that quality literature creates in children (Snow & Ninio, 1986). Much of what is read aloud may be repeated readings of favorite books and poems (Routman, 1991). Reading aloud is particularly effective with students who have limited experience with written language because it helps them learn the particular vocabulary, syntax, and decontextualized nature of written text (Purcell-Gates, 1989).

Hoffman, Roser, and Battle (1993) propose that a model read aloud program should include the following factors: (a) designating a legitimate time and place in the daily schedule for reading aloud, (b) selecting quality literature, (c) sharing literature related to other literature, (d) discussing literature in lively and thoughtful ways, (e) grouping students to maximize opportunities to respond, (f) offering many types of response and extension opportunities, and (g) rereading selected pieces. Reading aloud is an essential part of an effective first grade literacy program.

Book introduction activities. Independent reading of new texts by first graders can be facilitated by the teacher providing a rich introduction to the story instead of reading the entire story to the children in advance of student reading (Clay, 1991b). A good introduction, although not needed before familiar books, makes the text more accessible to the reader and provides a scaffold for a child's successful first reading of a particular book (Anderson & Armbruster, 1990). With a rich book introduction, children learn that they must initiate the reading work themselves to get meaning from texts (Clay, 1991b). In a book introduction, the teacher introduces the book, talks about parts of the text that the students may find difficult, explores and draws on the children's prior knowledge, and helps students understand the structure of the text as a whole. This scaffolding makes it easier for students to attend to the many details about print. Lower-achieving students need more careful anticipation by the teacher in deciding which text features might make problem-solving easier (Clay, 1991b).

Instructional settings for reading. In a first grade classroom, reading instruction is delivered in several ways to provide modeling (Sweet, 1993) and scaffolding (Beed, Hawkins, & Roller, 1991) to help students acquire reading skills and strategies. First grade teachers use shared reading settings and guided reading settings for instructional purposes.

Shared reading is "any rewarding reading situation in which a learner-- or group of learners--sees the text, observes an expert (usually the teacher) reading it with fluency and expression, and is invited to read along" (Routman,

1991, p. 33). It is based on Holdaway's (1979) notion of the *shared reading experience*. In a first grade classroom, shared reading is often done with big books and poems containing rhyme, rhythm, and repetition (Huck & Pinnell, 1991; Strickland & Morrow, 1990). Though it is most common for the teacher to act as "expert," a student may volunteer to lead the group, or a more able student can be paired with a struggling reader. Many primary grade classrooms use listening centers to provide students the opportunity to follow along with the recording of a book.

Typically the text is read several times for enjoyment before being used to discuss print features. Students discover features of text such as letters, phonemes, punctuation, and high-frequency words as they interact in shared reading situations (Routman, 1991; Routman & Butler, 1996; Strickland & Morrow, 1990). The purpose of a shared reading session is to support the students so that they can enjoy the books that they cannot yet read, appreciate the story as a whole, and learn the characteristics of book language (Adams, 1990; Ministry of Education, 1985). Eldredge, Reutzel, and Hollingsworth (1996) found that the shared book experience was superior to round-robin reading in reducing young children's oral reading errors, improving their fluency, increasing vocabulary acquisition, improving reading comprehension, and enhancing word analysis skills.

Guided reading provides the major instructional setting for a balanced reading program (Fountas & Pinnell, 1996). During a guided reading opportunity, the teacher and a small group of children talk, think aloud, and

question their way through a book at the students' instructional level (Anderson, et al., 1985; Ministry of Education, 1985; Mooney, 1995). Often, students and the teacher each have a copy of the text. A beginning guided reading lesson has three phases (Routman & Butler, 1996): (a) The teacher introduces the book; (b) children attempt to read the text by themselves, with teacher support; and (c) children form pairs and reread the book aloud to their partner. In the second phase, the teacher shows the students what questions to ask themselves as readers and which strategies might be successful when problems are encountered. Meaning-making is the focus; vocabulary, strategies, and content are discussed together. In a first grade classroom, a big book is typically used during the guided reading sessions. Afterward, the students are often given the same book in a small version to read independently or with a partner.

Repeated reading. Opportunities to reread texts are often provided as part of a balanced reading program. Martinez and Roser (1985) report that, when listening to a book that has been read repeatedly, children are more familiar with the text and more willing to discuss it. Children focus on more complex characteristics of the text as it becomes more familiar, and they develop a deeper understanding after several repeated readings. They also become more fluent through repeated readings (Samuels, 1979). Repeated reading of favorite texts provides a rich resource of language activities (Strickland & Morrow, 1990). During some readings, various strategies may be used to strengthen and extend understandings. For other readings, books may

be reread in unison so that students can enjoy the text, improve fluency, and develop confidence in their abilities to understand a book thoroughly.

Repeated readings also promote children's independent readings of those books (Teale & Sulzby, 1989). Adams (1990) asserts that teachers should choose texts that are worth rereading.

Independent reading. Independent reading provides opportunities for students to read self-selected books or other types of print, such as labels, letters, charts, or signs (Anderson, et al., 1985; Ministry of Education, 1985). Sometimes the first grade teacher will select books for the children to read independently, as in a follow-up to a guided reading session. On most occasions, the children will choose their own books for independent reading from the range of books available in the classroom or from the library. The aim of independent reading is to give students the opportunity for easy reading so that they can practice their reading strategies on familiar, and occasionally unfamiliar, books (Ministry of Education, 1985). The volume of reading done by a student has been associated with increased reading achievement (Pearson & Fielding, 1991); therefore, the more children read, the better readers they become.

Teaching for strategies. Readers, even at the beginning stages of reading, can use strategies to gain meaning from written text. An effective first grade program balances attention between explicit instruction in word recognition and comprehension strategies. Both areas, word recognition and comprehension, are taught to help students obtain meaning from text.

Word recognition strategies involve explicit attention to three cueing systems: meaning, syntax, and graphophonics (Clay, 1991). When using meaning cues, readers monitor their reading to ensure that what they read makes sense. Readers use syntactic cues to determine that what they read sounds like an English sentence. Graphophonic cues relate to letter-sound relationships. The reader attends to what looks right visually and sounds right phonetically.

Explicit instruction in using these cueing systems helps beginning readers develop a repertoire of strategies for word recognition (Clay, 1991a). The first grade teacher prompts students to attend to meaning and syntactic cues by asking questions such as, "Does that make sense?" "Does that sound right?" "Does that sound like a sentence?" Prompting students to reread to confirm their responses also helps them develop strategic reading behaviors.

Instructional approaches that include systematic phonics as part of a balanced first grade program lead to higher achievement in both word recognition and spelling (Adams, 1990, 1991). This appears particularly true for young, at-risk, or economically disadvantaged students (Adams, 1991). The ability to read most words in a text, either through immediate word recognition, context, syntax, or graphophonic cues, is a prerequisite for reading comprehension.

Stahl (1992) offers nine guidelines for exemplary phonics instruction. He cautions, however, that systematic attention to decoding must be placed within the context of a program that stresses comprehension and interpretation of

quality narrative and expository text. According to Stahl, exemplary phonics instruction (a) builds on children's rich concepts about how print works; (b) builds on a base of phonemic awareness; (c) is direct and clear; (d) is integrated into a total and balanced reading program; (e) includes invented spelling practice; (f) develops independent word recognition strategies, focusing attention on the internal structure of words; (g) generates automatic word recognition so that students can devote their attention to comprehension; (h) focuses on reading words, not memorizing rules; and (i) includes instruction in onset and rimes. The use of onsets (the part before the vowel) and rimes (the part from the vowel onward) is a helpful instructional approach for first graders because the brain detects the pattern of the rimes as children attempt to decode words (Cunningham, 1992/1993). It capitalizes on the natural tendency for students to seek out the pronounceable word parts (Adams, 1990; Gunning, 1995).

The first grade teacher's role is to have students behave like skilled readers to the fullest extent possible from the beginning (Ministry of Education, 1985). In a first grade classroom, teacher modeling is the primary mode of demonstrating comprehension processes to students. As the teacher explains the mental reasoning involved in a specific reading task, the goal is not to have the students simply replicate the teacher's thinking, but to have the teacher provide sufficient scaffolding to ensure that learning takes place (Dole, Duffy, Roehler, & Pearson, 1991). Teacher modeling is most effective if the information given is specific and explicit, lacks ambiguity, and flexibly adjusts to

text cues (Dole, et al., 1991). Pearson and Gallagher (1983) promote a model of explicit comprehension instruction that begins with teacher modeling. The students then engage in guided practice, followed by independent practice. Finally, students apply the strategies on their own while reading regular texts. Pearson and Gallagher (1983) call this the *gradual release of responsibility*. Their model fits well with the first grade practice of guided reading and the concept of scaffolded instruction.

What comprehension strategies can be modeled and taught in first grade? First graders can learn a simplified version of story grammar to help them understand narratives. Morrow (1984) demonstrated that kindergarten students who received instruction in story grammar performed better on measures sensitive to story structure knowledge. First graders can learn to set their purposes for reading (Brown, Palincsar, & Ambruster, 1994). They can also learn to utilize their background knowledge to comprehend text (Pearson & Fielding, 1991; Tierney & Pearson, 1994). Prediction questions have proven to be effective components of story-reading lessons (Pearson & Fielding, 1991). Other types of inferencing tasks, according to Dole, et al. (1991), can be taught to children as young as second grade. When the topic is familiar, first graders can detect inconsistencies and errors when being read to (Vosniadou, Pearson, & Rogers, 1988). During guided reading and shared reading sessions, teachers can model and encourage the use of self-monitoring by routinely asking the questions, "Does that make sense?" "Does that sound right?" and "Does that look right?"

A Balanced Writing Program

Writing Issues

Characteristics of first grade writing. Calkins (1986, 1994) identified common characteristics of first grade writers. Many first graders rehearse for writing by drawing (Graves, 1983). The act of drawing and the illustration itself provide a scaffold within which the piece of writing can be constructed. Though some text may accompany the illustration, most of the child's meaning is carried by the picture. Children move gradually toward the use of conventionally readable text as they write (Sulzby, 1989). As students gain more control over letter-sound relationships, significant growth is seen in spelling, conventions, voice, and story content (Calkins, 1986).

As first graders move away from drawing, talking can become their form of rehearsal (Dyson, 1993). A substantial amount of talk can surround the production of just a few written words (Calkins, 1994). As students become more confident, they are likely to produce several pieces of writing in one session. It is also common for first graders to jumble several stories into one. A common revision strategy in first grade is to add to a piece of writing as children realize they have more to tell (Calkins, 1986). Editing usually occurs after drafting. A typical editing checklist at the end of first grade might include questions such as the following. Do you have your name and date on your paper? Does it make sense? Have you checked the Word Wall for spelling? Have you checked for capital letters at the beginning of names and sentences? Do you have punctuation at the end of your sentences?

Spelling stages. Learners go through several developmental stages as they learn to spell (Gentry, 1982). The first stage is prephonemic spelling. In this stage, children scribble, form letters, and put letters together, but with no awareness that letters represent phonemes. This stage is most typical of preschoolers and beginning kindergartners. In the second stage, early phonemic spelling, there is a limited attempt to represent phonemes with letters. The third spelling stage is phonetic spelling. The child uses letters for phonemes and represents most of the phonemes, for example, *unkl* for *uncle*. The second and third spelling stages are typical of many kindergartners and beginning first graders. In the fourth stage, transitional spelling, children internalize much information about spelling patterns, and the words they write follow rules and look like English words. This stage usually includes first through third graders. The final stage is standard spelling. At this stage, usually occurring in the third or fourth grade, most words are spelled correctly. Students begin to use homonyms, contractions, affixes, and irregular spellings. In a first grade classroom, most students will be in the second through fourth stages of spelling development.

Phonetic spelling. Phonetic spellings (also known as invented spelling or temporary spelling) are the reasoned approximations and strategies students use as they spell and are based on what learners know about words--rules, patterns, configurations, meanings, and word origins (Routman & Maxim, 1996). When first graders engage in phonetic spelling during writing, they not only

become better spellers, but their decoding ability in reading is enhanced (Adams, 1990; P. Cunningham & J. Cunningham, 1992).

A study by Clarke (as cited in Adams, 1990) indicated a definite advantage for the invented over the traditional spelling program in first grade classrooms. For the at-risk children in the study, those who had been in the classrooms where phonetic spelling was encouraged significantly outperformed students receiving traditional spelling instruction on most of the spelling and word recognition measures. Adams (1990) concluded from this study that at-risk first graders who are allowed to use phonetic spelling reflect a better developed sense of letter-sound relationships between spoken and written words, and this sense grew from the students' own active efforts to spell words.

Writing Program Components

Instructional settings for writing. As with reading, writing instruction is delivered in several ways to provide modeling and scaffolding so that students can acquire writing skills and strategies. First grade teachers use writing aloud, shared writing, and guided writing for instructional purposes.

Writing aloud occurs when the teacher writes in front of the students and verbalizes what he or she is thinking. Writing aloud is a powerful technique in first grade classrooms for modeling topic selection, content, spacing, handwriting, spelling, punctuation, vocabulary, revision, and editing techniques (Routman, 1991). The teacher's writing is typically done on a large piece of chart paper or overhead projector.

Shared writing involves the teacher and student(s) composing collaboratively. Unlike the language experience approach, the teacher and children negotiate the topics and texts together. In shared writing, "the teacher's role is an enabling, supportive one that encourages and invites students to participate and enjoy writing experiences that they might not be able to do on their own" (Routman, 1991, p. 60). While teachers act as scribes in a shared writing lesson, they will demonstrate concepts of print, writing strategies, phonetic spelling, and writing conventions (Button, Johnson, & Furgerson, 1996).

Guided writing is the essence of the first grade writing program (Routman, 1991). As in guided reading, the teacher guides students, responds to them, and extends their thinking as they compose text. In contrast to shared writing where the teacher does the writing, in guided writing the students do their own writing on topics of their choice. Many teachers call this time *Writing Workshop*. There are writing opportunities involving student choice, decision-making, and peer response (Calkins, 1986; Graves, 1983). Conferences are routinely held between the teacher and individual students to discuss writing strategies and mechanics. Often a first grader will take a guided writing piece and *publish* it to share with others. Guided writing provides the opportunity for the explicit teaching of various aspects of writing and gives students the guidance needed to be involved in the writing process and produce quality products (Button, et al., 1996).

Independent writing. The purpose of independent writing is to "build fluency, establish the writing habit, make personal connections, explore meanings, promote critical thinking, and use writing as a natural, pleasurable, self-chosen activity" (Routman, 1991, p. 67). The student writes without teacher intervention or evaluation. Journal writing and response logs are common forms of independent writing.

Spelling instruction. Besides having the freedom to experiment with sound-symbol relationships and spelling patterns by using phonetic spelling, first graders need some explicit instruction in spelling strategies and high frequency words. Instruction in onsets and rimes not only develops decoding abilities but spelling skill as well (Gunning, 1995). A focus on spelling patterns aids in a student's ability to spell (Adams, 1990). In addition, first grade teachers must establish high expectations that a core list of high-frequency words will be spelled correctly even during the first draft stage of the writing process (Routman, 1996; Routman & Maxim, 1996). These words can be posted on a Word Wall and/or placed in individual student's spelling folders.

Curricular Integration

Educational experiences are more authentic and of greater value to students when the curriculum is integrated, rather than being compartmentalized into subject-matter components. When students are involved in authentic tasks, they seek to construct meaning from their experiences (Bergeron & Rudenga, 1996). Interdisciplinary instruction capitalizes on logical and natural connections between content areas

(Consortium of Interdisciplinary Teaching and Learning, n.d.). In first grade, an integrated curriculum is typically organized around themes or projects (Bredekamp, 1987). By integrating thematically, it is possible to combine instruction in worthwhile ways across reading, writing, math, social studies, science, and the arts (Shanahan, Robinson, & Schneider, 1995). Engaging students in themes helps them become confident and resourceful learners who are capable of constructing knowledge, tackling complex problems, and critically examining issues (Altwerger & Flores, 1994).

Social Interaction

Early reading and writing concepts, attitudes, and behaviors are seen as children's constructions that occur within the influences of a social environment that involves them, to varying degrees, in a range of literacy activities (Cook-Gumperz, 1986; Sulzby & Teale, 1991). When children share experiences, ideas, and opinions with others, they engage in intellectually demanding work (Vygotsky, 1978). Given tasks worth talking about and permission to talk, first graders' interactions in school can contribute considerably to intellectual development in general and literacy growth in particular (Dyson, 1987).

In a first grade classroom, opportunities for communication help students recognize that everyone can teach and learn within the classroom setting (Pontecorvo & Zuccheromaglio, 1990). The National Association for the Education of Young Children (Bredekamp, 1987) recommends that primary-aged children be provided with varied opportunities to communicate. Teachers should recognize the importance of developing peer group relationships, not

only to promote social competence, but also cognitive ability (Bredenkamp, 1987).

Grouping

Traditional ability grouping has been shown to be a faulty approach to literacy instruction. Grouping by ability is expected to tailor instruction to what students are capable of learning, and thus many educators presume that it will improve achievement. Traditionally the teacher has three reading groups based upon reading achievement. Ability groups, once established, are usually highly stable, with little movement between classes and groups (Barr & Dreeben, 1991). There are qualitative and quantitative differences in the experiences of children in high and low groups which place children in the low group at a disadvantage (Anderson, et al., 1985). Since the 1950s, it has not been uncommon for students in the low group or class, besides having the pace slowed and different instructional emphases than in the more able groups, to have entirely different reading materials tailored for their supposedly more limited abilities.

The means of assessing reading ability, especially for children in the early grades, are quite fallible (Anderson, et al., 1985). Thus, grouping decisions based upon reading ability also may be faulty. Problems with ability grouping can be alleviated if a flexible approach to grouping is employed. Group members can be reassigned periodically, and groups can be formed using criteria other than ability (e.g., skill development, interests, randomly, or the students' choice) (Anderson, et al., 1985; J. Flood, Lapp, S. Flood, & Nagel,

1992; Fountas & Pinnell, 1996). Groups can be teacher-led, student-led, or cooperative. The most appropriate grouping pattern for each instructional experience can be determined only by analyzing student strengths and needs and then matching this information to the choices available (Flood, et al., 1992).

Assessment

Assessment of individual student's literacy learning is essential for planning and implementing an appropriate first grade literacy program. The purpose of sound assessment is to inform instruction, and at the same time, to provide students, parents, administrators, and the public with reliable and worthwhile information regarding students' progress (C. S. Gillespie, Ford, R. D. Gillespie, & Leavell, 1996). However, assessment of young children should not rely heavily on testing information or grades but should be based primarily on the results of observations of each student's skills and abilities (Bredenkamp, 1987; Shepard, 1994). It should avoid approaches that place children in artificial settings, obstruct the usual learning and developmental activities in the classroom, or divert children from their natural learning process (Bredenkamp & Rosegrant, 1995).

Authentic assessment involves assessments intended to measure real-life complex tasks. The teacher is concerned not only with the reading or writing products, but with the processes of reading and writing as well. Valencia (1990) offers four principles to guide the assessment of literacy development. First, sound assessment is anchored in authenticity and grows out of authentic reading and writing tasks. Second, assessment must be a continuous, on-

going process to chronicle each student's development. Third, valid literacy assessment must sample a wide range of literacy processes, affective responses, and literacy activities. Finally, assessment includes collaborative reflection by both the teacher and students.

First grade teachers employ a variety of tools to assess student progress in literacy development. Teachers use varied assessment strategies as they observe literacy behavior and complete checklists or keep anecdotal notes about children (Rhodes & Nathenson-Mejia, 1992). First grade teachers collect performance samples that provide tangible evidence of progress in both areas of reading and writing (Strickland & Morrow, 1989). They also collect information about first grade students' reading skills and strategies by taking running records (Clay, 1993) and analyzing miscues (Goodman, 1995). Rubrics and anchor papers help guide teachers as they assess first graders' literacy skills (Routman, 1991). Often, collections of a student's work are assembled in a portfolio. A good portfolio records a student's literacy development, informs instruction and planning, and provides a foundation for teacher-student and teacher-student-parent conferences (Farr, 1991).

Best Practices for At-Risk First Graders

Educators have long been concerned about the education of children who find learning to read difficult. These are the children who are most likely to experience retention in grade, placement in remedial or special education classes, and continuing difficulty with literacy tasks throughout their school careers. They are more apt to drop out of school, become teenage parents,

commit crimes, and/or remain underemployed or unemployed (Allington, 1991a, 1995). The term *at-risk* has a variety of connotations--students who live in poverty, are pregnant, have been retained, speak a second language, and so on (Waxman, 1992). For the purposes of this review, at-risk will mean students who are not successfully completing literacy tasks as compared with their age-level peers. It will be used synonymously with the term *low-achieving*.

Instruction for these at-risk literacy learners at all grade levels has traditionally focused on rote learning, basic knowledge, and skills in isolation (Knapp, Shields, & Turnbull, 1995; Means & Knapp, 1991; Moll, 1991). This "slow it down and make it more concrete" (McGill-Franzen & Allington, 1991, p. 21) version of instruction, coupled with curriculum and policies that support it, has been criticized as impeding the development of at-risk learners so that they are unlikely to become critical and competent readers and writers (Allington, 1991a, 1994, 1995; Bowman, 1994; Clay, 1993; Johnson & Allington, 1991; Means & Knapp, 1991; Shepard, 1991). Although emphasizing the *basics* for at-risk learners may be teaching some discrete skills effectively, the generally low levels of literacy for this population suggest that this emphasis neglects more advanced skills and strategies (Knapp & Needels, 1991).

In spite of additional resources from state and federal programs and despite recent educational reforms, there is substantial evidence that the most common school responses to student difficulties with literacy learning do not reliably improve children's status as poor readers (Allington, 1991a; McGill-Franzen & Allington, 1991). The way instruction is arranged and the varieties of

assignments and reading materials given to at-risk students limit their access to full literacy. It is essential that school responses enhance the at-risk learners' access to more and better instruction. Specifically, classroom curriculum and instructional practices must improve, and support services must be reorganized.

School Responses Related to Curriculum and Instruction

Curriculum and instruction must change from their traditional forms to better meet the needs of today's diverse learners. Allington (1995) claims that today's classrooms are often characterized by teacher interrogation of children after reading, not by "discussion, reflection, revision, or analysis" (p. 10). He asserts that a first order of change in schools must be in the kind of work that both teachers and children do. Means and Knapp (1991) recommend that educators reshape instructional strategies and the school curriculum.

Reshaping Curriculum and Instruction

Curriculum and instruction for at-risk first graders should entail the use of best practices described earlier in this chapter. Essentially all analyses of the instructional experiences of low-achieving learners portray substantial involvement in low-level tasks (Allington, 1991b). Typically, in an effort to help students improve their reading performance, standard reading programs are slowed and fragmented into smaller skill units (Heath, 1980). Findings related to traditional instruction for at-risk readers demonstrate that few schools have organized instructional resources so that students who need access to more and better instruction have an opportunity to receive it (Allington, 1991b; Ysseldyke, Thurlow, Mecklenburg, & Graden, 1984). Better efforts are needed

to facilitate the acquisition of literacy in all young children, but they are especially necessary for at-risk first graders.

Focus on complex, meaningful problems. Studies by Allington and McGill-Franzen (Allington & McGill-Franzen, 1989; McGill-Franzen & Allington, 1991) have found that low-achieving children usually are not given access to large amounts of high-quality instruction. These children spend fewer minutes reading texts and more time on isolated skill work when compared with their higher-achieving peers. Texts selected for the poorer readers have fewer words per page, more controlled vocabulary, and simplified syntax often different from natural language (McGill-Franzen & Allington, 1991). McGill-Franzen and Allington (1991) assert that, since children's academic work shapes their thinking, low-achieving students are constrained by tasks that require less comprehension and discourage risk-taking, self-monitoring, and independence.

Instead of breaking down content into its smallest units to ensure mastery, curriculum for all students, including the educationally disadvantaged, should focus on global tasks where purposes are evident and make sense to students (Garcia & Pearson, 1991; Knapp & Needels, 1991; Means & Knapp, 1991). A curriculum that concentrates on complex, meaningful problems helps students improve skills, knowledge, and problem-solving as it builds on information they already know. The more global task motivates students to acquire the skills and strategies necessary to accomplish the task. Basic skills such as decoding, blending, and noting main ideas can then be embedded in

more global tasks focusing on application of skills (Brophy, 1991; Means & Knapp, 1991).

Brophy (1991) and Dempster (1993) propose that the curriculum for at-risk students be characterized (a) by *complete lessons* with higher-order applications of content, and (b) by the limitation in the breadth of content to allow for more depth of coverage. Although less material would be presented, thorough mastery would be required. Brophy (1991) further recommends that this reduced curriculum be centered on the most important knowledge and skills needed to be successful in society. In other words, at-risk learners would participate in a varied and integrated program with meaningful learning in the context of integration and application of skills.

Model powerful thinking strategies. Research in cognitive instruction demonstrates that for too long students have been shown the product they are supposed to achieve without a demonstration of the critical processes required to achieve it (Allington, 1994; Brophy, 1991; Knapp & Turnbull, 1991; Means & Knapp, 1991). At-risk first graders can be taught thinking strategies that affect all areas of the curriculum (Brown, Palincsar, & Armbruster, 1994). If teachers model thinking strategies emphasizing the cognitive and metacognitive components of procedural knowledge (how to apply strategies) plus the necessary conditional knowledge (when and why to apply strategies) (Brophy, 1991), low-achieving learners could make important progress in their comprehension and problem-solving competencies.

Encourage multiple approaches. Rather than trying to teach one right way to solve a problem, instructional approaches that foster students' abilities to invent strategies for solving problems are more appropriate (Means & Knapp, 1991). This will involve teachers providing students with open-ended problems for which there is no solution, or discussing all the different strategies used by various students to arrive at a solution for a problem that has only one correct answer.

Provide scaffolding to enable students to accomplish complex tasks. Because there are difficult components to many educational tasks, a key instructional concept is scaffolding (Ninio & Bruner, 1978). Scaffolding enables the learner to manage a complex task as the teacher assumes parts of the task. It occurs when the teacher enables a student to complete a task that the student could not otherwise do by providing a piece of information and/or segmenting the task into smaller, clearer ones (Juel, 1996). When preparing curriculum strands or units, teachers should plan appropriate scaffolding to ensure the gradual transfer of responsibility for managing learning activities to the students in response to their growing expertise on the subject (Brophy, 1991).

Make dialogue the central medium for teaching and learning. The use of dialogue is very different from the transmission approach found in many classrooms, particularly those serving at-risk learners. A dialogue connotes a form of communication in which all parties are participants with significant influence on the nature of the exchange (Means & Knapp, 1991). Dialogue capitalizes on the social nature of learning and encourages motivation,

problem-solving, and language development. Teachers can use questions and class discussion to stimulate students to process and reflect on content; recognize relationships among and the implications of important ideas; think critically; and use the information for problem-solving, decision-making, and advanced applications (Brophy, 1990). Discussion should be a sustained and thoughtful examination of a few related topics in which students are encouraged to explain, predict, debate, or otherwise consider the implications and applications of the content (Brophy, 1991).

School Responses Related to Early Intervention

For first graders who have problems with literacy tasks, traditional responses (Title I, special education, and retention) have been ineffective. The more current conceptualization of *early intervention* assumes that the most appropriate time to effectively assist children with reading or other learning problems is early in their school careers before the problems become magnified and more difficult to solve.

Ineffective School Responses

Support services, both special education and Title I, fail to substantially expand low-achieving students' opportunities to read, write, and listen to stories (Allington, 1994). Special education and compensatory education focus more often on providing skills lessons or minimizing potential problems for participating students (Wang, Reynolds, & Walberg, 1995). The common and traditional pullout model has been criticized for fragmentation of the school day, the potential for stigmatization, and the lack of consistency in the instruction

offered by two different teachers in separate locations (Allington, 1993; Strickland, 1995).

Children in such programs drill on phonics, vocabulary, and word decoding, usually in isolation rather than in the context of a story. Each of these is taught as a separate skill, rarely being placed in context and integrated into authentic reading and writing tasks (Knapp, Shields, & Turnbull, 1995; Means & Knapp, 1991). Students who find learning to read difficult rarely participate in compensatory programs that increase instructional time for literacy activities (Allington, 1991a; Haynes & Jenkins, 1986). These programs are typically arranged in short daily lessons that average between 20 and 30 minutes (Means & Knapp, 1991). Since the most commonly scheduled time for reading support services is during the time that reading is taught in the classroom, participating children have no larger periods allocated for reading instruction than other children (Allington, 1991a). Additionally, transition times for pullout programs fall in the 12-20 minute range (Allington, 1991a, 1993). This range includes the time spent preparing for the specialist teacher, moving to the pullout classroom, and settling into the other room and starting academic work. Consequently, at-risk students who participate in pullout programs can lose an hour or more of instructional opportunities each week when compared with their peers who remain in the regular education classroom.

An argument in support of pullout programs is that the specialist teacher and smaller class size can better accommodate individualization of instruction. In their analysis of curriculum, McGill-Franzen and Allington (1990) concluded

that individualization often meant working alone on low-level skills tasks. Little evidence was found of the specialist teacher's differentiation of instructional tasks for individual students by difficulty, task focus, or classroom curricula.

Lack of coordination between the core curriculum and schools' Title I and/or special education programs has been consistently documented (Haynes & Jenkins, 1986; Idol, West, & Lloyd, 1988; Johnston & Allington, 1991; Winfield, 1986). Classroom teachers often express little responsibility for the literacy education of the students in special programs. Some educators call for a collaborative approach between regular education and specialist teachers (Allington & Broikou, 1988; Idol, West, and Lloyd, 1988). Many schools have moved Title I and special education programs into the regular classroom. Specialist teachers team-teach with regular education teachers to better meet the needs of at-risk students (Allington, 1993).

In-class support reduces the amount of instructional time lost as children move from one location to the other. Moving support services into the regular classroom can cut transition time dramatically and increase the instructional time for at-risk learners. Another advantage of moving support services to the regular classroom is to minimize curricular fragmentation for participating students (Allington, 1993, 1994; Pugach, 1995). Typically, at-risk learners work in different, and often philosophically contradictory, reading curriculum (Walp & Walmsley, 1989). These students are also those who are least tolerant of curricular fragmentation (Allington, 1991a, 1991b). At-risk students have their learning made more difficult with the additional curricular materials and

academic tasks presented by the Title I or special education teachers. When specialist teachers move into the classroom, they can better support classroom learning and reduce stigmatization for those students experiencing difficulty. This move allows classroom and specialist teachers to emphasize the same skills and strategies; thus mastery of those skills and strategies improves (Allington, 1991a).

Retention and transitional-grade programs are often used as the school's first response for children having learning problems in kindergarten and first grade. Retention increases the likelihood that the student will ultimately drop out of school (Roderick, 1995). Although students typically have higher achievement during their retention year, their performance gradually slides downward. Three or four years after retention, many retained students are again functioning at a level lower than their now-younger classmates (Allington & McGill-Franzen, 1995). Transitional-grade programs also do not have a positive influence on student achievement (Smith & Shepard, 1987). The impact of these programs is virtually no different from retention (Allington & McGill-Franzen, 1995; Bredekamp & Shepard, 1989).

Effective School Responses

Effective school responses for at-risk learners differ markedly from traditional models (Slavin, 1987). Recently, there has been a greater willingness among school districts to adopt expensive early intervention programs designed to accelerate learning as a means of preventing early school failure (Wasik & Slavin, 1993). Since reading performance in the first

grade predicts reading level in the later grades (Juel, 1988; Stanovich, 1986), the case for early intervention is strong. Two of the better known and extensively researched programs are Reading Recovery and Success for All. A common element of both programs is individual tutoring by certified teachers.

Reading Recovery (Clay, 1985) includes a systematic set of procedures for helping the lowest achievers in a first grade class become proficient and independent readers. Procedures include specific strategies for teaching children, recommended reading materials, a staff development program, and administrative systems that coordinate the many facets of the program (Ross, Smith, Casey, & Slavin, 1995). In Reading Recovery, trained teachers tutor first graders who are having difficulties learning to read for 30 minutes a day beyond their regular reading instruction. Many studies have documented the short-term and long-term effectiveness of Reading Recovery (Clay, 1985; Ohio Reading Recovery Project, 1991; Pinnell, 1989; Pinnell, DeFord, & Lyons, 1988; Pinnell, Fried, & Estice, 1990; Pinnell, Lyons, DeFord, Bryk, & Seltzer, 1994; Spiegel, 1995).

By comparison, Success for All includes individual tutoring by certified teachers as one part of a comprehensive program. Additional program elements include (a) a reading program balancing phonics and whole language activities; (b) regrouping of students in the primary grades into smaller classes for homogeneous, cross-grade language arts instruction; (c) reading assessments every eight weeks with regrouping as needed; (d) a family support team; and (e) a program facilitator (Ross, et al., 1995). Studies have also

documented the effectiveness of Success for All (Ross, et al., 1995; Slavin, Madden, Dolan, Wasik, Ross, & Smith, 1994; Slavin, Madden, Karweit, Livermon, & Dolan, 1990; Wasik & Slavin, 1993).

Ross, et al. (1995) directly compared the effectiveness of Reading Recovery and Success for All. They determined that Reading Recovery strongly benefitted tutored students, particularly on passage comprehension. Success for All was more advantageous for special education students and for students who were not tutored. School climate and teacher attitude surveys showed advantages for Success for All with its comprehensive approach to schoolwide restructuring and integrating the reading curriculum. The researchers assert that their results justify a merger of Reading Recovery and Success for All, keeping the comprehensiveness of the Success for All program and replacing or supplementing the Success for All tutoring model with Reading Recovery approaches. They also suggest that Reading Recovery might be more appropriate for schools with strong language arts programs and relatively few students who are at-risk. Success for All appears more appropriate in schools that serve many at-risk learners or schools that need fundamental and comprehensive changes.

Summary

The role of first grade teachers in the development of students' reading and writing skills is an important one. Teachers must ensure that they meet the developmental and individual needs of all learners and establish and maintain the tone and structure of the classroom environment. The use of best practices

for all learners, both at-risk and those doing well, supports the literacy learning of first graders.

In a first grade classroom, the teacher's use of best practices is evidenced through an integrated curriculum; meaning-making in reading, writing, and the content areas; a print-rich environment; flexible groupings; modeling and scaffolding; and authentic assessment. Skills and strategies are explicitly taught in the context of meaningful activities. Learning centers, quality children's literature, and an assortment of writing materials are apparent. For children who are at-risk, school personnel respond early and intensively before student failure is likely. With a strong core language arts program and a well-designed instructional support program, there is little reason for first graders not to achieve acceptable levels of literacy development.

CHAPTER 3 METHODOLOGY

Research Design

Multiple Case Study

Because of my interest in better understanding how the various participants in a first grade environment and their interactions contributed to the success or failure of beginning readers and writers, a qualitative research design was selected for this study. An ethnographic multiple case study allowed me to compare and contrast the characteristics of initially successful and struggling beginning readers and writers. Long-term immersion over a period of seven months allowed me to gather comprehensive, systematic, and in-depth information about first graders in the early stages of literacy development. As Taylor (1989) stated, "Our task as social scientists is to try to understand the complexity of the literacy behaviors of young children, and our task as educators is to use these understandings to support and enhance children's learning opportunities" (p. 193).

Ethnography refers to methods of research that (a) emphasize exploring the nature of particular social phenomenon, (b) work with *unstructured* data, (c) investigate a small number of cases in detail, (d) analyze data by interpreting the meanings and functions of human interactions, and (e) create a product that takes the form of rich descriptions and explanations (Atkinson & Hammersley, 1994, p. 248). Focusing on multiple cases enhanced my understanding of the complex social phenomena in one first grade classroom, and the holistic and

meaningful characteristics of the literacy events in this classroom were retained (Yin, 1994). Case study is not a methodological choice, but a choice of the object of study (Stake, 1994). In other words, ethnography was the method of this research, and the individual cases were its focus.

Lincoln and Guba (1985) outline the advantages of the case study. These advantages include the following: (a) The case study is the principal vehicle for emic inquiry; i.e., research is carried out with an inside perspective; (b) the case study builds on the reader's tacit knowledge; thus the reader receives a vicarious experience; (c) the case study demonstrates the interplay between the researcher and the participants; (d) the case study provides the reader an opportunity to scrutinize for internal consistency and trustworthiness; (e) the case study provides thick description and thus helps a reader make judgements of transferability; and (f) the case study communicates information about context that is grounded in the particular setting being studied. Case studies are a dominant approach of the qualitative researcher.

Qualitative Component

Bisesi and Raphael (1995) identify characteristics of case study designs that are attributes of qualitative research. Researchers using qualitative case study approaches regard reality as multifaceted and open to interpretation. They believe that scientific knowledge consists of various interpretations of human learning and behavior, limited by unique perspectives, but contributing to some holistic and emerging understanding. Their purpose is to describe, explain, and understand by generating hypotheses to questions that ask what,

how, and why. The setting is naturalistic, and data are interpretive and analyzed inductively as themes and patterns emerge. The researcher is concerned with the trustworthiness of the findings. Meaning is the primary pursuit, and qualitative researchers are interested in process rather than simply outcomes or products (Bogdan & Biklen, 1992).

Research in one classroom over an extended period presents a complex social phenomenon that is a challenge to completely understand. I appreciate the metaphor of landscape exploration proposed by Spiro, Vispoel, Schmitz, Samarapungavan, and Boerger (1987) when describing ill-structured domains. They assert that deep understanding of complex conceptual landscapes, such as a classroom, cannot be obtained by a single traversal; instead the landscape must be "criss-crossed in many directions to master its complexity and to avoid having the fullness of the domain attenuated" (Spiro, Coulson, Feltovich, Anderson, 1994, p. 609). Spradley (1980) uses a similar metaphor when he compares the ethnographer with an explorer mapping a wilderness area. The explorer (ethnographer) begins gathering information, going first in one direction, perhaps retracing the route, then starting on a new course. Like the ethnographer, the explorer is seeking to describe a phenomenon rather than simply trying to find something. These metaphors seem particularly appropriate in arguing for the long-term immersion in one setting necessary for a thorough qualitative study.

Pilot Study

According to Lincoln and Guba (1985), one characteristic of naturalistic inquiry is an emergent design. The researcher chooses to allow the research design to emerge rather than to construct the design first, "because it is inconceivable that enough could be known ahead of time about the many multiple realities to devise the design adequately" (p. 41). Instead of entering the research site with specific questions, the qualitative researcher analyzes the field data compiled from initial observations to discover questions (Spradley, 1980). Yin (1994) suggests utilizing a pilot case study to help the researcher refine data collection plans and procedures. He asserts that the pilot case study is appropriate early in the research to assist the investigator in developing relevant lines of questions, with the inquiry much broader and less focused than the ultimate data collection plan. I originally recognized that my interest in this classroom was in the students who had difficulty with literacy tasks, but the research questions were tentative and undeveloped. Thus, I began a pilot study in a first grade classroom to negotiate my role as a researcher, become more familiar with the setting, select student participants, refine methodological procedures, and develop research questions (see Table 3.1, Phases 1 and 2).

The pilot study was begun in September 1996 in Pat Alexander's class at Randall Elementary School. I observed language arts lessons for several months and participated in literacy activities with all of the students. The initial goals were to interact naturally with the children and record detailed field notes describing these interactions. Spradley (1980) describes this beginning stage

of data collection as "descriptive observation" (p. 73), where the researcher attempts to get an overview of the social setting and what occurs there. As descriptive field notes were collected during the fall of 1996, the research focus began to narrow to particular students and specific research questions.

Selection of Participants

When considering the six children who would be the focus of my research, I looked for three children who were having difficulties with early literacy tasks (such as reading a predictable familiar book and using phonetic spelling) as they entered Pat's classroom and three children who were encountering initial success. I wanted to select children who were not at the extreme ends of competence (either having serious learning difficulties or already reading above grade level). One of the first tasks was to administer a series of assessment instruments to gather information about their entering-first-grade skills. *An Observation Survey* (Clay, 1993) measured each student's skill at letter identification, sight word recognition, concepts about print, oral reading of familiar text, words known in writing, and hearing sounds in words (see Appendix B for scores of the six children). I also looked at the students in the four flexible groupings that Pat had formed during the first months of school for her guided reading lessons.

The selection of the three students who were initially low-achieving was a straightforward task. Four children performed more poorly than others in the class on my initial assessments and classroom tasks, particularly as they read familiar predictable texts and used their knowledge of sound/symbol

relationships to write. Pat had selected these four children to receive instruction in reading skills and strategies designed to accelerate their literacy progress. I eliminated one of these four from consideration as a study participant because he had repeated first grade, was still encountering serious difficulties with first grade literacy tasks, and procedures for a special education evaluation had begun. The three students who remained as participants for this study were Ben, Aaron, and Calvin (pseudonyms).

It proved to be more difficult to select three students who were initially successful with first grade literacy tasks. Girls were not considered because my initially low-achieving group consisted of all boys. One student was eliminated because he was repeating first grade, and still another entered the classroom too late in the school year to be considered. Several other boys were not considered because of their age. Two of the three boys from my initially low-achieving group had recently turned six, and I wanted to ensure that my initially successful group did not consist of all older boys. I attempted to match the characteristics of my initially low-achieving group (gender, age, SES) with students who were initially successful, but no completely equivalent group was possible. Based upon Pat's feedback, entrance scores, analyses of field notes, and each student's ability to successfully read familiar preprimer reading materials and use phonetic spelling, Trevor, Josh, and Chris (pseudonyms) were chosen as study participants. Though Chris was not as strong initially as Trevor and Josh, he was still encountering success with early literacy tasks. He also was the youngest boy in the class.

All of the six participants were European American boys. Aaron was retained in his kindergarten year. All but Josh participated in the federal free/reduced lunch program. As of October 1, 1996, Chris was 6 years 1 month, Aaron was 7 years 3 months, Ben was 6 years 1 month, Josh was 6 years 11 months, Trevor was 7 years 1 month, and Calvin was 6 years 4 months old.

Data Collection

Table 3.1 is a graphic representation of the research timeline and procedures for data collection and analysis. Phases 1 and 2 cover the pilot study carried out during the early period of this research. Phases 3 and 4 comprise the procedures and analyses representing the focused research designed to answer my research questions.

Data Collection Techniques

Initial Procedures

In the spring of 1996, I requested permission of the principal at an inner city early childhood center (Headstart through first grade) to complete my research at that school. Pat Alexander was working at the school at the time, and her principal recommended her as an excellent first grade teacher who would accept me in her room as a researcher. Permission was then gained from the local school board. When Pat was transferred to a rural elementary school in mid-September 1996, I received permission from her new principal to conduct research at Randall Elementary School. The parents of all children

Table 3.1
Data Collection and Analysis
Timeline and Procedures

	DURATION/SUBJECT	EMPHASIS	TECHNIQUES
PHASE 1 •Pilot study •Field entry	•1 month •September 1996 •3-4 days/week •Language Arts	•Negotiate role as researcher •Become familiar with setting and data collection methods	•Participant observation •Descriptive field notes-- collect and review •Informal interviews with teacher
PHASE 2 •Pilot study	•2 months •October - November 1996 •3-4 days/week •Language Arts	•Select student participants •Develop research questions •Refine methodological procedures for recording field notes and cataloging artifacts •Write prospectus	•Participant observation •Descriptive field notes-- collect and review •Audiotape •Informal interviews with students and teacher •Member checking and peer debriefing
PHASE 3 •Focused research	•3 months •December 1996 - February 1997 •4-5 days/week •Language Arts and content area subjects	•Observe selected students •Begin data analysis •Develop tentative coding categories	•Participant observation •Focused field notes -- collect and review •Audiotape •Collection of artifacts •Student/teacher interviews •Member checking and peer debriefing •Constant comparative method
PHASE 4 •Focused research •Field exit	•2 months •March - April 1997 •1-2 days/week •Various subjects	•Continue data analysis •Confirm emerging themes in field •Search for negative cases •Write dissertation	•Participant observation •Focused field notes -- collect and review •Student/teacher interviews •Member checking and peer debriefing •Constant comparative method •Triangulation •External audit

were invited to a meeting early in the process to explain the intent of the study and to address any questions or concerns. All but one set of parents granted permission so that I could work with their child, interview, tape record, and collect documents. Included in the appendixes are copies of letters to the school district requesting permission to complete the study (Appendix C), from the school district granting permission (Appendix D), and the parent permission form (Appendix E). I also received approval from the Louisiana State University Institutional Review Board to conduct this research:

Observations

Participant observation is a particular mode of observation in which the researcher assumes a variety of roles within a case study situation and may participate in some events being studied (Yin, 1994). The participant observer analyzes his or her observations to determine meanings and to search for evidence of personal biases. The researcher plays an established participant role in the setting being studied.

Initial stages of this research helped to define my role in the classroom and to identify the amount of participation to assume. During the pilot study, I participated with all the first grade students in the classroom. My role was to interact with the children, but not to initiate or direct any learning activities. As the research progressed into the next phases, I remained in the role as a participant observer as I directed attention to the specific children being studied.

The nature of the researcher's observations unavoidably shifts from the early to later stages of an observational study (Adler & Adler, 1994). Spradley

(1980) identifies three types of observations used in qualitative research: descriptive, focused, and selective. Descriptive observations portray everything that happens in the setting, and they are used in the beginning stages of inquiry. Descriptive observations are unfocused, general in scope, and based on broad questions. Next in the observational process is focused observation, which directs the researcher's attention to a deeper and narrower portion of the research content. This period of observation generates clearer research questions, and the researcher begins to form themes and categories. These new questions and categories then require selective observations. At this point, the researcher focuses on refining the characteristics of and relationships among the objects of study. As this research project proceeded, Spradley's three types of observations were used to focus attention deeper into the elements of the first grade classroom that emerged as fundamental.

Field Notes

Field notes are the primary recording tool of the qualitative researcher. They are the written account of what the researcher sees, hears, experiences, and thinks while collecting and reflecting on data collected (Bogdan & Biklen, 1992). Field notes were a vital part of data collection procedures in this research.

In addition to the inclusion of descriptions of behaviors I observed in the classroom, field notes contained reflective impressions as the research progressed. Observer comments were distinguished throughout the field notes

so they were not confused with respondent comments. I also kept a supplementary journal of methodological thoughts and decisions.

Other Data Collection Sources

Additional sources of data were used throughout the research. Key informants provided insights, through an interview process, about my research topic. Informants included the teacher, students, and administrative staff. Student products were collected, and children were informally interviewed to describe their products, discuss their processes, and/or clarify their intentions and purposes. Official documents such as test results and report cards were reviewed. I had access to the teacher's anecdotal notes, running records, and portfolios for use as data sources. Conversations with the students and samples of their oral readings were periodically audiotaped and then transcribed. Weekly, I reviewed student papers sent home to parents. I also administered assessments of word recognition, oral reading, and words known in writing at the beginning, middle, and end of the research.

Ethics

Every effort was made in this research to address ethical issues such as individual rights to dignity, privacy, confidentiality, and avoidance of harm (Glesne & Peshkin, 1992; Yin, 1980). All individuals in this study participated voluntarily, through the consent of their parent or guardian (American Educational Research Association [AERA], 1992). The identities of all participants were confidential throughout all field notes and reports (AERA, 1992). I represented myself honestly to all involved, ensured that they were

informed of the research purposes, and I remained attentive to my own subjectivity and biases (Peshkin, 1988) throughout the course of this study.

Data Analysis

In qualitative research, data are analyzed inductively. The researcher begins with specific, raw units of information that are then classified or incorporated into a more comprehensive category or under a general principle (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). Analysis occurs during and after data collection. A central feature of qualitative analysis is the constant comparative approach (Glaser & Strauss, 1967), and the data from this research were analyzed using this method of data analysis.

Constant Comparative Analysis

The steps in the constant comparative method enumerated by Glaser (as cited in Bogdan & Biklen, 1992) were utilized: (a) Begin data collection; (b) search for important issues, recurring events, or activities in the data to develop categories of focus; (c) collect further data that provide examples of the categories of focus, looking to see the diversity of each category; (d) write about the categories by describing and accounting for all the incidents within the data while constantly searching for new incidents; (e) work with the data and emerging themes to discover basic processes and relationships; and (f) sample, code, and write as the analysis focuses on the core categories.

Although seemingly a step-by-step process, these procedures occurred simultaneously, and the analysis continued in a complex recursive fashion

where data were continually collected, coded, categorized, and analyzed until the completion of the research report.

Cross-Case Analysis

In this study, because I compared and contrasted the aspects of the first grade classroom that were relevant to initially successful and struggling readers, data were analyzed across individual cases. Yin (1984) advocates a replication strategy whereby a conceptual framework directs the first case study, then successive cases are compared to the first case to determine whether any patterns match. I looked for themes that cut across cases, and also themes that provided contrast among cases. The particular focus was on determining similarities and differences, not among individuals, but between the group of first graders characterized as initially successful readers and writers and the group of students identified as initially low-achieving readers and writers.

Trustworthiness

Though qualitative researchers do not use the same methods for establishing validity and reliability of their data collection methods and conclusions as do quantitative researchers, these elements are no less important in qualitative research (Rowe, 1986). Qualitative researchers use the terms credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability to establish the trustworthiness of the findings (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). To persuade readers that the findings were legitimate and trustworthy, several procedures were followed.

Credibility

To make it more likely that my findings and interpretations were credible, the techniques of prolonged engagement, persistent observation, triangulation, member checking, and peer debriefing (Lincoln & Guba, 1985) were used.

By observing and participating in this first grade class for seven months, my ability to understand the many aspects of the classroom environment was increased. Through prolonged engagement and persistent observation, I built trust among the participants, established emerging themes, and determined irrelevancies and distortions.

As a second precaution to ensure credibility, triangulation was built into this study in two ways. By collecting data through several techniques (triangulation of methods), the limitations of one technique were compensated for, and the use of other methods strengthened the research. By collecting and confirming data through multiple sources (triangulation of sources), data were verified and emerging themes and patterns were better established. Through these two procedures, any proposition confirmed through several methods or sources had its credibility greatly enhanced.

The classroom teacher served as the member checker (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). She received and reviewed a copy of the field notes daily, and we discussed any needed changes to accurately reflect the classroom situation and to eliminate any researcher bias. As the final research report was completed, the teacher had a final opportunity to test the credibility of the research by completing a comprehensive member check.

The use of a peer debriefer (Lincoln & Guba, 1985) is another technique to establish credibility. Through this entire research process, the peer debriefer discussed and debated the working hypotheses, probed for biases, helped define coding categories, and assisted me with any questions and concerns. My peer debriefer had 26 years of experience dealing with young children and was employed an elementary school principal. She had a Ph.D. in curriculum and instruction with an emphasis on reading and was familiar with qualitative methodology.

Transferability

The thick description present in a qualitative report enables someone interested in generalizing the information from the context of the study to reach a conclusion about whether transfer is possible to another context. Lincoln and Guba (1985) assert that the degree of transferability depends upon the degree of similarity between the sending and receiving contexts. Since the original researcher cannot know the contexts to which transferability might be sought, it was my responsibility as a researcher only to provide sufficient descriptive data to make similarity judgements possible. Thus, determinations of the generalizability of my research findings must be left to those researchers who wish to apply these findings to other settings.

Dependability and Confirmability

Lincoln and Guba (1985) suggest the use of an external auditor to provide dependability and confirmability. Qualitative researchers use an auditor to examine the data after field notes are analyzed to carefully verify both

the process and the product of the research. The researcher leaves an audit trail consisting of six types of documentation recommended by Halpern (as cited in Lincoln & Guba, 1985): raw data, data reduction and analysis products, data reconstruction and synthesis products, process notes, materials related to intentions and dispositions, and instrument development information. The auditor discerns whether the research findings are grounded in the data, judges whether the inferences are logical, and checks for bias. Schwandt and Halpern (1988) recommend six questions for the auditor to consider: (a) Were findings grounded in the data? (b) were inferences logical? (c) was the category structure appropriate? (d) can methodological shifts and inquiry decisions be justified? (e) what was the degree of researcher bias? and (f) what strategies were used for increasing credibility? I left an extensive audit trail through field notes and a reflective journal. The use of an external auditor at the end of the study provided dependability and confirmability. My external auditor was a retired elementary curriculum coordinator/reading specialist with an M.Ed. + 30. She had 33 years of teaching experience and was familiar with qualitative methodology.

CHAPTER 4 THE CLASSROOM CONTEXT

The Classroom

Pat's first grade classroom at Randall Elementary was in a small duplex building that she shared with a special education resource teacher. The two classrooms were separated by a storage closet and bathrooms. The students sat at four small tables in one part of the room, and a large carpet in another section was available for large group lessons and manipulative activities. Shelves surrounded the room for displaying books, storing supplies, housing materials for centers, and holding individual bins for student papers and supplies (see Figure 4.1 for the classroom floor plan). Print related to reading, writing, mathematics, social studies, and science filled the room. Poetry and language experience charts hung from a cord strung across the room. Student artwork was suspended from the light fixtures.

Students began entering the classroom at 8:15, but those who rode late buses or were at breakfast arrived by 8:30. From 8:15-8:30, students hung up coats and booksacks, turned in homework and notes from parents, and either wrote or read for pleasure. On each table was a bin of familiar books for children to select for reading. Paper was available for writing. Some students shared items or stories with each other or with Pat. At mid-year, pairs of students read their basal text in an activity known as *Buddy Reading*. There was a quiet hum as the students prepared for the school day. Schoolwide announcements and the Pledge of Allegiance began each day.

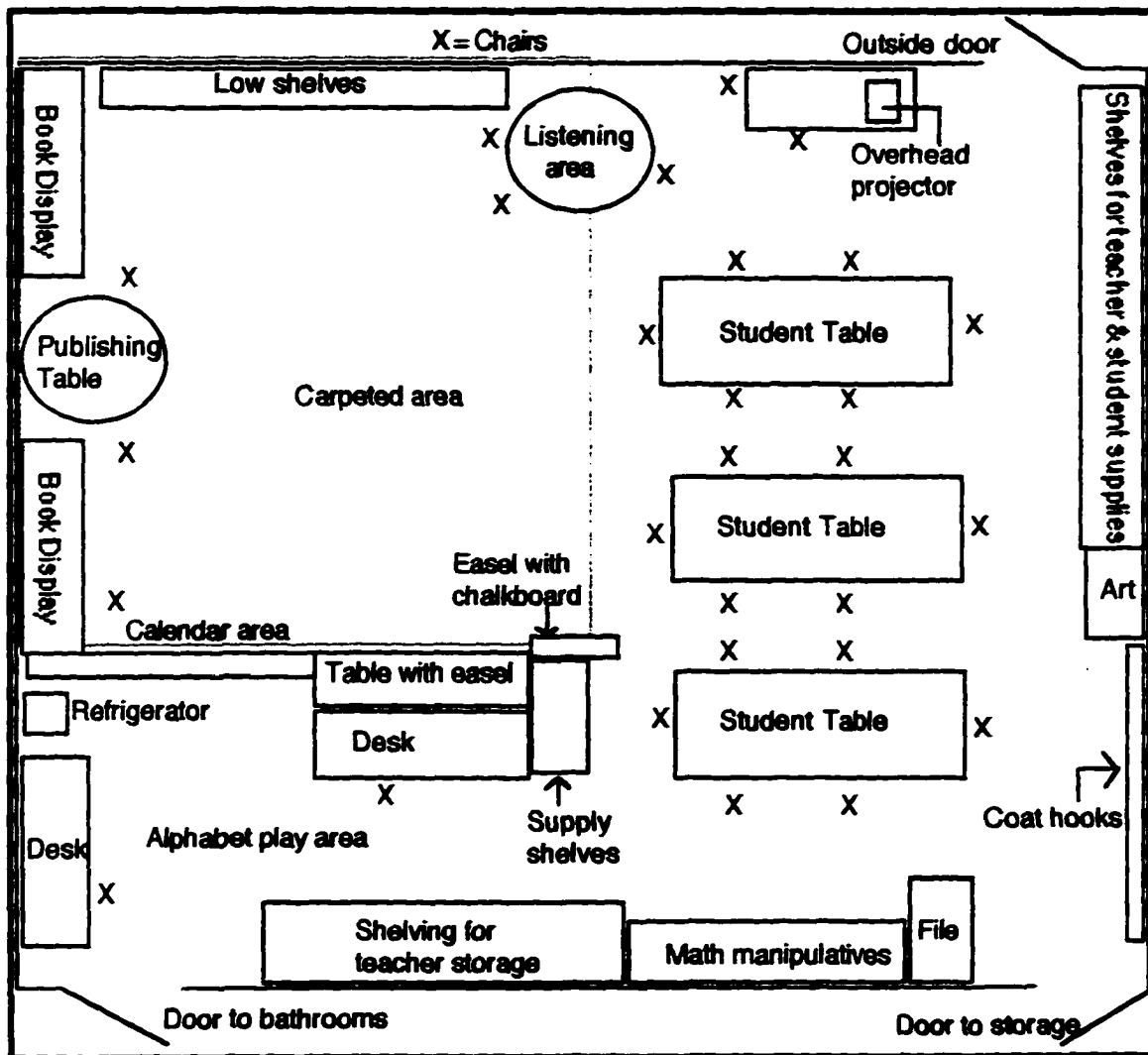


Figure 4.1
Classroom Floor Plan

Pat began instruction at approximately 8:35 as she sang a song about the weather (see Figure 4.2 for a daily schedule). Students joined in the singing as they assembled on the carpeted area. After discussing the weather and completing a weather graph, the students turned to face the large easel with the Morning Message. Using this message, Pat taught reading

TIME	ACTIVITY
8:15 - 8:30	Preparation
8:30 - 9:00	Weather song and graph; Morning Message
9:00 - 10:00	Small group guided reading lessons and Free choice centers
10:00 - 10:15	Recess
10:15 - 11:00	Writing Workshop
11:00 - 11:30	Lunch
11:30 - 12:15	Whole group basal lesson
12:15 - 12:45	Physical Education
12:45 - 1:00	Recess
1:00 - 2:00	Math
2:00 - 2:30	Working with Words
2:30 - 2:50	Social Living; Science
2:50 - 3:00	Preparation for home
1:00 - 1:30 Monday	Music
10:15 - 10:45 Friday	Library

Figure 4.2
Daily Schedule

skills and strategies in a shared reading format. Often, social studies or science concepts were integrated into the daily message.

Pat organized her language arts schedule into five blocks of instruction: shared reading (with the Morning Message), guided reading, Writing Workshop, basal instruction, and Working with Words. The schedule was based primarily on the work of Cunningham, Hall, and Defee (1991), who used a similar plan in first grade classrooms. Their model of instruction provided for a variety of ability levels without traditional ability grouping, included a variety of instructional

approaches, and eliminated the use of seatwork. Though the guided reading block was utilized occasionally for instruction with other readers, it was used daily with a flexible group of students who were having difficulties utilizing a range of reading strategies for word recognition or comprehension. The guided reading selections were at the students' instructional levels and utilized predictable books from The Wright Group, a publisher of books for emergent readers. Basal instruction was required at Randall, and Pat prepared a whole class basal lesson daily to teach important comprehension skills and strategies, develop word knowledge and vocabulary, extend students' listening and speaking skills, and expose children to a variety of literature and genres. Pat used the basal publisher's recommended scope and sequence, but she was selective in her use of stories, teaching strategies, and recommended student activities.

During the Writing Workshop block, Pat typically began with a demonstration or shared writing activity to teach writing strategies and conventions. Students then got writing folders from their bins and wrote on topics of their own choice. Writing often began with drawing as a form of rehearsal, and phonetic spelling was used routinely. High frequency words from the Harris-Jacobson Word List and the basal texts were posted on the *Word Wall* for easy student reference. When the children were finished with a written piece, they signed up for a conference with Pat. After conferring and editing, Pat copied the student's text into a book format for illustrating and

publishing. Completed covers were laminated, and books got a gold seal award on the cover.

For the Working with Words block of instruction, each child received 26 ceramic tiles, with one lower case letter written on each tile. Sometimes students experimented with these tiles to see how many different words they could make, and other times Pat dictated words and students assembled the tiles to form the words. In these ways, students developed phonemic awareness, knowledge of sound/symbol relationships, and familiarity with spelling patterns.

Phonemic awareness and phonics activities were integrated into other literacy activities throughout the day. For each vowel and vowel combination, Pat used a silly story to introduce the sound. A hand motion accompanied each story to involve the kinesthetic modality. As examples, short a was presented with the story of *Allison Allergy* who needed to sneeze often due to her allergies, and she always said /a/, /a/, /a/ before she sneezed. The grapheme *ow* was introduced with the story of the *w* that popped the *o* over the head and made the *o* say, "Ow!" These stories provided a mnemonic to help students recall the sound, and the hand motion allowed Pat to make the simple motion as a reminder of the sound. To develop phonemic segmentation skills, Pat used *fingerspelling* for encoding words. As students encoded words, they held up one finger for each phoneme they heard. For example, when fingerspelling the word *slip*, students held up four fingers as they said, "s-l-i-p." When spelling a word that had more letters than sounds, as in *take*, Pat encouraged her

students to see whether their fingerspelled *t-a-k* "looked right." As the children became more familiar with conventional spelling, they were able to combine the strategies of fingerspelling and thinking about what "looked right" to move toward standard spelling.

Learning centers were available every morning for students to enjoy while Pat was working with a guided reading group. Children worked alone or played cooperatively using activities that were self-selected and designed to promote development in all areas of the curriculum. Favorite centers included the reading center, snap cubes for construction, listening center with books on tape, a musical keyboard with headphones, and the overhead projector for writing activities.

Daily math lessons began with calendar activities. Typical skills addressed every day through the calendar included the date, patterns, money, time, place value, counting by tens, shape names, computation strategies, and reading labels on the calendar. Other first grade math skills were introduced and practiced with manipulatives. Pat routinely asked students to discuss their problem solving strategies with partners or the whole class.

Social studies and science concepts usually were integrated into language arts activities and were centered on thematic units. Pat used thematic units to combine instruction across reading, writing, social studies, science, math, and the arts. Examples of units included Columbus, World Geography, National and State Symbols, Thanksgiving, Plants, Animal Habitats, and Weather.

Pat's school district required first graders to take a standardized achievement test in mid-April 1997. To familiarize students with the format of each subtest, Pat used practice materials in March and early April. Test practice was scheduled in place of writing workshop and guided reading instruction.

A Day in Pat's Classroom

Pat often varied her schedule to accommodate the needs and interests of her young learners, so it was difficult to portray a typical day. Instead, in this section I have described a representative sample of instructional activities spanning the three school days of January 9, 15, and 17, 1997, so that the reader can better understand the routines, tasks, and complexities of this first grade classroom.

Pat walked the children to the classroom as the 8:15 bell rang to begin the school day. Everyone retrieved important papers from their booksacks, hung the booksacks up with their coats, and began to settle in. Some children got out books from the book bins on their tables and looked at the pictures or read. The books spanned a range of ability and interest levels. Other students got a piece of lined paper from the art table and began to draw or write. Children quietly shared books and writings with each other. By 8:30, all children were in the classroom and schoolwide announcements began. Pat took attendance and checked for homework papers. She complimented the children who were using their time productively.

At 8:35, Pat began singing a song about the sun, wind, rain, and snow. This song was the signal for students to gather on the carpeted area by the

weather graph (see Figure 4.3). The students and Pat discussed the weather for the day, and they decided together whether the day was sunny, cloudy, rainy, or snowy. One child was selected to get a Unifix cube and place it in the appropriate place on the weather graph. Then a student chose a word card describing the weather from the choices of cool, cold, warm, hot, foggy, and muggy. Pat asked questions about the graph. How many sunny days have we had in this month? How many

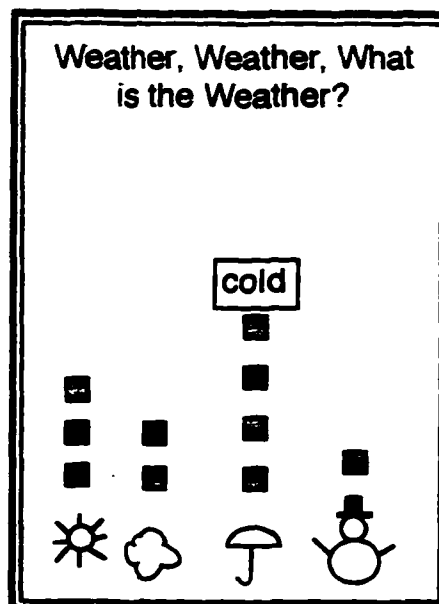


Figure 4.3
Weather Graph

snowy days? How many cloudy and rainy days all together? How many more sunny days than snowy days? To correlate with their science unit on weather, Pat shared a big book about the weather. When the book was finished, the children turned around on the floor to look at the daily message.

Pat color-coded the Morning Message (see Figure 4.4) so that exclamatory sentences were blue, statements were red, and questions were green. As Pat pointed to each word on the chart, the children began reading the Morning Message chorally. They knew to read the first sentence, "Good morning!" with an excited voice because they saw an exclamation mark. The students read "How are you?" with a questioning expression, and they stopped to talk for a few minutes about how everyone was doing. When they reached the sentence that said, "It is a ___ day," Pat showed them how to draw the

symbol for partly cloudy. After reading the second paragraph, Pat and the children discussed the recent bad weather. The third paragraph about verbs provided an opportunity to review a concept introduced the previous week. The children remembered that verbs are action words such as singing, yelling, smiling, writing, and spelling. When the

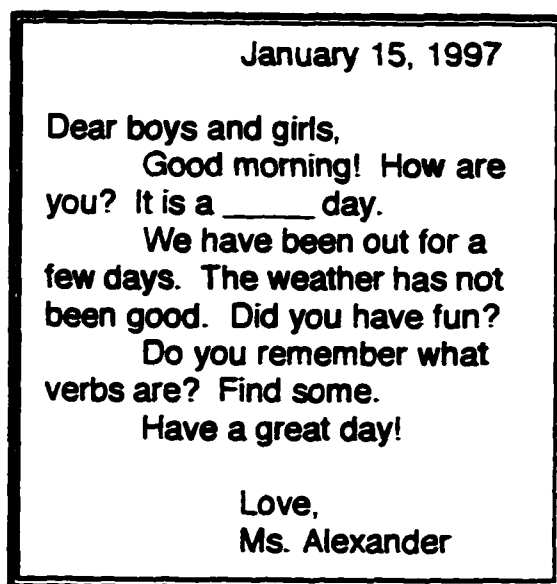


Figure 4.4
 Morning Message

Morning Message was finished, Pat reviewed the upcoming activities.

Some children participated in center activities, while others worked with Pat in a guided reading group that Pat called *Celebrity Reading*. Pat reminded the students that during their center time they could read the Morning Message or the big book she had read earlier. She provided chopsticks which served as small pointers for reading. Pat introduced two new centers. She had brought a container of blocks, and I had brought a flashlight so the children could use the beam to point to words they read on the Word Wall. The children were then dismissed to go to centers of their choice. Three children sat at the listening center, where two listened to a book on tape and another played the musical keyboard. Six children played together with the blocks and one played alone. Several others used the chopsticks to point to words in books or texts displayed on chart paper around the room. Two students used small chalkboards to write

words and practice addition facts. Children changed activities when they chose, and they were allowed to converse quietly during center time.

While most of the children were at centers, Pat worked with a small group of students who needed additional reading instruction to accelerate their progress. Three students always participated in the guided reading activities, and others joined the group as needed. A *guest reader* was invited to join the group often so that all children could have an opportunity to participate even if their reading progress was satisfactory. Pat followed a three-day sequence of activities planned to accelerate progress in word analysis, use of context cues, and comprehension by employing books published by The Wright Group designed to promote emergent literacy development. On the first day of the lesson sequence, Pat completed a thorough book introduction to familiarize the students with the book's vocabulary and concepts. The students then read the story chorally. When they encountered difficulties, Pat supported them in using meaning, syntactic, or sound/symbol cues to work through the text. After reading the book, the children chose several words from the story for a word analysis activity. For each word, Pat made a grid of connected boxes on each individual's paper, with the number of boxes corresponding to the number of phonemes in the given word. The children fingerspelled the word and wrote the appropriate graphemes in the grid. On the second day, the students in the guided reading group reread the story from a chart so that they no longer had picture cues to help them with their reading. As they read, Pat emphasized using meaning, syntactic, and phonetic cues for word recognition. The group

then brainstormed a sentence about the story and wrote as much as they could individually, with Pat supplying necessary scaffolding. Independent reading and partner reading of the story were done on the third day of the lesson sequence, while Pat took a running record of each student's reading.

On the day described here, the guided reading group was in the first day of the lesson sequence and was working with a book entitled *The Seed* (Cowley, 1996). Five students sat at a table around Pat as she introduced the book. They talked about the cover illustration and predicted why the children were holding a trowel and spade. They used this prediction to help them read the title, and they talked about the sounds in the word *seed*. As they proceeded through the book introduction by discussing the illustrations, Pat introduced vocabulary and concepts that the students would encounter as they read. After the introduction, the children read the text chorally. When a miscue occurred, Pat stopped the reading to discuss the error. For example, when one child read *seeds* instead of *seed*, the group discussed what they should find at the end if the word had been *seeds*. As the group read, "It's not growing to grow" instead of "It's not going to grow," a child looked confused and said, "It has two *grows* in it and it sounds stupid." Pat complimented this child on using meaning to help him correct a miscue. They then discussed the word parts of *going* -- *go* and *-ing*. After the book was read, Pat passed out each student's guided reading notebook and drew a grid with three boxes on a blank page. They fingerspelled the word *away*, and the students wrote *a-w-a* in the three boxes. Pat asked the group if their spellings of the word looked right. They decided that a *y* was

missing, and the students added it to the last box. Before being dismissed to centers, Pat told the group that an *ay* combination makes the *long a* sound.

After morning recess, Writing Workshop began at 10:15. Pat modeled the writing process by composing a piece about an evaporation experiment the class had conducted (see Figure 4.5). As she wrote, she reviewed the skills of topic selection; choosing a title; using phonics, the Word Wall, and environmental print for spelling; writing in complete sentences; and using periods and exclamation marks. When Pat finished her rough draft, the students helped her edit for capitalization and spelling errors. Then they got out their own writing folders from their individual storage bins and either began a new piece, continued their work from the previous day, or worked on the illustrations for their book

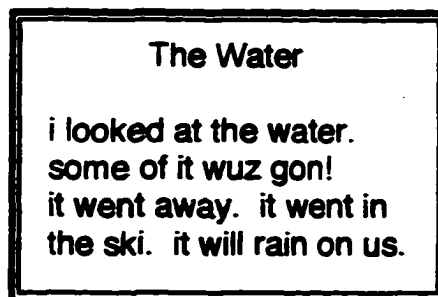


Figure 4.5
Writing Demonstration

to be published. Pat conferred with one child who was ready to publish, and other students shared their work with classmates. Writing Workshop ended at 11:00 as the class headed to the cafeteria. When lunch was finished, three children shared their Writing Workshop pieces with the class in the *Author's Chair*. Other students commented on the stories and complimented the authors.

Next in the classroom schedule was basal instruction. Students were beginning the first story in the primer basal text. Pat first showed the children the table of contents and demonstrated its use. She told them the name of the author of this day's story and reminded them of other stories that they had

heard or read by this author. When she asked the students what they knew about the author, one student replied that the author used animals as characters. They predicted whether animals would be in their new story and then turned to the story to confirm. Pat read the story to her students, modeling fluency and expression. She stopped occasionally to have the children make predictions and to discuss the story's meaning. When she finished reading, Pat directed the students' attention to the four charts hung from the blinds on the classroom windows. There was a chart for each type of word: compound words, contractions, words ending in *-ing*, and words ending in *-s*. Four or five words were already on each chart because the class had addressed these types of words previously. Pat selected words from the story and asked individuals to select on which of the four charts the given word should be written. Pat and the students paid particular attention to analyzing compound words and contractions. Following this lesson was Buddy Reading. The children cheered when this activity was announced. Students formed pairs and read the story to one another. Each group selected the place in the room to sit, and many were busy reading in corners or under tables. Each pair of children decided together how the story would be read. Some read together chorally, some chose a character's part to read, and others took turns reading a page at a time. Pat paired a stronger reader with one needing more support, and much peer assistance was observed.

After 30 minutes at Physical Education and 15 minutes at recess, the students returned to the classroom for math. The first half of the one hour math

lesson consisted of calendar math.

Pat first passed out blank paper folded into eighths. Students worked in pairs to solve the problems identified in Figure 4.6 by using the classroom calendar (see Figure 4.7).

Each group had a set of manipulatives that included a clock, straws and rubber bands for place value, shapes, and play coins. When students were finished solving the

problems independently, Pat reconvened the group to discuss the solutions to the problems. After the calendar activities, the students spread out across the room in pairs to play an addition game called *Two Dice Bump* to reinforce addition of single digit numbers.

For the final learning activity of the school day, Pat passed out bags of letter tiles for a Making Words activity. The children each had a place mat at their tables with the alphabet, and Pat instructed the children to first match the tiles to the letters on their mats. Next, Pat called out four words containing a *short u* and directed the children to form these letters with their tiles. Finally, students made *short u* words of their choice, with invented spelling acceptable. The children enjoyed seeing how many words they could make and how long


Month Year Number Day	Who can tell the time?
How much?	What comes next?
Tens and ones	How many days have we been in school?
Problem of the day Turnaround fact	Strategy

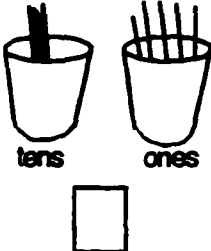
Figure 4.6
Calendar Chart

Who can tell the time?

JANUARY 1997

Sun.	Mon.	Tue.	Wed.	Thu.	Fri.	Sat.
			1	2	3	4
5	6	7	8	9	10	11
12	13	14	15	16	17	18
19	20	21	22	23	24	25
26	27	28	29	30	31	





How much?

○○○○○○○○○○○○

○○○○○

○○○

What comes next?

□□ ○ □

Problem of the day

$6 + 6 =$

How many days have we been in school?

85 86 87 88 89 90 91

Figure 4.7
Calendar

they could make each word. Some words made on this day are *gut*, *cup*, *suny*, *butr*, *gun*, *puk*, and *cusing*.

To end the day, the children prepared their booksacks for home, making sure that they included their homework and basal text. Then they gathered on the carpet to listen to Pat read *Pip Moves Away* (Brown, 1967) to recognize a classmate who was moving to another school. The children were dismissed in three groups five minutes apart to accommodate the bus schedule at Randall.

CHAPTER 5 CASE STUDIES OF INITIALLY SUCCESSFUL STUDENTS

The six boys who were the focus of this research were unique individuals with their own patterns and preferences toward learning. Their development was varied and complex, and the progress of these boys provided an interesting account of their acquisition of literacy in Pat's first grade classroom. Accounts of the three initially successful students will be described in this chapter, and the three initially low-achieving students will be discussed in the chapter that follows.

Categories

After analyzing field notes, formal assessment information, informal assessment information, and interviews, I categorized the data into four broad areas related to literacy learning: (a) attitude toward literacy, (b) learning through collaboration, (c) learning about literacy through reading, and (d) learning about literacy through writing. I also categorized miscellaneous data related to school and home. In this chapter, I have first defined each of the four broad categories and then provided an analysis of each student's literacy learning from October through April of their first grade year so that I could answer my first research question: How did each child interact with reading/writing materials and with other readers and writers within the classroom?

Attitude toward literacy involves a student's motivation and attitude. Motivation is seen in a student's time on task, persistence with a difficult task,

and willingness to volunteer in classroom discussions. Attitude toward literacy is evident in a student's enthusiasm and confidence. Students who have a positive attitude toward literacy also voluntarily read and write during free choice opportunities.

For this study, I used the *Elementary Reading Attitude Survey (ERAS)* (McKenna & Kear, 1990) to estimate attitudes related to two aspects of reading: (a) attitude toward recreational reading, and (b) attitude toward academic reading. Students responded to ten questions in each area by circling a picture of the cartoon character Garfield, rating their attitude toward each question on a four-point scale by selecting the happiest Garfield, slightly smiling Garfield, mildly upset Garfield, or very upset Garfield. An average score was then obtained for each aspect of reading attitude, ranging from 4.0 for strongly positive feelings to 1.0 for strongly negative feelings. A score of 2.5 was the midpoint between positive and negative attitudes and indicated an indifferent attitude toward reading. In addition, percentile ranks were available that compared individual students' scores with a national sample.

Learning through collaboration occurs as students cooperate on learning tasks, share their work with others, seek help from others, or give assistance to others. Students who learn through collaboration provide positive support and instructional scaffolding to peers, and they are also willing to receive support and scaffolding from their peers.

Learning about literacy through reading involves each student's knowledge about words and understanding of reading strategies. Though in

reality reading and writing are interwoven, they are separated here for analysis. As students become knowledgeable about words, they begin to attend to word details and use environmental print. They notice, for example, that the words *to* and *her* are in the word *Christopher*. They realize that the word *red* on the classroom color chart is the same word as in the title of the story *The Little Red Hen*. Students become increasingly proficient in their use of phonics to help them identify unfamiliar words. As they develop strategies to aid them in word recognition and comprehension, students begin to use prior knowledge, illustrations, syntax, sound/symbol relationships, and context. They monitor their own reading, reread, and correct miscues to gain or maintain meaning.

For this research, I have provided examples of each student's reading behavior of instructional level and grade level texts. The samples were used to provide insights into how each reader orchestrated effective reading, how processing and problem-solving were done, and how and when effective processing broke down (Clay, 1993). With a few exceptions, the reading samples reported here were taken on familiar texts. Grade level reading samples were taken from the Houghton Mifflin Reading basal series (Durr, 1989) used in the school.

Learning about literacy through writing includes a student's knowledge about words, use of print conventions, and his or her approach to writing. When students use phonetic spelling and high frequency sight words for writing, they are demonstrating their knowledge about the spelling of words. First graders begin to use print conventions such as capitalization and punctuation, and they

edit for some writing errors. As they participate in the writing process, first graders use drawing as a form of rehearsal and select their own topics of interest, though they are not likely to revise to enhance the meaning of their written pieces.

To analyze writing samples, I followed several conventions. I first totaled the number of words in each written piece, and then I counted the number of words that the child spelled conventionally. Using these two numbers, I computed a percentage of words spelled conventionally per written piece. In addition, I used a technique based upon Clay's research (Clay, 1993) for determining a child's use of the appropriate sound/symbol relationships in phonetic spelling (see Appendix F for a detailed explanation).

As I have chronicled the learning of six students from October through April of their first grade year, I have attempted to maintain a balance between the complexity of the classroom events and the need to explain the distinct features of each student's progress. Though my data revealed many examples of each child's growth toward literacy acquisition, I have highlighted only representative samples from each month that exemplify each child's development. I have recounted dialogue, showed samples of written work, and summarized their growing competencies and areas where continued improvement was needed.

Three Case Studies

Chris

Introduction

Chris was born on September 14, 1990, and he was the youngest boy in Pat's classroom. Because of allergies, Chris had occasional absences from school. He lived with his mother and maternal grandmother and had no siblings. Chris's grandmother reported that his father had mood swings and had a felony arrest. Chris visited his father at his paternal grandmother's house. He completed kindergarten at Randall Elementary, where he had difficulties with small muscle coordination, writing his first name, writing his last name, and identifying the value of money. He was left-handed.

Small muscle coordination continued to be a problem for Chris in first grade. Because of this, Pat believed that he was reluctant to complete pencil/paper activities. He did, however, enjoy sharing his growing knowledge base verbally. When studying Columbus, Chris explained that Columbus was "captain of the seas," was "from Spain," and "Columbus's men wanted to let him drown. It was taking too long to reach land." When the class made an alphabet book about Thanksgiving, Chris contributed *b* for *boat*, "They sailed on a boat named the Mayflower." He said that *x* was for, "The Pilgrims were afraid the Indians would attack them so they marked their places with *x*." He also volunteered that *z* was for *zero*, "The Indians brought zero women with them." He remembered that words like "yelling" were action words called verbs and when writing a possessive noun one needs an "apostrophe." Chris also told the

class information that he had learned outside the classroom as it related to topics he was learning at school. For example, Pat read a book to the class about geese migrating, and she asked where the geese were going. Chris replied, "South for winter. You know how I thought about that? There was a show on Looney Tunes where they went south for the winter."

During center time, Chris experimented with many center choices, but his preference was snap cubes. These cubes snapped together at all sides and could be assembled into many interesting shapes. Chris appeared contented playing alone at centers, but he also enjoyed playing with others. With the snap cubes, Chris and other boys formed intricate constructions such as a town complete with a church, airplanes, hangar, and runway.

Attitude toward Literacy

Chris was enthusiastic about literacy activities, but his persistence and time on task were inconsistent throughout the school year. Off-task behavior was seen occasionally at the beginning of the school day when other students were reading or writing for pleasure. At times, Chris spent this time reading books of his choice at an appropriate level of difficulty. At other times, he would either sit impassively or talk with a neighbor.

Chris was persistent and attentive for teacher-directed literacy activities, and he offered appropriate comments and responses. During Writing Workshop, however, Chris needed motivation to persist with writing activities; he often chose to illustrate his story rather than write. Several times Pat or I asked him if he planned to revise his story, but without exception, he would

respond with a comment such as, "No, I'm finished." Pat believed that Chris's difficulties with fine motor control affected his motivation to write. Chris was never observed writing during free time.

Chris remained an enthusiastic learner throughout his first grade year. When Josh published the class's first book, Chris excitedly told me of Josh's accomplishment. He occasionally laughed or clapped after a book had been read to the class, or responded with phrases such as, "That was a cute ending," or "I love it! I love it!" Chris replied, "I'm good at that!" when Pat complimented him for his expressive voice as he read.

On the *Elementary Reading Attitude Survey* (McKenna & Kear, 1990) administered on October 14, 1996, Chris scored a 2.4 (percentile rank [PR] = 12) for recreational reading and 2.3 (PR = 18) for academic reading. These scores indicated that he felt slightly negative about both aspects of reading. Chris's responses showed that he was strongly positive about reading on a rainy Saturday, starting a new book, going to a bookstore, reading school books, learning from a book, and using a dictionary. He was strongly negative about reading a book during free time, getting a book for a present, reading instead of playing, reading different kinds of books, doing workbook pages and worksheets, reading in school, and taking a reading test. When this instrument was readministered on February 4, 1997, Chris's scores had changed little (2.3 for recreational reading [PR = 9] and 2.5 for academic reading [PR = 25]). He strongly reacted to the question concerned with getting a book for a present. Chris replied, "No one understands that I like to get toys more than books."

Similar responses occurred on April 4, 1997. He was adamant that he would rather play than read for pleasure. His April scores on the *ERAS* were 2.2 for recreational reading (PR = 7) and 2.8 for academic reading (PR = 39).

I interviewed Chris on several occasions to obtain responses related to literacy learning (see Appendix G for interview questions). On November 14, 1996, Chris replied that he was a good reader "because I like reading ever since I started because whenever I started reading, I started loving it so much. So I wanted to try to be a good reader." He felt that he was "a little bit" of a good writer "because sometimes I get messed up on my words but I keep leaving a space and working hard and I learn a lot and a lot and a lot." On January 9, 1997, he confirmed that he was still a good reader, and "concentrating" made him good. Chris said he was "a lot good" at writing because "I think I can do what I need to do and finish it quick quick." He continued to believe that he was a good reader when interviewed on April 10, 1997, because "I read every night in my own *Trumpets*" (the basal text). He was less confident about his writing. He said "sometimes I'm a bad writer and sometimes I'm a good writer. Sometimes I'm a bad writer 'cause I don't space and I'm a good writer when I space."

Learning Through Collaboration

Chris rarely engaged in collaborative work voluntarily, but he collaborated with others when Pat directed the students to do so. For example, during whole group discussions, Pat often asked the students to discuss an answer with their neighbor before the class considered the response together.

Other times, the students read their basal story in pairs for Buddy Reading. During these teacher-directed collaborative activities, Chris participated willingly and occasionally helped his partners.

Chris seldom requested help from adults and never from another student. He occasionally shared his work with Pat or me, but only shared with other students during the teacher-directed Author's Chair, where students read Writing Workshop pieces to the class.

At the end of February, Chris and Trevor formed a temporary partnership to examine books and to write a story. They worked together to find items in the illustrations of a book about a Christmas blizzard. In addition, Chris worked with Trevor to write about Chris's dead cat (see Figure 5.1). Chris dictated the story and illustrated it, and Trevor wrote the words. This alliance was short-lived and ended a day later.

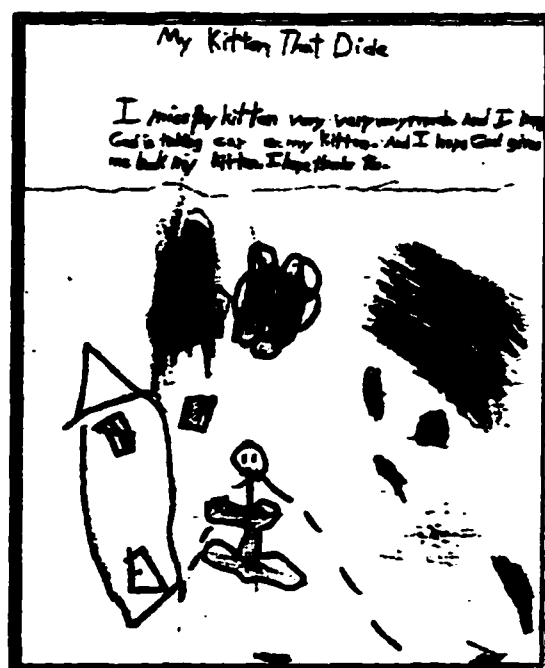


Figure 5.1
February 21, 1997

Learning about Literacy Through Reading

Knowledge about words. Early in the school year, Chris began to announce his observations about words and word patterns. On October 14, 1996, the students were spelling words with a medial /e/. Chris told the class

that all the words they had spelled ended with *n*, and they also all rhymed. Several days later during basal reading instruction, Chris volunteered, "I know something with *-ing* in it. 'We are going to school.'" As the class talked about symbols of the United States, Chris said, "I just noticed something about *president*. It has *lel, lel, lel*." When Pat asked what the students knew about the word *kicking*, Chris told the class about the initial sound. "It might be *c* because *c* and *k* have the same sound. *kj, kj, kj*," he announced.

Chris continued to observe word details as the year progressed. He knew that the compound word *snowflakes* was made up of "snow plus flakes." When the class discussed the *soft c* sound, Pat said, "I'm thinking about a certain kind of bike. Let me write it." As she wrote *tr*, Chris said, "Tricycle." He identified the word *seed* because, "There's an *s*, 2 *e*'s, and a *d* at the end." When Chris read *him* for *her*, he corrected his error and announced, "You won't hear *r* in *him*." As he used context to identify unfamiliar words, he once announced, "I didn't even know the words, and I just said 'em."

Though he was observant of word details and could read familiar texts well, Chris had difficulty when asked to read words in isolation. Either Pat or I administered various assessments of isolated sight words throughout the year. Students were asked to read words from the Dolch and Harris-Jacobson sight word lists or the norm-referenced *Slosson Oral Reading Test-Revised (SORT-R)* (Slosson, 1990). On the *SORT-R* administered in September 1996, Chris read 3 words (stanine = 3, PR = 19), but increased to 12 words (stanine = 4, PR = 27) in December. He read 58 of the 220 words on the Dolch list on January 16,

1997, identifying 78% of the words on the preprimer list and 40% of the words on the primer list. When Pat asked Chris to read the preprimer list of Harris-Jacobson words, he read 79% correctly. He had a heavy reliance on phonics to determine unknown words, and pronounced most unfamiliar words with short vowel sounds. On February 25, 1997, the *SORT-R* was administered again. Chris read 17 words (stanine = 3, PR = 18). He read 31 words (stanine = 4, PR = 31) on the *SORT-R* on April 14, 1997. On this last reading, Chris did not appear to use phonics to read any word until he read from the third grade list. His response to unfamiliar words was, "I forgot that word."

Reading of whole texts. Chris consistently read grade level basal texts with satisfactory word recognition and good expression. Typically, Chris corrected his oral reading miscues so that the meaning of the passage was maintained. The following samples of Chris's oral reading were taken from his readings of basal text selections. I will not give illustrations of text sections that Chris read without error but will instead give examples of his problem-solving as he read. Chris's reading is shown in italics below the actual text.

In a running record of a preprimer basal text selection taken on October 11, 1996, Chris's ability to maintain meaning and to self-correct was evident.

Text: Bears are big.

Chris: *But bears are big.*

In this example, Chris noticed the initial *b*, expected the text to say *but*, then corrected his miscue when he realized that *but* did not match the text.

Text: I want to see bears, not turtles.

Chris: *I want see bears, I want to see bears, not turtles.*

Chris omitted a word in this example, then he reread the sentence so that his reading would be grammatically correct.

Text: You can work in here, Pam.

Chris: *You can work here, Pam.*

In this instance, Chris's omission did not affect the meaning of the sentence, so it was not necessary for him to notice or correct his miscue.

All running records taken from October through December were similar.

Without exception, Chris's miscues either did not affect the meaning of the sentence or were self-corrected to maintain meaning. For example,

Text: This is not fun, Pig!

Chris: *This is not for fun, Pig!*

Text: I can not do it, Boo.

Chris: *I can not make, I can not do it, Boo.*

Word recognition accuracy on passages read orally ranged from 99% to 100%.

On January 8, 1997, I administered the preprimer passage from the *Classroom Reading Inventory* (Silvaroli, 1997) to determine Chris's reading skill on unfamiliar text. We first discussed the illustration of two children and a toy car. Chris's reading work consisted of:

Text: "See my play car," said Tom.

Chris: *See my play car, /s/ /a/ /l/ /d/ /T/ /o/ /m/ /b/.*

Text: Ann said, "It's a big car."

Chris: *Ann said, it it's a big car.*

Text: "Yes," said Tom.

Chris: *You yes said Tomb. Yes said Tomb.*

Text: "Would you like a ride?"

Chris: */w/ /u/ -- (I told him would) you like a ride?"*

On this passage, Chris scored an 88% accuracy in word recognition. After Pat examined his work on this passage, she commented that Chris was relying too heavily on decoding and disregarding other word recognition strategies, such as using context or syntax. At this point, Pat decided to include Chris in her guided reading group. Her concern was not that his progress was inadequate, but that he was becoming over-reliant on decoding as his primary word recognition strategy.

On January 23, 1997, Pat recorded Chris's reading of a previously unseen selection from the primer level basal text. He achieved 97% accuracy in word recognition. His miscues included:

Text: "Who will help me plant the wheat?" asked the little red hen.

Chris: *Who will help me plant the wheat? (Pat told the word asked) the little red hen.*

Text: The wheat grew and grew. It grew into big plants.

Chris: *The wheat growed and growed. It growed into big plants.*

Text: "Well, then I will cut it myself," said the little red hen.

Chris: *Well (pause) th//e//n/ then I will cut it myself, said the little red hen.*

Pat's note to Chris's parents that accompanied this running record said, "Chris was using some *excellent* strategies to read this previously unseen text. He said, 'I'll do my best but it hasn't been taught to me yet!' Chris does better if he says what makes *sense* instead of trying to *sound out* everything. It does, occasionally, make sense to sound out but more often Chris already knows what makes sense and should try that first."

Chris read a passage on February 21, 1997, from the primer basal text with 100% word recognition accuracy and two self-corrections. His reading consisted of:

Text: "Let's look around," said Marvin.

Chris: *Let's look around maybe said Marvin.*

Text: There are brown dogs all over the place.

Chris: *There is are brown dogs all over the place.*

Text: Then I would go down and get Tooley.

Chris: *Then I then I would go down and get Tooley.*

In the first two examples above, Chris corrected his miscues because there was a mismatch between what he said and what was written. In the last example, he reread to confirm the accuracy of his reading. These examples indicated that Chris was monitoring his reading to ensure that he was maintaining meaning.

On a primer passage that Chris read on March 7, 1997, he had 97% word recognition accuracy. The three errors maintained the meaning of each sentence. Chris repeated one line to correct a miscue.

Text: She wanted me to take her for a walk.

Chris: *She wanted me to take a she wanted me to take her for a walk.*

I asked Chris what he had been thinking to help him correct his mistake. He replied, "I got mixed up. I thought, 'That couldn't be a 'cause it don't have an a.' So I sounded it out." Since Chris had not appeared to use decoding to read *her*, I responded, "I don't think you sounded it out. I think you just knew it." He disagreed by saying, "You couldn't hear me. I sounded it out."

Another running record from a primer passage taken on March 14 illustrated some interesting reading strategies.

Text: When Miss Finney lets the children...

Chris: When Miss Finney lost lost the children children...

Chris repeated the line but could not recognize *lets*. He replied, "I'll just keep on going." During this passage, Chris said several times that he was going to go on because he could not recognize a word. Pat considered this a positive step because Chris continued to read to maintain meaning, and he did not laboriously attempt to sound out an unknown word as he had in the past. He achieved 95% accuracy on this passage. He obtained 100% accuracy on a basal selection from March 21, 1997. Pat wrote, "Beautiful phrasing and expression!"

On April 16, 1997, I administered the primer level passage of the *Classroom Reading Inventory* (Silvaroli, 1997) to assess Chris's reading of an unfamiliar text. He had only one error as he read *Mr.* for *Mrs.* Both his word recognition and comprehension were at the independent level on this primer passage.

Graph of oral reading accuracy. Throughout the year, Chris maintained a high degree of accuracy in his oral reading of basal text selections. Because efficient self-correction behavior is an important skill in good reading (Clay, 1993), I also computed self-correction rates. Chris spontaneously corrected 38% of his miscues on a total of 12 oral reading passages. A graph is shown in Figure 5.2 that summarizes his oral reading accuracy of basal text selections from October 1996 through April 1997. Based upon Clay's research (1993), Pat considered a selection to be an easy text if it was read with 95% accuracy or

better, instructional level if the text was read with 90% to 95% accuracy, and a hard text if it was read with accuracy below 90%. The graph illustrates that Chris was consistently reading basal texts that were at his instructional and independent levels.

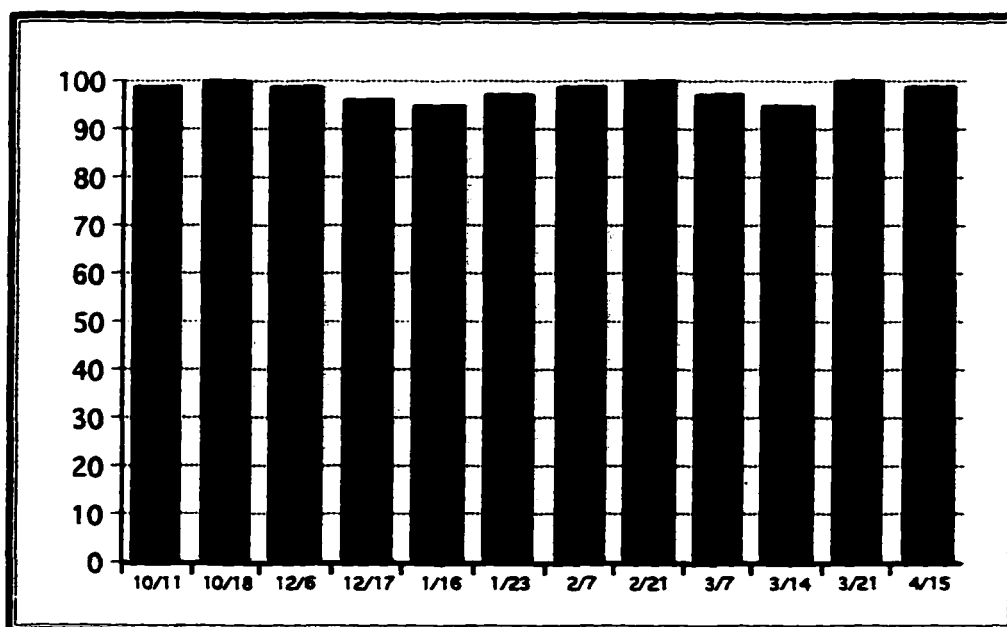


Figure 5.2
Percentages of Oral Reading Accuracy
Basal Text Selections

Learning about Literacy Through Writing

Chris responded well to Pat's instruction in writing conventions, though he was unable to consistently use new learning in a variety of settings. He did not have a large bank of sight words memorized for conventional spelling, so Chris's prominent strategy for spelling was to sound out words. As he learned new vowel sounds and consonant combinations, he used them during teacher-directed activities, but did not always apply them independently. The same is

true for capitalization and punctuation usage. In other words, Chris could correctly identify letter sounds, the need for a capital letter at the beginning of a sentence, and the use of punctuation at the end of a sentence. However, when writing independently, he did not consistently transfer this understanding to his own writing. He occasionally used environmental print or the Word Wall for spelling. By examining several of Chris's writing pieces over the course of the school year, his growth as a writer can be seen.

Chris's writing topic in October was related to Halloween (see Figure 5.3). It said, "I will come to you. I will go, go, go, go, go trick-or-treat." This writing showed the correct use of the capital letter / and some appropriate phonetic spelling. Forty-seven percent of the words were spelled conventionally, and of the remaining words spelled phonetically, Chris used 52% of the correct sounds.

Though Chris did not spell *trick* and *treat* with the correct initial consonant blend, his use of *ch* in its place showed a growing understanding of more complex consonant

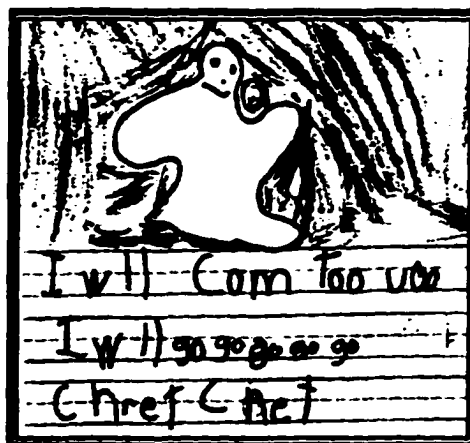


Figure 5.3
October 8, 1996

digraphs. No punctuation was used in this written piece.

The illustration for Chris's November 1, 1996, writing sample showed two large red circles (see Figure 5.4). He told me that he had drawn red blobs that he was calling a "red place." His text read, "I will go to a red place. I like this place." As compared to his October writing sample, Chris now used

conventional spelling for *will* and *to*. He had omitted some sounds in his phonetic spellings for *red*, *place*, and *likes*. Fifty-five percent of the words were spelled conventionally, and of the remaining words spelled phonetically, Chris used 71% of the correct sounds. Again, Chris had used a capital *I*, but he did not use punctuation.

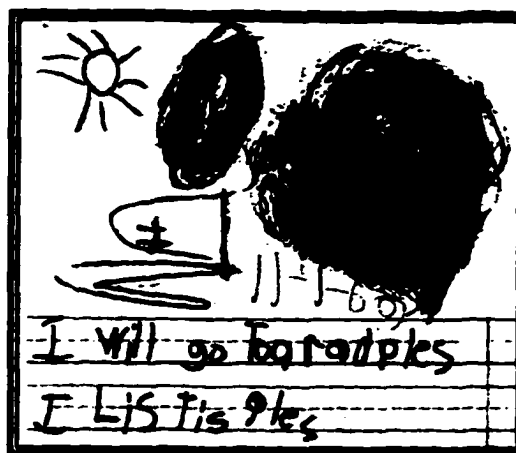


Figure 5.4
November 1, 1996

On December 3, 1996, the class decorated Christmas ornaments for the school's Christmas tree. After decorating, Pat wrote the word *ornament* on the board and instructed the students to write about their ornaments. Though I did not obtain the sample of Chris's work in his own writing, a reproduction of his text is shown in Figure 5.5. His growth in phonetic spelling was seen in this work; the text was much easier to read. It said, "I will be very patient for my ornament so I can make my ornament to be good." Chris

I will be vare pahis
for mi ornament
soo I can mak mi
ornament to be Good.

Figure 5.5
December 3, 1996

showed more use of conventional spelling in this piece; 65% of the words were spelled conventionally. Of the remaining words spelled phonetically, Chris used 82% of the correct sounds. He showed letter reversals by writing the *p* and *k* backwards. He copied *ornament* from the board correctly. I reminded

him that he could use the Word Wall to spell *my*. He put a period at the end of his sentence.

Chris worked diligently in January on illustrations for a story about a swingset, but he wrote very few words. Because of the lack of writing, Pat told Chris that he needed to begin writing instead of drawing. She reminded him that stories have many sentences about one idea. Figure 5.6 shows his writing

after Pat's instructions. It said, "I was playing until an alien came along. I couldn't get away. But I ran until I found a gun and I shot the alien." After writing his first

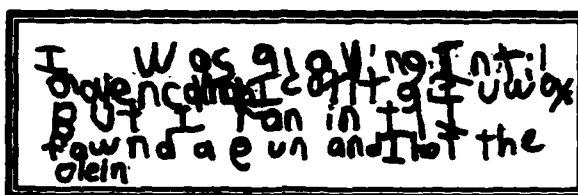


Figure 5.6
January 22, 1997

draft, Chris read his story to me. The beginning said, "I was playing until a came." Chris realized that he had omitted several words, so he compressed the words that were missing into the space where they were needed. Chris's writing showed handwriting difficulties and lack of spaces between words. Fifty-six percent of the words were spelled conventionally, and of the remaining words spelled phonetically, Chris used 59% of the correct sounds. He inserted one period after the second sentence but not after the first or third sentence. He shared this piece with the class and said, "I worked hard to get this done because when I wanted to make a book about the aliens, I thought about outer space and I made a picture of the aliens." Chris elaborated on his story orally, and Pat suggested that he add more to his piece so that the whole story would

be written. Chris nodded in reply to this suggestion, but he never added information to this written piece.

In mid-February, Chris worked to complete a three-page story about his kitten (see Figures 5.7-5.9). I have

not shown all of the illustrations that accompanied this writing. The text read, "I was scared to death and I saw the ghost of my kitten that died.

I will go to warn my Dad. I miss my cat very much. I wish this wouldn't

happen. I miss him very, very much." Chris

spelled 59% of the words conventionally, but he improved in his use of phonetic

spelling. Of the words that were not spelled conventionally, Chris used 83% of the sounds. Though he was not leaving spaces between words, he used a period at the end of three out of the four sentences. He began each sentence with a capital letter

and capitalized the word *Dad*. The letters *p* and *c* were reversed. Chris's illustrations matched the text. Pat helped Chris with one word in this writing. He had spelled the word *the* as *t-e-h*. Pat asked him to find one word "that's on the

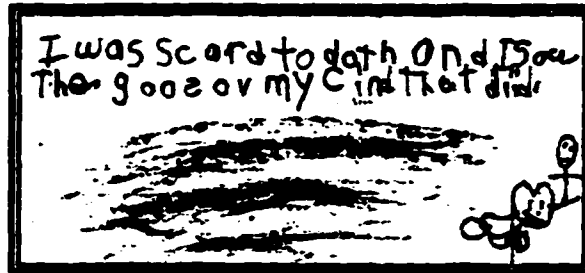


Figure 5.7
February 17, 1997
Page 1

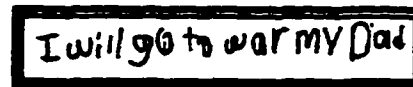


Figure 5.8
February 17, 1997
Page 2

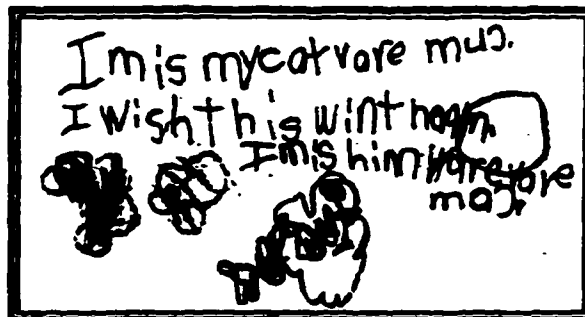


Figure 5.9
February 17, 1997
Page 3

Word Wall and in your head and that you think you spelled incorrectly." Chris underlined *scared*. Pat told him that there was another word that he could spell correctly because it was "in his head," and she directed him to the correct line. She asked Chris to spell *the*. He said, "The, t-h.... Oh, I got it wrong." He corrected his spelling, and then Pat reminded him that he needed to leave a space between words.

Writing Workshop was not held during most of March and April because of standardized test practice. The children did, however, record information about their science experiments. Each student had planted a lima bean seed on March 7, 1997, and then recorded information about their plant for the next two weeks (see Figures 5.10 - 5.12).

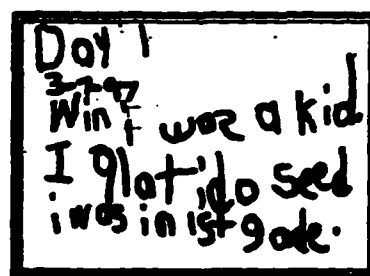


Figure 5.10
March 7, 1997

Chris wrote for Day 1, "When I was a kid, I planted a seed. I was in 1st grade." On Day 7 of the experiment, he wrote, "Our plants are beginning to grow. I am glad!" Two weeks after

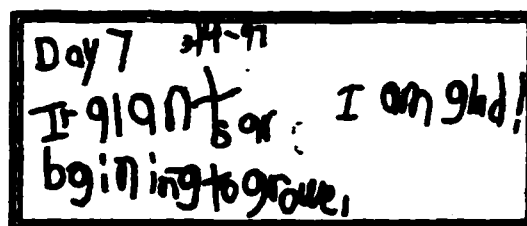


Figure 5.11
March 14, 1997

planting, Chris wrote in his plant journal, "I am glad my plant is growing. I'm happy, happy, happy." Of the 31 words in these three journal entries, Chris spelled 58% of the words conventionally. He used 84% of

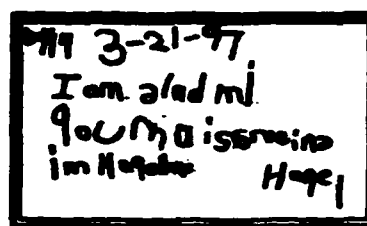


Figure 5.12
March 21, 1997

the correct sounds in the phonetically spelled words. Chris reversed several letters and inconsistently used the capital *I*. Periods were used incorrectly, but Chris inserted an exclamation mark after his sentence, "I am glad!" For the word *first*, Chris used the abbreviation *1st*.

Josh

Introduction

Josh lived with both parents and an older brother. He was born on October 20, 1989. He described his home as "kind of like a farm" because his family had many animals. Josh completed kindergarten at Randall Elementary and had satisfactory grades in all areas on his kindergarten report card. He wore glasses for all academic and leisure tasks. He was right-handed.

Josh was a verbal child who liked to contribute to class discussions. His contributions reflected his understanding of the content presented in the classroom and his knowledge of events outside the classroom. As examples, after the class had read a book about spiders, Josh said that spiders build a web "to live on and to trap food." In January, a local zookeeper had killed a rhinoceros that was charging him, and Josh offered, "You heard it was pregnant? I was really sad about that." Following an ice storm, the class was discussing a power outage that had occurred. Josh was leaving for home with an earache, but he stayed in the classroom until Pat called on him to say, "What happens is the ice gets on the power line and gets too heavy and they fall down. It happened while I was taking a bath. A power line fell right on my bathroom and scared me." When Pat shared a magazine about Siberian tigers,

Josh remarked, "The zoo had a pretty tiger like that but it got old, old. It's name was Ed, and now they got a cub."

Josh was willing to take risks with his contributions to classroom discussions, even if he were inaccurate or unsure of his response. To complete the class weather graph on a cold day, Pat asked what the weather was like outside. Josh said that it was warm. Pat disagreed, and he said, "Well, it's warm to me." During a lesson on compound words, Pat explained about two little words put together to make a big word. Josh said that they were called "pound-down words."

Josh participated in a variety of center activities, with no noticeable preference for any choice. For most activities, he played with other students instead of alone. In January, several children began *playing school* by writing on chalkboards together and reading items around the room. Josh was an avid participant in these play activities.

Attitude toward Literacy

Though Josh was an attentive and thoughtful learner throughout teacher-directed literacy activities, he frequently was off task during independent reading or writing work. As examples, he was observed organizing his crayon box, tearing and rolling paper, talking, or just sitting during work time. He was adept at justifying his off task behavior with comments such as, "I spilled my crayons" or "I don't feel good." When motivated, however, Josh worked on literacy tasks during free time, before school, and at home. Josh displayed considerable pride and enthusiasm when he published the class's first book.

He also occasionally enjoyed looking at or reading books during the morning preparation time.

Enthusiasm for learning was observed throughout the school year. Josh often shared his published book with me for several weeks after he had completed it. Once, as Pat was teaching a guided reading group and Josh was working at centers, he frequently stopped his play to observe Pat's instruction. He later remarked to me about a pattern that he had noticed in the book used by the guided reading group. Upon returning from Christmas vacation, Josh told Pat that he was happy to be back at school. Several times he offered to read a book to me, and he once told me, "I read a lot of books at home. About 10 a night. Little books. They're easy."

On the *Elementary Reading Attitude Survey* (McKenna & Kear, 1990) administered on October 14, 1996, Josh scored a 3.0 (PR = 44) for recreational reading and 3.1 (PR = 53) for academic reading. These scores indicated that Josh felt somewhat positive about both aspects of reading. He expressed strong positive feelings for reading a book during free time, getting a book for a present, starting a new book, going to a bookstore, answering questions about reading, learning from a book, and reading basal stories. Josh's only strongly negative response was that he preferred to play instead of read. When this instrument was readministered on February 6, 1997, Josh's scores increased slightly, indicating a more positive response to reading tasks (3.4 for recreational reading [PR = 72] and 3.3 for academic reading [PR = 63]). He had a negative response to only one question: "How do you feel about reading

instead of playing?" On April 10, 1997, Josh scored 3.1 for recreational reading (PR = 52) and 3.3 for academic reading (PR = 63). He indicated that he did not want to read for fun at home or during summer vacation, and reading out loud at school made him nervous.

I interviewed Josh on several occasions to obtain responses related to literacy learning. On November 14, 1996, when asked if he were a good reader, he replied "kind of and kind of not" because "I read a lot of books and I get 'em right and the ones I don't get right my mom helps me right 'em. In some easy books, I can read half of them and I can't read half of them." He said that he thought he was a good reader for a beginning first grader. When asked about his skill at writing, he said he was "just sort of" good, but "I don't know how to explain that one." In a second interview on January 9, 1997, I again asked if he were a good reader. He replied, "You could probably say that" because "I write more words, then I learn how to read them." In response to the question, "Are you a good writer?", Josh answered, "You can maybe say that. I'm a good writer for my age, but not a good writer." He said he was a good writer for his age because "I read more." On April 10, 1997, Josh responded that he was a good reader but did not know why. He answered that he was "not very much" of a good writer. "I would be a good writer to the teacher but not a good writer to me." I asked him if he meant that he could do better, and Josh replied, "Yes."

Josh was the only research participant to express an understanding of the connection between reading and writing during these interviews. When I asked him how he was learning to write, he responded, "I just started to learn

how to write more because I'm reading a lot more and I'm remembering a lot more words." He also said, "I noticed that now that I'm reading a lot more, I can write a lot more words," and "Whenever I write more, I read. Whenever I read more, I write."

Learning Through Collaboration

Josh displayed considerable collaborative efforts when small groups of children played school during center time. Josh and his friends would often read and write together while they were at literacy centers. At other times throughout the school day, he participated in teacher-directed collaborative activities. He enjoyed sharing his writing work with me, but only shared with students during Author's Chair time. Josh infrequently requested help from Pat or me and was never observed requesting help from other students.

Josh was a kind boy who often helped friends by bringing them a chair, giving his peers help with work, or asking them to join his group. For example, one day Josh noticed Allison reading alone and said to her, "Hey, you wanna make us a little group?" Pat nominated him for the school's Peacemaker Award.

Josh's willingness to help his peers is best illustrated by describing an interaction that he had with Cedrick on March 4, 1997. Cedrick had serious troubles with literacy tasks and could recognize very few letter names, sounds, or sight words. Josh showed me a list of words that he had written the day before. He had quizzed Cedrick on word recognition, and the list represented the words that Cedrick could not read. During center time on March 4, Josh and

Cedrick huddled together in a corner to work on the words again. When I observed their collaboration, Josh was attempting to help Cedrick recognize the word *town*. Josh had illustrated the word by having the *w* hit the *o* so the *ow* would say /ow/. Cedrick was still unable to recognize the word. I suggested that Josh help him read the word in a book so that Cedrick could use the illustration and the context for word identification. Josh responded, "I know just the book that this word is in." Then he opened a book to an illustration of a town with the text that read, "...all over town." Josh asked Cedrick where one could find all the big buildings. Cedrick answered, "town." Josh said to me, "Ms. Debbie, you sure had a good idea."

Learning about Literacy Through Reading

Knowledge about words. Josh had considerable knowledge about words at the beginning of the first grade and increased his understanding as the year progressed. As examples, Josh was listening to a guided reading lesson where the children were reading a book about activities done at school--reading, writing, singing, playing, and painting. Josh turned to me and said, "They all end in *-ing*." He observed that since he could read the word *bat*, he could also read the word *mat*, and if he knew the word *pull*, he could read the word *full*. When he was trying to read the word *forest*, he said, "I found a little word. Here's *for*." Josh announced in January, "I know the vowels--a, e, i, o, u, and sometimes other letters." He contributed *icicle* and *popsicle* to the class list of *soft c* words. As he encountered the word *read* on a sight word list, he

replied, "Either the book read or the color red." He volunteered that *tablecloth* was a compound word.

Josh understood that decoding was not always an effective word recognition strategy. In early December, I asked Josh to read words from a list of isolated sight words. He decoded *first* as *fierst* and *baby* as *baybye*. After reading each word, he said, "I sounded it out but it didn't sound like a real word." As he was working with two other students to read the phrase *neighbor's baby*, he told them, "Some words you can sound out a little, some not at all, and some you can sound out all the way." He also advised this small group to use the illustration to help with word recognition. "We can use the picture. Here's the neighbor and here's the baby."

On the *Slosson Oral Reading Test-Revised* (Slosson, 1990) administered in September 1996, Josh read 6 words (stanine = 3, PR = 21), but increased to 21 words (stanine = 4, PR = 38) in December. He read 93 of the 220 words on the Dolch list on January 17, 1997, identifying 93% of the words on the preprimer list and 58% of the words on the primer list. When Pat asked Josh to read the preprimer list of Harris-Jacobson words, he read 100% correctly. On February 25, 1997, the *SORT-R* was administered again. Josh read 33 words (stanine = 4, PR = 33). He read 43 words (stanine = 4, PR = 45) on the *SORT-R* on April 15, 1997.

Reading of whole texts. Josh read grade level texts skillfully and usually applied successful strategies to recognize words and correct miscues. The following samples of Josh's oral reading were taken from his readings of basal

text selections. I will not give illustrations of text sections that Josh read without error, but will instead give examples of Josh's problem-solving as he read.

Josh's reading is shown in italics below the actual text.

On October 4, 1996, Josh read a selection from the first story in the second preprimer basal text. He correctly read 112 out of 112 words, with two repetitions and four self-corrections. His self-corrections are shown in the three examples below.

Text: Do you want me to help you?

Josh: *Do you need help want me to help you?*

Text: But I think Turtle can.

Josh: *But Turtle I think Turtle can.*

Text: I would like to find a good home.

Josh: *I want a would like to find a good home.*

Josh's self-corrections indicated that he was anticipating the text, but then he recognized that what he had said did not match the written words. With these self-corrections, Josh showed that he was checking one word recognition strategy (context) with another (graphophonics) to monitor his reading.

A selection read on October 11, 1996, showed one of Josh's only miscues that remained uncorrected. He read:

Text: I want to see what bears are like.

Josh: *I want to see (pause) would bear are look.*

On this sentence, Josh was not monitoring his reading to ensure that what he read made sense.

Running records of oral readings during the remainder of October, November, and December 1996 showed that Josh was easily reading grade

level passages from the second and third preprimer basal texts. All records showed that Josh had 100% accuracy, with no miscues, repetitions, or self-corrections. In one instance, Josh reread a sentence so that his expression sounded excited after he observed an exclamation mark at the end of the sentence.

On January 8, 1997, I administered the preprimer passage from the *Classroom Reading Inventory* (Silvaroli, 1997) to determine Josh's reading skill on unfamiliar text. We first discussed the illustration of two children and a toy car. Josh's reading work consisted of:

Text: *The Play Car*

Josh: *The /p/ /l/ the play car.*

Text: "See my play car," said Tom.

Josh: *See my play car, said /T/ /o/ /m/.*

Text: Ann said, "It's a big car."

Josh: *Ann said Ann said it's a big car.*

Josh read with 100% word recognition accuracy and comprehension on this passage. He hesitated several times to determine unfamiliar words. An analysis of his reading work showed that Josh used decoding to help himself read two words, and he repeated two words so that he could maintain meaning.

When Pat asked Josh to read a 155 word selection from the primer level basal text on January 16, 1997, Josh demonstrated his skill at monitoring his reading and cross-checking one word recognition strategy against the other.

Some of Josh's reading work included these self-corrections:

Text: That may be so. But I'm trying to sleep!

Josh: *That ("I can't think of what that word is. I ain't gonna think of it either.") be so. That may be so. But I'm trying to sleep.*

Text: It's daytime, Dog. Why don't you sleep at night?

Josh: *It's day daytime, Dog. Who why don't you sleep at night?*

Text: We'll go so that you can sleep.

Josh: *We'll go so at you can we'll go so that you can sleep.*

Josh obtained a 97% accuracy on this passage. He used context, graphophonics, and repetition to make his reading meaningful.

The following week on January 23, 1997, Pat asked Josh to read an unfamiliar selection from the primer basal text. He read 100% of the words correctly, with one self-correction. Pat noted, "Excellent use of strategies and cross-checking." On January 30, Josh read a line as:

Text: Then he said, "That's 2."

Josh: *That's them to then he said NO! then he said, that's 2.*

I asked him what he thought about as he worked through this line of text. He replied, "I thought, 'No!' *Them* doesn't make sense."

On February 13, 1997, Josh read a 121-word selection to me from the primer basal text. He obtained a 99% word recognition accuracy on this passage, with only one uncorrected miscue. He paused several times throughout the reading to determine unknown words. His reading expression was appropriate. Josh's reading work consisted of:

Text: Find out who will live in it.

Josh: *(pause) (I told him the word find) what who will live in it.*

Upon reading this sentence incorrectly, Josh repeated the line correctly and said, "Yeah. I didn't think it made sense. That word is *out*." On another running

record from a basal text taken February 20, 1997, Josh had 100% accuracy with no miscues and one repetition.

Josh obtained one of his lowest accuracy scores on a running record taken on March 14, 1997, from a primer passage. Though he had 11 uncorrected errors, all miscues were meaningful. On eight of the miscues, he changed verb tense; the story was written in present tense and Josh read it in past tense. Other miscues included:

Text: She likes lunchtime.

Josh: She liked learning time.

Text: So the children decided to make get-well cards for Miss Finney.

Josh: So so the children didn't started to make (pause) get-well cards for Miss Finney.

Josh achieved a 91% accuracy on this passage.

I administered the primer level passage of the *Classroom Reading Inventory* (Silvaroli, 1997) on April 16, 1997. Josh had one omission and one substitution, and he could not answer one of five related comprehension questions. This passage was at Josh's instructional level.

Graph of oral reading accuracy. Throughout the year, Josh remained a good reader of basal reading materials. The graph in Figure 5.13 shows Josh's oral reading accuracy on basal selections from October 1996 through April 1997. On a total of 14 oral reading passages, Josh self-corrected 55% of his miscues. The graph illustrates that Josh typically read at a level above 95%. In other words, most basal text selections were at his independent level.

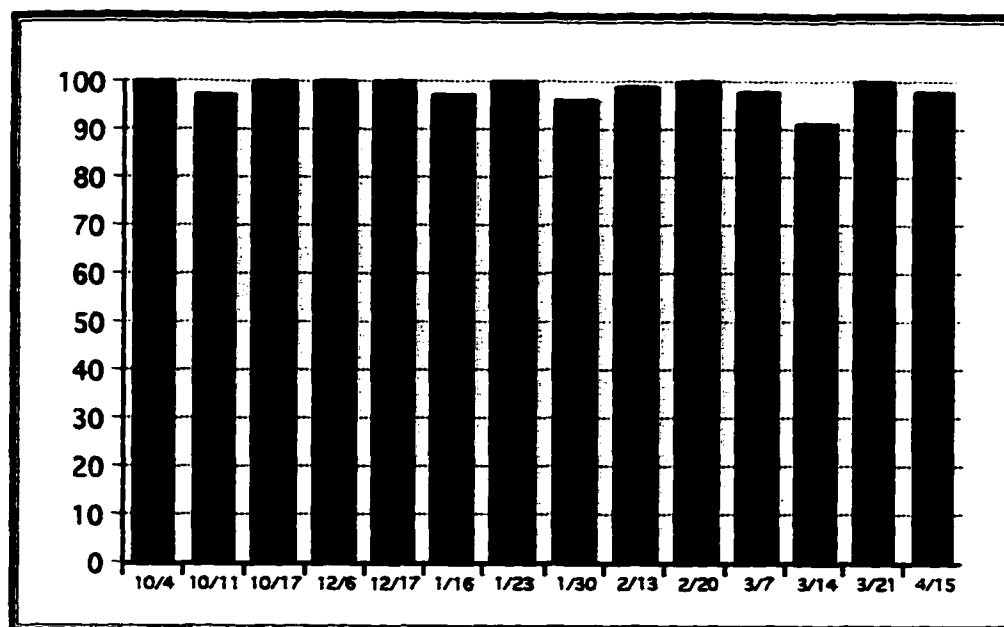


Figure 5.13
Percentages of Oral Reading Accuracy
Basal Text Selections

Learning about Literacy Through Writing

Josh's writing demonstrated his growing understanding of sound/symbol relationships and the use of writing as a tool for communication. Josh's motivation to write fluctuated throughout the year, but when he had a topic that interested him, he wrote avidly. For spelling, he relied primarily on sounding out words and used conventional spelling less regularly. Josh could explain the need for capitalization and punctuation in sentences, but he did not routinely transfer this knowledge to independent writing. By studying Josh's writing samples, his development as a writer over the span of seven months can be observed.

Josh's writing in early October provided motivation for many students in the class. Figure 5.14 shows his first attempt at writing a Halloween story. It

said, "I carve a jack-o-lantern and I put a candle on to it. And it came alive and it was mean. It tried to chase me." Later, Josh added to his story, "It made me cry.

I shot it with the water hose. When the candle went out, it turned back into a regular jack-o-lantern." When Josh shared his writing with the other students, they responded positively to its humor. Pat copied Josh's story into a book format, and Josh then illustrated it. He dedicated the book "to Ms. Alexander who started me off."

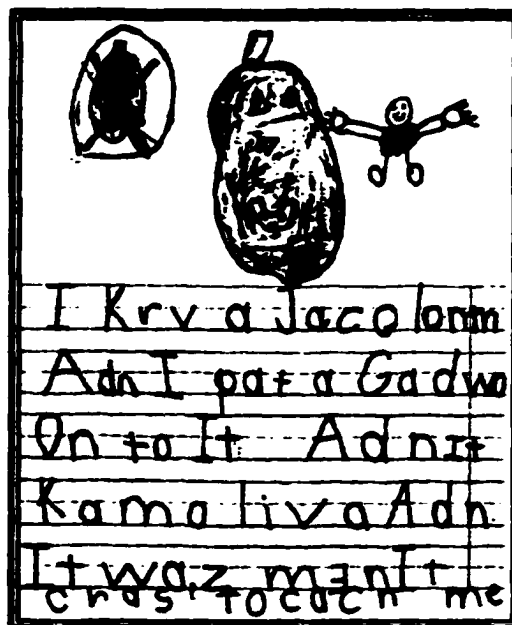


Figure 5.14
October 8, 1996

His excitement over his published book was infectious; other students soon produced books for publishing. This writing showed Josh's beginning attempts at conventional and phonetic spelling. Forty-eight percent of the words were spelled conventionally, and of the remaining words spelled phonetically, Josh used 75% of the correct sounds. In this piece, he inserted capital letters throughout the writing and used no punctuation.

On November 4, Josh was writing about his experiences on Halloween night (see Figure 5.15). He wrote, "I went and we got lots of candy." After he read his writing to me, he realized that he wanted to say, "I went trick-or-treating and we got lots of candy." I told him that when writers reread what they had written, they often realize that they have made a mistake and then correct it.

Josh attempted to insert the words "trick-or-treat" into his text. Though he used phonetic spelling and some conventional spelling (*i*, *we*, *got*, *of*), the reversal of the *g* in *got* and *d* in *candy* made his piece more difficult to read. Forty percent of

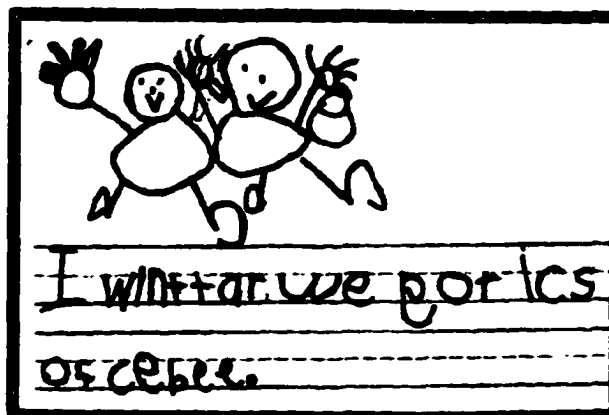


Figure 5.15
November 4, 1996

the words were spelled conventionally. Of the remaining words spelled phonetically, Josh used 30% of the correct sounds. This piece was considerably shorter than his writing from October. He used a capital letter at the beginning and a period at the end of his sentence.

When Josh wrote about his Christmas ornament on December 3, 1996, he recorded, "I have mad my ornamint" (I have made my ornament). I asked him why he had written so little. He told me that he had been repairing his torn ornament so he had little time to write. All words in this short sample were either spelled conventionally (60%) or spelled accurately using sound/symbol relationships. Josh used 100% of the correct sounds in phonetic spelling.

In January, Josh's favorite dog, Jake, was struck by a car and killed. Josh initially was distracted and upset. After a few days, he discovered that writing about Jake caused him to think of happy memories and made him less sad. On the bus one morning before school, he began to write his first story about Jake. He continued writing about his dog during free time that morning,

throughout Writing Workshop, and into the next day. He asked to share his story during Author's Chair time, and he began a new story about Jake several days later. He told me that he intended to compile his Jake stories into a book and asked me to type the stories on my computer. He said that I could make copies for the book bins at each table and give a copy to all my friends. His January 22 piece (see Figure 5.16) was entitled "My Dog Jake" and said, "Jake was a good dog. I loved him. I was attached to him. I cried for him. I'm sorry he died. I know times come. He was wrapped around my finger."

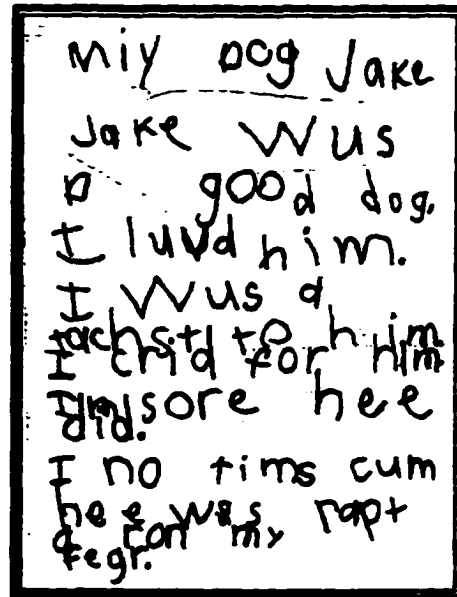


Figure 5.16
January 22, 1997

He told Pat and me that he had enclosed the title in a *speech bubble*. Sixty-four percent of the words were spelled conventionally, and of the remaining words spelled phonetically. Josh used 93% of the correct sounds. The following day, Josh wrote another story about Jake (see Figure 5.17) that said, "The day when Jake got killed, I was at school. Then I had a earache, so Mom came get me. On the way, Mom told me Jake got hit. I cried. The

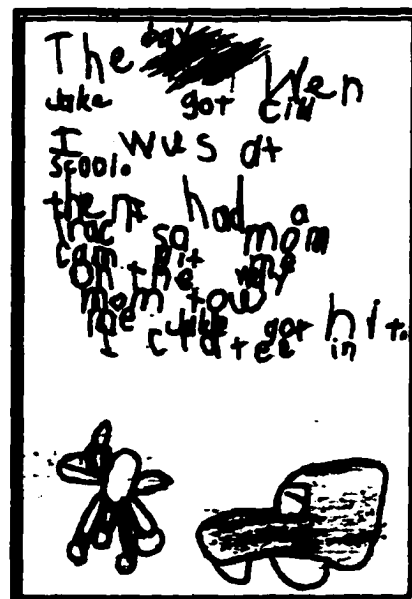


Figure 5.17
January 23, 1997

end." Sixty-four percent of the words were spelled conventionally, and of the remaining words spelled phonetically, Josh used 80% of the correct sounds.

When I entered the classroom on January 30, Josh showed me another story about Jake (see Figure 5.18), and he

again asked me to type it for him. He said that he had run out of room at the bottom of the paper, so he wrote the text up the side.

The story was entitled, "The Day When Jake Was Born" and read, "We were in town. When I got back, Uncle Tony was kicking the cats so they wouldn't eat him."

Josh explained that all of the puppies in the litter except Jake were safe under his

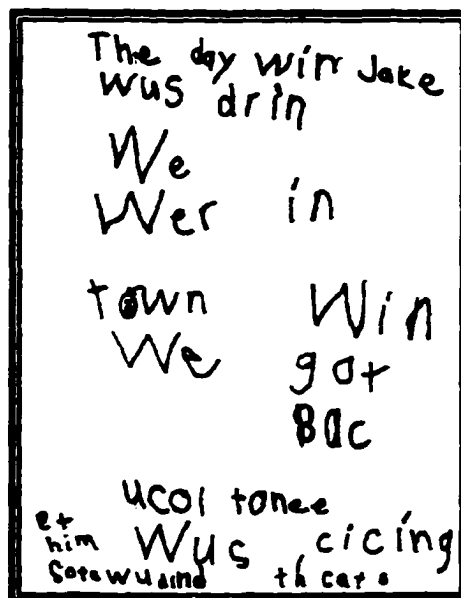


Figure 5.18
January 30, 1997

house, but the cats were trying to attack Jake. I suggested that he put this information in his story, but he declined. Forty-four percent of the words were spelled conventionally, and of the remaining words spelled phonetically, Josh used 81% of the correct sounds. When I gave Josh this piece typed, he gave me his collection of stories with a cover that said, "Dog." He had written a total of four stories about Jake. He said that he was all finished writing about his dog because "I don't have no more ideas."

I have chosen to show several of Josh's January writings about Jake because they reflect his motivation toward writing, use of writing as an emotional outlet, and his growing understanding of the purposes and

conventions of writing. All three Jake pieces showed Josh's reliance of sound/symbol relationships (e.g.: *ir ac* for *earache* and *rapt* for *wrapped*). He used phonics for spelling even when the words were on the class's Word Wall (e.g., *was, were, my, he, come get, at*). In the last piece (see figure 5.18, fifth line), Josh's use of Pat's silly phonics stories was evident when he illustrated the story of the *ow* sound as he wrote *town*. In the first piece, Josh inserted periods appropriately at the end of each sentence. His writing used several expressions, such as "I was attached to him" and "He was wrapped around my finger," that showed Josh's use of figurative language. He used appropriate spacing repeatedly, though he did not make his handwriting a uniform size. Capitalization at the beginning and punctuation at the end of sentences were used inconsistently. He gave a title to his first piece. In addition, Josh began writing twice without using drawing as a form of rehearsal.

In February, Josh wrote several pieces about his personal and school life. One piece is shown in Figure 5.19. Josh entitled this piece, "My Parakeet," and wrote, "I got a parakeet for Christmas. I liked it. My mom had said she had a present in her car. It was a parakeet. I liked it." The illustration

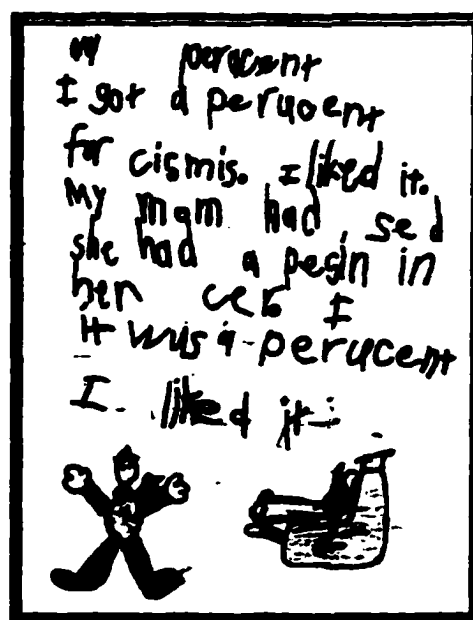


Figure 5.19
February 18, 1997

his shoulder and his dad watching them as he sat in a recliner. Of the 30 words, 77% were spelled conventionally. The seven remaining words were spelled with 90% of the correct sounds. Josh inserted a period at the end of three of his five sentences, and he used a capital letter at the beginning of every sentence.

In March, Josh wrote about his science experiment in "My Plant Journal" (see Figures 5.20 - 5.22). On the day he planted the seeds, Josh wrote, "We planted a seed. We had fun. I liked it. We let them grow." The following week, he wrote, "We watered the plants. I looked at my plant. And it was sprouting. I'm happy that I have a sprout." The next week, Josh wrote, "I looked at my plant. And I saw two plants. I was happy!" Seventy-two percent of the words were spelled conventionally, and Josh used 93% of the correct sounds in the words spelled phonetically. The affixes *-s*, *-ed* and *-ing* were used appropriately for the words *planted*, *liked*, *watered*, *looked*, *sprouting*, and *plants*. Ending punctuation (periods and an exclamation mark) were used

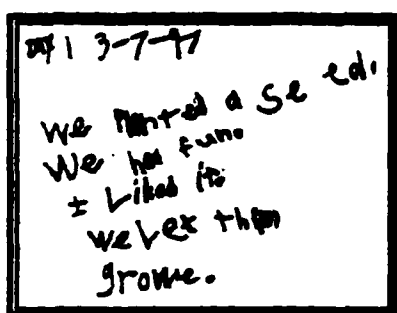


Figure 5.20
March 7, 1997

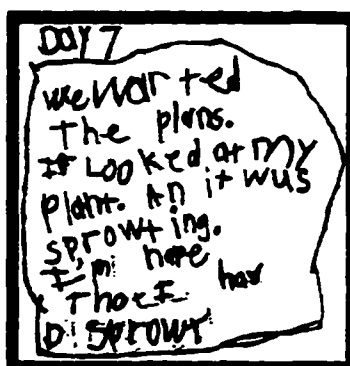


Figure 5.21
March 14, 1997

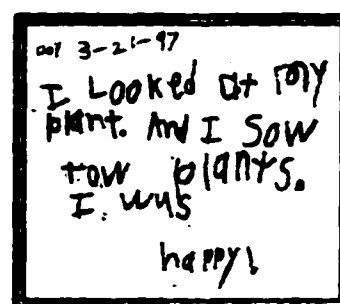


Figure 5.22
March 21, 1997

correctly. Josh used capital letters at the beginning of all sentences and a capital letter for the pronoun *I*. He correctly wrote the contraction *I'm*.

Trevor

Introduction

Trevor was born on September 29, 1989. He lived with his mother and visited his father in a nearby city. He had no siblings. He was right-handed. On his kindergarten report card from Randall Elementary, Trevor had satisfactory grades with one exception; he had difficulty remembering to take turns to speak.

Trevor continued to make suitable progress in first grade. Though he was not a regular contributor to classroom discussions, he usually was ready with an accurate response. After the class had seen a play at a local performance center about Christmas around the world, Pat asked the class about a stage backdrop. Trevor volunteered that it was a picture of "the continents," and he knew that Mexico was in North America. Another time, he told the class that a book they had read was set in the continent of Africa. When talking about a rhinoceros that was killed, Trevor remarked, "One time when I went to the zoo, I saw a rhino. They are almost like statues." On another day in the school library, the librarian asked what the symbol © meant when it was shown in a book. Trevor replied, "It means you can't copy it."

Trevor investigated a variety of center choices, but he regularly returned to either the snap cubes or the blocks. He enjoyed participating in center activities with other students. During other free times, Trevor was an avid artist.

His drawing skills were superior to that of his classmates and showed great attention to details.

Attitude toward Literacy

Trevor usually persisted with independent literacy tasks and was attentive during teacher-directed activities. He willingly read for pleasure when instructed to do so, but he preferred to spend his free time drawing. When he chose a book to read, his choices were at an appropriate level of difficulty.

Trevor was a compliant student, but he rarely exhibited enthusiasm over his work during the first semester of first grade. As he began to gain confidence in his reading and writing abilities, he became more enthusiastic and persistent with literacy tasks. During the first part of the year in Writing Workshop, Trevor devoted most of his time to his illustrations and then hurriedly wrote words to accompany his drawings. Toward mid-year, Trevor wrote more information about each illustration and seemed less rushed to move to another drawing opportunity. He also began to independently apply reading strategies to tasks outside basal reading instruction. For example, the cafeteria staff had displayed a sign at the entrance to the lunch line that said, "Pick up ketchup." Trevor was excited that he could read the sign on his own, and he eagerly reread it to me and several classmates.

On the *Elementary Reading Attitude Survey* (McKenna & Kear, 1990) administered on October 14, 1996, Trevor scored a 2.7 (PR = 26) for recreational reading and 2.1 (PR = 11) for academic reading. The scores indicated that Trevor felt slightly positive about recreational reading and slightly

negative about academic reading. He expressed strong positive feelings about reading a book on a rainy Saturday, reading a book during free time, getting a book for a present, reading during summer vacation, reading school books, and using a dictionary. Strong negative feelings were expressed about reading for fun at home, reading instead of playing, reading different kinds of books, doing workbook pages and worksheets, reading in school, learning from a book, and taking a reading test. Trevor's attitude toward reading changed significantly during the first semester of first grade. When this instrument was readministered on February 6, 1997, he expressed strong positive feelings on both aspects of reading (scores of 3.9 for recreational reading [PR = 92] and 4.0 for academic reading [PR = 99]). On April 10, 1997, Trevor's scores continued to indicate his positive feelings toward reading (3.9 for recreational reading [PR = 92] and 3.7 for academic reading [PR = 85]).

I interviewed Trevor on several occasions to obtain responses related to literacy learning. When asked in November if he were a good reader, he replied, "Yes, 'cause I keep on sounding out." He responded that he was a good writer when "I draw pictures always 'cause I make it pretty and stuff." Trevor's responses to the same questions in January were similar. He was a good reader because "I sound out," and he was a good writer "'cause when I was four I drew and drew all the time and that's why I'm a good drawer." When I asked again what made him a good writer, he responded, "'cause I was trying to write whenever I was four." On April 10, 1997, he said that he would "read books to my children before bedtime" when he is a grown-up. Trevor said

he was "kind of" a good reader because "I can read some hard words in my Goosebumps books." He considered himself a good writer "because I sound out words."

Learning Through Collaboration

Trevor participated in all teacher-directed collaborative activities willingly. He appeared to be a confident student who rarely shared his work with others or requested help. He acted as if he knew that his work was well done, and he did not need to seek feedback from others about his efforts. He was, however, willing to help other students when the opportunity arose. For example, one day as Trevor and his buddy reader, James, were reading together, James had difficulty with word recognition. Trevor told me, "I'm teaching him that word." Trevor pointed to the words as James read and helped him identify unknown words and correct miscues. Another day, while playing school at center time, Kevin needed to know how to spell the word *work*. Trevor took the flashlight and pointed to the word on the Word Wall so that Kevin could spell it correctly. He worked briefly with Chris to collaborate on a story about Chris's cat (see Figure 5.1).

Learning about Literacy Through Reading

Knowledge about words. Field notes revealed few instances where Trevor articulated his knowledge about words. It was evident, however, that he had a strong understanding of words and word patterns through his performance on reading, spelling, and writing tasks. On those occasions when Trevor discussed his knowledge about words, his observations were accurate.

As examples, Trevor noticed that part of his name was in the word *treasure*. He knew that two small words put together were called compound words. He told Pat to change *mall* to *tall* by taking away the *m* and inserting a *t* in its place. When the class was discussing plural nouns, Trevor announced that "*mice* has a soft *c*." On another day during a math lesson on symmetry, one student said of the word *symmetrical*, "If you put an *o* instead of *a* at the end and then a *d*, it would spell *cold* like on our weather graph." Trevor responded, "Then it would say *symmetricold*."

Trevor used his knowledge about words to help the class edit pieces written during shared writing. When someone had spelled *new* as *now*, he said, "change the *o* to *e*." He knew that the phonetic spelling *sistr* needed an additional letter. He told Pat, "On *sister*, on *str*, you've gotta have an *e*." He contributed that the invented spelling for *laughed* needed an *e* added.

As the year progressed, Trevor excelled at recognizing sight words in isolation. On the *Slosson Oral Reading Test-Revised* (Slosson, 1990) administered in September 1996, Trevor read 13 words (stanine = 4, PR = 29), but increased to 25 words (stanine = 5, PR = 43) in December. He read 146 of the 220 words on the Dolch list on January 17, 1997, identifying 98% of the words on the preprimer list, 75% of the words on the primer list, 73% on the first grade list, 50% on the second grade list, and 37% on the third grade list. When Pat asked Trevor to read the preprimer list of Harris-Jacobson words, he read 100% correctly. On February 25, 1997, the *SORT-R* was administered again.

Trevor read 57 words (stanine = 6, PR = 64). He read 68 words (stanine = 6, PR = 75) on the *SORT-R* on April 14, 1997.

Reading of whole texts. Trevor easily mastered grade level reading material and had few oral reading miscues. He monitored his reading to ensure that it made sense, and he cross-checked one source of word recognition information with others (context, syntax, graphophonics) to identify words or correct miscues. Word recognition accuracy was typically 100%, so I have few examples in which to analyze miscues. Two examples from October include:

Text: Do you like this home, Rabbit?
Trevor: Do you like it this home, Rabbit?

Text: But I do have work to do.
Trevor: But I do not but I do have work to do.

In both of these examples, Trevor was anticipating the upcoming words but then realized that his spoken words did not match the written text. He was cross-checking meaning cues against graphophonic information.

On January 8, 1997, I administered the preprimer passage from the *Classroom Reading Inventory* (Silvaroli, 1997) to determine Trevor's reading skill on unfamiliar text. We first discussed the illustration of two children and a toy car. Trevor's reading work consisted of:

Text: Ann said, "It's a big car."
Trevor: Ann said Ann said it it's a big car.

Text: "Would you like a ride?"
Trevor: Wud you like a ride?

Trevor achieved 96% word recognition accuracy on this inventory passage.

Trevor's excellent reading continued through January, February, and March. He often read with 100% word recognition accuracy with no uncorrected miscues. His reading work included:

Text: He was baking bread.

Trevor: *He was making bread.*

Text: "May I take a big orange with me?" asked Caleb.

Trevor: *Make may I take a big orange with me, asked Caleb.*

Text: "Do you want something more?" asked Dad.

Trevor: *To you do you want something more, asked Dad.*

Text: My dog pushed me with her nose.

Trevor: *My dog poked pushed me with her nose.*

Text: "Maybe I'll take a sandwich, too," said Caleb.

Trevor: *Maybe I'll take a (pause) sandwich too, said Caleb.*

In the first example above, Trevor's miscue did not affect the meaning of the sentence, so it was not corrected. In the second, third, and fourth examples, Trevor recognized that the words he had said did not match the text, so he reread to correct his miscues. In the last example, I asked Trevor how he had determined the word *sandwich*. He told me that he had looked at the picture to help him.

I administered the primer passage of the *Classroom Reading Inventory* (Silvaroli, 1997) on April 16, 1997. Trevor had no errors in word recognition or comprehension, indicating that this passage was at his independent reading level.

Graph of oral reading accuracy. Trevor continued to be an excellent reader of grade level materials throughout his first grade year. Trevor self-

corrected 75% of his oral reading errors. Figure 5.23 represents Trevor's oral reading accuracy as he read basal text selections from October 1996 through April 1997. The graph indicates that Trevor was reading at his independent level on all basal reading passages.

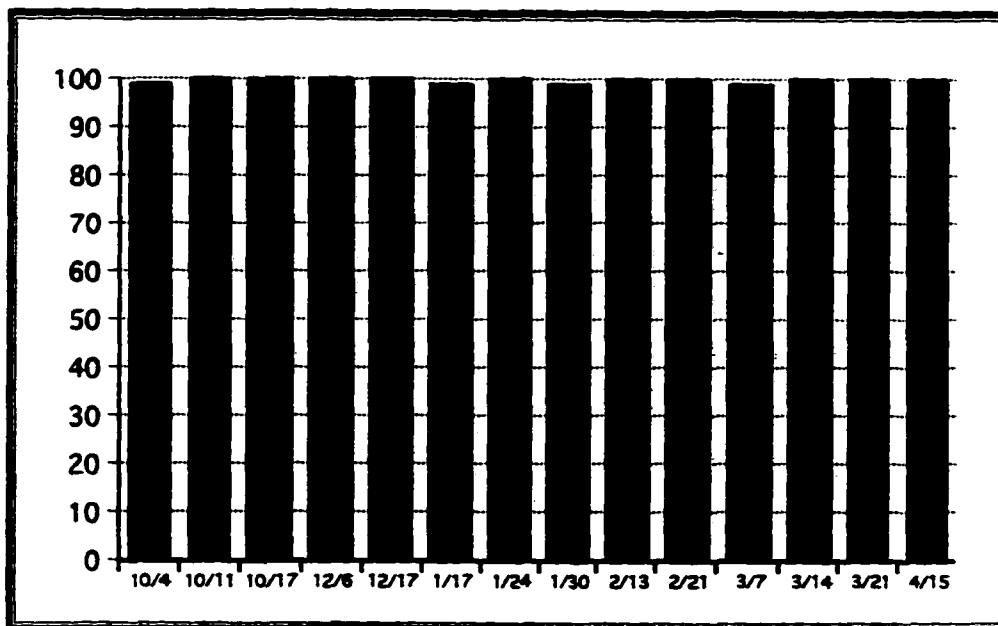


Figure 5.23
Percentages of Oral Reading Accuracy
Basal Text Selections

Learning about Literacy Through Writing

Trevor was one of the stronger writers in Pat's classroom. His writing typically showed his understanding of writing conventions, conventional spelling, and sound/symbol relationships. By examining several of Trevor's written pieces, his development as a writer can be seen.

Trevor's October writing sample showed that he already had considerable knowledge about the writing process and writing conventions (see Figure 5.24). The text said, "The witch is eating the little boy. The ghost is

scary. The wolf is howling." In this piece, Trevor's drawing was detailed and his writing had more than one sentence about the same topic. His phonetic spelling was easily read, and he correctly spelled several high frequency words. Fifty-three percent of the words were spelled conventionally, and of the remaining words spelled

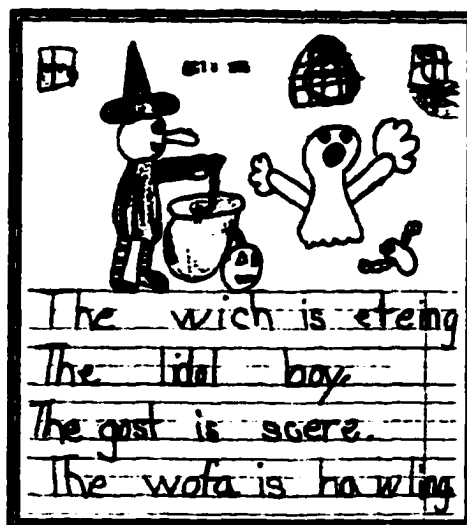


Figure 5.24
October 8, 1996

phonetically, Trevor used 90% of the correct sounds. He used a capital letter at the beginning of every line of text, left ample space between words, and used periods appropriately at the end of each sentence.

During most of November, Trevor preferred drawing to writing. He invested so much energy in his illustrations, it seemed as if he lost his motivation for writing. Hunting season became his preferred topic for drawing, as he and his father hunted deer every weekend. He needed prompting to write about his illustrations. One day during Writing Workshop, Trevor asked me if I wanted a drawing of a "10 point, eight point, five point, six point, or whatever I wanted buck." I replied that I had already seen his drawing of a deer so I would prefer to see his writing. He said that he would draw me a ten-point buck because he liked drawing. Figure 5.25 was one of Trevor's lengthier pieces that month. His topic was Halloween; it said, "I was a cowboy. I got a 100 candies." Again, it was apparent through his use of spaces between words and

periods at the end of sentences that he understood the concept of words and sentences. Phonetic spelling was used effectively. Forty percent of the words were spelled conventionally, and of the remaining words spelled phonetically, Trevor used 80% of the correct sounds. The numbers at the bottom of the text

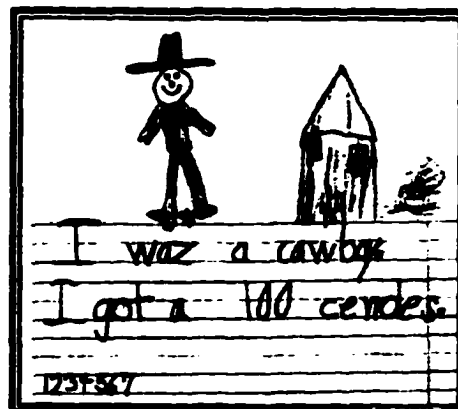


Figure 5.25
November 1, 1996

corresponded to the items on the class's *Writing Checklist*. Pat previously had modeled how she referred to items one through seven on the writing checklist to determine if her writing had the necessary elements. As she modeled by writing and checking her own piece, she wrote the numbers at the bottom of her writing and then checked them off as she referred to the checklist. Though there was no evidence that Trevor used the checklist to edit his piece, he was the only student observed to imitate Pat's editing strategy with numbers at the bottom of the page.

Trevor continued to prefer drawing to writing until mid-December. At that time, he began a short series of pieces on fireworks (see Figure 5.26). Complete with an elaborate illustration, his original piece read, "When I eat breakfast and then I was finished. I went to watch the

When I eat brecfrieste and
thin I was finish.
I wit to woch the fireworks
that wore shooting
outsid.

Figure 5.26
December 17, 1996

fireworks that were shooting outside." Trevor attempted the spelling of several long words (*breakfast, fireworks, shooting, outside*), and his approximations reflected a good understanding of sound/symbol relationships. Sixty-two percent of the words were spelled conventionally, and of the remaining words spelled phonetically, Trevor used 70% of the correct sounds. He added the affixes *-s* to *fireworks* and *-ing* to *shooting*. Punctuation was used correctly. On the following day, Trevor entitled this story, "Fireworks," and added, "And then I played with my toys." He wrote several other stories related to fireworks.

In January, Trevor and his family attended the rodeo, and he began a piece on that topic the next day (see Figure 5.27). It read, "I saw two horses at

the rodeo. And then I saw a big bull!! Then I saw a wild horse.

When they had the bull fights, I was so excited. And then the

rodeo was over. I went back

home." This piece reflected

Trevor's growth as a writer. He

used adjectives to describe,

had an ending, used capital

letters at the beginning of all

sentences, and inserted

punctuation marks at the end.

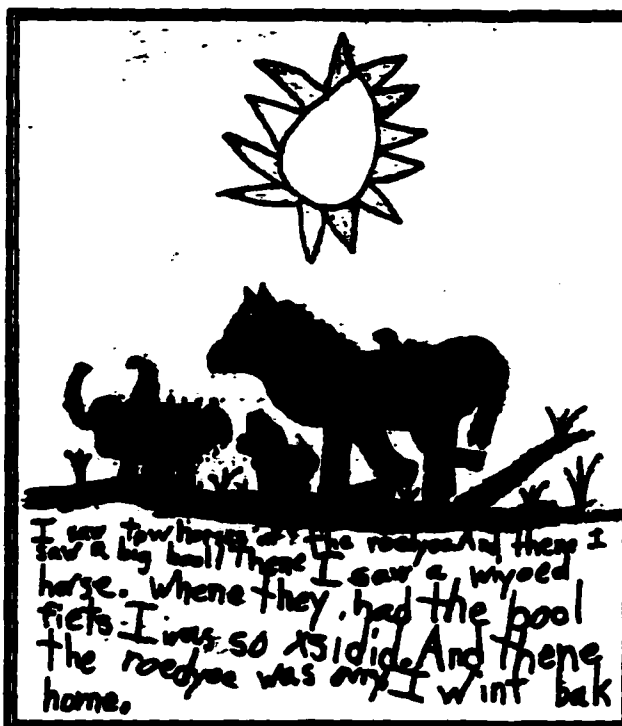


Figure 5.27

January 21, 1997

An exclamation mark appeared after the second sentence. Trevor's phonetic

spellings showed more complex sound/symbol relationships (e.g., *bool* for *bull*, *roedyoe* for *rodeo*, *wiyoad* for *wild*, and *fiets* for *fights*). Sixty-three percent of the words were spelled conventionally, and of the remaining words spelled phonetically, Trevor used 82% of the correct sounds.

Trevor began an illustration on February 17, 1997, after he watched a movie at home. He worked diligently on this illustration for two weeks, drawing an aerial view, a glider plane, and flying geese (see Figure 5.28). He took time away from this illustration to write

a story that Chris dictated (see Figure 5.1). On March 4, 1997, Trevor began his writing. He entitled his piece, "Fly Away Home," and he wrote, "Amy took her geese to fly away home. And then Amy heard a knock on the door. She opened the door and her geese came back." He said he planned to add much more information to this story. His writing of March 4 showed that he

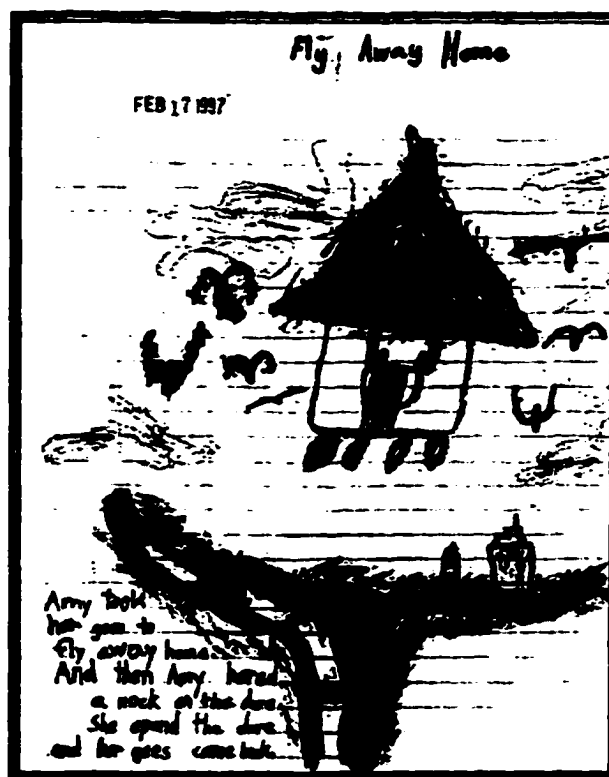


Figure 5.28
March 4, 1997

was using capital letters correctly in his title, for proper names, and at the beginning of each sentence. He used a period accurately at the end of every sentence. Of the 28 words, Trevor spelled 79% of them conventionally. He

used 90% of the sounds correctly in the word he spelled phonetically. Trevor did not finish his "Fly Away Home" story because the class began to practice standardized test-taking skills in March and April.

In Trevor's plant journal (see Figures 5.29 - 5.31), he wrote for his first entry, "I plant two seeds. And then we watered them. I liked the experiment." A week later, he wrote, "I am so excited that my plant has a little sprout. Finally I got a sprout. I like my plant." His last entry read, "I am happy that my plant has grown." Trevor spelled all but four words with conventional spelling (90%). Of the four words spelled phonetically, he used 88% of the correct sounds. Periods were inserted at the ends of all but one sentence, and Trevor used capital letters at the beginning of all sentences.

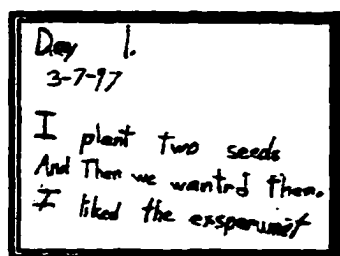


Figure 5.29
March 7, 1997

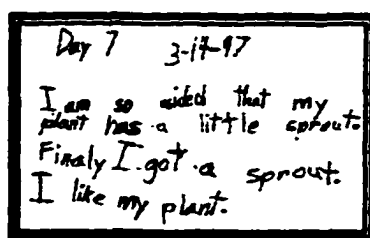


Figure 5.30
March 14, 1997

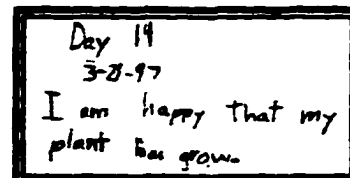


Figure 5.31
March 21, 1997

CHAPTER 6 CASE STUDIES OF INITIALLY LOW-ACHIEVING STUDENTS

Three Case Studies

The three initially low-achieving students described in this chapter entered first grade with some knowledge of sound/symbol relationships and letter names, but they had limited sight vocabulary, lacked skill with phonetic spelling, and could not read a familiar and predictable text. Because of their initial difficulties, they were chosen to participate in Pat's guided reading group utilizing her three-day acceleration strategy related in Chapter 4.

The descriptions in this chapter follow the same format as the preceding chapter. Each child's literacy learning is recounted through four broad categories: attitude toward literacy, learning through collaboration, learning about literacy through reading, and learning about literacy through writing.

Ben

Introduction

Ben was born on September 5, 1990, and he lived with his parents and younger sister. He was right-handed. Ben's father had academic problems as a young child. Ben completed his kindergarten year at Randall Elementary. His kindergarten report card indicated that he had difficulty with small muscle coordination, writing his name, recognizing the eight basic colors, and identifying number words zero through ten. He also had problems with behavior, as the report card grades showed that Ben had difficulties with

accepting authority, meeting new situations with ease, following directions, listening attentively, and making good use of his time.

In Pat's classroom, Ben remained an impulsive child who needed motivation to complete his work in a timely manner. Though Ben's behavior problems were not of a serious nature, he was often distractable and off task when the work did not interest him. As Pat told Ben's parents at the November parent-teacher conference, "I can be teaching a lesson that has the other students on the edge of their seats, and Ben appears to be thinking, 'You don't impress me, woman!'" At other times, Ben was silly and disruptive. When motivated, Ben displayed persistence and interest in the activity.

Ben participated willingly in class discussions, and when interested, he exhibited inquisitiveness and gave thoughtful responses. For example, the students were examining some seedpods I had brought, and they discussed the life cycle of a flower. When I showed them a picture of the bloom and said that the flower was called a *moonflower*, Ben said, "I bet they're called moonflowers because they're white and round like the moon." After being introduced to *nouns*, the class cut out magazine pictures and pasted them on a chart in the separate categories of *people*, *places*, *things*, and *animals*. Ben cut out a picture of people walking on the beach. He put a large X on the people and pasted his picture under the *places* category. He explained that the people did not fit in that category, so he needed to cross them out.

Because Pat had guided reading instruction during center time, Ben did not participate in center activities daily. When he did participate, he enjoyed

center activities. He usually avoided the centers with an academic focus, preferring to build objects with others using snap cubes.

Before the end of the first semester, Pat began communicating to Ben's parents about her concern over his academic progress and behavior. For several weeks after Pat's communication, Ben's behavior improved and he put forth more effort on academic tasks. When Pat complimented Ben for reading well one day, he replied, "I've been practicing and thinking about reading. My dad won't let me stop." Shortly thereafter, Ben's father requested that Ben be evaluated for dyslexia since he was dyslexic as a child. Ben's behavior became problematic again in Pat's classroom, during physical education, and with a substitute teacher. For the remainder of the year, Ben continued to have difficulty staying on task unless the activity was highly motivating.

Attitude toward Literacy

Ben displayed many contradictory behaviors in his motivation and attitudes toward literacy learning. Although he was inattentive and off task during many teacher-directed and independent learning activities, he remained highly enthusiastic about school. He routinely volunteered in all classroom discussions, usually with pertinent responses. As he became more strategic in his reading, Ben participated with more appropriate responses and behavior during guided reading instruction. When complimented once on his perceptive thinking, he replied, "Every time I work, I get smarter."

Ben became excited about writing early in the school year. He was so intent upon making his own book that he brought paper from home and stapled

sheets together for his book. Pat prepared his text for publishing, and Ben announced later, "I'm gonna be working on my book today." Although his enthusiasm was intense initially, it waned quickly, and Ben never completed this book. He also lost interest in his next book before it was finished.

Ben occasionally commented on his enjoyment of school and of literacy tasks. I heard comments such as, "That's a good book," "This is a great story," or "I love books." When Pat offered a reading game to several students before recess, Ben said, "That's a lot funner than playing outside when it's raining." He replied, "We're having fun at school" after the class worked with *short u* words and had spelled *fun*. He told Pat, "I'm happy 'cause you're my teacher." Remarks such as these were customary.

Voluntary reading and writing were rarely seen from Ben. Though he would sit occasionally with a book in front of him, he seldom was observed reading it. When he did choose a book to read, it was usually a familiar text and was at an appropriate reading level. Several incidents in mid-February were the exceptions. On February 14, Ben read for 30 minutes and was one of only two children to stay consistently on task. On February 17, Ben read six books at one sitting. He wrote several love notes to Pat and me, and once voluntarily responded to a letter from Pat's son, Arthur. Ben and Arthur met at a first grade program one evening at Randall. They quickly became

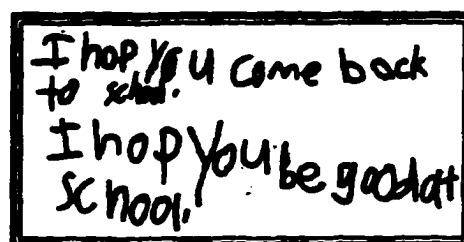


Figure 6.1
February 20, 1997

friends, and Arthur wrote a note to Ben that night. When Ben received the note the next morning, he replied with the letter shown in Figure 6.1.

On the *Elementary Reading Attitude Survey* (McKenna & Kear, 1990) administered on October 14, 1996, Ben scored a 3.4 (PR = 72) for recreational reading and 3.2 (PR = 58) for academic reading. The scores indicated positive feeling toward both aspects of reading. Ben expressed strong positive feelings toward reading during free time, getting a book for a present, starting a new book, reading during summer vacation, going to a bookstore, answering questions about reading, reading school books, using a dictionary, and taking a reading test. He expressed strong negative feelings only for doing workbook pages and worksheets. When this instrument was readministered on February 6, 1997, Ben's scores had changed little. His scores indicated continued positive feelings toward both aspects of reading (3.7 for recreational reading [PR = 86] and 3.2 for academic reading [PR = 58]). Ben responded that he did not like to read out loud in class. On April 14, 1997, Ben's responses on the *ERAS* indicated that he had less positive feelings about reading than he had previously. He scored 3.2 for recreational reading (PR = 58) and 2.8 for academic reading (PR = 39). He felt strongly negative about reading instead of playing, reading stories during reading instruction, and taking a reading test.

I interviewed Ben on several occasions to obtain responses related to literacy learning. I asked him in November if he were a good reader and writer. He responded that he was a good reader, "cause I know alots of words" and he wrote well, "cause I know to write lots of words and I use them and make them

by sounding them out." In a January interview, Ben's responses were much shorter. He said that "my reading" made him a good reader, and "my writing" made him a good writer. I interviewed Ben again on April 10, 1997, and I asked him if he were a good reader and writer. He replied, "No, ma'am" to the question about reading and shook his head to the question about writing. When I asked him why he felt that he was not a good reader or writer, he said that he did not know.

Learning Through Collaboration

Ben participated in teacher-directed collaborative activities such as Buddy Reading and discussing questions with a partner, though he occasionally needed reminders to stay on task. He often requested help from me and would accept assistance from his peers when it was offered. Ben shared his writing when he was in the Author's Chair, and once said he had read his piece to a neighbor.

Ben's greatest opportunity for collaboration occurred during guided reading. With Pat directing the instruction, the students in the guided reading group assisted each other, discussed reading strategies together, and participated in think alouds. Ben was an eager participant in this group and frequently offered excellent suggestions that helped other students with word recognition and comprehension.

Though voluntary collaboration was uncommon, Ben worked collaboratively several times with Ashley. They once worked together to write a piece about Ben's family (see Figure 6.2). Ben wrote a few words and drew the

four people in his family. Ashley added to Ben's writing and wrote at the top, "Story by Ben." As another example, Ben was reading several books during his center time. He encountered a page with an illustration of a child jumping rope and a text that read, "I can skip." When Ben came to the word *skip*, he asked, "Is that *jump rope*?" Ashley replied, "That's not a *j*." Ben then chose

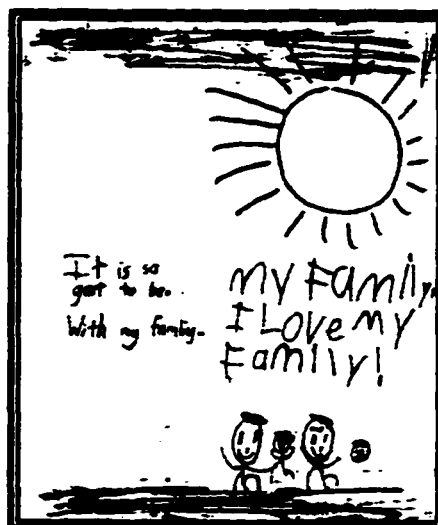


Figure 6.2
February, 1997

another book to read that was more difficult. Ben said to Ashley, "How about if I read it to you and then you can read it to me. And you can help me with the words."

Learning about Literacy Through Reading

Knowledge about words. As the year progressed, Ben became increasingly more aware of the details within words. The first time this awareness was evident was on October 14, when he remarked that the word *drums* "has an *s* at the end." On October 22, he said of the word *soapsuds*, "it has *s* at the beginning and *s* at the end." On that same day, when he read *in* for *on* and then corrected his miscue, he explained that he self-corrected because the word "starts with *o*." At the end of the month, when reading a text that said, "'Run,' said the leopard," Ben hesitated on the word *leopard*. After he read the sentence correctly, Pat asked him how he knew the correct word. He

explained that he thought the troublesome word might be *tiger*, but he knew it was *leopard* because it had a *l* and *d*, and if it was *tiger* it would have a *t*.

In his guided reading group, Ben remarked that The Wright Group books that Pat used for instruction always had "Story by..." on their covers. He said, "We use *the* a lot." On another occasion, Ben observed, "I just figured something out. That space like outer space and the space like the space between words is spelled the same, like the bat that flies and the bat you hit with are spelled the same." He also told the class that they could, "use the 'back sounds' to know *could* if you know *would*."

One morning in December, the class was reading the Morning Message chorally. One sentence said, "Don't forget to study our chart" (of nouns). When the word *chart* was read correctly, Pat asked someone to tell how they identified the word. Marcy explained she knew because of the *ch* at the beginning, and Ben said, "Like in *Chuck*" (another student in the room). Another day, he told the other students that they could tell the word *class* from *classes* by looking to see "if it had three *s*'s." As the students were listing words with a *soft c* sound, Ben announced that his friend's name, Clarence, needed to be added to the list. Another day, he said that *celebrate* also had a *soft c* sound.

In January, Ben began to articulate how he used word details to correct miscues. For example, when his guided reading group could not read the word *why*, someone suggested that the word was *we*. Ben said, "No, it can't be *we*. We'd need a *w* with an *e*." After reading a story about growing a watermelon, Ben wrote the word *watermelon* and announced, "I underlined *water*. I thought

the *t* was the last letter, but I sounded it out and I knew *r* was the last one." On a cloze worksheet, Ben told me that he had first read *wanted* as *wants*. He then underlined the *-ed*, and pointing to the class chart with *-ed* words, said, "I practiced that over there."

Although he was observant of word details, Ben had difficulty when asked to read words in isolation. On the *Slosson Oral Reading Test-Revised* (Slosson, 1990) administered in September 1996, Ben read 8 words (stanine = 3, PR = 23), and increased to only 10 words (stanine = 4, PR = 25) in December. He read 49 of the 220 words on the Dolch list on January 17, 1997, identifying 68% of the words on the preprimer list and 35% of the words on the primer list. When Pat asked Ben to read the preprimer list of Harris-Jacobson words, he read 76% correctly. On February 25, 1997, the *SORT-R* was administered again. Ben read 18 words (stanine = 3, PR = 18). He read 25 words (stanine = 4, PR = 25) on the *SORT-R* on April 14, 1997.

Reading of whole texts. Pat directly and systematically taught word recognition and comprehension strategies daily. Strategic reading was a particular focus during guided reading lessons. Initially, Ben struggled through grade level reading materials. As the year progressed, Ben became more adept at using strategies to aid himself in reading text. He used illustrations, book patterns, phonics, and context as reading strategies, though his application of these strategies was not always effective.

The following samples of Ben's oral reading were taken from two different sources: basal text selections and guided reading text selections. The

guided reading material followed a more predictable format and had more supportive illustrations. I will not give examples of text sections that Ben read without error, but will instead give excerpts of instances where he encountered problems. Ben's reading is written in italics below the actual text.

Ben's first running record was taken on October 14, 1996, of his reading of a selection for the second preprimer basal text. This reading included pauses, self-corrections, and repetitions as Ben worked to maintain the meaning of the text.

Text: I see! I see!

Ben: *The do I see! I see!*

Pat reminded Ben to use his finger to keep his place. Two lines later, he skipped an entire line. His reading continued:

Text: This is not the home for me.

Ben: *Turtle it this is not the home for me.*

Text: I have the home for you, Rabbit.

Ben: *I the the home I have the home to you, Rabbit.*

In both the examples above, Ben corrected most errors, indicating that he was monitoring his reading in an attempt to maintain meaning.

Two running records were taken of Ben's reading on October 25, 1996. The first record was of Ben's reading of a predictable text published by The Wright Group. Ben obtained 100% word recognition accuracy on this reading with no miscues, and he read the last line of the book with an excited expression because he noticed the exclamation mark at the end. On the basal text selection that Ben read on the same day, he again scored 100% word

recognition accuracy but struggled to self-correct to maintain meaning. He had nine self-corrections on this passage. His reading included:

Text: Kites are fun.
Ben: *Kite kites are fun.*

Text: I have a tail.
Ben: *The I have a tail.*

Text: We do not have big tails.
Ben: *We need do not have big tails.*

Text: What a good day to fly a kite!
Ben: *What a good friend friend day to fly a kite!*

The examples above indicated that Ben first anticipated the text but self-corrected his miscue when he observed that what he said did not match the word in the text. Pat's note on this reading said, "Ben worked with the text until he made it make sense! Good job!"

Ben began to encounter significant problems with grade level basal texts in December. As Pat took a running record of Ben's oral reading of the first story in the third preprimer, she had to prompt him several times to point with his finger so that he could keep his place in the selection. Representative miscues include:

Text: Do you want to take your book?
Ben: *Do you (pause) want to make take your book?*

Text: Jed, you aren't in bed!
Ben: *Jed, you your in bed.*

Text: I can't go to bed, Mother.
Ben: *I can can't go to bed, Mom.*

Text: The cat needs to go out.

Ben: *The cat has to go out.*

Text: I think it's on your bed.

Ben: *I think your it isn't is it on your bed.*

Except for the second example above, the miscues kept the intended meaning or Ben corrected his errors to maintain meaning. Ben read with 93% word recognition on this 109-word passage. Despite Ben's effort to make his reading meaningful, Pat became more concerned with Ben's progress after this running record. She wrote, "This was more difficult than the score indicated. He became frustrated or maybe disinterested often. I had to remind him often to use his finger. The suggestion helped--he wouldn't have been able to continue if I hadn't made the suggestion."

Another running record taken a week later confirmed Pat's impression that Ben was having difficulty attending to the text and staying motivated to read grade level material. After he had read 67 words, Pat asked Ben to stop reading a story from the third preprimer because he was frustrated and inattentive. Miscues included:

Text: What are you looking at, Pig?

Ben: *What is is are you doing looking at, Pig?*

Text: No, but you are smart, Pig.

Ben: *Now you are (long pause, yawn) Pig.*

Text: I will show you what it is.

Ben: *I will show it what is it.*

Text: You put it on your hat.

Ben: *You it ont hat.*

Text: What a smart thing to do!

Ben: *What a thinker think to do.*

Though Ben was attempting to use graphophonics and meaning cues to recognize unfamiliar words, the intense effort left him frustrated and uncooperative. Pat's note for this running record said, "Ben could do better but doesn't seem to be able to put the concentration necessary into reading this material. It's only going to become more difficult as the year goes on. I don't believe Ben realizes that if he doesn't pick up, he may have to repeat first grade. He complained of a bad headache when we finished: Could he have undetected eye problems? I don't think so."

Ben continued to have similar types of word recognition problems even on texts from his guided reading instruction which were at an easier and more supportive level. Problem-solving strategies (such as rereading, decoding, and using context) were evident in Ben's oral reading but were not used effectively to maintain meaning.

On January 8, 1997, I administered the preprimer passage from the *Classroom Reading Inventory* (Silvaroli, 1997) to determine Ben's reading skill on unfamiliar text. We first discussed the illustration of two children and a toy car. His reading work consisted of:

Text: "See my play car," said Tom.

Ben: *See my play car, they see said.*

Text: "It can go fast."

Ben: *It can go friend.*

Text: "Would you like a ride?"

Ben: *What what want do you like a engine race.*

Ben struggled with this text and showed little evidence of effective strategy use and comprehension.

By mid-January, Ben began to apply strategies more routinely to his word recognition work, though the effectiveness of his strategy application remained inconsistent. An example from a running record of a third preprimer basal selection taken on January 17, 1997, included:

Text: Now it's time to take a rest.

Ben: *Now it's time to rest a rest to take a rest.*

Text: I don't need to rest.

Ben: *I do do don't need a rest.*

Text: I don't think I need to rest.

Ben: *I don't need think I need to rest.*

Text: But I will try, Mother.

Ben: *But I will try, Mom.*

After reading "Mom" in the last example, Ben asked me, "That's not *Mom*, is it?" His reading remained disfluent, but he attended better to phonetic and context cues. On another reading sample taken on January 17, 1997, Pat wrote, "Ben did not read this fluently but *is* beginning to use the strategies I've introduced and most importantly--HE IS TAKING RESPONSIBILITY for making sense of text."

Ben's progress through January continued to be erratic. He occasionally had difficulty tracking and self-correcting miscues, but at other times he displayed effective strategy application. Examples of Ben's reading from an unfamiliar primer basal selection included:

Text: I am going to plant it.

Ben: *I am coming coming going to play it plant it.*

Text: "Who will help me plant the wheat?" asked the little red hen.

Ben: *"(Pat told him the word who) will plant help me plant the wheat,
(Pat told him the word asked) the little red hen.*

Text: "Not I," said the duck.

Ben: *Now now not I said the dog. (pause) Not I said the duck.*

As Ben paused during the last line and referred to the illustration, Pat asked, "Why did you stop reading?" Ben replied, "It didn't make sense."

In February, Ben began to read with more accuracy and fluency. He applied more effectively those strategies that Pat had taught during guided reading instruction. On one passage from the primer text from February 7, 1997, Ben achieved 99% word recognition accuracy and corrected all but one miscue. On another reading sample from February 21, 1997, he read 96% of the words accurately. Pat wrote, "Ben's motivation waivers. Sometimes he concentrates and does very well. Other weeks he's uninterested. Let's keep him interested! He appears to have mastered the most important strategy that a beginning reader must master--SELF-MONITORING. He knows when he's read something that doesn't make sense and goes back to correct it." Some of Ben's February miscues illustrate his effective monitoring.

Text: But no one wanted it.

Ben: *But no body but no one wanted it.*

Text: "Then I'll paint my house," said Freckles.

Ben: *Needs then I'll put then I'll paint my house.*

Text: But on this day they had no money.

Ben: *But one day (pause) but one day (pause) but on this day they had no money.*

A running record taken from a 141-word primer passage on March 6, 1997, shows Ben's continued use of self-monitoring so that his reading matched the text and made sense.

Text: One day, my dog and I were by a tree.

Ben: *One dog one dog one day my dog and I were by a tree.*

Text: We sat by the tree for a long time.

Ben: *We sat by the tree for a little long time for a long time.*

Text: My dog pushed me with her nose.

Ben: *My dog bumped me with her nose.*

Text: My dog pushed me some more, but I still sat.

Ben: *My dog pushed me some more, but I stayed stayed stayed still sat.*

Ben achieved 95% accuracy on this passage. Pat wrote, "Ben is beginning to feel comfortable reading so his attention has shifted from attending to print details to reading for meaning. It's becoming automatic for him. I'm so proud! This is what we've been working for all year! Now he just needs lots of practice and he will get better each time he reads!"

Despite the progress made in February, Ben's inconsistency was seen on March 14, 1997, as he read a primer passage with only 78% accuracy. He worked hard on this passage and articulated his strategic thinking, but he lacked automatic recognition of many words. Ben's reading work consisted of:

Text: She likes reading and counting.

Ben: *She likes reading and coloring.*

He then replied, "No, it can't be *coloring*," but he did not correct his miscue.

Text: She likes the children in her room.

Ben: *She likes the (pause) c c-cook? (Debbie: Use ch) ch-i-l-d-r-e-n
She likes the she rhyme she like the class.*

I attempted to help him use context to read *children*. I said, "She likes the ___ in her room." Ben replied, "What could be in her room? Church? No." I told him the word, and he reread the line three times.

Text: But Willaby likes to draw best.

Ben: *But Willaby but Willaby like to (pause) br-aw brown but Willaby likes to (pause) . . .*

I suggested that he skip *draw* and read on to use the context to help him. He reread the line and hesitated on *best*. He said, "Most would make sense, but it doesn't have an *m* and an *o*." He then reread the line correctly.

Text: When Miss Finney lets the children...

Ben: *Then Miss Finney l--list--lost*

He said, "No, it can't be *lost*." He continued reading without identifying the word. Ben was thinking aloud as he read this passage, and he demonstrated that he was attempting (though unsuccessfully) to apply phonics, syntax, and context to read this passage.

In March, the class began to work on practice materials to prepare them for an upcoming standardized achievement test. On a practice comprehension test, Ben answered one out of eight questions correctly. On March 21, 1997, Pat asked me to have Ben read one of three stories in this test. Ben's reading work included:

Text: His name is Skippy.

Ben: *His name is (pause) Sock S His name is S.*

Ben had learned to substitute an initial letter for an unknown name so that the meaning of the passage would not be disrupted.

Text: My sister and I like to play with Skippy.

Ben: *My (pause) sister and I like to pet white S.*

Text: We throw a ball and he brings it back.

Ben: *We (pause) thr throw a ball and he br dr It can't be 'brings'. Yes it can. it back. We throw a ball and he brings it back.*

Text: We take him for walks on our street.

Ben: *We (pause) t-a take we take him for walks walks walks on our street sidewalk. What would make sense?*

The last two examples show that Ben was attempted to think aloud as he applied strategies to recognize unknown words. He achieved 84% accuracy on this practice test passage.

On April 17, 1997, I administered the primer passage of the *Classroom Reading Inventory* (Silvaroli, 1997) to assess Ben's reading of an unfamiliar grade level text. He had numerous word recognition errors but was able to answer comprehension questions at his instructional level. Ben's reading showed limited attention to word details, but all of his miscues kept an appropriate grammatical structure. For example,

Text: It was time to go to the farm.

Ben: *It was time to go on a field trip.*

Text: We are ready to go now.

Ben: *We are running to get on.*

Graph of oral reading accuracy. Figure 6.3 illustrates Ben's progress in oral reading accuracy as he read basal text selections from October 1996 through April 1997. Pat considered a text an easy level if the text was read with 95% or better accuracy, an instructional level if the text was read with accuracy between 90% and 95%, and a difficult level if the text was read with accuracy

below 90%. On 16 oral reading passages, he self-corrected 37% of his miscues. The graph illustrates Ben's inconsistent performance of grade level oral reading.

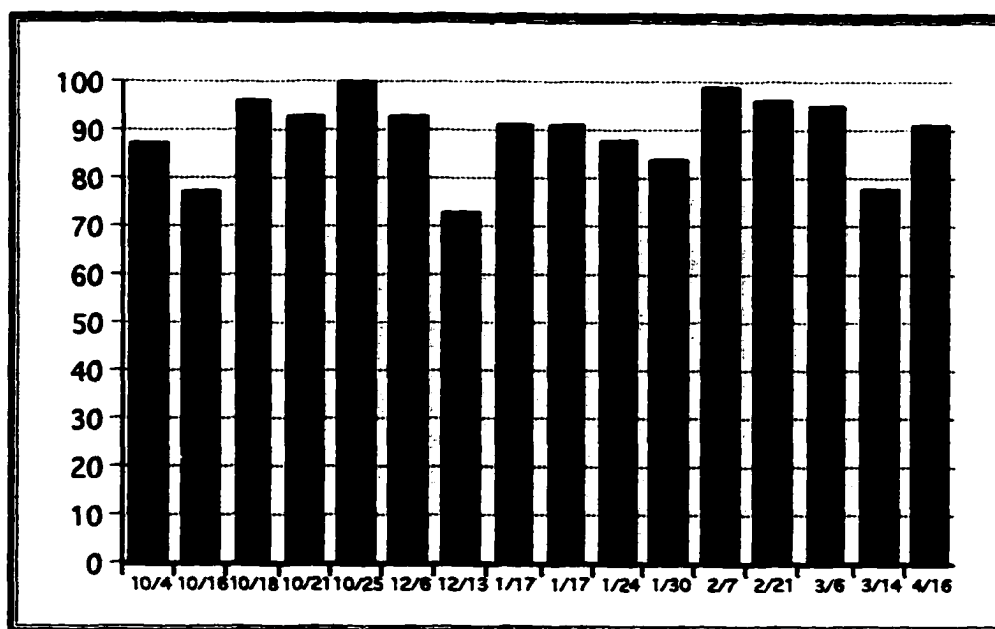


Figure 6.3
Percentages of Oral Reading Accuracy
Basal Text Selections

Learning about Literacy Through Writing

Ben's understanding of print conventions improved as the school year progressed, though his motivation to write wavered considerably. He consistently used drawing as a form of rehearsal and wrote about familiar topics. His writing reflected an increasingly accurate use of sound/symbol relationships and high frequency sight words from the class Word Wall. Ben's progress in writing is best viewed by examining writing samples taken over the course of his first grade year.

Ben's writing of October 8, 1996, (see Figure 6.4) said, "I cannot play."

Ben knew that he needed to use a capital letter to write the pronoun *I*. He spelled *can* correctly and wrote the word *not* from right to left. He attempted the word *play* by writing the first two letters, but then he realized that he did not know how to spell it so erased his attempt. Sixty-seven

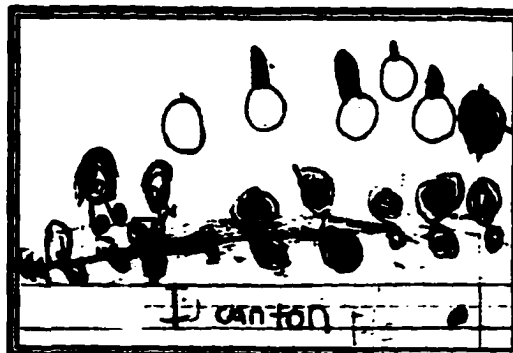


Figure 6.4
October 8, 1996

percent of the words were spelled conventionally, and of the remaining words spelled phonetically, Ben used 67% of the correct sounds. His understanding of the function of the period was shown by his large dot at the end of his work. Ben's illustration showed several people standing by a pumpkin vine with five pumpkins. The relationship between the text and picture was not clear.

Ben's November piece (see Figure 6.5) read, "I like to play at the playground!" The writing was longer than in October and reflected a greater willingness to use phonetic spelling. In this piece, he spelled *play* as p-a-y and p-l-a. He continued to use a capital *I* and spelled several high frequency words correctly. Fifty-seven percent of the words were spelled conventionally, and of the remaining words spelled phonetically, Ben used 71% of the correct sounds. Ben

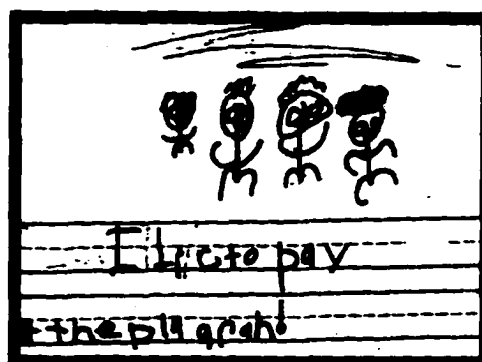


Figure 6.5
November 9, 1996

said that he heard someone else talking about the *excited mark*, so he went back and put it on his paper.

On December 3, 1996, Ben wrote a piece about a Christmas ornament that came alive. Another child had recently published a book about a pumpkin that came alive, and Ben apparently received inspiration from that book. In his spelling, his piece read, "I like to make ornament! My ornament kam u lif!" This writing shows Ben's use of environmental print (when he copied *ornament* from the board), phonetic spelling, knowledge of high frequency words, and use of the exclamation mark.

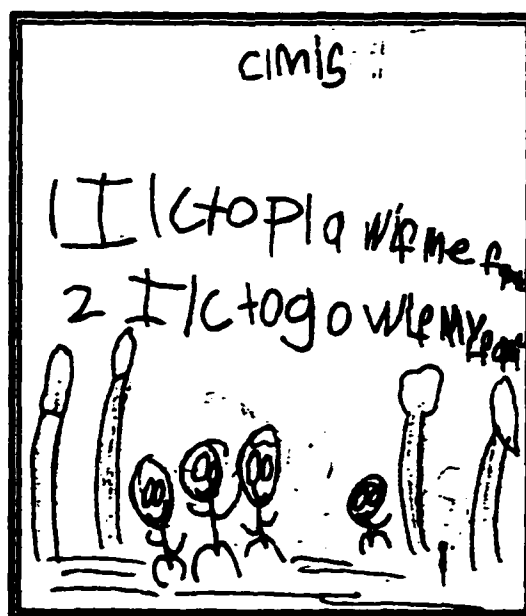


Figure 6.6
December 1996

Another December writing sample was entitled *Christmas* (see Figure 6.6). He listed, "1. I like to play with my family. 2. I like to go with my family." His writing has increased from three words in October to 15 words with this piece. Spelling approximations were seen in *lc* for *like*, *wif* for *with*, and *famle* for *family*. Forty percent of the words were spelled conventionally, and of the remaining words spelled phonetically, Ben used 70% of the correct sounds. The illustration matched the text, showing his family standing in the middle of several trees.

Ben became excited about his piece about fireworks that he began in early January (See Figure 6.7). A classmate, Trevor, had been writing about fireworks and Ben appeared interested in that topic. Ben first drew his illustration and wrote "I." He asked me how to spell *like*, and I referred him to the Word Wall. He knew that he needed to look under the *L* words, but he needed assistance to find that list. He then requested my help to spell *fireworks*. I helped him fingerspell the word *fire*, and Ben wrote "f-i-o-r." I again directed him to the Word Wall to spell *work*. He wrote *w-o-r-k* and then looked at me questioningly. I repeated the word, stressing the final *s* sound. Ben erased the *k* in *work* and substituted *s*. He asked, "Is that right?" I directed him to look at the Word Wall again to spell *work*. He said, "I need a *k*. After the *s*?" I replied, "No, before the *s*." Ben's completed work for one day said, "I like fireworks." This effort was Ben's first time to stay entirely on task and request help during Writing Workshop. The next day, he added to his fireworks story, "Can we get some fireworks? They are pretty fireworks." He had spelled *pretty* as *prdey*, and asked me if he had spelled it well. I sounded out his attempt and said that I could read it easily. He

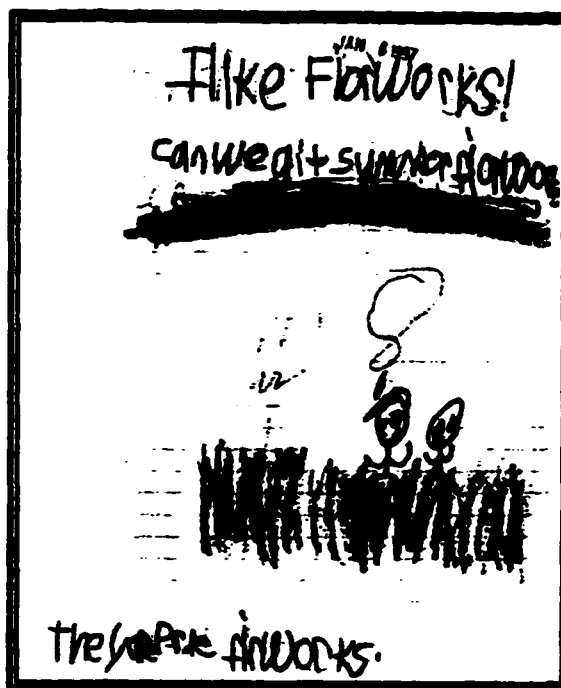


Figure 6.7
January 6, 1997

later told me that he had used the Word Wall to spell *can*. Forty-six percent of the words were spelled conventionally, and of the remaining words spelled phonetically, Ben used 91% of the correct sounds. Figure 6.7 is difficult to read in part because Ben had many erasures trying to make his writing look good. His writing reflected more content on one topic, greater motivation to write, increased use of conventional spelling (*like, they, can, and we*), and more accurate knowledge of sound/symbol relationships as shown in his phonetic spelling (*git* for *get*, *sum* for *some*, and *mor* for *more*). He used punctuation after each sentence but lacked spacing between most words.

In the latter part of January, Ben discovered the picture dictionary. He enjoyed copying words from the dictionary during his daily writing time. Figure 6.8 shows that Ben had copied people and animal words. He ended with, "I love Dad and Mom." I asked him why he was copying from a book and was not writing his own story. He told me that he was making the list for his father. Also during January, Ben was illustrating his book about fireworks that he was publishing. Pat had to remind him frequently to finish this activity.

Throughout most of February, Ben wrote little and worked sporadically on the illustrations for his published books. He copied the names of the months from the timeline of months, wrote some addition

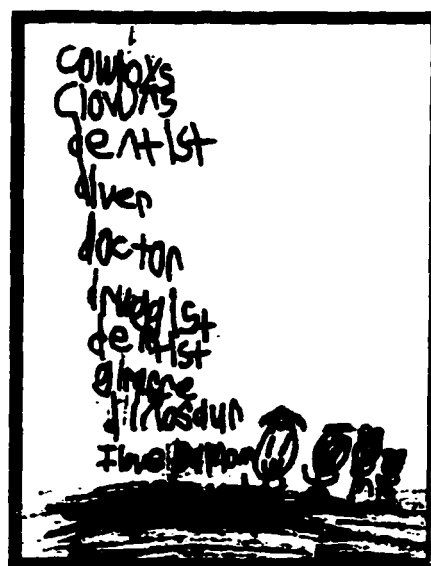


Figure 6.8
January 21, 1997

equations, and drafted a few sentences about loving his family. He collaborated on a short piece about his family with Ashley (see Figure 6.2). On March 4, 1997, Ben was motivated to write a letter to his family (see Figure 6.9). He explained that he had been punished by his parents the previous night because he had thrown a popcorn tin up to the ceiling and broke the overhead light in his bedroom. He wrote, "Mom and Dad, I know sometimes I do bad things. I'm trying to be good. From Ben, To Dad and Mom." In this letter, he inserted a comma after the salutation and put periods at the end of each sentence. He capitalized the pronoun *I* only

one time out of three, and spelled *and* as *n-a-d*. He used spaces between words so that his writing was legible. He asked me how to spell *I'm*, and I directed him to the contraction chart. Ben told Pat that he had first written *Mom* as *MoM* but then changed it because he knew that he only needed a capital letter at the beginning of the word.

Sixty-eight percent of the words were spelled conventionally, and of the remaining words

spelled phonetically, Ben used 83% of the correct sounds. Reversals deflated these percentages. His spelling of *chriing* (*trying*) showed that he was developing an understanding of consonant digraphs (*ch*) and suffixes (*ing*).

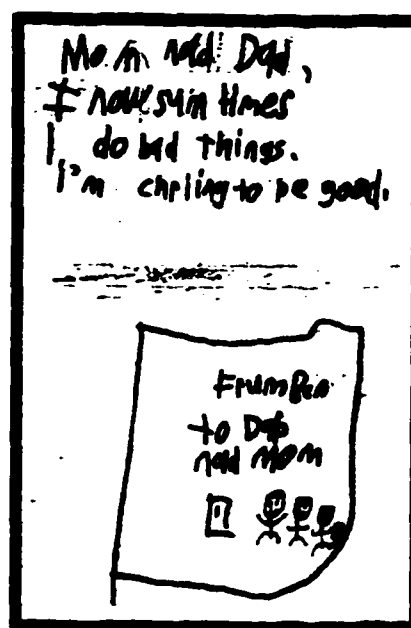


Figure 6.9
March 4, 1997

Writing Workshop was not held during much of March and April because of standardized test practice, but writing was done in March in a plant journal (see Figures 6.10 - 6.12). After planting two lima bean seeds, Ben wrote, "On day one my plant didn't grow. But one day in but one day it will grow." A week later, after his plant had not yet sprouted, Ben recorded, "On day 7 my plant was the same as day 1." The following week, Ben wrote, "It grow and grow today!" Of the 22 words in these three writing samples, Ben spelled 79% conventionally and used 82% of the correct sounds in phonetic spelling. He used punctuation appropriately after every sentence, but he inserted capital letters (particularly capital D) throughout his writing. Though Ben had been talking about leaving spaces between words, he has few spaces in these pieces.

Calvin

Introduction

Calvin was born on June 15, 1990. He lived with his mother and younger sister and visited his father occasionally in a distant city. He attended kindergarten at another school within the district. His kindergarten report card

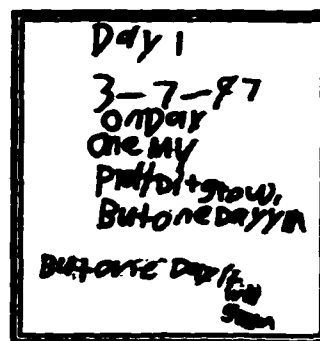


Figure 6.10
March 7, 1997

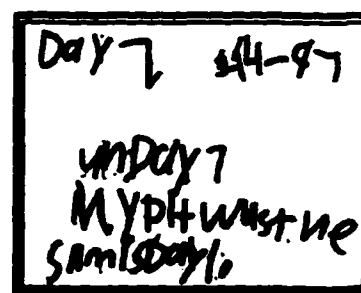


Figure 6.11
March 14, 1997

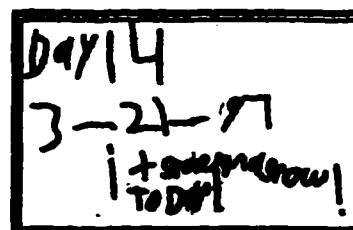


Figure 6.12
March 21, 1997

recorded that Calvin was satisfactory in most areas but had difficulty identifying sounds, the eight basic colors, color words, and basic sight words. In the section of his report card for comments, his teacher noted that Calvin's final reading grade in kindergarten was 67. Calvin was right-handed and wore glasses for reading. He had been seen by an ear specialist due to concerns about his hearing, and he had frequent absences due to asthma. At the end of February, Calvin's absences were brought before the School Building Level Committee. He had 12 absences then, and state law allowed for a student to be retained after 20 absences.

Calvin was a well-behaved student who participated in classroom discussions infrequently. Often Pat had to call on him directly to involve him in class conversations. When he offered a response, it usually occurred during the morning calendar activity or during guided reading time. As the year progressed, Calvin's willingness to participate increased.

Although many boys and some girls chose blocks or snap cubes as a recurrent center activity, Calvin was never observed with these. He preferred the listening center and the toy computer. When at centers, he usually played with other students instead of playing alone. Calvin had limited opportunities to join in center activities due to his frequent absences and participation in the guided reading group which took place during center time.

Attitude toward Literacy

Calvin was an attentive student who displayed persistence on most teacher-directed and independent literacy tasks. Early in the school year, he

seemed to lack confidence and would frequently give no response to Pat's questions. He often asked Pat or me for help with many literacy tasks. As the year progressed, Calvin became more independent and willing to respond.

During free time, Calvin chose books to read at an appropriate level of difficulty. He became more engaged in independent reading tasks as he became a more strategic reader. In February, he tried to sneak one of Pat's books home in his booksack. After listening to a story at the listening center one day in early April, Calvin told Pat that he had enjoyed the book. She offered the book to him to take home to read himself. Several days later, Calvin told me that he had a good book to read to me, and he read the story with no miscues. Calvin was observed writing only once at a time other than Writing Workshop, when he wrote me a love note.

Calvin was absent when the *Elementary Reading Attitude Survey* (McKenna & Kear, 1990) was originally administered in October. When this instrument was administered on February 6, 1997, Calvin's responses indicated a strong positive attitude toward both recreational (score = 3.6, PR = 81) and academic reading (score = 3.6, PR = 79). His only negative response was to the question, "How do you feel when you read out loud in class?" On April 10, 1997, Calvin again responded positively (3.8 for recreational reading [PR = 89] and 3.7 for academic reading [PR = 85]). As before, he responded negatively to the question about reading out loud in class.

I interviewed Calvin on several occasions to obtain responses related to literacy learning. In response to questions in November about whether he was

a good reader and writer, he responded that he was a good reader "'cause I read good," and he was a good writer "'cause I write good." When I asked him what made him read well, he replied, "Myself." Calvin's responses to the same questions in January were that he was a good reader "by reading a book," and was a good writer "by writing." On April 10, 1997, he confirmed that he was a good reader "'cause I read good books," and he was a good writer "'cause I write good."

Learning Through Collaboration

Calvin participated willingly in all teacher-directed collaborative activities. In his guided reading group, Calvin collaborated frequently with others to identify words and discuss strategies. When he was observed collaborating without teacher direction, Calvin was typically sharing books or reading with other students at his table. In February, he formed a partnership with Clint, another student in Pat's class who sat at Calvin's table. They worked together to read books of poetry and jokes, and they collaborated as they made a book together. Clint wrote the words, and Calvin drew the illustrations. At another time, he helped Cedrick identify words in the book *Brown Bear, Brown Bear, What Do You See?* (Martin, 1983). Calvin asked riddles such as, "It's black and starts with /sh/," and Cedrick tried to guess the animal from the book.

Calvin enjoyed sharing his work with me and did so occasionally, particularly during the first semester. He asked that I read his writing, confirm his spelling, identify a word, affirm his thinking, or view his illustrations. He also freely asked me for help, particularly with spelling. I directed him to use phonics

or the Word Wall. He was never observed sharing his work with others or asking for help from his peers.

Learning about Literacy Through Reading

Knowledge about words. Early in the year, Calvin had limited understanding of words, word patterns, and sound/symbol relationships. When reading predictable books at his instructional level, he routinely relied on the illustration or initial letters to recognize words. As the year progressed, Calvin examined words more thoughtfully and accurately.

Calvin began using some environmental print and noticing the plural -s on words in mid-October. For example, when Pat asked for a calendar word that began with short o, Calvin replied, "October." He routinely told of words he located that ended with -s, such as *bubbles*, *soapsuds*, and *animals*.

By the end of October, after one month of guided reading instruction, Calvin began to observe other word details. When his group read *run* for *jump*, Pat asked how they could tell the difference between the two words. Calvin said, "There's no *j* in *run*. And it doesn't have a *p*." He knew that the word *good* in a book title was the same word that Pat used on the Morning Message to say "Good morning!" He soon became more adept at identifying words based upon context, syntax, and graphophonics cues. One day in February, Pat wrote a story for the class that contained the word *window*. Calvin raised his hand and announced, "*Window* was in our *Parades* book" (the basal text).

Calvin initially had difficulty when asked to read words in isolation. On the *Slosson Oral Reading Test-Revised* (Slosson, 1990) administered in

September 1996, Calvin read 5 words (stanine = 3, PR = 21), but increased to only 7 words (stanine = 3, PR = 23) in December. He read 57 of the 220 words on the Dolch list on January 17, 1997, identifying 55% of the words on the preprimer list and 44% of the words on the primer list. When Pat asked Calvin to read the preprimer list of Harris-Jacobson words, he read 85% correctly. On February 25, 1997, the *SORT-R* was administered again. Calvin read 27 words (stanine = 4, PR = 27). He read 43 words (stanine = 5, PR = 45) on the *SORT-R* on April 14, 1997.

Reading of whole texts. Initially, Calvin struggled through grade level reading materials. As the year progressed, he became more adept at using strategies as an aid to reading text. He used illustrations, book patterns, phonics, and context as successful reading strategies.

The following samples of Calvin's oral reading were taken from two different sources: basal text selections and guided reading text selections. The guided reading material followed a more predictable format and had more supportive illustrations. I will not give illustrations of text selections that Calvin read without error, but will instead give examples of instances where he encountered problems. Calvin's reading is written in italics below the actual text.

A running record was taken on October 4, 1996, of Calvin's reading of a selection from the second preprimer. His miscues were meaningful in only a few instances. Examples of his reading were:

Text: Take a look in here.

Calvin: *Take a look inside.*

Text: I will go to see Turtle.

Calvin: *I will go to see Rabbit.*

Text: I would like to find a good home.

Calvin: *I to look a look.*

Text: I will take you to see a good home now.

Calvin: *It a will you to see a good home.*

On this selection, Calvin achieved 60% word recognition. Only one self-correction occurred. Pat wrote, "This story was difficult reading for Calvin."

Calvin's reading soon began to show evidence of self-corrections, indicating that he was monitoring his reading to make it meaningful. He still, however, had many words that he could not identify. A running record of Calvin's reading on a second preprimer passage on October 11, 1996, showed the following miscues:

Text: I want to see what bears are like.

Calvin: *I want to see.*

Text: But look, Pam!

Calvin: *But see, bears.*

Text: Now what will I do?

Calvin: *Want what will I do?*

Text: This is where the turtles are.

Calvin: *Is this is where the turtles live are.*

Calvin recognized 75% of the words in this familiar passage.

Calvin could read more strategically and meaningfully on the texts Pat chose for guided reading instruction. On two running records taken in October

from books published for emergent readers by The Wright Group, Calvin scored a 91% and a 97% in word recognition. Miscues on both texts did not affect the meaning.

By the end of October 1996, Calvin was reading more fluently and more strategically on familiar grade level basal materials. Word recognition accuracy for basal selections from the third preprimer was maintained at approximately a 98% accuracy in November and December. He required assistance with a few words on each selection, but he generally could correct miscues and successfully apply word recognition strategies.

Though he was able to read familiar texts, unfamiliar selections were more difficult for Calvin. On January 8, 1997, I administered the preprimer passage from the *Classroom Reading Inventory* (Silvaroli, 1997) to determine Calvin's reading skill on unfamiliar text. Calvin's word recognition was at 92% accuracy, but he could answer only half of the related comprehension questions. On an unfamiliar primer level basal selection from January 24, 1997, Calvin achieved 83% word recognition accuracy. Miscues included:

Text: I am going to plant it.
Calvin: *I am going to bake it.*

Text: "Not I," said the duck.
Calvin: *Now I, said the.*

Text: Then I will plant it myself.
Calvin: *Then I will plant it.*

Text: The wheat grew and grew.
Calvin: *The wheat grow and grow.*

Text: "Well then, I will cut it myself," said the little red hen.

Calvin: *Well the then, I will cat it.*

In this selection, Calvin had only one self-correction in 21 miscues. Pat wrote, "I expected Calvin to do better. This assessment was taken on an *unseen* text so that I could see which strategies Calvin relies on when presented with new or difficult materials. We need to concentrate *more* on making sense. I want to work on getting Calvin to know when it doesn't make sense and to try again."

As the class completed stories in the primer level basal text in January through March, Calvin's oral reading accuracy continued to improve. He maintained an average accuracy of 97% on familiar primer passages. Word recognition miscues were usually meaningful or self-corrected. Examples include:

Text: Freckles went to the store to get paint.

Calvin: *Freckles went back to the store to get paint.*

Text: "I don't think we can find Tooley," said Milton.

Calvin: *I didn't don't think we can find Tooley said Milton.*

Text: My dog pushed me with her nose.

Calvin: *My dog poked me with her nose.*

Text: Mrs. Benjamin said that Miss Finney wouldn't be back for a while.

Calvin: *But Mrs. Benjamin said that Miss Finney wouldn't be back for a while.*

Calvin was unable to determine an unfamiliar word using context in only a few instances.

Text: When Miss Finney lets the children decide what they want to do...

Calvin: *Then Miss Finney looks lost (pause) then they went to do...*

Text: My dog is smart. She can find lost things.

Calvin: *My dog is She can find lost things.*

In the last example, Calvin initially skipped the word *smart*, and Pat encouraged him to go back and reread. He repeated the sentences several times but was unable to read *smart* using either context or decoding.

When I administered the primer level passage of the *Classroom Reading Inventory* (Silvaroli, 1997) on April 17, 1997, Calvin read it with one self-correction and one uncorrected miscue. This passage was at his independent level in both word recognition and comprehension.

Graph of oral reading accuracy. Calvin's ability to successfully read grade level materials improved significantly as the year progressed. On basal text readings from October 1996 through April 1997, Calvin's oral reading

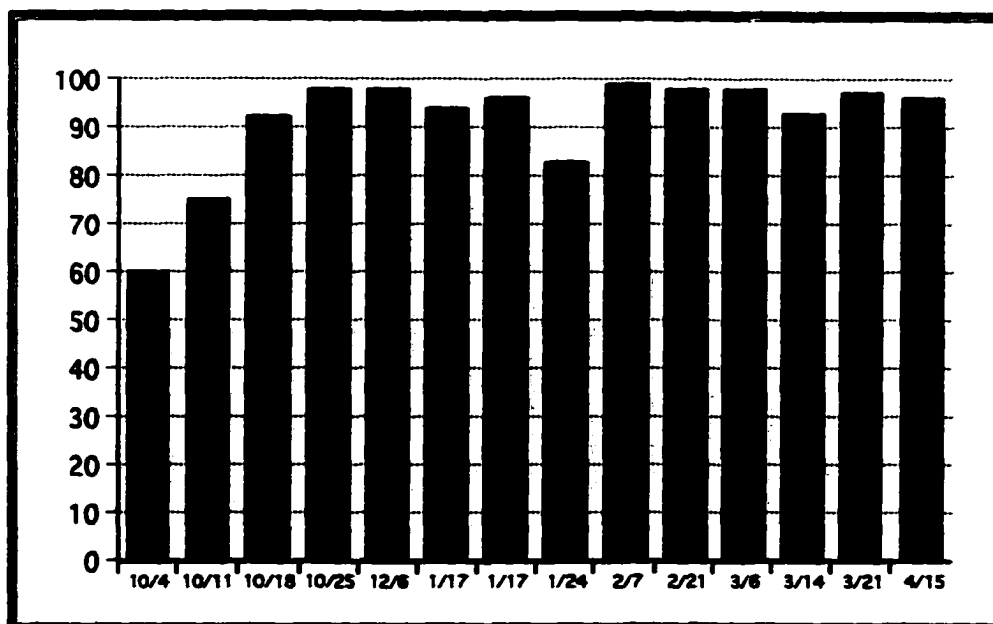


Figure 6.13
Percentages of Oral Reading Accuracy
Basal Text Selections

accuracy is represented by the graph in Figure 6.13. As he read 14 passages from the basal reader, he self-corrected 20% of his miscues. The large majority of

his errors occurred in the first semester, and his self-correction rate and oral reading accuracy improved considerably in the second semester.

Learning about Literacy Through Writing

Calvin was in the beginning stages of learning about writing early in his first grade year. His selections were short, and they showed Calvin's limited understanding of sound/symbol relationships, particularly vowel sounds. As the year progressed, Calvin became increasingly more accurate in his use of sound/symbol relationships and conventional spellings. He also spent more time on writing activities and appeared to be more confident as he matured as a writer throughout the year. Samples of his writing help show his development.

Calvin's October pieces had only illustrations or one to two simple sentences, and he frequently requested help as he drew or wrote. On October 28, 1996, Calvin wrote, "I lag Dog" (I love my dog). He asked me to look at his work because he was finished after writing this sentence. I suggested some information that I would still like to know about his dog. What do you do with your dog? What do you like about your dog? Calvin told me that his dog sleeps, and then he wrote, "My Dog is sisse" (My dog sleeps). The following day, Calvin wrote, "My brd tos it jot fat" (My bird talks. It got fat.). In these four sentences, Calvin showed knowledge of initial consonant sounds and several final consonant sounds. He started three of the four sentences with a capital letter. Several phonetic spellings were difficult to translate. Fifty-four percent of the words were spelled conventionally, and of the remaining words spelled phonetically, Calvin used 55% of the correct sounds.

Calvin's writing several days later showed a piece with four simple sentences about Halloween (see Figure 6.14). It read, "I was a pirate. Caleb is a boy. I had a sword. It was big." Calvin used initial consonant sounds in phonetic spelling, accurately spelled several high frequency words (*I, a, is, and, it*), and he inserted periods at the end of his first two sentences. Fifty-three percent of the words

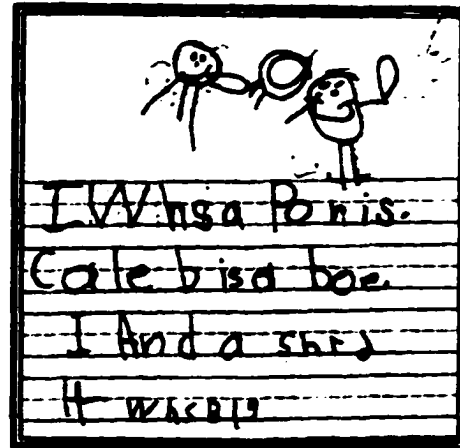


Figure 6.14
November 1, 1996

were spelled conventionally, and of the remaining words spelled phonetically, Calvin used 65% of the correct sounds. The illustration, though immature, corresponded with his story. When I asked Calvin to read this piece to me several days later, he was unable to read the third line. He continued reading the remainder of the piece, and then correctly reread the line with which he had difficulty.

Calvin misplaced the contents of his writing folder in December, and I had little data in my field notes concerning Calvin's writing for that month. My single note about an actual writing sample concerned his writing from the week of December 2, 1996. He drew a picture of a turkey, labeled it "Trcy," and added, "the Idyin and The piging" (the Indians and the Pilgrims). In this piece, 50% of the words were spelled conventionally, and of the remaining words spelled phonetically, Calvin used 65% of the correct sounds. He did not use a complete sentence and had few details.

Two writing samples from January are shown here to illustrate Calvin's growth as a writer that month. Figure 6.15, from early January, showed an increase in the length of the selection, greater use of conventional spelling, and use of some medial consonants and vowels. It said, "Me and my friend swing on the swing. And my friend my friend comes over at my house." Fifty-three percent of the words were spelled conventionally, and of the remaining words spelled phonetically, Calvin used 60% of the correct sounds. Calvin's

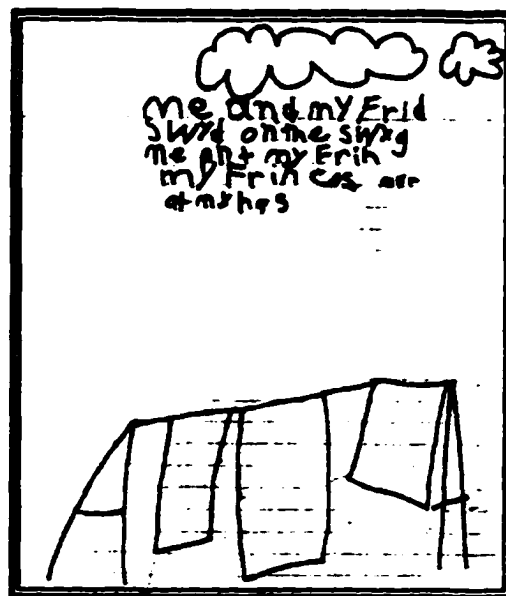


Figure 6.15
January 6, 1997

writing from the end of January (see Figure 6.16) displayed growth in phonetic spelling; most of his phonetic spellings were done with appropriate sound/symbol relationships. Though some lines are difficult to read because of the lack of spacing between words, Calvin's use of conventional and phonetic spelling improved. In this piece, 61% of the words were spelled conventionally, and of the remaining words spelled phonetically, 86% of the correct sounds were used. The piece

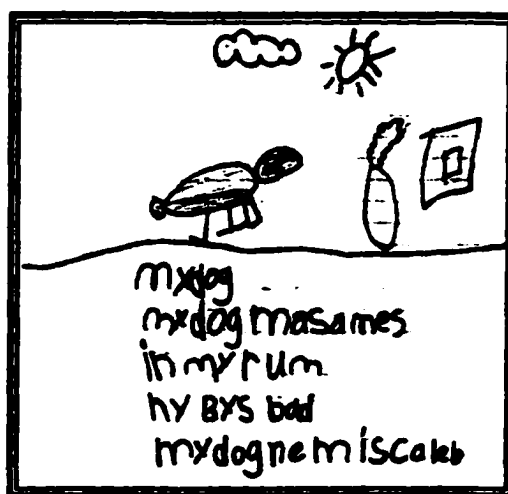


Figure 6.16
January 27, 1997

was entitled, "My Dog," and read, "My dog makes a mess in my room. He be's bad. My dog's name is Caleb." This selection represented the first time that Calvin used a title for his writing. No punctuation or use of capital letters to begin sentences was evident.

Calvin completed several pieces of writing in February, and Figure 6.17 typifies his work during that month. The piece read, "I love Valentine's Day 'cause I like it. It is my favorite day. I want to love my family and me and my dad and my dog and my mom." Calvin wrote a total of 30 words, and 77% of the words were spelled conventionally. Of the words that he spelled by phonetic analysis, Calvin correctly wrote 67%

of the sounds. He wrote *what* for *want*, indicating that he is attempting to spell more high frequency sight words. He used a period at the end of the piece. For most words, he used capital and lower case letters appropriately. Calvin's illustration

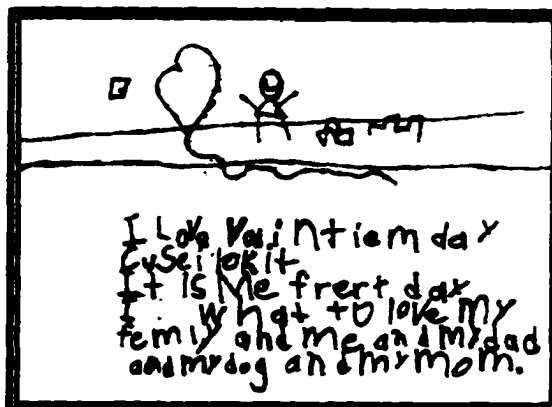


Figure 6.17
February 17, 1997

matched his text. In March, Calvin wrote in his plant journal to document the science experiment that the class had done with seeds (see Figures 6.18 - 6.20). After planting two seeds, Calvin wrote, "We planted a

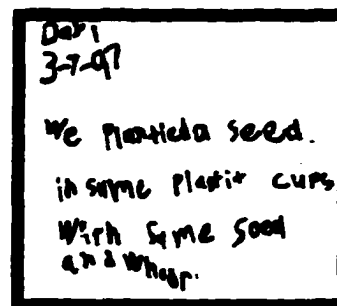


Figure 6.18
March 7, 1997

seed in some plastic cups with some soil and water."

A week later, he recorded, "I'm happy because I have a sprout." His final journal entry read, "I'm happy because my plant is growing. I love this school."

Though he spelled only 61% of the words

conventionally, he used 87% of the correct sounds

in the words he spelled phonetically. These writings

demonstrate Calvin's growth in phonetic spelling.

He used several complex consonant combinations

(*spr* in *sprout* and *sch* in *school*). He used no

punctuation at the end of sentences and did not insert

an apostrophe in *I'm*. He inserted capital and lower case letters throughout his writing.

im ha ppy be kus
I lufa sprat

Figure 6.19
March 14, 1997

I m Ha ppy
Be cuse my
Plat is groing
I Lovethis Schil

Figure 6.20
March 21, 1997

Aaron

Introduction

Aaron repeated kindergarten at Randall Elementary and entered Pat's first grade classroom on October 2, 1996, from a nearby school in the district. His report card for his first year in kindergarten noted that Aaron received unsatisfactory grades in many areas related to reading and math. His final report card for his second year in kindergarten showed that he had satisfactory grades in all areas except recognizing number words. Because of his previous retention, Aaron was being monitored by the school's building level screening committee as a Section 504 student, which allowed Pat to make instructional

and testing modifications. He was born on July 1, 1989. He lived with his mother and was the second of three sons. His parents were recently separated, and Aaron visited his father. His mother reported that he was often defiant at home. According to his mother, she tried to arrange for Aaron to live with his father beginning in December 1996, but his father was not willing to accept that arrangement. Aaron's mother also reported that his kindergarten teacher said that Aaron "just couldn't learn." He wore glasses but often needed a reminder to put them on for reading and writing tasks. He was left-handed.

Though Aaron was defiant at home, he was quite passive at school, particularly through the first semester of first grade. He sat compliantly during classroom activities and discussions but seldom volunteered any responses. Even when called on, Aaron often gave no response and had no change of expression. He rarely showed emotions, either of happiness, frustration, or anger. He was reluctant to share his writing with Pat or me. He usually participated in solitary play with the snap cubes during center time.

After the Christmas holidays, Aaron had a positive change in his attitude. He smiled more frequently, more willingly shared his work, requested help, volunteered responses, and played with others. Aaron's mother called Pat to tell her how pleased she was with the changes in her son. He began to make positive comments about his work, such as, "Isn't that a good picture?" and "I'm getting good now." Despite the changes, Aaron's passivity remained evident at many times.

I had an opportunity to talk with Aaron's mother on February 14, 1997. I told her about the positive changes that Pat and I had observed in Aaron recently. His mother said that she had noticed the same changes at home, and she felt that the changes were "directly related" to Aaron's feelings about the separation of his parents. At first, she told me, Aaron had been adamant that his mother and father resume their marriage. Recently, according to his mother, he had been more accepting of the changes in his family.

Several weeks after this discussion, however, Aaron's began to revert to his previously passive nature. Though he was more animated than he had been during the first semester, he began to express his lack of confidence with literacy tasks.

Attitude toward Literacy

During the first four months of school, Aaron appeared apathetic about literacy learning. Though he was cooperative when specifically given instructions, he was unresponsive during teacher-directed activities and inactive during independent reading and writing opportunities. He seemed to lack confidence and usually would sit passively instead of asking for assistance with difficult tasks.

As discussed previously, Aaron's attitude toward literacy learning changed after Christmas. He willingly and enthusiastically wrote and illustrated stories. He approached reading and writing tasks with less reluctance. When he chose books to read, they were at an appropriate level of difficulty. I talked

with Aaron several times in January about his growing enjoyment and confidence, and he smiled and agreed.

By March, Aaron's lack of self-confidence had returned. Though he remained attentive during reading and writing activities and was more willing to take risks, he began to consider himself a poor student. For example, when a room mother suggested that he locate the words faster during a reading bingo activity, Aaron replied, "But I can't read." When Pat asked the students to write their opinion of a basal reader story, Aaron wrote, "I din lik it bkus it is not good for little kis in frst guad" (I didn't like it because it is not good for little kids in first grade). He told me that the story had been too hard for him.

On the *Elementary Reading Attitude Survey* (McKenna & Kear, 1990) administered on October 14, 1996, Aaron scored a 3.5 (PR = 77) for recreational reading and 3.7 (PR = 85) for academic reading. These scores indicated strong positive feelings toward both aspects of reading. Aaron's only negative responses were that he preferred playing instead of reading and he felt negative when he read out loud in class. When the survey was readministered on February 4, 1997, Aaron expressed slightly positive feelings toward recreational reading (score = 3.0; PR = 44) but strong positive feelings toward academic reading (score = 3.6; PR = 79). On April 10, 1997, he again had slightly positive feelings toward recreational reading (score = 3.1; PR = 52), but his attitude toward academic reading become more negative (score = 3.0; PR = 49). He expressed strong negative feelings about reading in school. I

asked him why he did not like to read at school. He replied, "Cause you have to read stuff that you don't know."

I interviewed Aaron on several occasions to obtain responses related to literacy learning. In November, he said he was a good reader, "because I read," and he was a good writer, "because I wrote about Indians before. I write about Indians and Pilgrims." In January, Aaron said he was a good reader, but he did not know what made him so. In response to the question, "Are you a good writer?", Aaron replied, "not too much." I asked him why he was not a good writer. He responded, "because sometimes I have to write hard stuff." On April 10, 1997, I again asked Aaron if he were a good reader. He replied, "I don't know. I think I am. Because I read some books and I read good in Celebrity Readers. If you go forward, then you get the word you didn't know." He said that he was a good writer "cause I sound out the words and I write them."

Learning Through Collaboration

Aaron's passive nature during the school year made collaboration rare. Though he participated in teacher-directed collaborative activities and accepted help from peers when offered, he was never seen offering help to others or requesting help from peers. He shared his work voluntarily with me only a few times and once shared his writing in the Author's Chair.

Learning about Literacy Through Reading

Knowledge about words. At the beginning of the school year, Aaron had a limited understanding of words, word patterns, and sound/symbol relationships. When reading predictable books at his instructional level, he

routinely relied on the illustrations or the pattern in the book, though he occasionally used initial letters to recognize words. As the year progressed, Aaron examined words more thoughtfully and accurately. Representative samples of Aaron's knowledge about words were few because he was so reticent about discussing academic tasks. He often sat passively during reading activities.

In October 1996, Aaron selected a sentence strip that said, "Bubbles in my nose." He read it as, "Bubbles in my hair." When Pat pointed to the *n* in *nose*, Aaron reread the sentence correctly. Pat asked him how he knew the word was *nose*. He replied, "It has an *n*." Aaron had no response when Pat asked him what was the letter at the end of *the* that "you don't hear but you see." He said that the difference between *jump* and *run* was that "this" (pointing to *jump*) "has *j* at the beginning and not an *r* at the beginning."

By mid-November, Aaron had begun to notice details in the medial and ending positions of words. Once his group was reading the word *like*, and several students called it *love*. Pat asked Aaron, "Could this be *like* or *love*?" She stressed the final consonant sound of both words. Aaron answered that the word was *like* because "it has a *l* at the beginning." Pat countered that *love* also had an *l* at the beginning. "What else is different?" she asked. Aaron hesitated, then replied that "*love* has *v*." In early December, Aaron identified *cold* and *cool* "cause *cold* has a *d* at the end." In January, he explained that the difference between *buffalo* and *baboon* was that "*buffalo* has an *o* at the end and *baboon* has an *n*."

Aaron's use of meaning as a strategy for word recognition was apparent in February. Pat introduced a book about a boat to Aaron's guided reading group. Aaron whispered to me, "I know the title." Pat asked him how he identified the word *boat*. Aaron replied, "Because it starts with a *b* and ends with a *t* and if you sound it out and say *b-o-t*" (with a short o) "it doesn't make sense."

Aaron had difficulty when asked to read words in isolation. On the *Slosson Oral Reading Test-Revised* (Slosson, 1990) administered in September 1996, Aaron read 6 words (stanine = 3, PR = 21), but increased to 10 words (stanine = 4, PR = 25) in December. He read 46 of the 220 words on the Dolch list on January 16, 1997, identifying 50% of the words on the preprimer list and 33% of the words on the primer list. When Pat asked Aaron to read the preprimer list of Harris-Jacobson words, he read 69% correctly. On February 25, 1997, the *SORT-R* was administered again. Aaron read 20 words (stanine = 3, PR = 19). He read 14 words (stanine = 3, PR = 14) on the *SORT-R* on April 15, 1997.

Reading of whole texts. Of all the six research participants, Aaron was the only student who continued to have serious difficulties as he read grade level texts. Running records showed that Aaron read more easily the texts used for guided reading; that he had difficulty with grade level basal selections; and that he became more willing to apply word recognition strategies to unknown words, though he was not always successful.

On October 11, 1996, Aaron read a passage from the second preprimer basal text. Miscues included:

Text: I want to see what bears are like.

Aaron: *I to see bears like.*

Text: I do, too.

Aaron: *I do not too.*

Text: Bears are big.

Aaron: *Bears*

Text: But look, Pam!

Aaron: *like*

Text: I want to see bears, not turtles.

Aaron: *I would not see bears, not.*

Text: Turtles are too little.

Aaron: *too like*

As is apparent by the examples above, Aaron was not correcting his miscues and monitoring reading to ensure that it made sense.

Running records of Aaron's oral reading from basal selections averaged around the 90% word recognition range from October through December 1996. This indicated that he was near his frustration level on grade level material. His oral reading continued to be significantly lacking in fluency.

On January 8, 1997, I administered the preprimer passage from the *Classroom Reading Inventory* (Silvaroli, 1997) to determine Aaron's reading skill on unfamiliar text. We first discussed the illustration of two children and a toy car. Aaron's reading work consisted of:

Text: "See my play car, " said Tom.

Aaron: *See my play car, sit (pause) Tom.*

Text: Ann said, "It's a big car."

Aaron: *Ann sat, It it's a (pause) big car.*

Text: "Yes," said Tom.

Aaron: *(pause) Yes, sat sad Tom.*

Text: "Would you like a ride?"

Aaron: *(I told him would) you like a red?*

On the last line, Aaron tried to decode *would*, using the hand motions that Pat had taught them for each short vowel sound. Because his decoding strategy was ineffective for *would*, I told him the word. He read slowly and did not recognize the words immediately. Despite obtaining a 79% word recognition accuracy, Aaron could correctly answer three and a half of the five comprehension questions.

Aaron's use of word recognition strategies was applied inconsistently in January 1997. On a running record from a book studied during guided reading on January 16, 1997, Aaron made the following miscues:

Text: They watered it, but it didn't grow.

Aaron: *They watered it, and it didn't grow.*

Text: They raked it, but it didn't grow.

Aaron: *They raked it, and it didn't grow.*

Text: "It's not going to grow," said Annie.

Aaron: *Lucy (I told him it's) isn't isn't not going to grow grow said Annie.*

Text: "It's not going to grow," said Bobbie.

Aaron: *It (I told him it's) not no note going to grow and Bobbie.*

Though several miscues were not meaningful and were not corrected, Aaron's miscues on the first two lines did not affect the meaning of the story. He also

made one self-correction and repeated once to gain meaning. In addition, he used the picture to help him identify unknown words.

When running records were taken on January 22, 1997, Aaron struggled through both basal and guided reading texts. He had numerous miscues, relied on Pat or me to tell him unknown words, skipped lines, and applied word recognition strategies inconsistently and often ineffectively. It appeared as if he knew he needed to use strategies to determine unknown words, but he was unsure of which strategy to apply to particular words. For example, as he attempted to read the word *don't*, he said, "Just use my phonics." In this instance, decoding caused him to read the word as *doon* and *don*, but using the context would have been a more successful strategy.

Similar problems were seen on a reading of an unfamiliar text done on January 24, 1997, but he also used strategies more effectively. Aaron used the picture, initial sounds, and rereading to help him with word recognition, though several attempts at word recognition were unsuccessful. His reading work included:

Text: "Come see what I have."

Aaron: *Come see what I (looking at picture) have.*

Text: I am going to plant it.

Aaron: *I am going to plant to plant it.*

Text: "Who will help me cut the wheat," asked the little red hen.

Aaron: *-- (Pat said, "Keep going.") we (pause) help me cut the wheat, -- (Pat said, "Keep going.") the little red hen.*

In the last example, Pat was trying to help Aaron understand that readers sometimes skip words that are troublesome and later come back to use context

to determine unknown words. Aaron needed prompting to move on when he reached a troublesome word, and he did not go back to reread the sentence for meaning. He achieved 91% word recognition accuracy, indicating that this grade level text was at his instructional level. Pat wrote to his mother, "Aaron has made wonderful progress. He is emerging as a reader. He read passages correctly from this selection that even surprised him! As an emergent reader, he needs *many* opportunities to read and reread books which he has already mastered. This one activity (rereading familiar books) will do more to make him an independent reader than anything else you can do."

On a familiar basal selection on February 7, 1997, Aaron read with 97% word recognition accuracy. Many more self-corrections were evident, demonstrating that he was monitoring his reading more closely to ensure that what he said matched the text and made sense. Aaron's reading work consisted of:

Text: "I will put this one up for sale."

Aaron: *I will put this house one up for sale.*

Text: Dogs came to look at the house.

Aaron: *Dog dogs came to look at the house.*

Text: But no one wanted it.

Aaron: *But no one want wanted it.*

Text: "Then I'll paint my house," said Freckles. "I'll paint it red."

Aaron: *Then I'll paint my house and said Freckles. Looked said Freckles. I'll paint it red.*

On February 21, 1997, I sat beside Pat and Aaron as they completed a running record from a primer basal selection. Aaron's reading lacked fluency,

and at first he had significant word recognition problems. On the word *let's*, Pat had to tell him the word after he read *look, looks, looked, and looks*. When he encountered the word *don't*, he sounded it out with both a long and short *o* sound. He then could not determine which of his decoded words sounded like a real word. After he opened to a two-page spread of text, he did not know whether to begin reading on the left page or the right page. I left Aaron's side after he had read half of the selection because I thought I might be making him nervous. Once I had moved, his fluency and word recognition improved significantly. Pat said that she thought that Aaron felt such affection for me that he had wanted to read without error, but he got over-anxious when I was observing him. On a running record of his guided reading text administered the same day, Aaron achieved 98% word recognition accuracy. His miscues were meaningful and he self-corrected three out of five errors.

Pat became increasingly more worried about Aaron's reading progress in March. Though Aaron was attempting to use word recognition strategies to be a successful reader, he continued to struggle with oral reading and with the occasional basal seatwork that Pat assigned. On March 2, Pat told me that Aaron was "slipping away from me." When report cards were sent home for the fourth six weeks period at the beginning of March, Mrs. Palmer, the principal, asked Pat to consider referring Aaron for a special education evaluation since he had been retained once and continued to have difficulty with literacy tasks.

Aaron's difficulties were confirmed with a running record of a primer level passage taken on March 7, 1997. Aaron achieved 86% word recognition

accuracy, and Pat stopped his reading early due to his frustration. His oral reading included:

Text: My name is Jennie.

Aaron: *Me my n-a-m-e name is Jennie.*

Text: I couldn't think of a good name for her.

Aaron: *I (pause) c-o-u-l-d-n-t (Pat: Keep going.) th-i-nk for a good name for her.*

Text: She can find lost things.

Aaron: *S-h can find lost things. (Aaron told himself, "Go back," and he repeated the line.)*

He continued to lose his place and once asked, "Where am I?" Pat reminded him to use his finger to point to the words.

Text: We sat by the tree for a long time.

Aaron: *We sat by the tree (long pause) for a (pause) l-o-n-g look (pause; looked at picture) time time time.*

Text: It was a hot day.

Aaron: *It was it was it was (long pause) a a h-o-t hot hot day.*

On the back of this running record, Pat wrote a note to Aaron's mother. It read, "This text is too difficult for Aaron to read. He seems to be regressing somewhat in his reading development. Reasons? Not enough practice (not interested). Too challenging text. In order to motivate Aaron once again, I will have the stories from the reader put on tape. He really seems to enjoy the listening center so maybe this will help. We need to watch Aaron carefully. His grades are beginning to fall. I may ask for a meeting to request an evaluation. Please let me know what you think."

On another primer passage that Aaron read on March 14, 1997, he read only 28 words due to his difficulties. He paused several times, was told four

words, and looked around the room yawning. He achieved 71% accuracy on this passage. He read with 87% accuracy on a primer passage read on March 21, 1997. Aaron made comments such as, "Is that a word I can use my phonics on?", "I don't know that word," "That's the same word as that one so I can't read it," and "That (word) is hard." He needed frequent prompting to proceed through the text.

Aaron continued to have significant difficulties on a running record of a guided reading test from April 10, 1997. Pat wrote his mother, "I'm quite concerned about Aaron's reading development. He had begun to make excellent progress but since mid-February has really begun to fall behind. He is on the list to be evaluated for next year. I'm looking into options for some additional help for him -- possibly over the summer. Aaron CAN LEARN!! He CAN READ!! It's just that the grade level material is too difficult. If he's consistently presented material that is too difficult for him, he'll regress. I believe that's what has happened. Now we know the level of material that he needs -- we have 2 months to work hard and try to get back some ground that we lost. I'll be sending some of my own books home with Aaron to read. I'll send them in a ziplock bag. You'll like these books. Please ask Aaron to read to you every day -- even on the weekends. Put the book back in the bag and send it to school each day. DISREGARD HOMEWORK ASSIGNMENTS FROM THE READING BOOK. If you'd like, you can read the stories to Aaron before bed but don't ask him to read them unless he volunteers. Call if you have questions."

On the *Classroom Reading Inventory* (Silvaroli, 1997) administered April 17, 1997, Aaron was unable to read the primer level passage. He used initial sounds to attempt unfamiliar words, and he asked for assistance several times. As he read, he did not self-correct any miscues to make his reading meaningful. For example,

Text: "Get in the bus," said Mrs. Brown.

Aaron: *in the bus sand Mr.*

Graph of oral reading accuracy. Aaron's reading progress fluctuated throughout the year. Though his ability to read grade level text improved, the basal reading material remained difficult for him. On 15 basal text selections, Aaron, self-corrected 16% of his miscues. The graph in Figure 6.21 represents

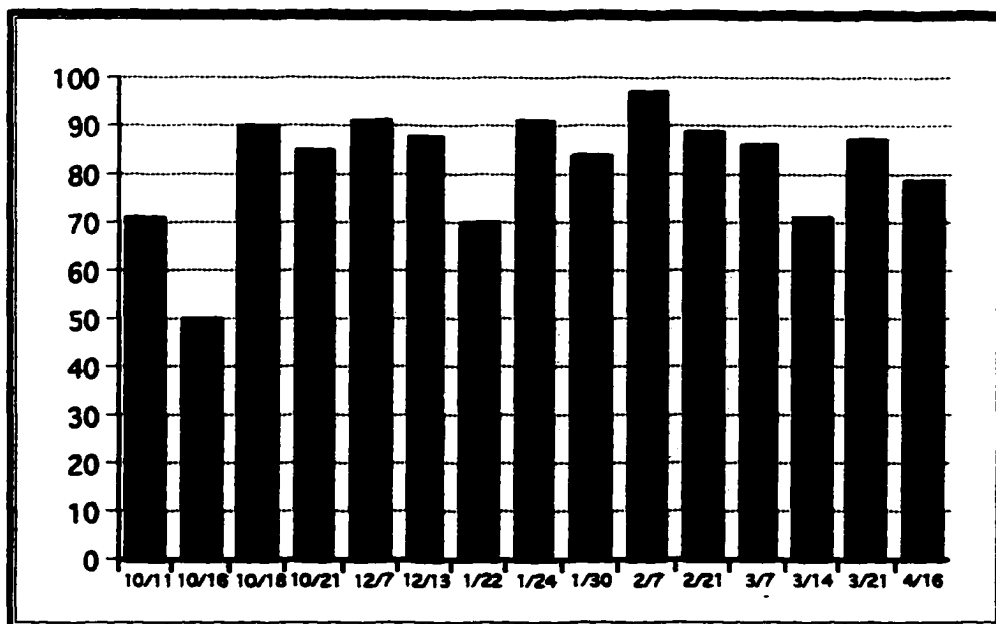


Figure 6.21
Percentages of Oral Reading Accuracy
Basal Text Selections

Aaron's accuracy on oral reading samples taken from October 1996 through April 1997.

Learning about Literacy Through Writing

Aaron seemed to invest little effort in writing for the first few months of the school year. He copied environmental print and wrote single sentence stories. He was rarely seen taking risks with phonetic spelling. As Aaron's attitude and motivation changed, so did his writing. He wrote more information on a single topic, wrote more pieces each month, and showed greater use of conventional and phonetic spelling. Aaron's development as a writer is best seen by examining writing samples taken over the course of the school year.

Aaron's primary writing strategy in October and November was to use environmental print to select a topic. On October 10 (see Figure 6.22), he used labels on the calendar to write, "We are in October. Halloween." He spelled conventionally; sound/symbol relationships were used to spell *are* (*ore*) and *in* (*n*). In this piece, 53% of the words were spelled conventionally, and of the remaining words spelled phonetically, 65% of the correct sounds were used. Aaron used no punctuation marks. On October 14, Aaron wrote, "Columbus Halloween OCTOBER."

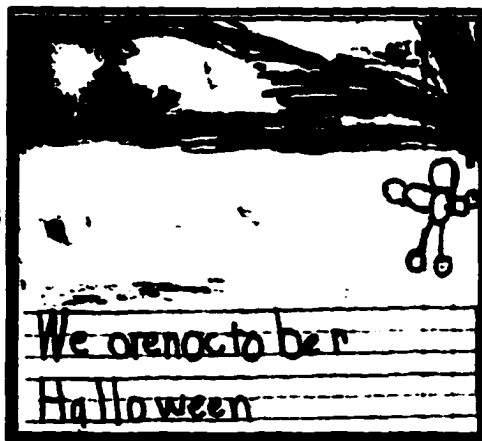


Figure 6.22
October 10, 1996

I asked him how he knew to spell *October*. He pointed to the calendar. He used a chart about the seasons to copy the other two words.

In early November, Aaron used words on the class attendance chart to write, "This is a raining day" (see Figure 6.23). He spelled *is* and *a* correctly without reference to environmental print. In this piece, 80% of the words were spelled conventionally, and of the remaining words spelled phonetically, Aaron used 33% of the correct sounds. A capital letter was used at the beginning of each line of text. Aaron's illustration matched his written content.

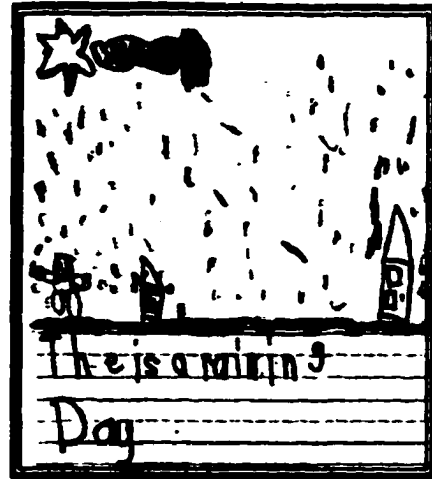


Figure 6.23
November 4, 1996

The December 3 writing sample showed that Aaron was relying less on environmental print and was writing more details about a single topic (see Figure 6.24). After the class made decorations for the school's Christmas tree, Pat instructed the students to write about their ornaments. She wrote the word *ornament* on the board for reference. Aaron's writing included three sentences about his ornament and said, "I like my ornament. It is good. It is good to me." He used sound/symbol relationships instead of environmental print to spell the word *ornament*. His spelling approximations were similar to the conventional spelling. Fifty

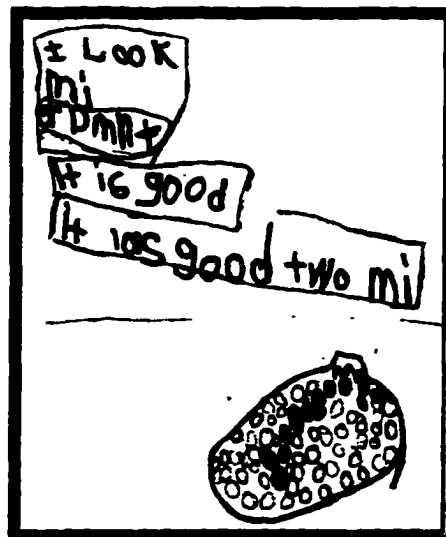


Figure 6.24
December 3, 1996

percent of the words were spelled conventionally, and of the remaining words spelled phonetically, Aaron used 81% of the correct sounds. No punctuation was used, but Aaron drew boxes around each sentence. Originally, when Aaron wrote the word *good* in his second sentence, he had spelled it "gD." Because his guided reading group had read a book that morning and the word *good* was used throughout its text, I reminded Aaron that he could use what he had learned in reading to help him in writing. A classmate, Josh, signed the class's hand motion for *o*, and Aaron changed his spelling to "goD." Josh told him that he needed two o's. Aaron quickly corrected his spelling and added his last line of text.

In January, Aaron displayed greater interest in writing. He occasionally wrote "Story by Aaron" on his Writing Workshop papers, and asked me how to spell *illustrated* so that he could also write "Illustrated by Aaron." His drawings contained more details, and he began to seek help and show me his pieces of writing. Pat remarked that she was pleased with Aaron's improvement; he was leaving spaces between words, using appropriate phonetic spelling, and his illustrations matched his text. He wrote seven pieces in January on various topics but misplaced six of them. Aaron wrote the piece shown in Figure 6.25 at the end of January. His text said, "My house is great. We are great too." Originally, Aaron had drawn and labeled four people: Cory, Mom, Eric, and Craig. When I requested a copy of this selection several days later, he told me that he had added a new person, Mister David, because his mother had a new boyfriend. Though this selection did not exhibit the increase in length that other

January writing samples showed, it revealed that Aaron was beginning to understand punctuation and capitalization. For his first sentence, he changed a lower case *m* to a capital letter and used an exclamation mark at the end. Valid approximations were seen in his phonetic spelling. Only 38% of the words were spelled conventionally, but of the remaining words spelled phonetically, Aaron used 100% of the correct sounds.

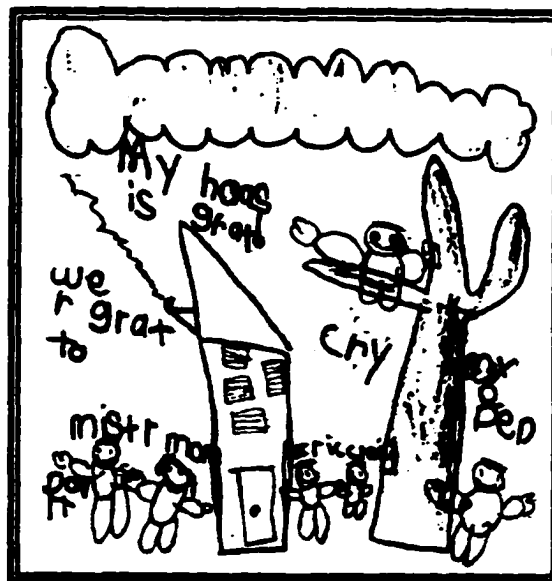


Figure 6.25
January 28, 1997

Aaron began several pieces in February, most of which were one sentence or labels for the illustration. Figure 6.26 shows his only writing during the month that contained several

sentences. Aaron first drew three trees, the ground, a sun, and clouds. He labeled the picture at the bottom, "Apl tree stry by Aaron" (Apple Tree; story by Aaron). Next he erased his text and added a black color around the trees. He

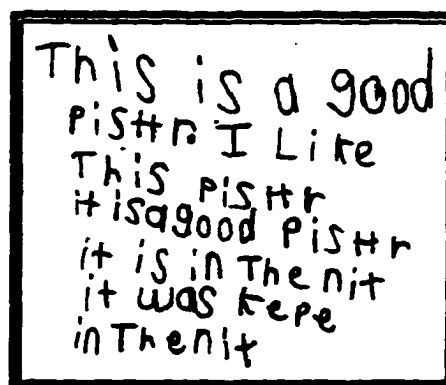


Figure 6.26
February 18, 1997

then turned over the paper and wrote, "This is a good picture. I like this picture. It is a good picture. It is in the night. It was creepy in the night." Not only was

this Aaron's longest piece of writing, it reflected several areas of improvement. He spelled 76% of the words conventionally, and he correctly spelled some words that he had previously spelled incorrectly (e.g., *good*, *was*, *this*). Of the words spelled phonetically, he correctly used 85% of the sounds. When Pat demonstrated the writing process, she often stressed that when students spell a word phonetically, they do not need to sound out the word again; instead they should copy it from the first attempt. This piece showed that Aaron first used phonetic spelling to write *picture* and *night*, and then copied the words each time he rewrote them. He used the digraph *sh* correctly in his phonetic spelling of *picture*. Aaron inserted a period after the first sentence and used a capital letter for the pronoun *I*. When he shared this writing in the Author's Chair, he told the class that he had made it dark "in the background" to show that it was nighttime.

Because Pat did not conduct Writing Workshop during March, there were few opportunities for students to write on topics of their own choice unless they selected writing as a center activity.

However, on March 7, 1997, I found a book that Aaron had made during his free time (see Figures 6.27 - 6.30). He had illustrated it and written three pages of text, then he placed his book in the book

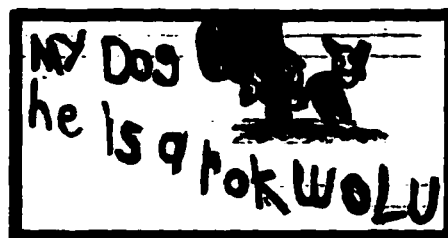


Figure 6.27
March 1997
Title Page

bin on his table for his classmates to read. Neither Pat nor I knew when Aaron had made it. It was entitled, "My Dog," and Aaron had written, "Illustrations by

Aaron; Story by Aaron." His text read, "He is a Rottweiler. I love my dog. He is great. I love him. My dog is great. I love him very very much. Me and my dog. The end."

Aaron wrote a total of 38 words, spelling 74% of them conventionally. Of the words he spelled phonetically, he used 80% of the correct phonemes. He inserted capital letters throughout his piece and used no punctuation. This was the first piece that Aaron wrote outside of Writing Workshop.



Figure 6.28
Page 1

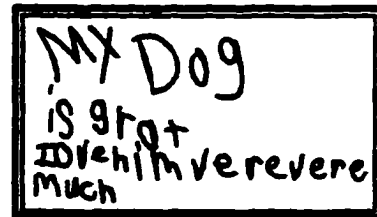


Figure 6.29
Page 2

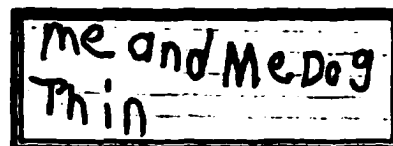


Figure 6.30
Page 3

CHAPTER 7 TEACHER INTERACTIONS

Research in typical classrooms shows that teachers provide differentiated and poorer quality instruction for children who have difficulty with reading and writing. Low-achieving students generally have access to instruction that focuses on rote learning, skills in isolation, and basic knowledge. They also have fewer opportunities to read and write for authentic purposes. In addition, the gap between the learning of the low-achieving and successful students typically widens as the school year progresses. This research was conducted, in part, to describe what happened to students in a classroom of a teacher employing best practices for literacy instruction.

My second research question was, "How did the teacher interact with each child?" To answer this question, I analyzed data into several categories according to Pat's interaction with individual participants and her interaction with the two research groups. Pat had one-on-one interactions with all students and individualized her instruction as needed. As examples, she called on Aaron more frequently to keep his attention on the lesson; she routinely dealt with Ben's off-task behavior; and she directed Chris to write text during Writing Workshop before he illustrated. The data, however, divided primarily into the two research groups.

In general, I found that all students in Pat's classroom received instruction based in large part upon the current recommended standards and developmentally appropriate practices for first grade literacy instruction. The

initially low-achieving students had access to additional instruction that provided further opportunities for explicit and scaffolded reading instruction, supplementary phonemic awareness activities, and more chances to respond orally during group work. Additionally, the initially low-achieving students received more teacher assessment than did the initially successful students, to determine teaching points, and their parents obtained more information from Pat about helping their child at home.

As I describe Pat's interaction with the six research participants, I will first portray how she interacted with all of the six students. Then I will explain how her supplemental instruction for the three initially low-achieving participants differed quantitatively and qualitatively from the instruction received by other students.

Interaction with All Six Students

Basal Text Instruction

All children in Pat's classroom received instruction according to the scope and sequence recommended by the publishers of the basal text adopted by the school district. Because use of the basal text and supplementary teaching materials was required at Randall Elementary School, Pat used the basal text for whole class instruction to ensure that all students were exposed to stories, skills, and strategies at a level appropriate for most first graders.

For the days in which basal text instruction was observed, data from this research show that all students in Pat's class received an average of 27.1 minutes of instruction on activities delineated by the basal manual. Pat

routinely provided activities for the students on basal vocabulary, word analysis, and comprehension skills. For example, the students were required to read sentences with vocabulary words introduced in their basal selections, select the best word to fill in the blank using the sentence's context, and analyze words according to phonics or structural analysis. All six children in this study were instructed with the same basal lessons.

Phonemic Awareness

All students were exposed to phonemic awareness and phonics instruction so that they could sound out and spell unfamiliar words. During basal instruction and Making Words activities, students identified consonant sounds; short, long, and r-controlled vowels; and consonant blends and digraphs. Students also blended words, decoded and encoded words, identified the number of syllables within words, and recognized rhyming words.

Explicit and Scaffolded Reading Instruction

Pat taught reading skills and strategies explicitly. She clearly taught skills and strategies in a meaningful context so that the students could learn to be problem-solvers and independent readers. She modeled procedures and processes to ensure that all learners became familiar with how reading works.

Pat was adept at providing scaffolded literacy experiences for her students. By scaffolding, Pat enabled the students to complete a task that they could not do otherwise. She rephrased questions, provided prompts, contributed an additional piece of information, and/or segmented the task into clearer, smaller units.

Independent Reading

Pat provided daily opportunities for all students to read whole texts. The opportunity for independent reading of books and poetry was available every day during morning preparation and center times. In January, after Pat observed that many children chose activities other than independent reading when they were given a choice, she implemented a Buddy Reading activity for 20-30 minutes daily so that students could practice reading their basal text to a peer.

Demonstrations of the Writing Process

All students in Pat's class routinely observed her as she modeled the writing process (see description in Chapter 4). As Pat composed a story and verbalized her thinking, she demonstrated writing skills such as topic selection, content, vocabulary, capitalization, punctuation, conventional spelling, phonetic spelling, title selection, handwriting, spacing, revision, and editing techniques.

Assessment

Pat incorporated report cards, progress reports, anecdotal records, and authentic assessment measures into her practice. She believed that authentic assessment should occur daily, and she continually observed, interpreted, and made instructional decisions based upon the actions of her students. Her daily assessment guided her instructional planning in all areas of the curriculum.

In addition to the papers that each child completed as a part of the basal reading program, Pat administered running records to all students at least twice monthly. As she reviewed each child's oral reading of a basal text selection,

Pat could determine how each reader orchestrated effective reading, how processing and problem-solving were done, and how and when effective processing broke down. By using a selection from the basal reader, Pat judged which students were successful and which were encountering difficulties with grade level texts.

Pat used the students' writing samples to evaluate each child's progress in spelling and writing conventions. She also used them to determine the *teaching points* she needed to address as she modeled the writing process or as she conferred with individual students. Each student maintained a folder of all their writing for their first grade year.

Two types of portfolios were kept for each student. A showcase portfolio held each student's best work in reading, writing, math, art, social studies, and science. This portfolio was updated each six weeks grading term. Pat also retained all of the students' weekly work in a separate portfolio.

Opportunities to Respond

Pat tried to balance the chances to respond in group situations so that all students would have similar opportunities to participate. She called on students to respond when they raised their hands to volunteer, and she also called on them when they had not volunteered. To ensure that each child had an opportunity to respond, Pat wrote each student's name on a clothespin. She often pulled names from the container of clothespins so that she would not repeat a name until all children had a chance to participate.

Summary

With all students in the classroom, Pat ensured that they learned, experienced success, and were involved in classroom activities. Trevor, Chris, Josh, Ben, Aaron, and Calvin had many opportunities throughout the school day to read, write, and think. They received explicit and scaffolded instruction, and they participated in activities designed to promote their understanding of reading and writing processes and conventions. Pat routinely assessed their learning so that she could adapt instruction to better meet their individual needs.

Interactions with Initially Low-Achieving Students

Early in the school year, Pat identified students who needed additional instruction and experiences with reading and writing tasks so that their literacy learning could be accelerated. Aaron, Ben, and Calvin were the research participants who joined a guided reading group in early October 1996. Pat designed guided reading opportunities for students to develop phonemic awareness, word recognition strategies, and comprehension. Chris joined this group on January 15, 1997, so that Pat could help him expand his repertoire of word recognition strategies beyond decoding. The remainder of this chapter will first describe the ways in which Pat adapted her schedule, materials, and techniques for the initially low-achieving students so that she could provide more high-quality instruction to Aaron, Ben, Calvin, and later, Chris. Second, an excerpt from my field notes will be used to depict the interaction between Pat and the students in the guided reading group.

Additional Guided Reading Instruction

Because Pat felt strongly that instruction provided through the basal reader was insufficient for those students encountering difficulties with literacy learning, she scheduled an extra period of literacy instruction for a small group of struggling readers (see Chapter 4 for a further explanation). Through her interactions with this group, Pat could support each student's development of effective strategies as they read increasingly challenging texts. She used books published by The Wright Group, a publisher of books for emergent readers. For the days in which this guided reading group was observed, they received an average of 31.7 minutes per day of additional reading instruction to supplement the instruction that they also received through the basal reader.

Additional Opportunities to Read Whole Texts

Although all students in Pat's class had opportunities to read whole stories during Buddy Reading and independent reading activities, the initially-low achieving students had additional occasions to read and reread texts during guiding reading time. For the days in which these opportunities to read were observed, the students in the guided reading group had 60% more opportunities to read whole texts than the other students in the class.

Additional Phonemic Awareness Activities

Pat's guided reading lesson cycle scheduled three days of practice on each book. On the first and second days of the lesson sequence, activities were conducted that promoted the development of phonemic awareness (see Chapter 4 for a further explanation). Students used phonemic segmentation to

spell words from the story on the first day, and they wrote a sentence from the story on the second day of the guided reading lesson cycle. Students in the guided reading group participated in 65% more phonemic awareness activities during this research.

Additional Opportunities to Respond

Because the children in the guided reading group received more individualized instruction, they also had additional opportunities to respond to discussions about reading or writing. Aaron was reticent about responding and Pat frequently questioned him directly because he rarely volunteered. The initially low-achieving students averaged over three times more oral responses than the initially successful group due to the opportunities provided in the guided reading group.

Additional Explicit and Scaffolded Instruction

During her guided reading group, Pat gave explicit instruction in word recognition and comprehension skills and strategies designed to help the initially low-achieving students become independent readers. She taught them how to monitor their own reading; to search for cues in the illustration, syntax, semantics, and graphophonics; to cross-check one source of cues with another; to reread to confirm their reading; and to self-correct miscues. Pat also supported these readers through scaffolding their learning when they needed prompts to be successful. On the days that these teaching interactions were observed, the students in the guided reading group received 68% more explicit

instruction on reading and writing processes, and they had 106% more scaffolded learning experiences.

Assessment to Determine Teaching Points

In addition to the assessment practices that Pat used with all students, she took running records every week for the children in her guided reading group. These students read selections from the basal text and the books used for guided reading. The information gained from the use of the running records helped Pat determine how successful the children were as they read grade level and instructional level texts.

Pat also assessed each student informally as the group was participating in guided reading instruction. This assessment allowed Pat to immediately address teaching points to ensure student learning.

Information for Parents

Every Tuesday, Pat sent papers home from the preceding week for parent signatures. These papers were accompanied by a class newsletter describing activities to be covered for the week and learning projects that parents could do with their children at home. For Aaron, Ben, and Calvin (and occasionally Chris), Pat wrote additional notes to their parents to express her impressions about their child's learning and to give parents specific information about how to help their child at home.

For example, Pat wrote to Ben's parents, "Keep books in your car for him to read." She urged Aaron's mother to help him reread familiar books because "this one activity will do more to make him an independent reader than anything

else you can do." Pat recommended that Calvin's mother, "encourage him to go back and reread the line" when he ignored unknown words.

An Excerpt from Field Notes

To better exemplify how Pat's interactions supported the students in the guided reading group, I will use an excerpt from a 20 minute guided reading lesson on January 7, 1997. Ben, Aaron, and Calvin participated as they worked through the text of *Come for a Swim!* (Cowley, 1996). Pat had introduced the book the previous day, highlighting the vocabulary and meaning of the story. On the day from which this excerpt was taken, the three students were reading the text together for the first time. The text of the book is shown in italics, and the dialogue is taken directly from my field notes. My notes were transcribed from a recording of the lesson.

Pat: At this time of year, we could do this where?

She was pointing to the illustration of a family swimming at a beach.

Ben: Antarctica

Pat: Close. It starts with a.

Ben: Australia.

Pat: Yes, this could be happening right now in Australia.

They begin to read the story chorally. Ben and Calvin were easier to hear and more vocal, but Aaron read along quietly.

Title Page: Come for a Swim! by Joy Cowley; illustrations by Philip Webb.

Calvin was able to read *illustrations* before others.

Pat: Philip Webb also illustrated a good book called *The Seed*.

Ben: My dad's name is Philip.

Pat: Then that will help you remember because it's the same name as your dad.

Page 2: "Mom! Dad! Come for a swim!" the children called.

The boys got stuck on *children*. Calvin said "water" and Ben repeated after him. Pat continued to point to the word *children* with her pointer (a chopstick) to let them know they still had some reading work to do.

Pat: Let's go back to the beginning. Sometimes when we come to a place that's tricky and doesn't make any sense, sometimes it helps us to go back to the beginning to get more meaning by using the other words. Let's try again.

Group: Mom!

Pat: First of all, tell me. What are these little people?

She points to the illustration of the children.

Ben and Calvin: kids

Pat: Um, hum. What's another word for kids?

Ben: children

Pat: OK, let's go.

Group: Mom! Dad! Come for a swim! the...

Ben: children

Pat: Well done, Ben!

Group: the children...

Calvin: kid

Pat: Does that make sense? Come for a swim, the children kid.

Calvin shook his head.

Pat (reading with much expression): Mom! Dad! Come for a swim, the children...

Ben: coming

Pat: Does that make sense? The children coming. Mom! Dad! Come for a swim, the children coming.

Calvin: called

Pat: What made you say *called*?

Calvin: It has a *c*.

Pat: What else?

Calvin: It has a *d* at the beginning.

Pat: A *d* at the beginning?

Calvin: At the end.

Ben: And *l*'s in the middle.

Pat: Oh, and you have *l*'s in the middle. Do you recognize this word?

She shows them the word part *call* in *called*.

Unidentified: Call.

Pat: That's right. Call. My son was on the beach and he screamed at me, "I can spell *ball*." And I said, "Spell it." And he said, "B-a-l-l." I said, "Then spell *call*," and he said, "C-a-l-l." And I said, "Spell *hall*," and he said...

Calvin: h-a-l-l.

Pat: And I said, "Spell *mall*," and he said...

Calvin: m-a-l-l.

Pat: Yes, that's what he said.

She points to word *called* in the book.

Pat (stressing the final sound): Called. There's the *-ed* at the end. Good.

Let's keep going.

Page 3: "Coming!" said Dad, and he ran into the water.

Ben: Come. Coming.

Pat: Oh! Very good!

Group: Coming.

Ben: sild

Calvin: said

Group: dad. And he ran

Calvin: into

Group: the water.

Pat: Good. Now that makes sense.

She reread the first two pages of text, modeling fluency and expression.

Page 4. "Coming!" said Mom, and she put on her suntan oil.

Group: Coming, said Mom, and...

They had difficulty with the word *she*.

Ben: suntan, sun.

Pat: I can understand why you might call this word *sun* because this word and *sun* have the same letter at the beginning.

Calvin: It don't have an e in it.

Pat: That's right. They don't end the same way, Calvin. And you know something else about this? This has those two letters together (referring to the *sh*) that go to make...

Ben: /sh/.

Pat: Very good. S-h says /sh/.

Ben: shul

Pat rereads sentence with expression and stops at *she*.

Ben: child...children????

Pat: Let's keep going.

Calvin: puts

Pat: Good.

Group: on

Aaron: her

Ben: oil

Pat keeps pointing to *suntan*.

Ben: suntan lotion.

Pat points to *oil*.

Ben: oil

Pat: Um, hum. Suntan oil. Now let's go back and see if we can figure out what that word was that we couldn't get. This time what we did was we went on. Now let's go back again since we went on and see if we can figure out what makes sense here. Here we go.

Group: Coming! said Mom and...

Pat gives the students time to work on the word *she*.

Calvin: *she*

Ben repeats: *she*

Pat: Good boy.

Group: Coming! said Mom, and she put on her suntan oil.

Pat: What made you say *she*?

Calvin: 'Cause it had an *s-h* and an *e*.

Pat: And how did you figure out that was *she*?

Calvin: 'Cause I spelled it out.

Pat: You spelled it out. Is there any other way that you knew that might be *she*?

Calvin did not respond.

Pat: No. What do you think? How could Calvin have figured out that was *she*?

Ben: Sh-ee. 'Cause he heard the *ee* and he heard the *sh*.

Pat: So Mom's putting on her suntan oil.

They discussed how today we use sun block, not just suntan oil.

Page 6 : "Come on, Mom!" they called.

Pat (referring to the illustration): They're calling something to Mom. Here we go.

Group: Come on, Mom!

The students stopped when they encountered the word *they*. After several attempts, someone said the word correctly.

Group: they called.

Pat: Good! We talked about this word yesterday.

Pat had the group reread the page several times with expression.

Pat: OK, let's see what mom says.

Page 7: "Coming!" said Mom, and she lay on the towel.

Group: Coming! said Mom, and her...

Ben: she

Pat: Good!

Group: she

The group hesitated on the word *lay*.

Pat: lay

Group: on the

Calvin: towel

Pat: That's right. She lay on the towel.

Ben: Does she sleep?

Pat: I don't know. Probably. I know how she feels, just nice and toasty and warm.

Ben: I would eat myself 'cause I love toast.

Pat: Here we go.

Page 8: Dad and the children were waiting. They called to Mom, "Why don't you come in for a swim?"

Group: Dad and the...

Ben: children

Group: children...

Pat: It rhymes with *her*.

Ben: work

Pat: *Work* doesn't rhyme with *her*. This is one of those funny words that you just have to know. Let's keep going. We need to start at the beginning again because we're losing meaning. Let's go back and try to reread and see if we can figure out--skip, go on, come back. Here we go, everyone.

Group: Dad and the children

Calvin: were

Pat: Good!

They couldn't read *waiting*.

Pat: What were they doing? They were...

Calvin: wearing

Pat: Hum. They were wearing something, but you don't have enough words to say what they were wearing. Maybe this word isn't the word *wearing*. What are they doing?

Ben: They're fixing to splash Mama. They're mad.

Pat: Why are they mad?

Ben: Mama wouldn't get up and go swimming.

Pat: And what are they mad about? Mama's making them...

Ben: wait

Pat: Ah.

She points to ending of *waiting*.

Ben: waiting

Pat: Good boy, Ben!

Pat: Let's read this again.

Group: Dad and the children were waiting.

They had some trouble with *were* and *waiting*, but they figured both words out. The continued reading.

Calvin: They called

Group: to mom

The students hesitated on *why*. Someone suggested *we*.

Ben: No, it can't be *we*. It's *w* with an *e*.

Pat: That's right. *We* would be *w* and *e*.

The boys try *wait* and */w/ /h/*. Pat tells them the word.

Pat: Here we go.

Group: Why

Calvin: did

Pat: It's on the contraction chart. No, it's not! I can't believe it!

Group: didn't

Pat: Close.

Pat (reading the text): Why don't...

Group: Why don't you come in for a swim?

Page 8: "I am coming," said Mom, and she shut her eyes.

Group: I am coming, said mom, and she...

They could not read *shut*.

Pat is opening and closing her eyes to give them a clue.

Ben: closed

Pat (pointing to the word *shut*): Could this word be *closed*?

Ben: No.

Pat waits while the group is working.

Debbie: You've got the right idea. Use the sounds.

Ben: sh- nate?

Pat: Hum. Let's keep going.

Group: She ___ her

Ben: close

Ben: eyes

Group: and she

They again could not identify *shut*.

Ben: eyes

Calvin: and she

They hesitated.

Ben: sleeps

Pat: And she sleeps her eyes?

(At this point, I had a problem with my tape recorder and lost the next few minutes of reading work. I begin recording again as the students read the last sentence of page 11.)

Pages 10 and 11: Dad got a bucket. He filled it with water. He dumped the water over Mom. Mom yelled.

Group: Mom

Calvin: yellow

Pat: Does that make sense? Mom yellow?

Calvin shook his head no.

Ben: holler

Pat: That would make sense. Mom hollered.

Ben: shout

Pat: Why did mom holler?

Ben: 'Cause they threw the water on Mom.

Pat: You want to read these words for me again.

Kids stumble through the text.

Pat (reading page 11): He dumped the water over Mom. Mom yelled.

The school counselor arrived to give a lesson to the class, so Pat finished reading the text herself, modeling fluency and expression.

Summary

As one analyzes the excerpt above, Pat's instructional interactions with the initially low-achieving students can be seen. She used explicit instruction; scaffolding; and attention to the cueing systems of syntax, semantics, and graphophonics to help her students work through this text. The number of participants in the guided reading group changed as the year progressed, but Aaron, Ben, and Calvin remained with the group throughout the year. As

initially low-achieving students, these three boys were exposed to instruction at an appropriate level of difficulty that helped them develop inner control of their own reading behaviors.

CHAPTER 8 GROUP SIMILARITIES AND DIFFERENCES

The third research question of this study was, "What were the similarities and differences between the school experiences of the initially successful and initially low-achieving students in a developmentally appropriate classroom?" This question was posed to investigate the patterns of achievement that occurred in Pat's classroom between the two groups of learners. I have described each student's individual progress in Chapters 5 and 6. Chapter 7 documented the whole class lessons that all students received, and the additional teacher interactions that Pat employed to accelerate the literacy learning of her initially low-achieving students. In this chapter, I discuss the similarities and differences that were evident between the two research groups.

Analysis

Although there were many similarities and differences among individuals, few conclusions could be reached when the two groups were compared and contrasted. Usually, there was overlapping data between the initially successful and the initially low-achieving students. Only by comparing group averages in several categories could conclusions be inferred.

I examined many categories of literacy behavior for which no conclusions concerning similarities and differences could be reached. I studied student attitudes (as measured by the *ERAS* [McKenna & Kear, 1990]), final scores on the *Observation Survey* (Clay, 1993) (see Appendix B), collaboration with others, time on task, absences, requests for assistance, isolated word

recognition, successful completion of basal reader vocabulary and comprehension worksheets, and the use of phonetic spelling. In these categories, there was enough variability between the individuals and groups so that no conclusions could be determined.

Similarities

As discussed in Chapter 7, both groups of students were exposed to whole class instruction from the basal reader, demonstrations of the writing process, and activities designed to develop phonemic awareness and phonetic spelling. Besides these similarities, only one other distinct likeness between the two research groups was evident.

In Chapter 5, I explained my procedures for analyzing the writing samples of each child. I calculated the percentage of words spelled conventionally within each student's writing and the percentage of correct sounds used in phonetic spelling. To analyze the similarity between research groups in their uses of phonetic and conventional spelling, I first found percentages for every piece that each student wrote (including those pieces not described in Chapters 5 and 6). I then averaged those percentages to find the mean (see Table 8.1). Although their mean scores of conventional spelling usage masked the variability between writing samples, the averages demonstrated that both groups of students spelled almost 60% of their total words conventionally. From October 1996 through March 1997, the initially successful students had a mean score of 59.8% of words spelled conventionally; the initially low-achieving students' mean score was 59.9% (see

Table 8.1). These scores indicated that both groups were comparable in their use of conventional spelling.

Table 8.1
Spelling Used in Writing Samples

	Trevor	Josh	Chris	Calvin	Ben	Aaron
Conventional Spelling	70.1%	54.5%	54.8%	61.3%	64.6%	53.8%
	59.8% Group Mean			59.9% Group Mean		
Sounds in Phonetic Spelling	84.2%	81.8%	76.4%	73.6%	80.4%	78.6%
	80.8% Group Mean			77.5% Group Mean		

Table 8.1 shows that there was a slight difference between groups in their ability to use the correct sounds in phonetic spelling. After examining the individual differences, however, it seems apparent the mean score of each group does not indicate the similarities between the individuals in both groups. In other words, the individual scores indicate that each student's phonetic spelling was more similar than different.

Differences

As explained in Chapter 7, the initially low-achieving students had access to additional instruction provided through Pat's guided reading group. Chris joined this group in the second semester of first grade, so no comparisons could be made between groups for the second half of the school year. But for the first semester, the initially low-achieving group had significantly more opportunities to respond to literacy tasks than did the initially successful group. Participation in this group may explain why ultimately there were fewer differences between groups.

Analysis of each group's writing samples showed a difference between the mean number of words per sample (see Table 8.2). The initially successful students had a mean score of 19.1 words per written piece; the initially low-achieving group wrote an average of 15.0 words per sample. The range among individuals varied also. The initially successful group ranged from 17.9 words per piece to 19.7 words per piece. The initially low-achieving group's words per piece ranged from 13.3 to 16.9.

Table 8.2
Total Number of Words Per Writing Sample

Trevor	Josh	Chris	Calvin	Ben	Aaron
17.9	19.7	19.7	16.9	14.9	13.3
19.1 Group Mean			15.0 Group Mean		

The groups showed a difference in the reading grades each student received on his report card (see Table 8.3). For the first five grading periods of first grade, the initially successful group had mean reading report card grades of 91% or better (range = 91.4% to 98.8%). The initially low-achieving group

Table 8.3
Reading Report Card Grades for First Five Grading Periods

	1st grading period	2nd grading period	3rd grading period	4th grading period	5th grading period	Mean
Trevor	98%	100%	97%	100%	99%	98.8%
Josh	97%	97%	97%	97%	97%	97.0%
Chris	86%	89%	94%	95%	93%	91.4%
Calvin	89%	78%	78%	80%	81%	81.2%
Ben	80%	80%	63%	84%	78%	77.0%
Aaron	NA	85%	76%	72%	70%	75.8%

received reading grades that averaged from 75.8% to 81.2%. This group also showed more variability in their report card grades for each six-week grading period. Their scores ranged from a grade of 63 to a grade of 89 (26 percentage points). In contrast, the initially successful group's report card grades ranged from 86 to 100 (14 percentage points).

The two groups were most divergent in various areas of oral reading (see Table 8.4). I examined the percentages of oral reading accuracy, the uncorrected error rate per 100 words of text, and the self-correction rates of individuals and between each group. On basal texts, the initially successful

Table 8.4
Oral Reading

	Trevor	Josh	Chris	Calvin	Ben	Aaron
Accuracy	99.6%	98.3%	97.9%	90.8%	89.4%	82.1%
Group accuracy average	98.6% accurate			87.4% accurate		
Uncorrected Errors/100 words	.4	1.9	1.9	8.3	8.1	16.0
Group errors average	1.4 errors/100 words			10.8 errors/100 words		
Self-corrections	75%	55%	38%	20%	37%	16%
Group self-correction avg.	56.0% self-correction rate			24.3% self-correction rate		

group clearly sustained their ability to read grade level texts accurately with an overall 98.6% accuracy rate. The initially low-achieving group's accuracy rate on basal texts was 87.4%, though this number obscures the growth in accuracy for Calvin and Ben (see graphs in Chapter 6). The high level of oral reading accuracy of the initially successful group is also apparent in its error rate. This

group averaged only 1.4 uncorrected miscues per 100 words of text; the initially low-achieving group had an average of 10.8 uncorrected miscues per 100 words. When studying the self-corrections of individual students, Chris and Ben had similar rates. When examining the group averages related to self-corrections, however, a large discrepancy between groups is seen. The initially successful group corrected 56.0% of miscues; the initially low-achieving group corrected only 24.3%.

Discussion

Comparisons between the two research groups showed few areas of literacy learning where the similarities and differences were distinct. The initially successful group averaged slightly more words per written piece, and their phonetic spelling was somewhat better than the initially low-achieving group. Reading report card grades for the initially successful group surpassed the grades for the initially low-achieving group. The greatest distinction between the two groups was in their oral reading skills. The initially successful group was superior to the low-achieving group in the students' oral reading accuracy, error rate, and self-correction rate on grade level basal reader selections.

It is apparent that the initially low-achieving group did not reach the same levels of literacy learning achieved by the initially successful group. These findings seem logical when considering that the initially low-achieving group started the year behind the initially successful group in early literacy skills. Although they had additional instruction designed to accelerate their progress,

they did not achieve similar levels of literacy when compared with their initially successful classmates.

The data comparing the two groups obscure the similarities and differences among the six students, and the numbers provided in this chapter mask the progress that the initially low-achieving students made in their acquisition of reading skills and strategies. Though the initially low-achieving group did not achieve similar levels of literacy, it does not mean that they did not reach acceptable levels of literacy. The three initially low-achieving students all gained skill at using phonetic spelling and utilizing context, syntax, and graphophonics to become more strategic readers. Both Ben and Calvin were reading and writing at a level comparable with other students in Pat's classroom.

CHAPTER 9 FINDINGS, IMPLICATIONS, LIMITATIONS, AND FUTURE RESEARCH

Findings

This ethnographic multi-case study first described the literacy learning of six students in a classroom with a teacher using best practices for first grade literacy instruction. This research also examined the literacy learning of these students by comparing and contrasting the experiences of the three students who entered first grade able to successfully complete early literacy tasks with three students who initially had difficulties with these tasks. The six first graders who were the focus of this research followed diverse roads to literacy as they grew as readers and writers during the seven months I observed in Pat's classroom.

The three initially successful students maintained their skill at reading basal texts with proficiency, and they continued to improve in their use of conventional and phonetic spelling as they wrote texts on self-selected topics. Trevor and Josh progressed easily through the first grade reading and writing curriculum and required little assistance except for the regular whole group instruction in reading and writing. Chris, though he was not as strong in writing and spelling as Trevor or Josh, continued to easily read grade level materials. Because Chris was overly-reliant on decoding as a word recognition strategy, after the first semester he began to participate in Pat's guided reading group so that he could practice applying other word recognition strategies to unfamiliar words.

The three initially low-achieving students followed much more divergent paths to literacy. Though they all had difficulties at the beginning of the year in using conventional and phonetic spelling as they wrote, the three boys made considerable progress by the end of the study. To help them develop inner control of their reading, they participated in Pat's guided reading instruction designed to provide modeling, scaffolding, and explicit instruction in comprehension and the cueing systems (syntax, semantics, and graphophonics) for word recognition. These students were given additional opportunities to read and respond to texts written specifically to support the emergence of literacy in young students. Calvin responded well to this instruction and began to experience success with grade level basal texts after several months of guided reading group participation. Ben's reading accuracy was inconsistent, but he became adept at monitoring his reading to ensure that it made sense. Though Aaron made progress initially, as the difficulty of the work increased, his frustration with the work mounted. He understood the strategies that he needed to apply to word recognition but could not apply them effectively. Though Aaron was successful with many reading tasks during guided reading instruction, he could not read basal level materials well. In March, Pat began the necessary paperwork for Aaron to receive an educational evaluation by the district's pupil appraisal services to determine if he would qualify for additional special education support.

Educational Implications

Due to the qualitative methodology employed in this study, cause-effect relationships cannot be reached. The outcomes of this research are specific to the teacher and students studied in one classroom. However, I believe that it is important to examine the characteristics of this literacy environment that supported literacy learning, and to contemplate those educational and fiscal policies that impeded or encouraged student progress. By examining the nature of this one classroom environment, I have drawn some conclusions about how literacy learning for first graders might be supported in other instructional settings.

Implications for Instruction

The basal reading instruction provided to Pat's whole class seemed adequate to meet the reading needs of the three initially successful students, but it is unlikely that the initially low-achieving students could have become strategic readers using this single instructional approach. At the beginning of first grade, the initially low-achieving students were unable to search for cues to word recognition, cross-check one source of cues with another, self-correct to make cues match, or reread to confirm their reading. In other words, they needed instruction, as provided in Pat's guided reading group, specifically designed to help them monitor and regulate their own reading, using texts at their instructional level. It seems probable that other low-achieving students in other first grade classrooms would also benefit from the kinds of supportive texts and activities that Pat supplied during guided reading instruction.

The case studies of the three initially low-achieving students document their growth toward literacy. They differed from the initially successful group primarily in their ability to read grade level texts fluently and efficiently. Additional classroom activities designed to improve fluency may have been beneficial. Some successful instructional activities for improving fluency are repeated reading, echo reading, choral reading, readers' theater, and books on tape (Carbo, 1978; Rasinski, 1989; Samuels, 1979; Samuels, Schermer, & Reinking, 1992).

Although the basal reader text was adequate for the initially successful students to maintain grade level skills, it was not sufficient for them. On running records taken over the course of the year, all three students in the initially successful group achieved reading accuracy levels consistently above 95%. This indicates that these boys routinely were reading stories that were at an independent level and could have benefitted from opportunities to read and receive instruction from texts that were at their instructional level. First graders in other educational settings could undoubtedly profit from having texts and activities at their instructional level.

I am not suggesting that teachers return to the ability grouping prevalent in the past. Research has consistently supported the notion that traditional ability grouping is most harmful to low-achieving students because they receive instructional experiences that place children in this group at a disadvantage. Instead, a flexible approach to grouping students, coupled with an abundance of books designed for emergent readers at varying interest and reading levels,

would alleviate the problems of ability grouping and the disadvantages of whole group instruction.

The Writing Workshop approach that Pat used in her classroom provided opportunities for her to model many aspects of the writing process and writing conventions. It also allowed students to select topics of their own choice as they applied what they learned from Pat's instruction to their own writings. Through writing, they also became more familiar with sound/symbol relationships and word patterns. All six students in this study improved over the course of their first grade year in the length of their written texts, use of conventional spelling, and use of the correct sounds in phonetic spelling. This approach to writing may be successful in other first grade classrooms.

Over the past decade, much debate has occurred among literacy professionals concerning the emphasis that should be given to whole language practices versus traditional skills-based approaches. At one extreme, some whole language proponents assert that instruction should exclusively feature exposure to quality children's literature and frequent opportunities to read, speak, write, and listen. Although this approach may be sufficient for students who enter first grade able to successfully complete early literacy tasks, my research provides evidence that it is inadequate for those who are not initially able to do so. This study supports the view that explicit instruction in comprehension, phonemic awareness tasks, and the three cueing systems for word recognition is important for initially low-achieving students. In addition, texts that are specifically designed to support the changing needs of first grade

readers are desirable. Teachers who are aware of text factors such as familiarity with the story, the match between the illustrations and the text, and the predictability of language patterns and story episodes will better ensure the success of beginning readers.

At the other extreme, traditional skills-based programs separate learning tasks into component parts that must be learned in sequence from the simplest to the most complex. Learning objectives are carefully defined and arranged so that students do not move to the next objective until they have mastered a lower level one. Often students spend their instructional time on basic skills-in-isolation practice. This research provides data that show that low-achieving learners do not need the traditional reading and writing instruction designed to "slow it down and make it more concrete" (McGill-Franzen & Allington, 1991, p. 21). Instead, explicit instruction in strategies taught within the context of actual reading and writing activities seemed beneficial to the initially low-achieving students in this study, and may also help readers in other settings gain inner control of their reading.

To summarize the instructional implications of this research, the following factors appear to be significant: (a) Whole group instruction could not meet the needs of all learners within the classroom; (b) explicit guided reading instruction was beneficial for the low-achieving students; (c) as an alternative or supplement to the basal reader, texts specifically designed to support emergent readers helped the initially low-achievers apply strategic reading behaviors; (d) activities designed to promote reading fluency are needed for low-achieving

readers; (e) students improved in the use of writing conventions and the use of conventional and phonetic spelling through a process writing approach; and (f) a balanced literacy program with a teacher using developmentally appropriate best practices allowed diverse learners to develop as readers and writers.

Implications for Policy

Educational policies, either federal, state, local, or school-based, affect individual teachers and students. I argue here that these policies can impede or stimulate teaching and learning, and most of the regulations imposed upon Pat impeded her ability to individualize reading instruction to meet the needs of all her students and/or negatively affected student achievement.

The school policy that required Pat to use the basal text did not allow her enough flexibility to schedule guided reading groups for all her students so that they could all receive lessons at their instructional level. Even if Pat had been allowed to substitute other materials to replace the basal reader, no funds were provided by local, state, or federal educational agencies to enable her to obtain appropriate texts. In fact, Pat purchased the materials she used for her small guided reading group from her family budget. In addition, no funds were provided for her to stock a classroom library so there would be a wider range of books available for reading. Again, Pat's classroom library consisted of books that she bought herself. It appears that the policies related to fund allocation impeded Pat's ability to supply an abundance of appropriate reading material to her students.

Allington (1991b) asserts that "unequal inputs could produce more equal outcomes" (p. 12). He advises that low-achieving children need access to larger amounts of instructional time than others if they are to become successful with literacy tasks. Through Pat's guided reading group, she provided additional instruction to a flexible group of students who needed additional support. For most students in this group, this additional instructional time was sufficient to meet their learning needs. Despite Pat's best efforts, Aaron continued to fall farther behind his classmates in reading achievement. Even the instructional and testing modifications specified for Aaron under Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 did not provide him with additional services designed to accelerate his progress. At Randall Elementary, as in many schools within the district, no services other than special education were available for first graders experiencing learning problems. It can be argued that services such as additional tutoring, after-school assistance, or a summer school program could provide a *safety net* so that special education placement could be avoided. Such services possibly could provide a sufficient amount of additional instructional time to raise Aaron's level of achievement, and other students like Aaron, so that they would no longer be at risk of reading failure.

The additional instructional time for literacy instruction discussed in the last paragraph must be of high-quality to ensure accelerated learning (Allington, 1994; Bowman, 1994; Clay, 1993; Shepard, 1991). Thus, teacher expertise is critical to the success of support programs. School, district, and state policies and funds are needed that provide for long-term systemic staff development in

developmentally appropriate best practices for teachers who work with primary age students.

This study did not examine the effects of retention on students in Pat's class, but the district's retention policy had a potential impact on the three initially low-achieving children. The district promotion policy stated that students must be present 166 days and receive a final minimum grade of 67% (D) mastery in reading and math. In addition, retention decisions could be based on class performance (standardized test scores, homework, class participation, attitude, study and work habits) as well as physical and social maturity. If Aaron previously had not experienced one retention in kindergarten, he might have been retained in first grade due to his lack of progress. Ben remained at risk for retention due to his inconsistent time-on-task and performance on reading tasks. Retention was discussed for Calvin because of his absences. Research on retention shows no long-term benefits to students and increases the likelihood that a student will drop out of school (Allington & McGill-Franzen, 1995; Bredekamp & Shepard, 1989; Roderick, 1995; Shepard, 1991; Smith & Shepard, 1987). Retention is often a school's first intervention for children having learning problems in kindergarten and first grade.

This research also did not study the effects of standardized testing on first grade students. It was apparent, however, that four weeks of preparation for and administration of a district-required standardized achievement test took the place of other instructional activities that may have better met the needs of Pat's students. The position of the National Association for the Education of Young

Children (NAEYC) on standardized testing in early childhood programs restricts the use of tests to situations in which testing provides information that will clearly contribute to improved instruction for children and only as one of many sources of information (Bredekamp & Copple, 1997; Bredekamp & Shepard, 1989; NAEYC, 1988). In addition, the younger the child, the more difficult it is to obtain valid and reliable results from standardized tests (NAEYC, 1988).

Bredekamp and Shepard (1989) recommend that school districts should not conduct standardized achievement testing of all children until at least third grade.

To summarize, the following observations from this research have implications for educational policy makers: (a) Greater flexibility with instructional materials and schedules would allow teachers to better meet their students' learning needs, (b) additional funding should be provided so that teachers can purchase books for instructional and independent reading, (c) larger amounts of *quality* instruction could provide a safety net for students who find learning to read difficult, (d) better in-depth and long-term staff development may help teachers deliver high-quality instruction and meet individual student needs, and (e) a reexamination of policies on pupil progression, retention, and testing is needed.

Limitations

The framework of this qualitative inquiry presented limitations as well as providing strengths to the research. Balancing the advantages of the rich description of a qualitative study is concern over issues of validity and reliability.

These issues have been discussed fully in Chapter 3, and I made every effort to ensure that this research report was trustworthy.

The primary goals of this kind of research are thick description and understanding. This work was intended to provide an interpretation of one classroom context that affected six learners. Because my meaning-making was specific to this classroom, generalizing the outcomes of this research to different settings or different students is difficult. The transferability of the conclusions from this study must be determined by other researchers who wish to apply these findings to other settings. However, the descriptions, work samples, and narratives embedded in this research are intended to provide information that will make conclusions about transferability easier.

Because of the long-term immersion in this classroom, I believe that this research presents an accurate representation of the many events that occurred. Since I was not present to observe every interaction every day, it is possible that I did not see literacy events that may have changed my interpretations. The use of member checking was designed to ameliorate this potential limitation.

Future Research

Pat's guided reading group instruction provided support for the literacy learning of her least successful students. Using Pat's three day plan for guided reading instruction, future research could compare quantitatively the achievement of low-achieving students in a guided reading group with similar children in a basal program. To measure achievement, each student's growth

in word recognition, strategic reading, phonemic awareness, and phonetic spelling could be studied.

Furthermore, the effectiveness of Pat's guided reading plan on different populations of learners could be examined. Research could be conducted using Pat's plan with other school populations such as learning disabled students or students who are not being successful with literacy tasks in second or third grade.

I purposefully did not investigate the home life of each child and its impact on literacy learning. Because Pat frequently supplied detailed information to parents about how and what to study with their child, future research could examine how this information affected the ways in which parents helped their children at home.

This research described the literacy environment arranged by one teacher in one classroom. Pat's behaviors could be compared and contrasted with other first grade teachers using a qualitative multiple-case study research design.

Finally, this research could be extended to examine the progress of any or all of the six participants as they advance through elementary school. Their attitudes, collaborative efforts, reading progress, and writing samples could be studied.

Personal Reflections

The first words in this dissertation addressed my concern for the children who find learning to read difficult. This research has helped me understand

more about the kinds of literacy environments that can support or impede the learning of young readers and writers. I chose this classroom because it was such a supportive environment for student growth in literacy acquisition, and I appreciate all that I have learned from Pat, Chris, Josh, Trevor, Ben, Calvin, and Aaron. My unvoiced hope at the onset of this study was that these six students would flourish in Pat's classroom, and in their own ways, they have.

Unfortunately, even a talented and knowledgeable teacher could not ensure the future success of all learners in her room. Aaron had learning difficulties despite excellent instruction, and I am concerned that he will not find the kind of teachers in the future who will build on his strengths and help him experience the joys of learning. I fear that Ben may encounter eventual academic problems unless he has teachers who are willing to provide additional support in academic areas and who are understanding of his behavioral needs. I also worry that all six boys will have a difficult adjustment if they are placed in classrooms with teachers who emphasize silence, seatwork, and skills.

We must have educational practices and policies that sustain all learners, but it is especially critical that we organize our schools to support the students who have difficulty learning to read. To make improvements in the literacy learning of at-risk students, it appears that these learners need more appropriate and intense instruction; they need it early and perhaps through many years of school; and they need capable teachers. Allington (1995) asserts, "We have good evidence that most children can become literate alongside their peers. *Not just a majority of children, but virtually all. Not*

someday, but along with their peers' (p. 2). It is now incumbent upon educators to promote a strong core language arts instructional program and well-designed support services so that all first graders can achieve acceptable levels of literacy development.

REFERENCES

- Adams, M. J. (1990). Beginning to read: Thinking and learning about print. Cambridge, MA: The MIT Press.
- Adams, M. J. (1991). Beginning reading instruction in the United States. Bloomington, IN: ERIC Clearinghouse on Reading and Communication Skills. (ERIC Document Reproduction Service No. ED 321 250)
- Adler, P. A., & Adler, P. (1994). Observational techniques. In N. K. Denzin & Y. S. Lincoln (Eds.), Handbook of qualitative research (pp. 377-392). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Allen, J., Michalove, B., & Shockley, B. (1993). Engaging children: Community and chaos in the lives of young literacy learners. Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann.
- Allington, R. L. (1991a). Children who find learning to read difficult. In E. H. Hiebert (Ed.), Literacy for a diverse society: Perspectives, practices, and policies (pp. 237-252). New York: Teachers College Press.
- Allington, R. L. (1991b). Effective literacy instruction for at-risk children. In M. S. Knapp & P. M. Shields (Eds.), Better schooling for the children of poverty: Alternatives to conventional wisdom (pp. 9-30). Berkeley, CA: McCutchan.
- Allington, R. L. (1993). Michael doesn't go down the hall anymore. The Reading Teacher, 46, 602-604.
- Allington, R. L. (1994). The schools we have. The schools we need. The Reading Teacher, 48, 14-29.
- Allington, R. L. (1995). Literacy lessons in the elementary schools: Yesterday, today, and tomorrow. In R. L. Allington & S. A. Walmsley (Eds.), No quick fix: Rethinking literacy programs in America's elementary schools (pp. 1-15). Newark, DE: International Reading Association.
- Allington, R. L., & Broikou, K. A. (1988). Development of shared knowledge: A new role for classroom and specialist teachers. The Reading Teacher, 41, 806-811.
- Allington, R. L., & Cunningham, P. M. (1996). Schools that work: Where all children read and write. New York: HarperCollins.

- Allington, R. L., & McGill-Franzen, A. (1989). Different programs, indifferent instruction. In A. Gartner & D. Lipsky (Eds.), Beyond separate education: Quality education for all (pp. 75-98). Baltimore: Brookes.
- Allington, R. L., & McGill-Franzen, A. (1995). Flunking: Throwing good money after bad. In R. L. Allington & S. A. Walmsley (Eds.), No quick fix: Rethinking literacy programs in America's elementary schools. New York: Teachers College Press.
- Altwerger, B., & Flores, B. (1994). Theme cycles: Creating communities of learners. Primary Voices K-6, 2(1), 2-6.
- American Educational Research Association. (1992). Ethical standards of the American Educational Research Association. Washington, DC: Author.
- Anderson, R. C., & Armbruster, B. B. (1990). Some maxims for learning and instruction. (Technical Report No. 491). Champaign, IL: Center for the Study of Reading, University of Illinois.
- Anderson, R., Hiebert, E., Scott, J., & Wilkinson, I. (1985). Becoming a nation of readers: The report of the Commission on Reading. Washington, DC: The National Institute of Education.
- Atkinson, P., & Hammersley, M. (1994). Ethnography and participant observation. In N. K. Denzin & Y. S. Lincoln (Eds.), Handbook of qualitative research (pp. 248-261). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Barr, R., & Dreeben, R. (1991). Grouping students for reading instruction. In R. Barr, M. L. Kamil, P. B. Mosenthal, & P. D. Pearson (Eds.), Handbook of reading research (vol. II, pp. 885-910). White Plains, NY: Longman.
- Beed, P. L., Hawkins, E. M., & Roller, C. M. (1991). Moving learners toward independence: The power of scaffolded instruction. The Reading Teacher, 44, 648-655.
- Bergeron, B. S., & Rudenga, E. A. (1996). Seeking authenticity: What is "real" about thematic literacy instruction? The Reading Teacher, 49, 544-551.
- Bisesi, T. L., & Raphael, T. E. (1995). Combining single-subject experimental designs with qualitative research. In S. B. Neuman & S. McCormick (Eds.), Single-subject experimental research: Applications for literacy (pp. 104-119). Newark, DE: International Reading Association.

- Bogdan, R. C., & Biklen, S. K. (1992). Qualitative research for education: An introduction to theory and methods. Boston: Allyn and Bacon.
- Bowman, B. (1994). The challenge of diversity. Phi Delta Kappan, 76, 218-224.
- Bredekamp, S. (Ed.). (1987). Developmentally appropriate practice in early childhood programs serving children from birth through 8. Washington, DC: National Association for the Education of Young Children.
- Bredekamp, S. (1997). NAEYC issues revised position statement on developmentally appropriate practice in early childhood programs. Young Children, 52(2), 34-40.
- Bredekamp, S., & Copple, C. (Eds.). (1997). Developmentally appropriate practice in early childhood programs - Revised edition. Washington, DC: National Association for the Education of Young Children.
- Bredekamp, S., & Rosegrant, T. (Eds.). (1995). Reaching potentials: Transforming early childhood curriculum and assessment (vol. 2). Washington, DC: National Association for the Education of Young Children.
- Bredekamp, S., & Shepard, L. (1989). How best to protect children from inappropriate school expectations, practices, and policies. Young Children, 44(3), 14-24.
- Brophy, J. E. (1991). Effective schooling for disadvantaged students. In M. S. Knapp & P. M. Shields (Eds.), Better schooling for the children of poverty: Alternatives to conventional wisdom (pp. 211-234). Berkeley, CA: McCutchan.
- Brophy, J. E. (Ed.). (1990). Advances in research on teaching. Vol. 1: Teaching for meaningful understanding and self-regulated learning. Greenwich, CT: JAI Press.
- Brown, A. L., Palincsar, A. S., & Armbruster, B. B. (1994). Instructing comprehension-fostering activities in interactive learning situation. In R. B. Ruddell, M. R. Ruddell, & H. Singer (Eds.), Theoretical models and processes of reading (4th ed., pp. 757-787). Newark, DE: International Reading Association.
- Brown, M. B. (1967). Pip Moves Away. Los Angeles: Anderson, Ritchie, & Simon.

- Buchanan, T., Burts, D. C., White, F., Bidner, J., & Charlesworth, R. (1997, March). Predictors of the developmental appropriateness of the beliefs and practices of first, second, and third grade teachers. Paper presented at the meeting of the American Educational Research Association, Chicago.
- Button, K., Johnson, M. J., & Furgerson, P. (1996). Interactive writing in a primary classroom. The Reading Teacher, 49, 446-454.
- Calkins, L. M. (1986). The art of teaching writing. Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann.
- Calkins, L. M. (1994). The art of teaching writing (new ed.), Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann.
- Carbo, M. (1978). Teaching reading with talking books. The Reading Teacher, 32, 267-273.
- Charlesworth, R., Hart, C. H., Burts, D. C., Thomasson, R. H., Mosley, J., & Fleege, P. O. (1993). Measuring the developmental appropriateness of kindergarten teachers' beliefs and practices. Early Childhood Research Quarterly, 8, 255-276.
- Clay, M. M. (1982). Observing young readers. Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann.
- Clay, M. M. (1985). The early detection of reading difficulties (3rd ed.). Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann.
- Clay, M. M. (1989). Concepts about print in English and other languages. The Reading Teacher, 42, 268-276.
- Clay, M. M. (1991a). Becoming literate: The construction of inner control. Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann.
- Clay, M. M. (1991b). Introducing a new storybook to young readers. The Reading Teacher, 45, 264-273.
- Clay, M. M. (1991c). Reading Recovery surprises. In D. E. DeFord, C. A. Lyons, & G. S. Pinnell (Eds.), Bridges to literacy: Learning from Reading Recovery (pp. 55-74). Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann.
- Clay, M. M. (1993). An observation survey of early literacy achievement. Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann.

- Consortium for Interdisciplinary Teaching and Learning. (n.d.). Position statement on interdisciplinary learning, pre-K - grade 4. Urbana, IL: National Council of Teachers of English.
- Cook-Gumperz, J. (1986). Introduction: The social construction of literacy. In J. Cook-Gumperz (Ed.), The social construction of literacy (pp. 1-15). New York: Cambridge University Press.
- Cowley, J. (1996). Come for a Swim! Bothell, WA: The Wright Group.
- Cowley, J. (1996). The Seed. Bothell, WA: The Wright Group.
- Crafton, L. K. (1996). Standards in practice, grades K-2. Urbana, IL: National Council of Teachers of English.
- Cullinan, B. E. (1992a). Leading with literature. In B. E. Cullinan (Ed.), Invitation to read: More children's literature in the reading program (pp. x-xxii). Newark, DE: International Reading Association.
- Cullinan, B. E. (1992b). Read to me: Raising kids who love to read. New York: Scholastic.
- Cunningham, P. M. (1992/1993). Reasonable rimes. The Reading Teacher, 46, 282.
- Cunningham, P. M., & Allington, R. L. (1994). Classrooms that work: They can all read and write. New York: HarperCollins.
- Cunningham, P. M., & Cunningham, J. W. (1992). Making words: Enhancing the invented spelling-decoding connection. The Reading Teacher, 46, 106-115.
- Cunningham, P. M., Hall, D. P., & Defee, M. (1991). Non-ability grouped, multi-level instruction: A year in a first grade classroom. The Reading Teacher, 44, 566-571.
- Delpit, L. D. (1986). Skills and other dilemmas of a progressive black educator. Harvard Educational Review, 56, 379-385.
- Dempster, F. N. (1993). Exposing our students to less should help them learn more. Phi Delta Kappan, 74, 433-437.

- Dole, J. A., Duffy, G. G., Roehler, L. R., & Pearson, P. D. (1991). Moving from the old to the new: Research on reading comprehension instruction. Review of Educational Research, 61, 239-264.
- Durr, W. K. (1989). Houghton Mifflin Reading. Boston: Houghton Mifflin.
- Dyson, A. H. (1987). The value of "time off task": Young children's spontaneous talk and deliberate text. Harvard Educational Review, 57, 396-420.
- Dyson, A. H. (1993). Social worlds of children learning to write in an urban primary school. New York: Teachers College Press.
- Eldredge, J. L., Ruetzel, D. R., & Hollingsworth, P. M. (1996). Comparing the effectiveness of two oral reading practices: Round-robin reading and the shared book experience. Journal of Literacy Research, 28, 201-225.
- Farr, R. (1991). Portfolios: Assessment in language arts. Washington, DC: ERIC Clearinghouse on Reading and Communication Skills. (ERIC Document Reproduction Services No. ED 334 603)
- Flood, J., Lapp, D., Flood, S., & Nagel, G. (1992). Am I allowed to group? Using flexible patterns for effective instruction. The Reading Teacher, 45, 608-616.
- Fountas, I. C., & Pinnell, G. S. (1996). Guided reading: Good first teaching for all children. Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann.
- Friedberg, B., & Strong, E. (1989). "Please don't stop there!" The power of reading aloud. In J. Hickman & B. E. Cullinan (Eds.), Children's literature in the classroom: Weaving Charlotte's web (pp. 39-48). Needham Heights, MA: Christopher-Gordon.
- Garcia, G. E., & Pearson, P. D. (1991). Modifying reading instruction to maximize its effectiveness for all students. In M. S. Knapp & P. M. Shields (Eds.), Better schooling for the children of poverty: Alternatives to conventional wisdom (pp. 31-59). Berkeley, CA: McCutchan.
- Gaskins, I. W., Ehri, L. C., Cress, C., O'Hara, C., & Donnelly, K. (1997). Analyzing words and making discoveries about the alphabetic system: Activities for beginning readers. Language Arts, 74, 172-184.
- Gentry, R. (1982). An analysis of developmental spelling in *GYNS AT WORK*. The Reading Teacher, 36, 192-200.

- Gillespie, C. S., Ford, K. L., Gillespie, R. D., & Leavell, A. G. (1996). Portfolio assessment: Some questions, some answers, some recommendations. Journal of Adolescent & Adult Literacy, 39, 480-491.
- Glaser, B. G., & Strauss, A. L. (1967). The discovery of grounded theory: Strategies for qualitative research. Chicago: Aldine.
- Glesne, C., & Peshkin, A. (1992). Becoming qualitative researchers: An introduction. White Plains, NY: Longman.
- Goodman, K. S., & Goodman, Y. M. (1979). Learning to read is natural. In L. B. Resnick & P. A. Weaver (Eds.), Theory and practice of early reading (vol. 1, pp. 137-154). Hillsdale, NJ: Erlbaum.
- Goodman, Y. M. (1995). Miscue analysis for classroom teachers: Some history and some procedures. Primary Voices K-6, 3(2), 2-9.
- Graves, D. H. (1983). Writing: Teachers and children at work. Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann.
- Griffith, P. L., & Olson, M. W. (1992). Phonemic awareness helps beginning readers break the code. The Reading Teacher, 45, 516-523.
- Gunning, T. G. (1995). Word building: A strategic approach to the teaching of phonics. The Reading Teacher, 48, 484-488.
- Harste, J. C. (1989). New policy guidelines for reading: Connecting research and practice. Urbana, IL: National Council of Teachers of English and the ERIC Clearinghouse on Reading and Communication Skills.
- Haynes, M. C., & Jenkins, J. R. (1986). Reading instruction in special education resource rooms. American Educational Research Journal, 8, 161-190.
- Heath, S. B. (1980). The functions and uses of literacy. Journal of Communication, 30(1), 123-133.
- Hiebert, E. H., Colt, J. M., Catto, S. L., & Gury, E. C. (1992). Reading and writing of first-grade students in a restructured Chapter I program. American Educational Research Journal, 29, 545-572.
- Hoffman, J. V., Roser, N. L., & Battle, J. (1993). Reading aloud in classrooms: From the modal toward a "model." The Reading Teacher (46), 496-503.

- Holdaway, D. (1979). The foundations of literacy. Sidney, Australia: Ashton Scholastic.
- Huck, C. S., & Pinnell, G. S. (1991). Literacy in the classroom. In D. E. DeFord, C. A. Lyons, & G. S. Pinnell (Eds.), Bridges to literacy: Learning from Reading Recovery (pp. 217-231). Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann.
- Idol, L., West, F., & Lloyd, S. R. (1988). Organizing and implementing specialized reading programs: A collaborative approach involving classroom, remedial, and special education teachers. Remedial and Special Education, 9(2), 54-61.
- Johns, J. J. (1980). First graders' concepts about print. Reading Research Quarterly, XV, 529-549.
- Johnston, P., & Allington, R. L. (1991). Remediation. In R. Barr, M. L. Kamil, P. B. Mosenthal, & P. D. Pearson (Eds.), Handbook of reading research (vol. II, pp. 984-1012). White Plains, NY: Longman.
- Juel, C. (1988). Learning to read and write. A longitudinal study of 54 children from first through fourth grades. Journal of Educational Psychology, 80, 437-447.
- Juel, C. (1991). Beginning reading. In R. Barr, M. L. Kamil, P. Mosenthal, & P. D. Pearson (Eds.), Handbook of reading research (vol. II, pp. 759-788). White Plains, NY: Longman.
- Juel, C. (1996). What makes literacy tutoring effective? Reading Research Quarterly, 31, 268-289.
- Knapp, M. S., & Needels, M. (1991). Review of research on curriculum and instruction in literacy. In M. S. Knapp & P. M. Shields (Eds.), Better schooling for the children of poverty: Alternatives to conventional wisdom (pp. 85-121). Berkeley, CA: McCutchan.
- Knapp, M. S., Shields, P. M., & Turnbull, B. J. (1995). Academic challenge in high-poverty classrooms. Phi Delta Kappan, 76, 770-776.
- Knapp, M. S., & Turnbull, B. J. (1991). Alternatives to conventional wisdom. In M. S. Knapp & P. M. Shields (Eds.), Better schooling for the children of poverty: Alternatives to conventional wisdom (pp. 329-353). Berkeley, CA: McCutchan.

- Lincoln, Y. S., & Guba, E. G. (1985). Naturalistic inquiry. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Lundberg, I., Frost, J., & Petersen, O. (1988). Effects of an extensive program for stimulating phonological awareness in preschool children. Reading Research Quarterly, 23, 263-284.
- Lyons, C. A. (1991). Helping a learning disabled child enter the literacy world. In D. E. DeFord, C. A. Lyons, & G. S. Pinnell (Eds.), Bridges to literacy: Learning from Reading Recovery (pp. 205-216). Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann.
- Manning, J. C. (1995). "Ariston metron." The Reading Teacher, 48, 650-659.
- Martin, B., Jr. (1983). Brown bear, brown bear, what do you see? New York: Henry Holt and Company.
- Martinez, M., & Roser, N. (1985). Read it again: The value of repeated readings during storytime. The Reading Teacher, 38, 782-786.
- Mason, J. M., Peterman, C. L., & Kerr, B. M. (1989). Reading to kindergarten children. In D. S. Strickland & L. M. Morrow (Eds.), Emerging literacy: Young children learn to read and write (pp. 52-62). Newark, DE: International Reading Association.
- McKenna, M. C., & Kear, D. J. (1990). Measuring attitude toward reading: A new tool for teachers. The Reading Teacher, 43, 626-639.
- McGill-Franzen, A., & Allington, R. L. (1990). Comprehension and coherence: Neglected elements of literacy instruction in remedial and resource room services. Journal of Reading, Writing, and Learning Disabilities, 6, 149-182.
- McGill-Franzen, A., & Allington, R. L. (1991). The gridlock of low reading achievement: Perspectives on practice and policy. Remedial and Special Education, 12, 20-30.
- Means, B., & Knapp, M. S. (1991). Introduction: Rethinking teaching for disadvantaged students. In B. Means, C. Chelemer, & M. S. Knapp (Eds.), Teaching advanced skills to at-risk students: Views from research and practice (pp. 1-26). San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.
- Ministry of Education. (1985). Reading in junior classes. Wellington, NZ: Learning Media Limited.

- Moll, L. C. (1991). Social and instructional issues in literacy instruction for "disadvantaged" students. In M. S. Knapp & P. M. Shields (Eds.), Better schooling for the children of poverty: Alternatives to conventional wisdom (pp. 61-84). Berkeley, CA: McCutchan.
- Mooney, M. (1995). Guided reading - The reader in control. Teaching K-8, 25(4), 54-58.
- Morrow, L. M. (1984). Reading stories to young children: Effects of story structure and traditional questioning strategies on comprehension. Journal of Reading Behavior, 16, 273-288.
- Mosenthal, P. B. (1989). The whole language approach: Teachers between a rock and a hard place. The Reading Teacher, 42, 628-629.
- National Association for the Education of Young Children. (1988). Position statement on standardized testing of young children 3 through 8 years of age. Young Children, 43(3), 42-47.
- Ninio, A., & Bruner, J. (1978). The achievement and antecedents of labeling. Journal of Child Language, 5, 1-15.
- Ohio Reading Recovery Project. (1991). Year five technical report, 14, 1990-1991. Columbus, OH: Columbus Reading Recovery Project.
- Pearson, P. D., & Fielding, L. (1991). Comprehension instruction. In R. Barr, M. L. Kamil, P. Mosenthal, & P. D. Pearson (Eds.), Handbook of reading research (vol. II, pp. 815-860). White Plains, NY: Longman.
- Pearson, P. D., & Gallagher, M. C. (1983). The instruction of reading comprehension. Contemporary Educational Psychology, 8, 317-344.
- Peshkin, A. (1988). In search of subjectivity - one's own. Educational Researcher, 17, 17-21.
- Peterson, B. (1991). Selecting books for beginning readers. In D. E. Ford, C. A. Lyons, & G. S. Pinnell (Eds.), Bridges to literacy: Learning from Reading Recovery (pp. 119-147). Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann.
- Pinnell, G. S. (1989). Reading Recovery: Helping at-risk children learn to read. Elementary School Journal, 90, 159-181.

- Pinnell, G. S., DeFord, D. E., & Lyons, C. A. (1988). Reading Recovery: Early intervention for at-risk first graders. Arlington, VA: Educational Research Service.
- Pinnell, G. S., Fried, M. D., & Estice, R. M. (1990). Reading Recovery: Learning how to make a difference. The Reading Teacher, 43, 282-295.
- Pinnell, G. S., Lyons, C. A., DeFord, D. E., Bryk, A. S., & Seltzer, M. (1994). Comparing instructional models for the literacy education of high-risk first graders. Reading Research Quarterly, 29, 9-39.
- Pontecorvo, C., & Zucchermaglio, C. (1990). A passage to literacy: Learning in a social context. In Y. M. Goodman (Ed.), How children construct literacy: A Piagetian perspective (pp. 59-98). Newark, DE: International Reading Association.
- Pressley, M., Rankin, J., & Yokoi, L. (1996). A survey of instructional practices of primary teachers nominated as effective in promoting literacy. The Elementary School Journal, 96, 363-384.
- Pugach, M. C. (1995). Twice victims: The struggle to educate children in urban schools and the reform of special education and Chapter I. In M. C. Wang & M. C. Reynolds (Eds.), Making a difference for students at risk: Trends and alternatives (pp. 27-60). Thousand Oaks, CA: Corwin Press.
- Purcell-Gates, V. (1989). What oral/written language differences can tell us about beginning reading. The Reading Teacher, 42, 290-294.
- Rhodes, L. K., & Nathenson-Mejia, S. (1992). Anecdotal records: A powerful tool for ongoing literacy assessment. The Reading Teacher, 45, 502-509.
- Rasinski, T. (1989). Fluency for everyone: Incorporating fluency instruction in the classroom. The Reading Teacher, 42, 690-693.
- Richgels, D. J., Poremba, K. J., & McGee, L. M. (1996). Kindergartners talk about print: Phonemic awareness in meaningful contexts. The Reading Teacher, 49, 632-642.
- Roderick, M. (1995). Grade retention and school dropout: Policy debate and research questions. Bloomington, IN: Center for Evaluation, Development, and Research, Phi Delta Kappa.

- Ross, S. M., Smith, L. J., Casey, J., & Slavin, R. E. (1995). Increasing the academic success of disadvantaged children: An examination of alternative early intervention programs. American Educational Research Journal, 32, 773-800.
- Routman, R. (1991). Invitations: Changing as teachers and learners K-12. Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann.
- Routman, R. (1996). Literacy at the crossroads: Crucial talk about reading, writing, and other teaching dilemmas. Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann.
- Routman, R., & Butler, A. (Eds.). (1996). How do I actually teach reading now that I am using literature? School Talk, 1(3).
- Routman, R., & Maxim, D. (Eds.). (1996). Invented spelling: What it is and what it isn't. School Talk, 1(4).
- Rowe, D. (1986). Literacy in the child's world: Young children's explorations of alternate communication systems. University Microfilms International, 870 7819.
- Samuels, S. J. (1979). The method of repeated readings. The Reading Teacher, 32, 403-408.
- Samuels, S. J., Schermer, N., & Reinking, D. (1992). Reading fluency: Techniques for making decoding automatic. In Samuels, S. J. & Farstrup, A. (Eds.), What research has to say about reading instruction (2nd ed.) (pp. 124-144). Newark, DE: International Reading Association.
- Schwandt, T. A., & Halpern, E. S. (1988). Linking auditing and metaevaluation: Enhancing quality in applied research. Newbury Park, CA: Sage.
- Shanahan, T., Robinson, B., & Schneider, M. (1995). Avoiding some of the pitfalls of thematic units. The Reading Teacher, 48, 718-719.
- Shepard, L. A. (1991). Negative policies for dealing with diversity: When does diagnosis turn into sorting and segregation? In E. H. Hiebert (Ed.), Literacy for a diverse society: Perspectives, practices, and policies (pp. 279-298). New York: Teachers College Press.
- Shepard, L. A. (1994). The challenges of assessing young children appropriately. Phi Delta Kappan, 76, 206-212.

- Silvaroli, N. J. (1997). Classroom Reading Inventory (8th ed.). Madison, WI: Brown & Benchmark.
- Slavin, R. E. (1987). Making Chapter I make a difference. Phi Delta Kappan, 69, 110-119.
- Slavin, R. E., Madden, N. A., Dolan, L. J., Wasik, B. A., Ross, S. M., & Smith, L. J. (1994). "Whenever and wherever we choose:" The replication of Success for All. Phi Delta Kappan, 75, 639-647.
- Slavin, R. E., Madden, N., Karweit, N. L., Livermon, B. J., & Dolan, L. (1990). Success for All: First-year outcomes of a comprehensive plan for reforming urban education. American Educational Research Journal, 27, 255-278.
- Slosson, R. (1990). Slosson Oral Reading Test-Revised. East Aurora, NY: Slosson.
- Smith, M. L., & Shepard, L. A. (1987). What doesn't work: Explaining policies of retention in the early grades. Phi Delta Kappan, 68, 129-134.
- Smith, C. B. (Moderator). (1994). Whole language: The debate. Bloomington, IN: EDINFO Press and ERIC Clearinghouse on Reading, English, and Communication.
- Snow, C., & Ninio, A. (1986). The contracts of literacy: What children learn from learning to read books. In W. H. Teale & E. Sulzby (Eds.), Emergent literacy: Writing and reading (pp. 116-138). Norwood, NJ: Ablex.
- Spiegel, D. L. (1992). Blending whole language and systematic direct instruction. The Reading Teacher, 46, 38-44.
- Spiegel, D. L. (1995). A comparison of traditional remedial programs and Reading Recovery: Guidelines for success for all programs. The Reading Teacher, 49, 86-96.
- Spiro, R. J., Coulson, R. L., Feltovich, P. J., & Anderson, D. K. (1994). Cognitive flexibility theory: Advanced knowledge acquisition in ill-structured domains. In R. B. Ruddell, M. R. Ruddell, & H. Singer (Eds.), Theoretical models and processes of reading (4th ed., pp. 602-615). Newark, DE: International Reading Association.

- Spiro, R. J., Vispoel, W. L., Schmitz, J., Samarapungavan, A., & Boerger, A. (1987). Knowledge acquisition for application: Cognitive flexibility and transfer in complex content domains. In B. C. Britton & S. Glynn (Eds.), Executive control processes. Hillsdale, NJ: Erlbaum.
- Spradley, J. P. (1980). Participant observation. New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston.
- Stahl, S. A. (1992). Saying the "p" word: Nine guidelines for exemplary phonics instruction. The Reading Teacher, 45, 618-625.
- Stake, R. E. (1994). Case studies. In N. K. Denzin & Y. S. Lincoln (Eds.), Handbook of qualitative research (pp. 236-247). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Standards for the English Language Arts. (1996). Urbana, IL: National Council of Teachers of English/International Reading Association.
- Stanovich, K. E. (1986). Matthew effects in reading: Some consequences of individual differences in the acquisition of literacy. Reading Research Quarterly, 21, 360-407.
- Stanovich, K. E. (1993/1994). Romance and reality. The Reading Teacher, 47, 280-291.
- Strickland, D. S. (1995). Commentary: Educating low-income black children. In V. L. Gadsden & D. A. Wagner (Eds.), Literacy among African-American youth: Issues in learning, teaching, and schooling (pp. 69-74). Cresskill, NJ: Hampton Press.
- Strickland, D. S. (1996). In search of balance: Restructuring our literacy programs. Reading Today, 14(2), p. 32.
- Strickland, D. S., & Morrow, L. M. (1989). Assessment and early literacy. The Reading Teacher, 42, 634-635.
- Strickland, D. S., & Morrow, L. M. (1990). Sharing big books. The Reading Teacher, 43, 342-343.
- Sulzby, E. (1985). Children's emergent reading of favorite storybooks: A developmental study. In R. B. Ruddell, M. R. Ruddell, & H. Singer (Eds.), Theoretical models and processes of reading (4th ed., pp. 244-277). Newark, DE: International Reading Association.

- Sulzby, E. (1989). Assessment of writing and of children's language while writing. In L. Morrow & J. Smith (Eds.), The role of assessment and measurement in early literacy instruction (pp. 83-109). Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall.
- Sulzby, E., & Teale, W. (1991). Emergent literacy. In R. Barr, M. L. Kamil, P. Mosenthal, & P. D. Pearson (Eds.), Handbook of reading research (vol. 2, pp. 727-758). White Plains, NY: Longman.
- Sweet, A. P. (1993). State of the art: Transforming ideas for teaching and learning to read. Washington, DC: Office of Educational Research and Improvement, U. S. Department of Education.
- Taylor, B. M., Short, R. A., Frye, B. J., & Shearer, B. A. (1992). Classroom teachers prevent reading failure among low-achieving first-grade students. The Reading Teacher, 45, 592-597.
- Taylor, D. (1989). Toward a unified theory of literacy learning and instructional practices. Phi Delta Kappan, 71, 184-193.
- Teale, W. H., & Sulzby, E. (1989). Emergent literacy: New perspectives. In D. S. Strickland & L. M. Morrow (Eds.), Emergent literacy: Young children learn to read and write (pp. 1-15), Newark, DE: International Reading Association.
- Tierney, R. J., & Pearson, P. D. (1994). Learning to learn from text: A framework for improving classroom practice. In R. B. Ruddell, M. R. Ruddell, & H. Singer (Eds.), Theoretical models and processes of reading (4th ed., 496-513). Newark, DE: International Reading Association.
- Trelease, J. (1989). The new read-aloud handbook. New York: Penguin.
- Trelease, J. (1996). Have you read to your kids today? Instructor, 105(8), 56-59.
- Vacca, R. T. (1996). The reading wars: Who will be the winners? Who will be the losers? Reading Today, 14(2), 3.
- Valencia, S. (1990). A portfolio approach to classroom reading assessment: The whys, whats, and hows. The Reading Teacher, 43, 338-340.

- Vosniadou, S., Pearson, P. D., & Rogers, T. (1988). What causes children's failure to detect inconsistencies in text? Representation vs. comparison difficulties. Journal of Educational Psychology, 80, 27-39.
- Vygotsky, L. S. (1978). Mind in society. Cambridge: Harvard University Press.
- Walker, B. J. (1992). Supporting struggling readers. Markham, Ontario: Pippin.
- Walp, T. P., & Walmsley, S. A. (1989). Instructional and philosophical congruence: Neglected aspects of coordination. The Reading Teacher, 42, 364-368.
- Wang, M. C., Reynolds, M. C., & Walberg, H. J. (1995). Introduction: Inner-city students at the margins. In M. C. Wang & M. C. Reynolds (Eds.), Making a difference for students at risk: Trends and alternatives (pp. 1-26). Thousand Oaks, CA: Corwin Press.
- Wasik, B. A., & Slavin, R. E. (1993). Preventing early reading failure with one-to-one tutoring: A review of five programs. Reading Research Quarterly, 28(2), 179-200.
- Waxman, H. C. (1992). Reversing the cycle of educational failure for students in at-risk school environments. In H. C. Waxman, J. W. deFelix, J. E. Anderson, & H. P. Baptiste, Jr. (Eds.), Students at risk in at-risk schools: Improving environments for learning (pp. 1-9). Newbury Park, CA: Sage.
- Wells, G. (1986). The meaning makers: Children learning language and using language to learn. Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann.
- Wharton-McDonald, R., Pressley, M., Rankin, J., Mistretta, J., Yokoi, L., & Ettenberger, S. (1997). Effective primary-grades literacy instruction = balanced literacy instruction. The Reading Teacher, 50, 518-521.
- Winfield, L. F. (1986). Teacher beliefs toward academically at risk students in inner urban schools. The Urban Review, 18, 253-268.
- Yin, R. K. (1994). Case study research: Designs and methods (2nd ed.). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Yopp, H. K. (1995). Read-aloud books for developing phonemic awareness: An annotated bibliography. The Reading Teacher, 48, 538-542.

Ysseldyke, J. E., Thurlow, M. L., Mecklenburg, C., & Graden, J. (1984). Opportunity to learn for regular and special education students during reading instruction. Remedial and Special Education, 5(1), 29-37.

Zemelman, S., Daniels, H., & Hyde, A. (1993). Best practice: New standards for teaching and learning in America's schools. Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann.

**APPENDIX A
CLASSROOM PROFILE**

Student	Gender	Ethnicity	Age (as of 10/1/96)
Aaron	Boy	European American	7-3
Aimee	Girl	European American	6-6
Albert	Boy	European American	7-1
Allison	Girl	European American	6-1
Ashley	Girl	Asian American	6-9
Ben	Boy	European American	6-1
Bobbie*	Girl	African American	6-11
Calvin	Boy	European American	6-4
Cedrick**	Boy	African American	7-8
Chris	Boy	European American	6-1
Chuck	Boy	European American	6-2
Clint	Boy	African American	7-9
James***	Boy	African American	6-5
Josh	Boy	European American	6-11
Kevin	Boy	European American	6-11
Lacey	Girl	European American	7-0
Marcy	Girl	European American	6-7
Melanie	Girl	European American	6-11
Tameka	Girl	European American	6-4
Trevor	Boy	European American	7-0

* withdrew January 9, 1997

** placed in special education class on April 7, 1997

*** enrolled November 6, 1996

**APPENDIX B
INITIAL AND FINAL SCORES OF PARTICIPANTS***

**Initial Scores
September 1996**

	Writing Vocabulary	Sight word recognition	Letter Identification (54 total)	Dictation (37 total)	Running Record (familiar text)	Concepts About Print (24 total)
Aaron	7	6	54	25	46%	15
Ben	7	8	48	20	0%	16
Calvin	4	5	45	7	50%	11
Chris	9	3	52	24	96%	18
Josh	9	6	52	26	96%	15
Trevor	18	13	52	31	95%	16
Class Mean	14.6	11	48.7	24	77.7%	14.8
Class Range	0-53	0-67	13-54	2-36	0-100%	9-18

**Final Scores
April 1997**

	Writing Vocabulary	Sight word recognition	Letter Identification (54 total)	Dictation (37 total)	Running Record (familiar text)	Concepts About Print (24 total)
Aaron	24	14	53	32	79%	18
Ben	35	25	53	34	91%	19
Calvin	33	43	53	36	96%	19
Chris	18	31	53	33	99%	19
Josh	32	43	54	37	98%	19
Trevor	30	68	53	37	100%	23

*Assessments were from Clay (1993).

**APPENDIX C
LETTER TO SCHOOL DISTRICT**

206 Burlington Avenue
Broussard, LA 70518
April 2, 1996

██████████
Assistant Superintendent
Instructional Services
██████████ Parish School Board
P.O. Drawer ██████████
██████████ LA ██████████

Dear Ms. ██████████

I am currently a special education teacher in Iberia Parish and will be a full-time Ph.D. candidate this fall at Louisiana State University in the department of Curriculum and Instruction. My major field of study is first graders who find learning to read difficult.

I am requesting permission to conduct the research for my dissertation in a first grade classroom at ██████████ Elementary School. I have received the approval of ██████████ and ██████████ has chosen a classroom for me to investigate. I have attached my research plan to better familiarize you with my intentions.

I will be happy to meet with you to answer any questions or to receive information about the procedures that ██████████ Parish School Board has for doctoral study. You can reach me at the address above or at 837-4287.

Sincerely,

Debbie Rickards
Debbie Rickards

cc: Ms. ██████████

APPENDIX D LETTER FROM SCHOOL DISTRICT

PARISH SCHOOL BOARD
P. O. Drawer
Louisiana

FILE: ICC-E
P
JAN 1 1997
PARISH SCH. BO.
INSTRUCTIONAL SERVICES
Parish Public School

Application requesting permission to do Graduate Study/Research Project in System

Name of Graduate Student/Agency Deborah Rickards, Louisiana State University
(Graduate student please provide name of Project Professor) Dr. Earl Cheek, Jr.

Address 206 Burlington Avenue, Broussard, LA 70518

Telephone 318/837-4287

Current Place of Employment (if applicable) NA

Position _____

Business Telephone _____

Title of Study Looking Closely: Views of First Grade Literacy
(tentative)

Proposed time period for conducting study/research 1996-1997 school year

Purpose of study/research to examine literacy interactions of first graders at a Title I school

What value will Parish School Board derive from information obtained from this study?
The study is expected to contribute valuable insights into classroom practices and student behavior in a first grade Title I classroom. This knowledge may help alleviate failure of many at-risk students

How many local public schools will be involved in the study? one

How will the research site(s) be selected? *See below

How many public school students will be involved in this study? one classroom

How will the students be selected? *See below

In what types of activities will students be involved? I will observe student participation in language arts lessons planned and presented by the classroom teacher.

How many public school teachers will be involved in this study? 1 (2 if Title I teacher participates)

In what types of activities will teachers be expected to participate?
The teacher will be expected to do her regular and routine teaching activities. No special activities will be required.

How will the teachers be selected? *see below

How much displacement time per teacher will the study require? None

Will a report of the study be made available to participants? Yes

If so, in what format? Dissertation

*Ms. _____ at _____ Elem. has agreed that I may conduct my research at her school, pending School Board approval. Ms. _____ has selected a classroom teacher for me to work with.

1 of 2

FILE: ICC-B

Please sign the following agreement:

1. I/We agree to abide by all Parish School Board policies and procedures while carrying out the proposed research study.
2. I/We will maintain confidentiality of all research participants as needed.
3. I/We agree not to publish or disseminate in any form any part of the research findings to any person, agency, or institution without written approval of the Parish School Board.
4. I/We further agree to submit program reports to the Parish School Board during the time the study/research is being pursued. A complete copy of the research study will be submitted to the Board once the study is completed.

Deborah Beckards
 Signature of Researcher

6/10/96
 Date

For use by Parish School Board personnel only:

Request approved

Request not approved

(Give reason) _____

 Date

**APPENDIX E
PARENT PERMISSION LETTER**

206 Burlington Avenue
Broussard, LA 70518
September 23, 1996

Dear Family:

I am a student at Louisiana State University in Baton Rouge studying reading. As part of the requirements for my degree, I will be doing research in Ms. Alexander's room this next year. Ms. Alexander was selected for me because of the outstanding teaching that takes place in this classroom. I have permission from the school board administration and Ms. Palmer to conduct my study at Randall.

I will be studying how children learn to read -- what makes learning easy for some children and hard for others. With the kind of research I am doing, I will first look at the big picture and get a general view of the kinds of activities that the children in the class will be doing. As my study continues throughout the year, I will narrow my focus to specific children and what they are doing to learn to read and write.

For the most part, I will be taking notes about what I observe, collecting work samples, talking with the children about what they are doing, and audiotaping these conversations. I will be in Ms. Alexander's room to answer any questions that you may have when she meets with you this Wednesday.

I need your permission so that I can observe your child as he/she learns to read. All of the children in this study will remain anonymous. Please complete the bottom of this letter and return it to Ms. Alexander.

Thank you for this opportunity. Please call me at 837-4287 if you have any questions.

Sincerely,

Debbie Rickards, Ed.S.

.....

I give permission for my child, _____, to participate in Mrs. Rickards's study. I understand that she will observe and talk with my child, collect work samples, audiotape, and write a report of her findings. I understand that my child's identity will remain anonymous.

Parent's signature

Date

APPENDIX F PHONETIC ANALYSIS

In a task called "Hearing and Recording Sounds in Words," Clay (1993, p. 65-70) provides scoring criteria for judging a child's written product based upon her extensive research in early literacy acquisition. In this assessment, the teacher dictates several sentences and then counts the child's representation of sounds (phonemes) by letters (graphemes). The student receives credit for every phoneme written correctly, although the whole word may not be spelled conventionally.

To score writing using Clay's standards, the teacher writes the correct text below the student's version after the writing task is finished. A writing sample could look like this:

Student: I m in frt grad.

Correct text: I am in first grade.

One point is scored for each phoneme the child has correctly recorded. In the example above, the student receives eleven points for recording eleven phonemes correctly. No points are deducted for incorrect phonemes. Clay does not distinguish between words spelled conventionally and words in which invented spelling was used.

In this research, I followed Clay's scoring standards delineated above for any word that a student had not spelled conventionally. I omitted words spelled conventionally because I performed a separate analysis on those words. After I totaled the number of phonemes used in phonetic spelling for a particular

writing sample, I then totaled the number of phonemes possible in those words. I divided the number of correct phonemes used into the number of phonemes possible to obtain a percentage of correct phonemes used.

In the example above, the words *I* and *in* would not be scored using these procedures because they were spelled conventionally. Of the remaining words using phonetic spelling, *m* would receive 1 out of a possible 2 points (a-m); *frr* would receive 3 out of a possible 4 points (f-ir-s-t); and *grad* would receive 4 out of a possible 4 points (g-r-a-de). In other words, this written example shows a student using 8 of the 10 phonemes (80%) heard in the three words spelled phonetically.

APPENDIX G STUDENT INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

1. What are you learning to do in reading?
2. How are you learning to do it? (Prompt: Who is helping you?)
3. What would you like to learn to do next as a reader?
4. How do you think you will learn it? (Prompt: Will anyone help you?)
5. What kinds of things will you need to read or want to read when you are a grown-up? (Prompt: for your job?)
6. What are you learning to do in writing?
7. How are you learning to do it? (Prompt: Who is helping you?)
8. What would you like to learn to do next in writing?
9. How do you think you will learn it? (Prompt: Will anyone help you?)
10. What kinds of things will you need to write or want to write when you are a grown-up? (Prompt: for your job?)
11. Are you a good reader? Why?
12. Are you a good writer? Why?

Adapted from Allen, Michalove, & Shockley (1993).

VITA

Deborah Arbs Rickards attended elementary and high school in the Houston Independent School District in Houston, Texas. She attended Sam Houston State University in Huntsville, Texas; the University of Houston in Houston, Texas; and the University of Minnesota in Minneapolis, Minnesota. After completing her bachelor of science degree in elementary education at the University of Minnesota in 1975, she taught first grade for six years in Moose Lake, Minnesota. In 1980, she moved to Shreveport, Louisiana, and worked in several positions for the Caddo Parish School Board. Those positions were first grade teacher, kindergarten-first grade transition teacher, fourth grade teacher, curriculum writer, and language arts enrichment teacher. During this time, Deborah obtained her master of education degree from Louisiana State University in Shreveport, and she received additional certifications as a reading specialist and elementary principal. She also worked in a private reading clinic as tutor, evaluator, and administrator.

In 1991, Deborah returned to Houston, Texas, and worked for the Alief Independent School District first as a second grade teacher and then as language arts specialist. She was employed as a special education teacher with the Iberia Parish School Board after moving to Broussard, Louisiana, in 1994. She completed her education specialist degree from Louisiana State University in 1996 and subsequently began work on her doctor of philosophy. She was awarded a Dissertation Fellowship from the Graduate School at Louisiana State University in 1996.

DOCTORAL EXAMINATION AND DISSERTATION REPORT

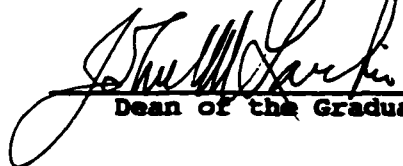
Candidate: Deborah Rickards

Major Field: Curriculum and Instruction

Title of Dissertation: Diverse Roads to Literacy: Examining the Literacy Learning of Six First Graders


Approved:

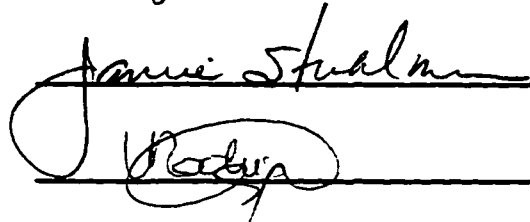

Major Professor and Chairman


Dean of the Graduate School

EXAMINING COMMITTEE:







Date of Examination:

June 5, 1997
