An Insider's View: The Teacher as Impetus in Literacy Acquisition.

Kerry Pierce Laster
Louisiana State University and Agricultural & Mechanical College

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

Recommended Citation
https://digitalcommons.lsu.edu/gradschool_disstheses/6116

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
AN INSIDER'S VIEW:
THE TEACHER AS IMPETUS IN LITERACY ACQUISITION

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
Kerry Pierce Laster
B. A., Northeast Louisiana University, 1970
M. Ed., Louisiana State University, 1979
December 1995
DEDICATION

I dedicate this dissertation to my family,
my husband Charles
for his unending support and patience;
to my children
Amy
who diverted my attentions to matters other than school and a dissertation;
Todd
who shared his sense of humor and relieved my intensity on many occasions;
to my parents
who taught me to always do my best--I know you would be proud!
and, finally,
to my friends who are like family
Joanie, Deb, Miss Elaine, Barbara, and Ms. May.
To each of you I owe so much because you believed in me
even when I didn't believe in myself.
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

To my family and friends, thank you for remaining close to me even when it was difficult. This phase in my life has been a challenge, but the support of my family and friends has sustained me. You have taught me that riches aren’t measured by money, but more importantly by time spent with each of you.

To Dr. Earl Cheek, Jr., you have become a part of my family. Your patience with my obsessiveness and your belief in me means more than I could ever express. To Dr. Jan Stuhlmann, Dr. Ken Denny, Dr. Gary Rice, and Dr. Tim Vollmer, your expertise, knowledge, as well as your ideas, have extended my professional growth and learning. You never gave me answers, but questioned so that I would continue to seek answers and further educate myself. For your friendship and support, I thank you.

Because of my family, friends, and doctoral committee, this experience has been wonderful and because of this experience, I will be forever changed.
TABLE OF CONTENTS

DEDICATION ................................................................. iii

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS .............................................................. iv

LIST OF FIGURES ............................................................... viii

ABSTRACT ................................................................. ix

CHAPTER

1 INTRODUCTION ................................................................. 1
   Vignette: January, 1995 (Taken from field notes) ........ 1
   The Purpose of the Study .............................................. 5
   Historical Perspective: The Setting ................................. 7
   Significance of the Study .............................................. 9
   Research Questions .................................................. 9

2 REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE ........................................... 11
   Early Literacy Development and Developmentally
   Appropriate Kindergarten Practices ............................... 11
   Assessment of Literacy Development .............................. 18
   Teacher Beliefs and Practices ....................................... 21
   Current Inclusion Practices ......................................... 28
   Reading Aloud to Children ........................................... 31

3 METHODOLOGY ............................................................. 40
   Research Design ...................................................... 40
   Selection of Participant .............................................. 42
   Data Collection ....................................................... 43
   Data Collection Procedure ......................................... 44
   Data Collection Analysis ............................................ 45
   Qualitative Component ............................................. 46
     Axioms ............................................................. 46
     Trustworthiness .................................................. 47

4 TEACHER INTERACTIONS IN AN INCLUSIVE
   KINDERGARTEN WITH HOLISTIC,
   LANGUAGE-BASED CURRICULA .................................... 50
   The Classroom Community ........................................... 50
   Interaction with Students in a Classroom with
   Holistic, Language-Based Curricula ............................... 56
     Routine Teacher Behaviors ....................................... 57
     Management ....................................................... 58
     Review ............................................................. 60
     Checking for Understanding .................................... 63
Questioning .................................................................. 64
Instructional Strategies .............................................. 68
Making Connections .................................................... 72
Interactions to Develop Literacy Skills ....................... 73
As Needed Teacher Behaviors ..................................... 73
Personalized Instruction ............................................ 74
Guided Practice ........................................................... 75
Vocabulary Understanding ....................................... 75
Clarification ................................................................. 76
Modifications/Adaptations .......................................... 77

5 TEACHER BEHAVIORS TO ENCOURAGE STUDENT ENGAGEMENT IN LITERACY PROCESSES ................................................................. 79
Teacher Behaviors Encouraging Student Engagement in Literacy Processes .................................................. 79
Routine Teacher Behaviors ........................................ 79
Rereading .................................................................... 80
Encouragement of Student Reading .............................. 82
Teacher Reading ............................................................ 84
Exposure of Students to Whole Texts ....................... 85
Book Extension Activities ........................................... 86
Participation in Book Talks ........................................ 90
Maintenance of a Print-rich Environment .................. 91
As Needed Teacher Behaviors ..................................... 95
Spontaneous Student Reading .................................... 95
Teacher Modeling of Writing ....................................... 97
Promoting Student Writing ....................................... 99
Direct Instruction ......................................................... 101

6 THE REPEATED READ ALOUD STRATEGY .................................................. 103
Encouraging Students to React to Books Using a Specific Repeated Read Aloud Strategy .................................. 103
Explanation of the Strategy .......................................... 103
Day One ........................................................................ 104
Day Two .......................................................................... 106
Day Three ...................................................................... 107
Day Four ........................................................................ 108
Day Five ........................................................................ 108
Daily Activities .............................................................. 109
Excerpts from Field Notes ........................................... 110
Day One ........................................................................ 110
Day Two .......................................................................... 114
Day Three ...................................................................... 117
Day Four ........................................................................ 124
Day Five ........................................................................ 126
Selection and Integration of the Books ....................... 129
LIST OF FIGURES

4.1 Ms. May's Class Schedule ................................................................. 51
4.2 Ms. May's Classroom Floor Plan ....................................................... 52
4.3 Student Activity Sign-up Chart ........................................................... 55
4.4 Question A: Routine Teacher Behaviors ............................................ 57
4.5 Question A: As Needed Teacher Behaviors ....................................... 74
5.1 Question B: Routine Teacher Behaviors ............................................ 80
5.2 Committee Chart .............................................................................. 94
5.3 Question B: As Needed Teacher Behaviors ....................................... 95
6.1 Literature-based Experience Chart .................................................. 107
6.2 Venn Diagram Comparing Two Books ............................................ 109
6.3 Day 3: Extension Activity, Part I ...................................................... 119
6.4 Day 3: Extension Activity, Part II ...................................................... 120
6.5 Day 3: Extension Activity, Part III ................................................... 121
6.6 Day 3: Independent Student Activity .............................................. 122
6.7 Day 4: Extension Activity--Phrase Strips ......................................... 124
6.8 Day 4: Follow-up Activity ............................................................... 126
6.9 Day 5: Extension Activity ................................................................. 129
ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study was to derive a deeper understanding of one successful kindergarten teacher, her behaviors, and her effect on students as they develop early literacy skills. This study examined the following aspects of teacher behavior as they related to early literacy development: (a) the interactions of the teacher with regular education and special education inclusion students in an inclusive kindergarten classroom with holistic, language-based curricula, (b) the behaviors of the teacher while engaging students in the literacy processes of reading and writing, (c) the behaviors of the teacher as she encouraged students to react to books using a specific repeated read aloud strategy, and (d) the teacher's professional activities and interactions with her peers which contributed to her beliefs and practices. By providing an in-depth description of one successful kindergarten teacher, this study presented valuable insights into classroom teaching with implications for school programs dealing with the development of early literacy skills for regular education students and full inclusion special education students in kindergarten. Through examination of each aspect of this teacher's behavior in depth, this investigation furnished information regarding characteristics of a successful kindergarten teacher and presented a specific repeated read aloud strategy.
CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

Routman (1991) identified principles needed for language learning to occur that can be applied in the classroom setting:

(a) literacy acquisition is a natural process; (b) the conditions for becoming readers and writers are the same as those for becoming oral language users; (c) young children come to school with a knowledge about literacy; (d) becoming a reader is closely related to becoming a writer; (e) the best literacy environments promote risk-taking in an atmosphere of trust; (f) becoming literate is a social act and involves a search for meaning; (g) literacy development is a continuous process; and (h) genuine literacy acts are authentic and meaningful (p. 9).

In order to better understand these concepts and to examine why some teachers are more successful than others with certain types of students such as inclusion special education students, at-risk students, regular education students, and high achieving students, I began a pilot study to investigate these phenomena. The pilot study was conducted using one at-risk student in a kindergarten classroom where the teacher used holistic language arts instruction to meet the needs of her regular and special education inclusion students. Qualitative research methodology facilitated the investigation of teaching and learning from a new perspective. Specifically, I investigated one teacher and classroom over time to provide a detailed understanding rather than a mere surface description (Lincoln & Guba, 1985).

Vignette: January 1995 (Taken from field notes)

As I entered this school and turned to go down the hall, I passed the kindergarten classrooms and heard a hum of noise. There was a Louisiana wall area with a big fishing net displaying crawfish, strawberries in a basket, magnolias on a tree branch, cotton bolls, and other items made by the children depicting our state. On a wooden clothesline were the day’s easel paintings
depicting the children's favorite part of an Eric Carle book that the teacher had recently read to them. On the other wall was an author study area about Eric Carle with writings of the children, clearly showing that the children were in different stages of writing development, and illustrations that they had completed of their favorite part of the book, *The Very Hungry Caterpillar* (Carle, 1981). They had captured the colorful aspect of the illustrations in an Eric Carle book.

I entered Room 1 unnoticed by the kindergarten children and took time to observe. Soft lamps lit the various areas of the room. This gave the classroom a "homey" atmosphere radiating warmth. The children were working busily in centers; the teacher was sitting in a rocking chair listening to a young child share her journal entry for the day. The teacher softly tapped a bell and the children began to clean up in the various centers, placed notes they had written in mailboxes of other children, and moved to a large carpeted area. As the children moved to the carpeted area, the teacher sang. The children joined in as they settled one by one on the carpet. While they were settling on the carpet, I began to make notes about this room and its ambiance.

Once all the children were settled, the teacher began the daily calendar activity, which was a modified version of *Box It and Bag It Mathematics* (Burk, Snider, & Symonds, 1988). The children were self-directed in this activity. It was obvious that they knew the routine procedure for this part of their day, which involved activities to tally, seriate, classify, pattern, and count to show place value. The children completed the attendance and lunch count. Then they recorded the day's weather on a graph. They were self-directed in all of these routine chores that were authentic literacy activities having a genuine purpose.
The teacher immediately moved into the next activity by picking up the book *Chicka Chicka Boom Boom* (Martin & Archambault, 1989) and discussing its cover. She asked if anyone could read the name of the author, and several children responded, “Bill Martin.” The teacher acknowledged their correct answer and asked if they remembered any other books they had read by this author. That they were able to remember *Brown Bear, Brown Bear, What Do You See?* (Martin, 1983) and another book they had read by Bill Martin, Jr. was noteworthy. The teacher then directed their attention to the author study area, where she had displayed a picture of the author and a book jacket from *Brown Bear, Brown Bear, What Do You See?* (Martin, 1983). She told the children that they would add the names of other books and information to this area during the week.

The teacher then allowed the children to read the title of the new book, *Chicka Chicka Boom Boom* (Martin & Archambault, 1989) and the name of the author again. She began to read. As the teacher shared the story, she was continually talking about the text and the pictures, as she questioned the children to verify they were thinking. The book was an alphabet book filled with letters and repetitive language that the children loved. The children were chiming in before the teacher had finished the book. The teacher was helping them make predictions and observe the letters in the story. She related the letters to the letters in the children’s names as well as to letters in other familiar words. Unceremoniously, she moved her hand under the print as she was reading. Completely involved with this story, many of the children were now reading along with the teacher and anticipating the text. The teacher reminded them that letters join together to make names, the days of the week, months and other words. Then she led the children to see that the words combine to make sentences; sentences form paragraphs; and paragraphs
develop text. I was thinking to myself, "what a wonderful use of an alphabet book to review and reinforce letter recognition in context." These children did not even realize that they were learning and reviewing letters. It appeared that this could be a better way to teach letter recognition as well as beginning reading than by celebrating the letter of the week and working from a basal workbook emphasizing only one letter at a time.

The children then signed up to go to the center areas giving them a real purpose for writing their names. Several centers were set up around the room, which the teacher changed often to create a literate environment filled with hands-on activities to encourage problem solving, reading, writing, listening, and speaking. These included a science center, a math center, a writing center, a building/block center, a housekeeping center, and an art center. The science center contained items to manipulate such as a giant magnifying glass for looking at the roots of plants. It included books about trees and flowers for the children to read as well as a book and tape set about flowers so the children could enjoy listening as they followed along in this book. The math center included manipulatives, a computer that displayed a math activity involving big/little, along with books about counting. The writing center contained a word wall, pencils, pens, markers, paint, crayons, envelopes, and all kinds of paper to use for notes, letters, lists, stories, and books. There were even small blank books that the children used to produce their own books easily. Materials for binding the works of the children were readily available. Near this area was a bulletin board filled with pictures of authors whom the children had studied. It included such names as Tomie DePaola, Robert Munsch, Jan Brett, and Eric Carle. Under the authors' names were names of the children. These young learners had voted on favorite authors and
identified parts of each author's story by writing or drawing about a significant part of the story.

The vignette described above was characteristic of this kindergarten classroom. Though I had initially intended to focus this research on the children in this kindergarten setting, I soon realized that the teacher was the impetus for the literacy acquisition of the students. The main subject of my study changed to this one teacher, her behaviors, and her interactions with the students. The teacher appeared to exemplify a philosophy which included the necessary conditions for literacy as listed by Routman (1991) at the beginning of this chapter. I began to question: Why do some teachers provide learning environments much like the one described and others design their curricula in a more structured manner with the basal reader being the central focus? Do both of these learning environments produce equally avid readers and writers?

The Purpose of the Study

Scenes such as the one related above are typical in many kindergarten classrooms that effectively promote early literacy. However, there are just as many situations where young children are placed in desks and asked to complete worksheet after worksheet with little personal interaction among the children or between the children and the teacher. Kindergarten is beginning to change in many communities and is no longer a part-time, play-oriented school setting, but rather "real school" (Steinberg, 1990). Developmentally appropriate practices where students are engaged in reading and writing to foster emergent literacy skills are desirable. In a revealing study of Ohio kindergarten teachers, Steinberg (1990) reported that the daily actions of two-thirds of the teachers interviewed was in direct conflict with their beliefs about the needs of children of this age.
In an earlier study of 42 kindergarten classes, Durkin (1987) found that the curricula consisted primarily of whole-class instruction with teachers relying on commercial materials, usually the readiness workbook of the basal reader series. The core of the program emphasized learning only one letter and sound per week with little time spent on actual reading or using the skills in the context of stories or books.

The purpose of the present study was to examine the characteristics of one successful kindergarten teacher, her behaviors, and her interactions with students as they acquired early literacy skills. This teacher was employed in an inclusive setting implementing a holistic, language-based curricula where such developmentally appropriate activities as the repeated read aloud strategy were used as the foundation to develop early literacy skills. The present study was not designed to present any cause/effect relationship between teacher behaviors and student outcomes; rather its purpose was to investigate the relationship between specific teacher practices and student literacy acquisition and establish correlations.

Allington (1994) asserted that there is a need for more inclusionary education to serve children with disabilities as well as a need for more in-class support. He suggested that it is time to reject the notion that only some students can learn to read and write well. Therefore, observing how the teacher interacted with different types of students to enhance their success with beginning literacy skills in an inclusive kindergarten classroom was a high priority in the present study. In addition, the teacher, curriculum coordinator, school administrator, full inclusion teacher, and the four peer kindergarten teachers were interviewed to gain a greater understanding of this teacher's professional activities and peer interactions.
An integral aspect of the investigation was the observation of the repeated read aloud strategy used by this kindergarten classroom teacher. The teacher in the present study had adapted a specific repeated read aloud strategy because she believed that although most teachers read to their kindergarten students, they rarely engage in quality readings and rereadings. Consequently, teacher readings were not extended to develop crucial skills such as predicting, sequencing, drawing conclusions, studying illustrations in detail, and using context to develop meaning.

**Historical Perspective: The Setting**

The setting for this study was a kindergarten class at an elementary school in a school district in north Louisiana with a total population of 633 students. There were 439 (69%) white students and 194 (31%) black students with 561 (89%) regular education students, 29 (4%) full inclusion students, and 43 (7%) students in self-contained special education classes. Most of the special education students in self-contained classes were mainstreamed to regular education classrooms for part of each day. Approximately 30% of the total school population participated in the free or reduced lunch program.

This elementary school was unique in many ways. It was a public neighborhood school that was allowed to enroll students from outside the school's attendance area because of its alternative language arts curriculum and its year-round schedule. The school had completed a three-year pilot of the year-round calendar, which allowed students to attend school for nine weeks and be on break for two weeks. After the fourth nine-week period ended in July, the students had a break for approximately one month. During the two-week breaks in October and February, one week of optional intersession classes was available for students desiring to attend school for an additional five or ten days. These intersession classes were non-traditional in
that they involved cross-age groupings, thematic units developed by teachers, flexible time scheduling, and class size limitations of twenty. Intersession classes were available to all students.

The school staff consisted of 45 professionals and 29 non-professionals. The professional staff at this school embraced a holistic, language-based philosophy. Most of the staff had received extensive training in the use of an integrated language arts approach, portfolio assessment, and the writing process.

Most teachers at this school had adopted the concept of inclusion for students with various disabilities. This school pioneered the inclusion of special needs students in this north Louisiana school district during the 1990-91 school year and had been employing inclusive practices for five years. There were two full inclusion teachers at the school, along with two paraprofessionals, who provided support in the regular classrooms where inclusion students were placed for the entire day with their regular education peers. The full inclusion teacher also provided support for the identified special needs students as well as others in the classroom who were not achieving as desired.

At this school, there were five kindergarten classes operating on a full-day schedule. Each kindergarten class had a certified teacher with limited paraprofessional assistance. During the daily schedule, each class had one fifteen-minute recess, a thirty-minute block for enrichment (computer, music, library, or physical education), twenty minutes for lunch, and a one-hour rest time. The five kindergarten teachers had varying amounts of teaching experience, but four of the five had completed at least a master's degree. Parent participation and administrative support were typically good.
Significance of the Study

By presenting an in-depth description of one successful kindergarten teacher, the present study provides valuable insights into classroom teaching with potential implications for school programs dedicated to the development of early literacy skills for regular education students and full inclusion special education students in kindergarten. Knowledge of effective practices may help alleviate failure of kindergarten students in early literacy acquisition.

The present study focused on four aspects of teacher behavior as they relate to early literacy development: (a) the interactions of the teacher with regular education and special education inclusion students in an inclusive kindergarten classroom with holistic, language-based curricula, (b) the behaviors of the teacher while engaging students in the literacy processes of reading and writing, (c) the behaviors of the teacher as she encouraged students to react to books using a specific repeated read aloud strategy, and (d) the teacher’s professional activities and interaction with her peers which contributed to her beliefs and practices. By examining each aspect of teacher behavior in depth, the present investigation provides information on the characteristics of a successful kindergarten teacher and presents a specific repeated read aloud strategy.

Research Questions

The present study investigated teacher beliefs and behaviors as related to early literacy acquisition and a specific repeated read aloud strategy. The research was limited to one kindergarten classroom at a school in north Louisiana. The following questions were investigated:

(a) What was the interaction of the teacher with regular education and special education inclusion students in an inclusive kindergarten classroom with holistic, language-based curricula?
(b) What behaviors did the teacher exhibit to engage students in the literacy processes of reading and writing?

(c) What behaviors did the teacher exhibit to encourage students to react to books using a specific repeated read aloud strategy?

(d) What were the professional activities and interactions of the classroom teacher with her peers that contributed to her beliefs and practices?
CHAPTER 2
REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

The review of the literature for the present study focused on these areas: (a) early literacy development and developmentally appropriate kindergarten practices, (b) assessment of literacy development, (c) teacher beliefs and practices, (d) current inclusion practices, and (e) reading aloud to children.

Early Literacy Development and Developmentally Appropriate Kindergarten Practices

Delores Durkin (1987) investigated the reading activities of 42 kindergartens in Illinois. She observed that the kindergarten curricula consisted mainly of whole-class instruction with an over reliance on the workbooks prepared by the basal reader publishers (Durkin, 1987). Such practice was in direct conflict with the position statement of the National Association for the Education of Young Children on developmentally appropriate practices in programs for four- and five-year-olds (Bredekamp, 1987). These age-appropriate practices included such key components as the following: (a) each child is viewed as a unique person with an individual pattern and timing of growth and development; (b) different levels of ability, development, and learning styles are expected and accepted with activities designed that are appropriate for each; (c) interactions as well as activities are designed to develop the child’s self-esteem and positive feelings about learning; (d) students work individually and in small groups most of the time; (e) students are given many opportunities to view reading and writing before they are instructed in skills such as letter names, sounds, and word identification; (f) listening to and reading various types of literature, taking field trips, dictating stories, seeing charts and other forms of print in use, as well as
participating in dramatic play and other communicative experiences are vital; (g) experimentation with writing by allowing time for drawing, copying, and invented spellings in stories is encouraged; (h) activities in the content areas such as health, science, and social living are integrated into meaningful hands-on type activities; and (i) the educational system must adjust and provide for the developmental needs of all students that it serves (Bredekamp, 1987, pp. 54-57). These age-appropriate practices should be followed as the guide to developing kindergarten classrooms in which there are no workbooks—providing time for more literacy experiences where students listen to stories, discuss them, and act them out. Students are expected to write and read their own books to experience the use of words (Vann, 1991).

Traditionally, instructional design for students with all types of disabilities has been based on a remedial/deficit philosophy. Zucker (1993) suggested that students with special needs might benefit from the whole language philosophy where there is integration of the content curriculum areas and the four language processes of reading, writing, listening, and speaking. She further suggested that these processes be taught in an authentic setting rather than in a fragmented remedial delivery approach.

Scala (1993) described a study of upper-elementary learning disabled students who remained in a regular classroom to receive whole language instructional activities. She described this experience as “a journey not on bold primary roads, mapped out straight, but as a trip that was full of detours, delays, and pleasures” (p. 223).

A qualitative study completed by former kindergarten teachers Allen, Michalove, Shockley, and West (1991) reported that students labeled “at risk” were rarely engaged in extended literacy events and found themselves outside the more successful community of learners. This study called for
further research on how teachers could reduce the risk of failure for these young learners labeled at risk through their literacy curricula. To date, most of the literate communities that have been investigated involved students who did not have histories of early school failure.

Literacy for young children, previously termed "readiness", can be described as a complex activity where time spent with print by preschool and kindergarten youngsters evolves into the lifelong process of learning to read and write. To pinpoint when literacy actually begins for young children is impossible as it begins long before the child enters kindergarten. As young children enter kindergarten, they are at different points along the continuum of learning to read and write. Therefore, educators must look at the concurrent and interrelated development of literacy skills, not at some imaginary point of readiness.

Teale and Sulzby (1989) suggested that the language arts mutually reinforce one another in the literacy development of young children. Reading books to young children enhances vocabulary while involvement in the writing process improves the young child's reading skills, thus suggesting that writing should be allowed in kindergarten classrooms. The authors also believed that interactive storybook readings between adults and children have dramatic effects on the way young children develop literacy. Interactive storybook reading allows the young child to observe adult role models engaged in reading. The kindergarten teacher should provide young children with two types of early reading activities. These activities should include: (a) reading aloud and allowing time for interaction with quality literature, and (b) providing time to read and interact with books independently.

The use of repeated readings is another strategy that has been successful with readers of all ages. Beginning readers, even preschoolers,
have a keen desire to reread books that are familiar to them and provide enjoyment. Parents attest that their preschoolers insist on hearing the same book repeatedly and often are able to recite the book flawlessly. Teachers also recognize the appeal of rereading familiar books to their students. In a study with kindergarten students, Martinez and Teale (1988) monitored the student's book choice twice a week for an eight week period to determine what types of books were selected most frequently. These researchers conducted their investigation by observing those books that were unfamiliar (had not been read to the students), familiar (read aloud one time), and very familiar (read aloud repeatedly). In their study, Martinez and Teale (1988) learned that the children were more likely to become involved in emergent reading with the very familiar books. As a result of their findings, they recommended repeated readings of stories as a regular, planned part of a read aloud program. Teale and Sulzby (1989) suggested that repeated readings encourage young children to explore and interact with the books. Such readings also promote independent, emergent readings of the books.

Rereadings are also utilized to extend knowledge and understanding of text (Bettelheim, 1977; Hill, 1989; Holdaway, 1979; Sulzby, 1985). In reference to repeated readings of fairy tales, Bettelheim (1977) believed, "Only on repeated hearing of a fairy tale, and when given ample time and opportunity to linger over it, is a child able to profit fully from what the story has to offer him in regard to understanding himself and his experience in the world (p. 58)."

His recommendation for repeated readings of fairy tales could apply to other literary genres as a means of developing understanding of vocabulary and extending the young child's understanding of text.

Other researchers have studied the emergent reading attempts of young students and found that repeated readings of books assisted in
developing emergent reading skills (Hill, 1989; Holdaway, 1979; Schickedanz, 1981). With repeated readings, the students become familiar with book language and are given time to sort out the meaning of the text, which then allows them to direct their attention to the print. Sulzby (1985) actually questioned readers in a study about learning to read. Some of the readers who were questioned attributed their reading success to having books read to them repeatedly.

The literature relating to repeated reading focuses primarily on two areas: (a) repeated reading techniques as a strategy to develop speed, accuracy, fluent oral reading, and comprehension, and (b) the documented quantitative and qualitative benefits of repeated reading with young children and the changes that occur in the children's early literacy acquisition. Literature in the first area examines the impact of students' rereading of texts to improve their reading skills. Literature in the second area investigates the changes occurring as young children comprehend storybooks in the social setting of school.

One challenging issue facing teachers today is helping students to develop oral reading fluency and acquire automaticity to insure comprehension of text (LaBerge & Samuels, 1974). With the widespread use of basal readers, the goal of developing fluency in oral reading has been neglected (Allington, 1983). However, with more teachers embracing a whole language philosophy and utilizing authentic materials rather than the controlled vocabulary stories of the basal, there is a renewed interest in fluency development. The research has not provided us with a universal definition of fluency, but according to Harris and Hodges (1981) in A Dictionary of Reading and Related Terms, fluency was defined as the clear, easy, written or spoken expression of ideas in writing or speech. It was further defined as
freedom from word identification problems which might hinder expression of ideas during oral reading.

According to Walley (1993), fluent reading is one facet of the literacy spectrum, but it is especially important because it empowers students to focus on constructing meaning from the text. Allington (1983) asserted that "a preponderance of empirical and clinical evidence supports the relationship of fluent oral reading and good overall reading ability" (p. 560). With a changing view of the reading process in recent years, reading is seen as the construction of meaning and is synonymous with comprehension. Current research indicates that in beginning readers, oral reading fluency is more directly connected to text comprehension than word recognition (Clay, 1985). Other studies (Rasinski, 1990; Samuels, Schermer, & Reinking, 1992; Stayter, 1990) confirmed the relationship between oral reading fluency and comprehension. According to Samuels, Schermer, and Reinking (1992), "the hallmark of fluent reading is the ability to decode and comprehend at the same time" (p. 132). Therefore, the need for teachers to address fluency with all students is clear, but it is especially necessary with the beginning reader.

In the views of Samuels (1979) and Chomsky (1978), the strategy of repeated reading facilitates automatic decoding and, therefore, improved oral reading fluency. When a student is asked to perform a repeated reading task, he or she is first given the passage and allowed to read it silently so that he or she will be able to read it orally with as few errors as possible. Then the student rereads the passage orally and the teacher records the oral reading errors and the reading rate. This process is repeated until the student has read the passage three or four times with an improvement in rate and fluency each time. The primary goal of repeated reading is to provide the practice necessary to allow decoding to become automatic and thus enable the student
to focus on comprehension (Downs & Morin, 1990; Samuels, 1979). Repeated readings for purposes that are meaningful for the student can build self-confidence and give the beginning or impaired reader the practice that is needed (Swanson, 1990). This method is also known as assisted repeated reading and is associated with Carbo (1978) and Chomsky (1978). In this method, the student is provided with either a live or audiotaped model of the passage being used.

Repeated listening while reading a text is slightly different from repeated reading since the reader reads the text while he or she simultaneously listens to a fluent rendition of the same text. A student can listen repeatedly, with the text being read by the teacher or other competent oral reading model, or the student can listen to the text on audiotape. This strategy can be implemented with a group of students or with only one student; therefore, it has versatility for classroom implementation.

Many of the studies of repeated readings with young children have looked predominantly at repeated readings in the one-on-one or small group setting. Several are single case studies involving the researchers' own children. Martinez and Roser (1985) completed two formalized case studies to review the differences in responses when students listened to familiar and unfamiliar stories. They found that (a) as children became increasingly familiar with the text, they became more able and willing to respond verbally; (b) talk changed form and children reading to their parents at home asked more questions initially, and made many more comments when the stories were familiar; (c) children focused on different aspects of the text such as characters, events, details, titles, story language, setting, and theme as the books became more familiar; and (d) a greater depth of understanding
occurred over repeated readings. Their fourth finding, which involved more depth of understanding, was documented in their transcripts.

In Morrow’s quantitative study (1988), she investigated whether frequent one-on-one readings in the classroom setting would increase the number as well as the complexity of the comments and the questions made by the children. She studied the responses of seventy-nine low socioeconomic students in daycare centers. Her study revealed that repeated readings resulted in more interpretive responses and more responses focusing on print and story structure and that this strategy was most effective with the low ability children.

Yaden (1988) affirmed that children’s understanding of text significantly increased after several rereadings. He further stated that attempting to measure a child’s comprehension after a single reading may not be an accurate reflection of the child’s comprehension. The tendency of teachers to expect students to fully understand a story after only one exposure is common, but unrealistic. Full understanding of a text or a book requires multiple exposures. Thus by allowing young children to have the opportunity to hear their favorite books read repeatedly, teachers are guiding young children in the development of early literacy skills.

Assessment of Literacy Development

Teachers are reflecting on and rethinking their view of the reading process. Many teachers currently view the reading process from a more holistic, meaning-centered perspective than from a skills-based perspective (Routman, 1994).

Those teachers who remain tied to a skills-based perspective of reading tend to believe that the mastering of discrete skills occurs in a hierarchy from the smallest unit or part to the whole. For instance, letters and sounds are first
taught in isolation and then isolated words are taught prior to the reading of sentences, paragraphs, or books. This amounts to a behaviorist view of learning where the mastery of discrete skills is a prerequisite for higher-order understandings (Walberg, Haertel, & Gerlach-Downie, 1994). In the implementation of a skills-based perspective to reading, the teacher would employ worksheets and drill to teach subskills such as phonics, main idea, sequencing, locating supporting details, cause and effect, drawing conclusions and vocabulary. These subskills would be taught in isolation, out of context, and with specific directions or direct instruction provided by the teacher. There would be little time spent in the actual act of reading or writing. The basal reader, the workbook, and the accompanying ditto masters produced by the school publishing companies would be the primary and perhaps only component of the instructional program (Routman, 1988). There would be an overemphasis on letter names, sounds, and word identification with little emphasis on actual reading and the construction of meaning (Weaver, 1990). Traditionally three reading groups have been formed within the classroom based on standardized test data with little input from teacher observation. With the classroom arranged around rows of student desks, there is little interaction among students. Teachers utilizing a skills-based reading model may find it difficult to motivate their students to read and write since the lessons are often uninteresting, without meaning, and irrelevant (Goodman, 1986). The traditional reading test consisting of true/false, multiple choice, fill-in-the-blank, or short answers is the prevalent form of evaluation. Little opportunity for authentic assessment exists in a skills-based model of reading.

In contrast, the teacher who adopts a holistic perspective of reading endeavors to produce a holistic reading curriculum consisting of the language processes of reading, writing, listening, and speaking. The curriculum utilizes
authentic literature and real books to develop lifelong readers and writers (Stowell & Tierney, 1995). The student is in control of what he or she reads and writes while the teacher serves in the primary role of facilitator. The teacher helps the student develop the ability to read in a naturalistic way with emphasis placed on the construction of meaning from text. The effective reader utilizes the three language systems (graphophonic or sound/letter patterns, syntactic or sentence patterns, and semantic or meaning patterns) to be successful with the text (Goodman, 1986). Reading is integrated across the curricula usually in themes or thematic units. There are no traditional reading groups; rather the students in the classroom are encouraged to collaborate and cooperate. The teacher plans developmentally appropriate activities to meet the individual needs of all students (Goodman, 1992).

Reading skills are taught in a holistic reading program, but they are taught in the meaningful context of what the child is reading rather than in isolation with little transfer or application to real reading. Reading and writing are interrelated and promoted in a learning environment where risk-taking is prevalent and trust is evident. In the holistic classroom, reading is viewed as a social act with students working individually, paired, in small groups, or as a whole class. The classroom environment usually consists of tables, comfortable reading centers, and areas that invite the student to “curl up and read.” The classroom is filled with print to include magazines, pamphlets, newspapers, and books of all kinds. The areas of the classroom are labeled. Reading and writing are celebrated. The most important thing provided by the holistic reading teacher is time to read (Routman, 1991).

The holistic reading perspective lends itself to authentic assessment. It involves the teacher’s ability to reconceptualize assessment, not as test scores, but as recordable data from which he or she can make inferences
about learning and teaching. Intuitively, teachers know that real assessment happens day-to-day, minute-by-minute, within the confines of the classroom. Good holistic teachers continually observe, interpret, and make decisions based on the actions of their students (Weaver, 1990).

The holistic reading teacher might develop a portfolio system that would include a working portfolio, a finished work or showcase portfolio, and a teacher’s observational portfolio to assist with the implementation of authentic reading assessment (Au, Scheu, Kawakami, & Herman, 1990; Grace, 1993). Rubrics constructed by the teacher would guide this process. (A rubric is a scoring guide that uses a scale to differentiate among a group of student samples that respond to the same prompt.) Authentic contents of the portfolio system include surveys, anecdotal records, reading records, literature response logs, journals, learning logs, self-evaluations, writing samples, videotapes, audiotapes, retellings, student projects, and running records (Routman, 1994). The holistic teacher needs to become astute at incorporating grades, report cards, and standardized tests with authentic assessment measures to report growth over time to students, parents, administrators, and other audiences. Assessment, when viewed from the holistic perspective, is ongoing and inseparable from instruction (Weaver, 1990).

**Teacher Beliefs and Practices**

Educators must examine what they believe about how children learn and combine it with their own educational background, experiences, and a clear theoretical literacy model to find their own “literate voice” (Routman, 1991). Only then, through each educator’s literate voice, can they articulate their beliefs and implement them into practice to provide success for regular and special education beginning readers.
Successful emergent literacy programs can be traced to the theories of Rousseau, Pestalozzi, Dewey, Piaget, and Vygotsky. Each of these theorists has had a significant impact on educators' understanding of the literacy development for young children. The beliefs of Rousseau (Boyd, 1962) supported a natural approach to learning where the child's natural curiosity is encouraged. Pestalozzi (Fletcher & Welton, 1912) added to this the important aspect of a positive, supportive climate for learning. Dewey's (1913) ideas promoted active involvement that was also significant to Piaget (Piaget & Inhelder, 1969), who believed that as young children interact with their world they change and reorganize their own knowledge. Coupled with these predecessors' theories, Vygotsky (1981) stressed the importance of the social interaction of children with peers and adults when they are learning new ideas or concepts. Morrow and O'Connor (1995) suggested that the following constructs of emergent literacy, based on these theorists' work, are important when developing a successful program in beginning reading: (a) a focus on the development of the "whole child"; (b) an emphasis on providing an optimal learning environment; (c) an emphasis on learning rather than teaching; (d) the importance of adult-child social interaction; (e) emphasis on meaningful, natural learning experiences; and (f) concern for children's active participation in learning (p. 102).

In his developmental model, Don Holdaway theorized that young children can acquire all language learning in the same manner that they acquire oral language. Holdaway's model (Fisher, 1991; Holdaway, 1986; Routman, 1991), coupled with the research of Ken Goodman (1986), has influenced many teachers who provide successful learning experiences for young children. This developmental model for language learning involves
four key concepts: observation of demonstrations, participation, role playing or practice, and performance.

Observation of demonstrations is interpreted to mean that the young child observes adult role models that he or she admires in the literacy act of listening, speaking, reading, and writing. At this stage, the learner is viewed as a spectator with no pressure to perform. Smith (1981), Halliday (1975), and Harste, Woodward, and Burke (1984) agreed that what young children learn from actual demonstrations provided by other language users is crucial to language learning. These demonstrations from other readers offer a range of reading strategies, both cognitive and social for the student (Short, 1991).

Later the child becomes a participant and collaborates with the “expert” who is usually the teacher, but could be another student, parent, or person significant to the learning process. The expert welcomes the “novice” as he or she explains, instructs, and demonstrates what to do.

The learner then requires time to practice the skill or act without direction or observation by the expert or teacher. This period becomes one of trial and error wherein the student engages independently in the literacy act. During this practice or role-playing period, the student self-regulates, self-corrects, and self-directs his or her own learning, but the expert remains nearby so that he or she can assist if necessary.

When the student feels competent, he or she becomes the demonstrator and the teacher or expert becomes the audience. In this stage, the student is allowed to share what he or she has accomplished and is given approval and acknowledgment from the expert or teacher (Routman, 1991).

This model of learning (Holdaway, 1986) is an integral part of the beliefs of teachers who have found that children learn and achieve success in whole language classrooms. The underlying tenets of this model are
cooperation, acceptance, approval, and an invitation to join in, intangibles that all learners desire. Implicit in the model are teachers as real readers and writers; interesting, meaningful, whole language materials or curricula that are relevant to the students; and an environment that is safe and nurturing. Whole language is a means of bringing together language, learning, and people, particularly students and teachers, and making beginning reading a successful adventure for all students (Goodman, 1986). As educators begin to implement whole language, they must remember that their beliefs and philosophy determine their practices and behaviors (Myers, 1993).

Judith Newman (1985) regarded whole language as "a shorthand way to refer to a set of beliefs about curriculum, not just the language arts curriculum, but about everything that goes on in classrooms" (p.1). Myers (1993) suggested that whole language is a holistic view of the language arts including reading, writing, speaking, and listening, and that proponents of whole language views the child holistically. Goodman (1992), considered by some to be the primary proponent of whole language, said,

Whole language is producing a holistic reading and writing curriculum which uses real, authentic literature and real books. It puts learners in control of what they read and write about. But it also produces new roles for teachers and learners and a new view of how learning and teaching are related (p.196).

Goodman (1992) further believed that whole language is an inclusive set of beliefs or philosophy of education supported by four pillars—a combined view of language, learning, teaching, and curriculum.

Simply stated, whole language is a focus on whole-to-part learning, with language being the center of learning (Cornett & Blankenship, 1990). Whole language teachers view themselves as professionals who believe in children, respect them as learners, cherish their diversity, and treat them with
dignity and love. They believe that all children enter school with meaningful language and the ability to extend this language into learning to read and write. They further believe that learning should and can be fun; therefore they tend to love teaching. These special teachers are strong in their beliefs, but draw on scientific theories and the disciplines of linguistics, language development, sociolinguistics, psycholinguistics, anthropology, and education. These theories and disciplines help teachers to build curricula, plan, and evaluate instruction (Goodman, 1986). Their beliefs are easily woven into the developmentally appropriate practices for young children that have been published by the National Association for the Education of Young Children (Bredekamp, 1987). As the whole language teacher strives to put beliefs into practice, it is obvious that literacy learning is developmental; each child in a classroom progresses through a number of predictable and well-defined stages at different rates (Zemelman, Daniels, & Hyde, 1993). A focus on meeting individual needs means that the whole language teacher accommodates the needs of all students—regular education, special education, and the gifted.

Teacher expectations can also affect success in beginning reading. In 1968, Robert Rosenthal and Lenore Jacobson demonstrated clearly and powerfully that the expectations teachers had for student performance influenced their achievement. Their famous study known as "Pygmalion in the Classroom" continues to have implications for teacher practices and behaviors (Cooper & Tom, 1984; Hoffman, 1991; Rosenthal & Jacobson, 1968). All learners function within a framework of expectations. Those teachers who express high expectations for all students are more successful with both regular and special students who are learning to read than are those teachers who do not express high expectations. Since students tend to conform to the
expectations of the teacher, teacher attitude must be considered when looking at factors that promote success in beginning reading.

The teacher who is successful with regular and special beginning readers must also continue to grow and learn and thus refine his or her practices and behaviors. Educators accomplish this through many avenues, one of which must be personal reflection about what does and does not work with students. Personal activities to expand beliefs, practices, and behaviors include observing other outstanding teachers, forming or participating in a teacher support group, continuing to take graduate course work, attending workshops and conferences, exchanging ideas informally with colleagues, and reading professional books and journals. Professional reading and reflection on teaching must become a daily experience if educators wish to grow and continue to be successful (Wong & Wong, 1991).

Beginning reading programs have undergone dramatic changes and teachers must continue to change. No longer do teachers of young children talk about readiness for school and readiness for reading and writing. There is no magic point when beginning readers are suddenly ready to read and write. Rather, beginning literacy is an emerging set of skills and knowledge that accumulates in various settings beginning at birth (Clay, 1989). However, it is still not uncommon to find a beginning reading program organized around the letter of the day (Harste & Woodward, 1989). These programs require students to learn the letter names or sounds, rather than using language for the purpose of meaningful learning. This trend in early reading was based on teacher beliefs that involved misconceptions. The implications are now clear that teachers must begin a journey to continually examine their beliefs, practices, and behaviors and transform their classrooms into more
child-centered programs using whole language beliefs and practices accompanied by authentic materials and purposes (Kuball, 1995).

Beginning reading programs have long been associated with basal readers and teacher's guides that script their teachers' lessons, ditto sheets that keep students busy and quiet. Emphasis is placed on isolated skills that students are required to perform on some pre-identified test (Pinnel, 1991).

Whole language has a research base and offers a way of viewing language. Beliefs based on successful classroom experience and whole language theory must guide practices and behaviors so that educators can succeed with all beginning readers whether they are labeled as regular or special education students. Children learn naturally and come to school knowing much about literacy. All children can learn and learn best when instruction is whole, meaningful, interesting, and functional. Children learn best when they are involved in a social, non-competitive community of learners. Beginning readers need to have choices in integrated curricula that include reading, writing, speaking, listening, mathematics, social studies, science, movement, music, art, and technology. A warm, caring, committed teacher who is flexible, but whose expectations remain high for the students, is most successful in integrating curricula. The teacher must be sensitive to individual needs and developmentally appropriate practices (Fisher, 1991; Ruddell, 1995).

Successful teaching practices must occur in print-rich kindergarten and first-grade classrooms where stories and books play a major role; where children draw and write; where posted signs abound; and where mailboxes, charts, notes, schedules, and sign-in activities have a real purpose. There must be centers in this literate environment to include appropriate manipulative materials and areas for housekeeping, building, music, art,
writing, math, science. The classroom must be filled with books and print in the forms of magazines, menus, message pads, blank paper for student-made books, typewriters, and computers for engaging in written literacy acts. The teacher must read aloud throughout the day from a variety of literary genres so that children can view reading as enjoyable and desirable and develop positive reading attitudes. Planned field trips must broaden the experiences of the children. Oral language must not only be allowed, but also encouraged so that children can express their ideas, feelings, and frustrations. Choices must be available for the children with an informed teacher to guide these beginning readers in their selections (Ellermeyer, 1988; Harste & Woodward, 1989).

Current Inclusion Practices

The history of the American educational system is interwoven with changes that seek to broaden, rather than narrow, access to school for all students. Allington (1994) stated that American education as it is presently known is undergoing substantial change; there is now the expectation that virtually all students will achieve the types of literacy proficiencies that historically were attained by about one-quarter of the students. Many sources have suggested that the differential curricula prevalent in different tracks, programs, and traditional reading groups have limited the opportunities of some students. All students are being measured on arbitrary standards or skills associated with literacy such as reading and writing. Traditionally, the American educational system has been populated with students who do not meet these arbitrary academic standards or skills. These students have often been labeled (at-risk, mildly mentally retarded, learning disabled, illiterate, culturally deprived, remedial, slow learners, handicapped, etc.) and find themselves on the fringes of the classroom community of learners (Rose,
These students face tremendous difficulties with the ties between literacy and culture as well as the ability to become successful learners in the classroom community. Allington (1994) asserted that it is time to reject the notion that only a few children can learn to read and write well. He further stated that for too long educators have developed arbitrary, but possibly limiting, literacy goals for some students in America's schools.

The Education for All Handicapped Children Act (1975) and the 1990 Individuals with Disabilities Education Act provided that students with disabilities must be placed in their least restrictive environments and that the integration with non-disabled children must occur to the maximum extent appropriate. This historical legislation has had and will continue to have a significant impact since regular education teachers have traditionally depended on the special education teachers to remove and teach the students with disabilities in separate classrooms (National Association of Secondary School Principals, 1993).

The inclusion of all types of students in classroom communities increases the demands on teachers as they face the daily challenge of meeting the physical, emotional, psychological, and instructional needs of all students. One of the most important factors influencing academic achievement for all students is teacher expectation (Thomas & Thomas, 1992). Therefore, teacher behaviors and expectations within an inclusive kindergarten classroom are important areas to observe.

As a result of a report by the coalition of educational associations launched by The Council for Exceptional Children, 12 principles for successful inclusive schools were developed. These principles are: (a) vision, (b) leadership, (c) high standards, (d) sense of community, (e) array of services, (f) flexible learning environment to meet student needs,
(g) research-based strategies, (h) collaboration and cooperation, (i) changing roles and responsibilities, (j) new forms of accountability, (k) access, and (l) partnerships with parents (Council for Exceptional Children, 1994). These 12 principles have the potential to affect the framework for teachers when meeting the needs of all students in an inclusive classroom.

Inclusive schools celebrate diversity in their classrooms. All children belong to the mainstream of the classroom and the school community. Inclusive schools share a vision and philosophy, with the building-level administrator playing an active, supportive role in the development and implementation of inclusive practices. In an inclusive classroom and school high standards for educational outcomes are communicated to all students, with emphasis on differing strategies or degrees in which these outcomes are achieved by various students. Inclusive classrooms and schools exhibit a sense of belonging and acceptance with a deep sense of community. The classroom and school community foster pride in student accomplishments. There is a feeling of “belonging” or “self-worth” for all students. School personnel coordinate the varied services for all students. Flexible grouping with authentic learning activities and developmentally appropriate curricula are accessible to all students. Increasingly there is less reliance on “pull-out” programs for students with special needs (The Council for Exceptional Children, 1994).

Both the regular education and special education teacher utilize innovative learning strategies such as cooperative learning, peer tutoring, modified curricula, direct instruction, social skills training, and mastery learning. Such strategies foster a natural network among regular education personnel, special education personnel, students, and parents. Team teaching or co-teaching with collaborative efforts is often found in inclusive
environments (Scala, 1993). Teachers become facilitators and problem
solvers to meet the needs of all students. Parents are considered partners in
inclusive schools and become involved in the planning and implementation of
strategies and services for their children.

Technology (including computers, CD-ROM, augmentative
communication devices, communication boards, and word processors) is used
to modify curricula. Physical modifications are also made to
insure access and participation for all students (The Council for Exceptional
Children, 1994).

**Reading Aloud to Children**

In *Becoming a Nation of Readers* (Anderson, Hiebert, Scott, &
Wilkinson, 1985), the authors asserted, "The single most important activity for
building the knowledge required for eventual success in reading is reading
aloud to children" (p. 23). The Report of the Commission on Reading strongly
recommended reading aloud to students not only in the home, but also at
school. The commission further suggested that the practice of reading aloud
should continue throughout the grades. This statement continues to have a
tremendous impact on the classrooms of America.

The work of Jim Trelease has affected many teachers as well as parents
with respect to the importance of reading aloud to children of all ages.
Trelease addresses parents, teachers, and professional groups on the
subjects of children, literature, and television and is the author of *The New
Read-Aloud Handbook*. According to Trelease (1989), the following patterns
have emerged in the past twenty-five years: (a) beginning in the late 1960's
there was a large decline in the number of books that were read by children;
(b) by 1979 when students were asked what they had been reading, they
replied with the names of their classroom textbooks; (c) a general lack of
interest in reading is evident in both public and private schools; and (d) some classes of students love reading and read voraciously and in each case where this is occurring, it is the direct result of the teacher’s attitude.

Many well-known reading professionals support the practice of reading aloud to students and maintain that reading stories aloud to preschool children is the most valuable preparation for school. Roser (1987) expressed that reading aloud, along with thinking aloud, questioning, constructing and reconstructing events, and playing with language, contributes to language use and ultimately to literacy. Reading aloud is viewed as the most influential force in beginning reading success, and it also helps students to understand what authors do during the process of writing and in turn, the students can emulate these processes for themselves (Routman, 1991).

For many students, the read aloud experience never occurred during their preschool years. Therefore, students who have not been read to at home need exposure to books at school and will benefit from the modeling done by an effective teacher when reading aloud. Reading aloud is a forceful strategy for promoting enjoyment and appreciation of quality literature. The benefits of reading aloud to children of all ages are many. Reading aloud provides a common experience for all children in a classroom. It adds meaning or extends a thematic unit and is an extremely effective way of modeling fluent reading. Reading aloud has a powerful influence on the literacy development of students, as well as on their growth and understanding of their world. This fact has been acknowledged by both teachers and researchers. Reading aloud often helps students negotiate the meanings of new words and learn additional meanings for already familiar words. The conversation that accompanies most read aloud sessions is vital in relating the experiences of the student to the literature being read. Reading aloud also enhances
listening comprehension, develops vocabulary, assists reading comprehension, and has a positive effect on the reading attitude of the student. It is both simple and effective to include reading aloud in any reading/language arts program at any grade level. The monetary costs for implementing a read aloud program are insignificant. The actual process of reading aloud requires little preparation, but careful selection of books is important (Routman, 1991).

Linking experiences with stories and poems makes them more memorable and helps to extend the lives of the students outside of the books being read aloud (Friedberg & Strong, 1989). The skillful teacher strives to make connections with stories read aloud to other stories and poems. This tends to build a frame of reference for the literature. Through reading aloud, students begin to make literary connections. It is through these literary connections that students become critical listeners and readers, who are able to make literary links for themselves. When students begin to make links, they are learning how stories are constructed (Friedberg & Strong, 1989).

Stimulating the student's imagination is another justification for reading aloud to students. Reading aloud from quality children's literature extends the student's imagination and causes the student to begin to question and reflect.

For many teachers, the time spent reading aloud may appear to be wasted since it requires no written responses, but this is not true. Students in the primary grades (kindergarten and first grade) may hear many readings of their favorite books and poems repeatedly as the teacher reads aloud to them. When students are allowed to choose a book to read, teachers find that the books that have been read aloud to students are usually their favorites.
There are several implications for teachers of emergent readers to confirm the validity of reading aloud to young children. In a project to document literacy learning, Elster (1994) worked with the children and teacher in a Head Start Program. The teacher read aloud the same book three times during a one week period. Elster collected audiotapes of the read aloud sessions. He also had eight of the children read the book to him after the first and third read aloud sessions. After the children had heard the book read repeatedly, the language of the children's emergent readings closely matched the language of the actual text. He further noted that the children also used their memory of the discussions during the read-aloud sessions. His findings confirmed that when sharing books, this teacher and her children usually went beyond the text as it was printed. They discussed the text and the illustrations to make sense of them, and also used the text and print in the context of their prior experiences and knowledge.

Based on information gained from this project, Elster (1994) believes that practice in the holistic activity of reading aloud and linking it to emergent reading is beneficial to beginning readers. He has suggested that teachers arrange their classroom space and time to encourage these activities. To obtain the maximum benefits of reading aloud and emergent reading, the following teacher suggestions were proposed: (a) inviting active participation in read aloud sessions; (b) providing many opportunities for young children to engage in book handling and emergent reading; (c) repeating the reading of favorite books to encourage emergent reading, and then making these books available for children to review on their own or with other children and adults; (d) providing opportunities for the teacher to observe children's emerging literacy in authentic situations; and (e) educating parents about the ability of their children to "pretend read" books and to participate in reading through
"completion reading." Elster described completing reading as a cloze activity where the teacher read part of a sentence from a text and the students then completed the sentence orally. Children can share in and enjoy reading experiences long before they are conventional readers. Allowing children to become involved in read aloud sessions and emergent reading provides them with an opportunity to experience language and what it means to read in a holistic setting.

Research studies have confirmed the value of reading aloud to students. Hoffman, Roser, and Battle (1993) developed a questionnaire that focused on several areas of the read aloud or story time experience. The questionnaire was given to preservice teachers who were completing classroom field experiences. These preservice teachers were asked to respond based on their most recent visit to a classroom in an elementary school. Packets containing the questionnaires were sent to 54 institutions with teacher education programs across the United States. Thirty completed packets were returned from 24 states for a total of 537 classroom questionnaires. There was a mix of income level and diversity in student ethnicity in the 537 classrooms represented. These researchers investigated the (a) regularity of occurrence of the read aloud experience, (b) choice and organization of the literature being read, (c) time distribution, and (d) opportunities for response and the response options offered to the children.

In the study done by Hoffman, Roser, and Battle (1993), they looked at the area of frequency of the read aloud experience. Questionnaire responses revealed that 74% of the observers reported that teachers read aloud to their classes from a trade book on the day of the observation. Reading aloud to children was more prevalent in the kindergarten and primary grades (76%) than in the intermediate grades (69%).
Responses to the choice and organization of the literature being read to the students showed that a total of 127 different authors and 217 different titles were represented. The selection of the books generally seemed to reflect high-quality children's literature. The predominant pattern was for the read aloud book to be independent of a unit; that is, not to be connected to a unit of study. In only a few situations were the books being read connected to the study of a particular piece of literature. The only exception was at the kindergarten level, where the majority of the books read aloud (59%) were related to an ongoing unit.

The results of the time component revealed that a 10 to 20 minute segment was the most commonly reported pattern. Reading aloud took 20 minutes or less in approximately 88% of the situations reported.

This study also examined the amount of time spent by the teacher discussing the book with the class both before and after the reading. The results in this area were significant. In most reported cases, less than five minutes was spent in discussion either before or after reading the story. Despite the increased benefits of extended discussion of the story, only 3% of the teachers devoted 20 minutes or more to this activity.

The final area that the survey addressed was response opportunities and response options offered to the children. In this area, the results showed that response opportunities were provided in less than 25% of the observed read aloud situations. When response situations were provided, the two most common forms of response were writing (36%) and drawing (36%) by the students. Dramatization was noted as 10% of the responses coded, while the category labeled other, which included cooking and construction, was observed less frequently.
Based on their findings, Hoffman, Roser, and Battle (1993) described the typical read aloud session in an elementary classroom in the following manner:

The classroom teacher reads to students from a trade book for a period between 10 and 20 minutes. The chosen literature is not connected to a unit of study in the classroom. The amount of discussion related to the book takes fewer than 5 minutes, including talk before and after the reading. Finally, no literature response activities are offered (p.500).

The work of these researchers led them to a second phase of this project, which involved developing a model for reading aloud. The following factors were included in the model read aloud (Hoffman, Roser, & Battle, 1993):

(a) designating a legitimate time and place in the daily curriculum for reading aloud, (b) selecting quality literature, (c) sharing literature related to other literature, (d) discussing literature in lively, invitational, thought-provoking ways, (e) grouping children to maximize opportunities to respond, (f) offering a variety of response and extension opportunities, and (g) rereading selected pieces (p. 501).

In a quantitative study on reading aloud, Morrow (1988) investigated the responses of young children to one-on-one story reading in the school setting. The study was designed to determine if one-on-one story readings at school increased the number and the complexity of comments and questions from low socioeconomic status students. There were two experimental groups and one control group. The first experimental group had a different book read aloud to them each week for ten weeks. In the second experimental group, the students heard repeated readings of three different books. The control group participated in traditional reading readiness activities.

The results of this study indicated that one-on-one readings in the school setting increased verbal participation and the level of complexity of the verbal interchange. The students in the two experimental groups commented and asked more questions than those in the control group. It became
apparent that the students in both experimental groups were much more interested in the meaning of the story than they were in sound-symbol relationships or names of letters. It can also be deduced that the children demonstrated the use of interpretative responses including prediction, association, and elaboration. These results have instructional implications for teachers of young children.

In a later study, Morrow and Smith (1990) examined the effects of group size on the comprehension of stories and the verbal interactions of the children during storybook readings. This study involved children hearing three stories in each of three settings: the one-on-one setting, small group (three children in a group), and whole class (15 children or more), with measures being taken on only the third reading in each of the settings. The results of the study showed that (a) the children who heard the stories in the small group performed at a level significantly better than those who heard the stories in the one-on-one setting, (b) the children in the one-on-one and small group setting both performed significantly better than those in the whole class setting, and (c) the children in the one-on-one and small group setting responded with more comments and questions than the children in the whole class setting. Morrow and Smith’s findings (1990) suggest that reading to children in small groups might produce as much interaction as one-on-one readings, and it also appears to develop greater comprehension than whole class or the one-on-one readings.

Reading aloud to students presents inherent challenges. The challenges presented by Hoffman, Roser, and Battle (1993) include the need for (a) providing a set time for stories or reading aloud, (b) making resources or quality children’s literature available, and (c) providing staff development and administrative support.
Although reading aloud to students appears to be a simple solution to the teaching of literacy, the act of reading aloud must not be oversimplified. A five-to-ten-minute read aloud period might satisfy requirements of the school district and ease the conscience of the teacher, but beneficial read aloud sessions will require teacher commitment, thorough planning, and careful implementation to include book conversations and extension activities so that literacy skills are developed.

In summary, reading aloud to students develops the language processes, builds a knowledge of literature, and assists students in discovering story structure. It also provides satisfaction and builds imagination as well as cultivates a desire to read. Therefore, educators can assume that although it presents challenges for teachers, reading aloud is valuable, well-spent time, and should be a priority in today's school curriculum.
A descriptive single case study of one successful teacher was conducted in a developmental kindergarten classroom with inclusion special education and regular education students at a public elementary school in a North Louisiana school district. A qualitative research design was selected for the present study because (a) it was conducted in a natural setting and the researcher’s insights were the key to analysis; (b) it was descriptive, and the data were collected in the form of words or pictures; (c) the investigator was concerned with a process rather than simply a product; (d) data were analyzed inductively as themes and patterns emerged; and (e) meaning was at the center of this approach (Bogdan & Biklen, 1992). A single case study format was used because the purpose was to gather comprehensive, systematic, and in-depth information about an effective kindergarten teacher using holistic literature-based curricula.

A pilot study was begun in December 1994 so that a case study of one student in this classroom setting could be completed by the end of the year. After coding the field notes for the pilot study, the investigator changed the primary focus. The emphasis of the present study then shifted from a child-centered focus to a classroom teacher focus. Continued observation of the teacher occurred to answer the following questions:

(a) What was the interaction of the teacher with regular education and special education inclusion students in an inclusive kindergarten classroom with holistic, language-based curricula?

(b) What behaviors did the teacher exhibit to engage students in the literacy processes of reading and writing?
(c) What behaviors did the teacher exhibit to encourage students to react to books using a specific repeated read aloud strategy?

(d) What were the professional activities and interactions of the classroom teacher with her peers that contributed to her beliefs and practices?

The investigation of teacher behaviors and student acquisition of early literacy skills in a developmentally appropriate kindergarten was started in December 1994 and continued through June 1995. As investigator I visited this kindergarten classroom two to five times per week for two or more hours per visit. The time of day was varied so that different types of activities throughout the day could be observed. Participant observation was the primary mode used to gain information and access data in this environment. Conversations with the regular kindergarten classroom teacher and the full inclusion special education teacher provided a broader knowledge of the activities being observed. Key informants such as the building administrator, curriculum coordinator, and the other four kindergarten teachers were used to provide a more thorough understanding of the students, the teacher, and the learning environment.

Extensive time spent in this kindergarten classroom provided a personal presence that allowed me as investigator to tell the story of this teacher. This was not a traditional research report, but rather a translation of an experience in this particular setting developed with rich narrative. This study developed a personal understanding of the structures and relationships that were present in this particular situation (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). The research reflected my voice in three modes: researcher, school administrator, and teacher.
Selection of Participant

This classroom was initially selected as a research site because it had a broad spectrum of students with varying abilities and disabilities as well as differing socioeconomic backgrounds. An early review of field notes precipitated a change in focus. The emphasis shifted from a child-centered perspective to that of the kindergarten teacher.

This teacher, identified as Ms. May for the purpose of the present study, was selected as the subject of this research because she was considered to be outstanding by her peers, administration, and parents. She was also chosen due to her experience in the use of developmentally appropriate literacy practices for the kindergarten-age child and because of the development of her early literacy curricula based on her holistic, language-based, inclusive philosophy.

Ms. May had 21 years of teaching experience. She had taught kindergarten for 13 years, seven in this school. Ms. May was in her third year working with special education kindergarten students and was teamed with a full inclusion teacher in her classroom during part of each day. Her undergraduate degree was from a well-known university in Texas; her master’s degree was from a small private college in Louisiana; and she had completed the educational specialist degree from a well-known Louisiana university. Ms. May had been awarded numerous classroom grants for innovative teaching practices; had given presentations on the local, state, and regional level; had over 200 hours of staff development credit at the local school district level; and had been nominated for her district’s Teacher of the Year award. She was a member of several professional organizations and had served on numerous district curriculum committees. When asked to share what had influenced her in changing from a workbook approach to a more
holistic, language-based approach for teaching beginning literacy skills to her kindergarten students, she replied, "A graduate class in process writing, attendance at a one-week Bill Martin Literacy Conference, and administrative encouragement and guidance have made me view reading and writing in a different way." When asked to provide a brief summary of how she would like to be described as a teacher, she shared: "I want the children in my class to love school. It needs to be fun and exciting. I also want the children to learn to be independent learners, responsible for their own mistakes and triumphs."

The target classroom consisted of 21 kindergarten students. There were five full inclusion students in this classroom and 16 regular education students. The class had a racial make-up of six black students and 15 white students. Twenty-five percent of the students participated in the free lunch program.

Data Collection
As investigator I visited this classroom two to five times each week during the period from December 1994 through June 1995. I took detailed field notes of classroom interactions and teacher behavior. Field notes consisted of two types of information: descriptive and reflective. As participant observer, I captured a word picture of the setting, teacher, students, and other adults. As investigator, I observed actions and conversations and assimilated them as part of the field notes. During the pilot study, I tape recorded the visits initially, but discontinued recording since the voices of the young children were often difficult to hear and understand. Reflections representative of my thoughts, ideas, concerns, and questions were included in the field notes. Originally I used my field notes to develop an in-depth look at the one student selected for the pilot case study. Continuation of data gathering provided ample information for the present research study. Preliminary analysis of the
data helped me select this classroom teacher as the subject for the dissertation and determine research questions. Beginning in July 1995, the data were analyzed and triangulated. The qualitative computer program *HyperQual2* (Padilla, 1993) was used initially to assist in coding and categorizing data, but hand-coding the field notes proved to be more effective.

**Data Collection Procedure**

Field notes were taken two to five times per week from December 1994 through June 1995. Triangulation of sources was completed to include information from the following: (a) field notes, (b) key informants, (c) observer comments and reflections, and (d) student records and test data. The four regular education kindergarten teachers and the full inclusion teacher, as key informants in this project, were interviewed using open-ended questions. Other key informants, including the paraprofessional, the curriculum coordinator, and the school administrator, were informally interviewed to gain additional information. School records and test data were studied for pertinent information. After the field notes were reviewed, the information was analyzed and triangulated to discover emerging themes and patterns that contributed to creating answers to the research questions.

Permission to complete this research was obtained from the local school board and the school administrator. The parents of all children in the class were invited to a meeting early in the process designed to explain the purpose of the research and answer any questions pertaining to visits to the classroom. My role as researcher was thoroughly delineated to the parents. Permission to work with the children, tape record, and photograph was given by all parents. A copy of the letter requesting permission to do the study from the school district (Appendix A), a copy of the letter granting permission (Appendix B), and the parent permission slip (Appendix C) are included. All
individuals in this study participated on a voluntary basis. The identity of the participants remains confidential, and steps were taken to prevent data from being associated with specific persons.

A request to complete this research project was also submitted to the Institutional Review Board at Louisiana State University. This research project was determined to be exempt from committee review (Appendix D).

**Data Collection Analysis**

The data were analyzed according to qualitative methodology using the constant comparative method of data analysis. Patton (1990) stated that analysis of data requires a review of all field notes, organization of the data, and study for emergent themes and linkages between patterns in the data. The constant comparative method involves a series of actions that occurred simultaneously with the analysis routinely recurring to involve more data collection and coding. Glaser (as cited in Bogdan & Biklen, 1992) described the following steps involved in the constant comparative method: (a) start data collection; (b) search for key issues, events, and activities within the data to develop categories of focus; (c) collect additional data that provide examples of the categories of focus; (d) write about the categories by attempting to describe and account for the examples in the data while constantly looking for new examples; (e) work with the data and emerging themes to discover basic relationships; and (f) gather samples, code, and write as the analysis focuses on the primary categories. In the beginning stages of the research, classroom data were collected and some initial coding was completed to look for emerging themes. Frequently revisiting the classroom allowed for collection of more data, completion of further analysis, and a search for linkages between the data in a complex recursive activity, which culminated in this research report.
The computer program *HyperQual2* (Padilla, 1993) was initially used to assist with sorting and categorizing the data after they had been coded, but hand-coding was found to be more meaningful. The sorted data were analyzed. Data from the field notes, interviews, and student records were reviewed routinely to search for recurring patterns and emergent themes. As patterns emerged, sources were rechecked to confirm or deny the patterns. Every attempt was made to review and synthesize all information gained from the field notes and interviews to complete this study. Through this process, a rich descriptive picture emerged, depicting how this kindergarten teacher developed early literacy skills in all students.

**Qualitative Component**

**Axioms**

The present study used qualitative research methodology and reflected the five qualitative axioms of Lincoln and Guba (1985) to be considered when analyzing qualitative data. Axiom 1 asserts that the multiple realities of any setting can be studied only holistically. These multiple realities diverge, making control and/or predictions of outcomes unlikely. However, some level of understanding can be achieved.

Axiom 2 emphasizes the relationship between the knower and the known. The researcher and the teacher were inseparable and interacted to influence one another. It was therefore understood that the researcher's knowledge base might have influenced the direction of the research investigation and that this knowledge base could not be separated from the study. Because of the close link between the research and the researcher, research bias must be considered when conducting qualitative analysis (Stuhlmann, 1993).
Axiom 3 relates to the generalizability of the research. As a thick description was developed, the researcher looked for similar situations where the findings applied. As similar situations or patterns emerged, the researcher formulated working hypotheses. This implied that by using the information from one set of circumstances, one might possibly see the same phenomena in a new or different circumstance.

Axiom 4 involves the possibility of causal linkages. Qualitative researchers believe, “All entities are in a state of mutual simultaneous shaping so that it is impossible to distinguish causes from effects” (Lincoln & Guba, 1985, p. 38).

Axiom 5 delineates the role of values in qualitative research. Researchers engaged in qualitative methods cannot separate their values from their research. Values are demonstrated in a variety of ways including selection of a research question, choice of research design, data collection instruments and procedures, and the interpretation of the results.

**Trustworthiness**

Though studies employing qualitative methodology do not use the same methods for establishing validity and reliability of their data collection methods and final conclusions as do quantitative studies, these elements are no less critical in qualitative research (Rowe, 1986). The researcher must persuade his or her audiences that the findings are legitimate and dependable (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). To establish trustworthiness and insure that the field notes were accurate, I followed several procedures. According to Lincoln and Guba (1985), sustained engagement; triangulation; and the use of member checking, peer debriefing, and auditing heighten the probability that the findings of the qualitative research are credible. These features have been built into this study in the following ways.
First, by observing and participating in this classroom experience over an extended period of time, I became a member of the classroom community, thereby increasing my ability to understand the interactions between the students and teacher. The length of the research allowed better evaluation of changes caused by initial participation and data collection instruments (tape recorder and laptop computer). Observing, participating, and registering hundreds of literacy interactions better established emerging themes and patterns and determined irrelevancies. The culture of the classroom was learned and trust was built between the investigator and class members.

As the second safeguard to ensure trustworthiness of the research, triangulation was built into the present study in two ways. By collecting data through a number of techniques, I compensated for any limitations of one method and strengthened the research by the use of other methods (triangulation of methods). As informal conversations were held with the classroom teacher and key informants, data were triangulated from multiple sources. This allowed for better understanding of observations, interpretations of events, and responses.

The kindergarten teacher who was the subject of the study served as the member checker, receiving and reviewing a copy of the field notes daily. The teacher and I discussed any needed changes to reflect accurately the situation in the classroom and to eliminate bias. Member checking assured that reported reconstructions were recognizable representations of classroom realities.

The use of a peer debriefer as suggested by Lincoln and Guba (1985) insured the accuracy of the information presented in this research. Throughout the entire research process, the peer debriefer read field notes, discussed and debated the working hypotheses, probed for biases, helped
define coding categories, and served as a knowledgeable person to discuss questions and concerns. The peer debriefer had a master’s degree in reading, had 20 years of experience teaching young children, and was familiar with qualitative methodology.

An external auditor (Lincoln & Guba, 1985) was used to analyze data and provide dependability and confirmability. The auditor examined data after field notes were analyzed and carefully verified both the process and product of the research. By examining the process of the inquiry, the external auditor determined that the process was acceptable and dependable. The auditor also examined the product (data and findings) to show that the conclusions were a reasonable and logical representation of the data. The external auditor had a doctorate in education and was dean of a college of education and behavioral sciences at a university in a midwestern state.

Determinations of the generalizability of these research findings must be left to those researchers who desire to apply these findings to other settings. Nevertheless, the present study provided a detailed narrative of the characteristics of the teacher’s interactions with students and a comprehensive description of the data collection methods used. Examples of classroom events and artifacts which served as research data were included. With this information, readers must develop their own judgment about the similarities between the classroom setting described in this study and other settings to which the information may be generalized.
CHAPTER 4
TEACHER INTERACTIONS IN AN INCLUSIVE KINDERGARTEN
WITH HOLISTIC, LANGUAGE-BASED CURRICULA

The Classroom Community

The classroom which I observed for the present research study was a constant hum of noise. One of the early comments in the field notes was, “There is movement and a small amount of noise, but to an outside observer who had not been a part of this entire activity this would probably look like a class in chaos.” Students were moving around the room, negotiating their classroom environment in a productive way.

To understand the classroom community, one must understand the routines, physical environment, and the teacher practices which made the students successful. Ms. May’s classroom schedule (Figure 4.1) showed a mixture of reading and writing activities, integrated instruction, large group and small group activities, active and passive activities, and enrichment time.

The floor plan (Figure 4.2) depicted a center approach to kindergarten, where children were involved in a multitude of varied activities during different parts of the day. Upon entering Ms. May’s classroom, one was immediately aware that books were a key element in all areas. The Book and Author Area, which contained an Author’s Corner, was inviting to the students. The books were on low shelves so they were at the level of these young children. There were also small plastic tubs filled with books by special authors. On the front of each tub was the author’s name, with some having special pictures or other identifying characteristics so that the children could easily retrieve a tub and reread or browse through books by their favorite authors. There was a book display rack facing the children where big books and small books were displayed. This rack held books that had just been read by the teacher. There
Ms. May's Class Schedule

8:00 - 8:30  Choice Time
8:30 - 9:00  Enrichment Class
            Monday--Music
            Tuesday--Physical Education
            Wednesday--Music
            Thursday--Reading and Writing Time
            Friday--Reading and Writing Time

9:00 - 10:00  Repeated Read Aloud
10:00 - 10:15  Recess and Snack
10:15 - 11:30  Language Arts (group rotation or whole
               group [Thematic Unit or Author Study]
               Monday--Library (10:15 - 10:45)
               Thursday--PE (10:45 - 11:15)
               Friday--Computer Enrichment (10:45 - 11:15)

11:30 - 12:00  Mathematics
               Wednesday--Social Skills
12:00 - 12:15  Journal Writing
12:20 - 12:50  Lunch
1:00 - 1:15   Bathroom and Story
1:15 - 2:15   Rest Time
2:15 - 2:30   Prepare to go home
              2:40  Car pool
              2:50  Buses
3:00  YEP (Youth Enrichment Program--after
      school child care

Figure 4.1 Ms. May's Class Schedule
Figure 4.2 Ms. May's Classroom Floor Plan

- Windows with Shelves Below
- Box It, Bag It Calendar Area
- Book and Author Area
- Block Area
- Housekeeping Area
- Independent Student Activity Table
- Easel/Painting Area
- Student Mailboxes
- Art/Project Table
- Student Lockers
- Computer Area
- Science Area
- Math Area
- Teacher Table
- Counter Space with Shelves Below and Display Area Above
- Teacher Work Area
- Hall Door
- Bathroom
- Outside Door
was also a section for books brought to school by the children that they wanted
Ms. May to read to the class or they wanted to share with their classmates.
Within the Book and Author Area was a tape recorder with headphones so that
the children could leisurely listen to books and tapes, many of which had
already been shared by Ms. May. In one part of this area was the Author’s
Corner. This was a special place where the author who was currently being
studied could be celebrated. In the Author’s Corner was a picture of the
author, biographical information, copies of his or her books, and book jackets
of books written by the special author.

Ms. May believed in integrating the curricula to respect the
interrelationship between the four communication processes of reading,
writing, speaking, and listening. All instruction and student activities were
planned so that children had opportunities to read, write, speak, and listen to
others. Ms. May also planned thematic units based upon major concepts,
which integrated the four communication processes and often included
content area subjects. These units of study made meaningful connections for
students and provided opportunities for transfer of skills. An example of a
thematic unit in Ms. May’s class was her unit about the ocean. She utilized
children’s literature such as the book A House for Hermit Crab (Carle, 1987)
and the big book Life in the Sea (Curran, 1985). These books were the
backbone of the unit. She introduced each book, discussed pictures and
unknown vocabulary, read and reread the texts, and continually questioned
orally. Her questions were both literal (recall) and higher level questions. She
developed a K-W-L chart: What I Know—What do I Want to learn—What I
Learned (Ogle, 1986). This chart guided the children in their inquiry into
science concepts they were interested in pursuing. It also served as the basis
for the unit of study and was referred to and reviewed daily.
These books and concepts about the ocean were integrated across the curriculum to include activities in reading, writing, mathematics, science, and social living. Relevant centers in the classroom reflected the integration of literacy skills into the content area theme. For example, in the science center, the children were able to observe several hermit crabs living in an aquarium. There was also a giant magnifying glass for exploring artifacts from the ocean. Appropriate books about the ocean and ocean life were strategically placed in the center. Opportunities were available for the children to record their scientific observations in a science log.

Students used real shells to classify and count sets in the mathematics center. This was done both individually and with partners. Individual chalkboards were available for students to write numerals relating to sets and record other data.

The children had dictated information for a chart to Ms. May which included words about the ocean and the life within. This chart was placed in the writing center so that it would be available for the children’s reference when writing in their journals or developing stories in the writing center.

As an independent art activity, the children painted crabs, reproducing the art work of Eric Carle in *A House for Hermit Crab* (1987). After painting the crabs and allowing them to dry, the students spent time at the art table developing fine motor skills by cutting out the crabs and assembling a collage in the style of Eric Carle. These were then placed on a bulletin board with related items about the thematic unit on the ocean.

The teacher table area was an area where Ms. May worked with small groups of students in a directed instructional activity. For example, she might reread a book that had been read by the entire class earlier to a small group.
Then students and the teacher completed an extension activity emphasizing a certain skill that Ms. May deemed important to this lesson.

During the group rotation part of the instructional day, the children were divided into three heterogeneous groups to move through the centers. There were three areas around which the students rotated: the teacher table where direct instruction was given by Ms. May, the independent student activity table where the students were involved in an independent project with occasional supervision by the special education paraprofessional, and the center areas prepared by Ms. May. She allowed the students to sign up on a chart for participation in the center areas. All centers were not available to the children on every day. A sign-up process using a chart (Figure 4.3) organized this time in the schedule, provided structure so that there were only two or three

![Diagram](Fig4.3.png)
children in each center at a time, and gave students an authentic purpose for writing. All children were given opportunities to work in all of the centers during a week. Ms. May began by calling a group to her table. One group went to the independent student activity table, and another group signed up for the centers. Students worked in these locations for approximately 15 to 20 minutes. Then Ms. May signaled using a soft bell, and students rotated. This rotation occurred three times so all students had opportunities to complete the different activities in the various instructional areas. Ms. May changed the heterogeneous groups often so that students had the opportunity to work with one another.

Ms. May’s teaching reflected a holistic, language-based perspective of literacy and followed the recommendations of the National Association for the Education of Young Children’s developmentally appropriate practices (Bredekamp, 1987). Making the curricula appropriate to meet the needs of individuals was essential to Ms. May’s philosophy of teaching young children.

Interaction with Students in a Classroom with Holistic, Language-Based Curricula

Question A: What was the interaction of the teacher with regular education and special education inclusion students in an inclusive kindergarten classroom with holistic, language-based curricula?

During the initial visits to this kindergarten classroom, I was interested in observing how the teacher accommodated the needs of the special education full inclusion students. Observations revealed that Ms. May interacted with all of the children in the classroom, not just the full inclusion students and further developed my investigation of what she did to insure learning, success, and motivation in all of her students.
Coding of field notes indicated that Ms. May's teaching behaviors fell into two broad categories: (a) routine teacher behaviors and (b) as needed teacher behaviors. Behaviors were classified as routine if they were observed on 70% or more of the days on which detailed data illustrating literacy activities were collected. As needed behaviors were those behaviors observed on less than 70% of the days, but more than 33%. Although I did not observe some of the behaviors in this category routinely, it is possible that the behaviors occurred at other times of the day when I was not present.

The operational definitions for each of the coded categories or themes that emerged from the data will be explained. In addition, concrete examples from the observations to examine each of the aspects of the teacher's behavior in depth are included.

**Routine Teacher Behaviors**

The following were behaviors that Ms. May engaged in routinely to interact with regular education and special education inclusion students as they participated in literacy activities. Her routine teacher behaviors included management, reviewing, checking for understanding, questioning,

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ROUTINE TEACHER BEHAVIORS</th>
<th>% OF DAYS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Making connections</td>
<td>84</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Checking for understanding</td>
<td>89</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Review</td>
<td>89</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Management</td>
<td>97</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interactions to develop literacy skills</td>
<td>97</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Questioning</td>
<td>97</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Instructional strategies</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Figure 4.4 Question A: Routine Teacher Behaviors**
instructional strategies, making connections, and interactions to develop literacy skills.

**Management.** In the present study, management was defined as the teacher behaviors that were necessary to insure development of early literacy skills by maximizing student time on task and student involvement. Teacher behaviors that managed learning also involved positive interactions and classroom activities to develop appropriate student behavior, self-esteem, and affirmative feelings about learning in the classroom community.

On no occasion during the visits did Ms. May raise her voice, act in a negative manner, or make damaging comments to the students. Managing student behavior in a positive way helped to insure that a sense of community was developed and that students assumed responsibility for their own actions. Prior to any important listening activity, Ms. May explained to the children why they needed to be good listeners, and waited for those who were not listening or were not on task to become involved with the activity. She was quick to compliment students who were listening or involved with the task, saying, "Give yourself a pat on the back for a job well done." When children were misbehaving or acting inappropriately, she led them to make wiser decisions and to see that what they were doing was inappropriate. For example, during story time one winter morning, Dean and Kim were playing with a piece of paper and causing a disturbance among four of the children. Kim continued to throw a tiny piece of paper into the air, distracting herself and others from the story. When Ms. May completed the book, she commented that most of the students were good listeners. Then she asked, "What could have helped you be better listeners today?" Theresa answered, "My brain." Crystal said that she could have stopped playing with Dean, and Kim said that she could have stopped playing and looked at the teacher. Through this questioning, Ms. May
allowed the children to share what would have made them better listeners and what behaviors they could have changed. In most situations, the children and Ms. May discussed as a group whether they had been good listeners or readers. During one of Ms. May's talks with the children about why it was important to be a good listener, Karl said, "I know because I want to learn to read everything in the whole world."

Not only did Ms. May treat listening skills in a constructive manner, she also handled other problems positively as well. In one particular situation, the children had been reading loudly along with Ms. May. Ms. May never reminded them to read softly, but at the end of the passage she asked the children if they would like to curl up next to their mom in bed and have her read in a loud voice. She never told the children not to yell when they were reading together as a group, but she guided them to read appropriately. This indicates how she guided and molded the children to develop appropriate behavior in a positive manner so as not to damage their self-esteem or develop negative feelings about school and learning. These examples of Ms. May's teacher behaviors insured the development of appropriate student behaviors. The following statement from Ms. May summarizes her attitude about developing self-esteem and positive feelings through her method of classroom management:

In my classroom, everyone is important and contributes to our daily activities, whether it is a cooperative learning exercise, an everyday chore, help with tying a shoe, or explaining a direction. We are all part of our classroom community. Experiencing group situations, gaining independence and dealing with feelings in an acceptable way are all part of the atmosphere of my classroom. In my classroom we have three rules: be kind to each other, help one another, and clean up your own mess.

Student behaviors during routine and transition activities were carefully managed by Ms. May. She used a soft bell as a signal when students needed
to clean up and move from one activity to another. Throughout the field notes were examples of Ms. May giving the students choices where to sit during the whole group instructional time. By giving students a choice about their seating positions, she was allowing the students to be responsible for their behaviors.

At times when the students moved from a small group or individual activity to a whole class activity, Ms. May sang a verse "Who Is Sitting on Their Bottom" and the children chanted back to her if they were indeed seated on the carpeted area and ready to listen. Occasionally one or two children were still cleaning up in their area and not responding as the others came to the carpeted area. Ms. May did not scold, but simply began her reading or discussion of a story. Then the children hurriedly completed the clean-up task and joined the rest of the group for the activity.

Misbehaviors were often intentionally ignored by Ms. May, and her principal reported that Ms. May "just looks at them (the children) and they behave." However, a "time out" chair was used on several occasions. When a child was seated in the time out chair, he or she was isolated from the group, but was seated near enough to see and hear the class activity. In this way, students realized the consequences for inappropriate behavior, but were still held accountable for the instructional task.

**Review.** Review was defined as any activity or dialogue for the purpose of rehearsing previously learned skills, strategies, or concepts. Ms. May routinely reviewed with the whole group, small groups, and individuals to help her students acquire literacy skills.

Ms. May used rereading as one review technique. This was exemplified in the field notes when one child needed to know the spelling of a particular word to complete an entry in his journal. When the children came to the carpeted area for the whole group time, Ms. May began by sharing that this
child needed a word for his writings and this word was not on any of their word lists displayed around the classroom. Ms. May suggested that they compile a January Word List Chart. She allowed the children to share responses such as snow, snowflake, snowman, cold, winter, sweater, snowstorm, snow boots, snowsuit, and ice skating, etc. After the list was completed, Ms. May interacted with the children to discuss the responses provided. She read the words on the chart as a form of review, and then reread them with the students spontaneously reading with her. This form of review was very casual, but the rereading was an effective review technique and was essential to the children's learning.

At times, Ms. May had to review to clarify her instructions for the children. In one instance, she introduced the children to the concept of a math journal for recording their responses. On the first page of the journal, which had been prepared for the children, Ms. May had written, "What Is Math?" She informed the children that on the first page they were to write or draw their ideas of what math meant to them. These ideas could be something they thought of or they could relate something from the book she had just read to them. As Ms. May circulated and monitored, she saw that the children were having a difficult time writing or drawing about this abstract concept even though they had been able to converse with her about the topic. She stopped the activity and shared with them Theresa's idea about using shapes in her book. She told the children that Theresa was really using her brain instead of just writing or drawing what her neighbor had on his or her paper. Ms. May then reviewed ways that the children used math such as weighing things with scales in the math center; sorting objects by putting the keys in one pile and the seashells in another; graphing on the weather chart; tallying when completing the morning calendar activity; counting, sorting, and measuring.
when engaging in the math tub activities; and counting money in the grocery store that was a part of the housekeeping center. After this simple conversational review with the children, they were able to return to the math log and make many entries by writing or drawing the answer to the question, “What Is Math?”

There were many examples of Ms. May reviewing by allowing the children to retell a story. Ms. May told the children that she was going to share the story *The Wolf’s Chicken Stew* (Kasza, 1987). She related to them that she would tell the story so there were no pictures to share. She asked them to listen very closely and imagine this story in their minds. After telling the story, Ms. May reviewed the story and its events by assisting the children in recalling all of the 100 items brought to the chicken and her chicks that were named in the story. This book and the review of each of the 100 items was correlated with the five kindergarten classes’ celebration of the 100th Day of School.

Ms. May often used visual aids when reviewing with the students. When she utilized her repeated read aloud strategy in the development of early literacy skills, Ms. May read the same book repeatedly (a form of review) for four days. On the fifth day she selected a similar or companion book to read. After reading the companion book, she compared and contrasted the two books using a visual aid. The children provided verbal responses for Ms. May to write on a chart explaining how the books were alike and different. On each occasion that this strategy was observed, Ms. May continually returned to the visual aid to review both during the activity and at its culmination. This revisiting not only helped the children develop the ability to read the words on the chart, but it also provided needed review to clarify and enhance concept understandings.
Ms. May strategically placed charts and other visuals aids in various locations throughout the room so students could refer to them when review was needed. An example of this activity was noted when Mike asked Ms. May how to spell *and*. Ms. May directed him to the “word wall” of high frequency words located in the writing center. She sat next to Mike and reviewed these words with him. When they came to the word *and*, his eyes brightened and he exclaimed, “I’ve got it!” In this particular situation, it would have been easier for Ms. May to tell the child how to spell the word and not move to the word wall in the writing center and actually review by reading through the list of words, but Mike might not have internalized the spelling of the word as he used it for a purpose in his writing.

Ms. May planned for review of book content daily during her repeated read aloud sessions. She showed the book and allowed the children to respond by reviewing the title of the text, the author, the illustrator, and key events before actually rereading the text. The rereading of the text to the children was another form of planned book review.

**Checking for understanding.** Checking for understanding meant any activity that the teacher completed to verify student comprehension of lesson content and activities. Ms. May checked for understanding in an informal fashion throughout all literacy lessons and activities.

Ms. May’s checking for understanding was quite obvious when she was conferencing one-on-one with the children about their entries in their daily journals. Although she was unable to conference with every child on every day, by questioning the children as they shared their daily journal entries, she was able to immediately check for understanding. She had the child read a particular entry to her and then she followed up with questions. During one conference, she noted that Kari had left a large amount of blank space at the
top of the page. Ms. May asked her why she did not write in this space, and they discussed the problem. Ms. May’s questioning led Kari to understand a very important print concept—the concept of beginning to read and write at the top of a page. Ms. May further clarified by modeling and showing Kari where to begin and how to write from left to right.

Ms. May also checked for understanding by initiating repeated readings and then listening and noting parts of phrases or sections of text with which the children were having problems recalling words as they read. She said, “Let’s read this one more time.” As the children reread, Ms. May would stop reading herself and begin to observe who was reading and developing an understanding of the text. To clarify and provide a practice extension activity, Ms. May usually supplied a taped version of the book in the book center so the children could listen to the story and follow the print, thus providing additional reinforcement.

Questioning. Questioning was routine and a prominent theme throughout the coding and analysis of the field notes. Questioning involved the teacher asking students literal and higher level questions to check for understanding, clarify, probe for deeper meanings, and assess student learning. Questions were asked to encourage the children to recall facts from a text that had been shared, to determine if students understood the steps to follow in a project, and to develop the children’s ability to think about everything rather than just spontaneously providing an answer. Review activities and dialogue often took the form of questioning in Ms. May’s class. Through the thoughtful use of questioning, Ms. May routinely encouraged her students to predict, compare and contrast, make inferences, draw conclusions, use context clues, generalize, and provide support for their responses. This questioning helped students construct meaning and develop vocabulary.
Data indicated that Ms. May rarely provided answers for the children, but questioned the children to make them think for themselves, which led the children to answer their own questions.

Each time a book was read to the children, Ms. May questioned to check not only for their comprehension of the text, but also their understanding of the pictures and their relationship to the story. For example, on the fourth day of the repeated read aloud strategy using the book _Mortimer_ (Munsch, 1983), Ms. May told the children as she read they were going to be talking about feelings. She informed the children that they would need good concentration. She began reading the story and asked, “How do you think Mortimer felt when his mama was carrying him upstairs to bed?” She checked for understanding by asking the children to pretend how they felt when they were in their mama’s arms and she carried them to bed, tucked them in, or hugged them tightly. Ms. May related these feelings to Mortimer in the story and the children shared with her that Mortimer felt good. As she continued to read and discuss this story, all of her questions related to feelings, but she was also checking the students’ understandings about the concepts in this particular book. She used illustrations from the story so that the children could compare events. She asked the children to verbalize the differences they noted on these two pages of illustrations. This continual probing, questioning, and waiting for answers gave all children opportunities for responding, but it also allowed Ms. May many opportunities to check the students’ understanding of the text.

On some occasions, Ms. May used questioning techniques not only to check for understandings, but also to clarify misunderstandings or misconceptions. After reading the companion book _Pigs_ (Munsch, 1989), the children shared their favorite parts of the story. Crystal told the class that she
liked the part of the story with the pig and the school bus. Bobby said that he liked the part where the character found the pig in her desk. When Kim began to relate to the pig in the story rather than telling her favorite part, Ms. May immediately clarified by saying, "Will you tell us your favorite part?" Ms. May explained to Kim what she actually meant by "favorite part of the story." Ms. May did this by sharing an example of her favorite part. Thus, the questioning strategy helped clarify the task for Kim.

The daily calendar routine involved many episodes where simple recall questions were asked. In the large group calendar activity, Ms. May asked questions such as, "What number will be put on the calendar for today?" or "What is the weather like today?" or "What number goes on the calendar to represent yesterday?"

Ms. May also used questioning during and after reading whole texts to the students. As she read to the children from the book *The Mitten* (Brett, 1989), the students listened attentively. Ms. May stopped and asked questions such as, "What animals have been in the story so far?" Then she allowed the children to randomly respond and she listed the animals that had appeared up to that point in the story. Ms. May continued reading and then abruptly stopped just prior to the end of the story. She asked literal level questions to assist her students in making predictions, thus leading to the development of higher levels of comprehension. She instructed the children to go to the tables and draw or write how they thought the story would end. She told them that they would have three minutes to complete this activity and then they would return to the carpeted area. Ms. May set the timer for three minutes. When the timer rang, the children returned to the carpeted area and shared their story endings. Finally, Ms. May read the end of the story. After she completed it,
she asked questions so children could determine if their predictions were correct and then she reviewed the characters and events in this book.

Ms. May employed strategies to develop higher level thinking skills. One example of using literature to build higher level thinking skills through questioning occurred when the class was comparing the books *I Was Walking Down the Road* (Barchas, 1975) and *Rosie's Walk* (Hutchins, 1968). Ms. May utilized two large overlapping circles on a piece of white butcher paper to show the comparison of these two texts. She led the students to first discover the characters in both books, and then she reviewed both texts to encourage the children to really think. She continued to probe and tried to guide their responses until they concluded that the animals in both stories wanted to be free. This fact was never explicitly expressed in the story, but by her deep probing and questioning, the children were able to arrive at this conclusion.

Every time Ms. May read a new book to her class, she asked the students to make predictions. In one instance when she introduced the book *One Cold Wet Night* (Melser & Cowley, 1980), the class discussed the text and pictures throughout the oral reading. On several pages of the text were ellipses, signifying that something special would occur on the following page. At each opportunity, Ms. May asked the children to predict what was upcoming and routinely had them justify their answers. She encouraged the students to pretend they were a story character and to imagine what they would do in the character’s situation.

Ms. May’s repeated read aloud strategy (discussed in Chapter 6) provided many opportunities for questioning the students at a higher level. The first day of the repeated read aloud strategy always required that students make predictions. During the fourth day, Ms. May helped students make inferences and draw conclusions about the characters’ feelings. On the fifth
day, Ms. May built skills in comparing and contrasting as children were questioned about how two books were the same and different.

As she related one book to another, particularly on the fifth day of her repeated read aloud strategy, Ms. May used literal questioning to help the students recall the stories. Through her questioning, students compared and contrasted the two separate texts. An excellent illustration of this strategy involved the books *The Napping House* (Wood, 1984) and *Silly Sally* (Wood, 1992). Ms. May drew two overlapping circles on a giant piece of white butcher paper to make a Venn diagram. She told the children that on each of the circles she would write the titles of the two books. Under each of the book titles, they listed story components that were in the books. On the overlapping part of the circles, they listed items they recalled from both books. To develop this activity, Ms. May incorporated literal level questioning and wrote the responses provided by the children on the Venn diagram. This was an extension activity employing literal level questioning as the basis for its development, but it also encouraged the use of higher level comprehension skills and was used for other literacy development purposes.

**Instructional strategies.** Under the broad theme of instruction, three distinct categories emerged: direct instruction, informal instruction, and instructional conversations. These three instructional strategies were easily observable in the classroom throughout the day.

Direct instruction in this study refers to the times when Ms. May was working directly with one or more of the students to develop specific skills, strategies and/or concepts. For instance, working with a poem in the book *Chicken Soup with Rice* (Sendak, 1962), Ms. May first read the poem. On the second reading, she directed the students’ attention to the words *ice* and *rice*. She told them that these two words rhymed. Then she continued to go
through the text noting words that ended “the same,” and therefore rhymed. She extended this activity by writing the word *ice* on a piece of chart paper and asking the students to name another word in the story that rhymed with *ice*. The students responded with rhyming words, which Ms. May wrote on the chart as the children called them out. She directed the students’ attention to the entire list of words and said that all of the words ended with the letters *i-c-e*. In this example, Ms. May provided direct instruction in rhyming words, but the instruction was within the context of a whole book. Ms. May’s methodology differed from traditional kindergarten practices where students use a workbook page or a ditto sheet and are involved in activities such as cutting and pasting pairs of pictures to indicate rhyming words.

In another situation, the students were having a difficult time distinguishing between the words *Tuesday* and *Thursday* when they needed to complete their calendar activity. Ms. May showed the children word cards with one of the words printed on each. She guided their attention to each letter in both words. By carefully looking at the letters in the words and comparing them, she directed the children to observe print details, thus enabling them to tell the differences between these words.

In addition to direct instruction, Ms. May took advantage of informal instructional opportunities. Informal instruction means instruction that occurs without prior planning, but that is provided as needed to develop early literacy skills. Ms. May used unexpected “teachable moments” throughout the day. Informal instruction was observed throughout all lessons and during center times when Ms. May moved from one area to another talking casually with students, but in a manner that provided instruction or guidance as needed for the activity. In one instance, Ms. May read the book *The Three Little Pigs* (Greenway, 1991) to the students. One student said that he had the same
story at home, but that it was not exactly like the one that Ms. May had just
read. Ms. May reached into her book basket and retrieved another version of
the story of the three little pigs. She shared this version of the story, and as
she read it to the children, she compared and contrasted the two books. This
was not a planned activity, but rather an informal opportunity to provide direct
instruction to clarify for the students that there are different versions of the
same story. Ms. May took advantage of the teachable moment that occurred
unexpectedly in her lesson.

A final category of instructional strategies identified in Ms. May’s class
was instructional conversation. Instructional conversation is defined as the
dialogue that occurs between a teacher and her students as they discuss a
book or activity. Ms. May did not have scripted questions to ask students,
although conversation was anticipated. She did fully intend for a dialogue to
occur between her and her students concerning the content of the book or the
activity. She provided direction to the conversation and helped keep students
focused, but Ms. May did not follow a set of prescribed questions as in a basal
teacher’s guide. Instructional conversations evolved between Ms. May and all
of the students at different times during the observations. The instructional
conversations occurred with single students, small groups, and the entire
class. Instructional conversation was continuous and was a characteristic of
Ms. May’s teaching style. She was continually talking for an instructional
purpose with the students, even during periods when lessons were not
occurring, as when she passed out the snacks when students exited the
classroom for recess.

Instructional conversation was a focus of the morning calendar routine.
In one situation, Ms. May asked the students serving as the leader and
caboose to come to the front of the group and put the correct pattern on the
calendar. She informally talked these two students through this process by first discussing with them where to begin. Since the current day was not the first day of the month, the children conversed about the correct numerals and the objects they would place on the calendar to begin the new pattern for that month. She then assisted them by talking about which shirts to put on the bears that were labeled *The Today Bear, The Tomorrow Bear,* and *The Yesterday Bear.* Her instructional conversations provided guidance as well as instruction in developing early literacy skills for these students.

During the morning when the children shared their journals with Ms. May, there were many opportunities for instructional conversations. Ms. May had a child read or tell about his or her journal entry. Then Ms. May made suggestions about such things as topics that students selected to write about, spacing on the page, letter formation, and elaboration and expansion of the journal entries. These informal instructional conversations were casual and directed to individuals and groups of students.

When Ms. May held an instructional conversation centered around a book, she and the students talked naturally about the book just as a group of adults do when discussing a book. After reading the book *Chicka Chicka Boom Boom* (Martin & Archambault, 1989), Ms. May casually asked the students to think about why they enjoyed the book. A natural conversation followed, with the students sharing, listening, and laughing. Darrell said that he liked the part of the book that repeated “Chicka Chicka Boom Boom.” Mike said he liked that part, too, because it made him want to “wiggle and jiggle.” Kim related her own loose tooth to the loose tooth “t” in the book. After Lauren shared that she liked the “black-eyed p” part, Joey told the class that he liked to eat black-eyed peas. Ms. May smiled and asked him if the “p” in the story could have another meaning. Theresa told the class that she could read parts
of the book because she had been reading it at nap time. As this conversation showed, Ms. May provided an opportunity for conversation to flow naturally after the reading of the text, but the content of the conversation had an instructional purpose.

**Making connections.** Making connections between school learning and the world outside the classroom makes learning more significant for students and helps them transfer the skills they learned in school to situations elsewhere. Ms. May helped students connect new learning to past learning and to their personal lives, and made books meaningful by correlating characters' lives to the children's experiences, linking one book to others, and connecting one author's work to the works of others. Ms. May routinely provided connections for her kindergartners to make literacy activities more meaningful.

Ms. May and her students frequently connected their classroom world to the world outside. For example, as the class was discussing a book entitled *Math is Everywhere* (Cutting & Cutting, 1988), Ms. May commented on ways the children used math each day. To make a meaningful connection to the outside world for the students, as well as to help them connect school learning to their personal lives, Ms. May talked with the class about their trips to the doctor. The children said that usually the first thing they did in a doctor's office was to step on scales to be weighed. Ms. May helped them see that math was involved in this activity. She then asked, “How does the doctor know how much medicine to put in a shot?” The children talked about the numbers on the syringe and how a doctor uses math skills to keep them healthy.

Ms. May often made connections for students using literacy activities. She helped the children identify with characters in books, understand the similarities and differences among books and authors, and recognize authors'
and illustrators' styles. For instance, as Ms. May introduced the book *Chicken Soup with Rice* (Sendak, 1962), one child noticed that there was a border around the cover of the book. After she complimented the child for using a special word such as *border*, Ms. May reminded the students that the cover was similar to the cover of books by author/illustrator Jan Brett they had previously studied. As the class began to discuss Maurice Sendak as the author of *Chicken Soup with Rice* (Sendak, 1962), Ms. May helped them recall that they had read another book by the same author, *Where the Wild Things Are* (Sendak, 1963). Connections such as these helped students feel associated with other books and authors in a special way.

**Interactions to develop literacy skills.** All of the interactions between the teacher and students described in this study helped Ms. May's students develop early literacy skills and strategies so they could become successful readers and writers. These interactions were customary and occurred numerous times throughout each day and across content areas. Because of Ms. May's strong belief in providing a naturalistic environment that promoted literacy, she routinely interacted with students to develop their reading and writing skills. Field notes confirmed that the natural and informal interactions between Ms. May and her students played a key role in her success in developing early literacy skills in these young learners.

**As Needed Teacher Behaviors**

Behaviors Ms. May engaged in as needed to interact with regular education and special education inclusion students as they participated in literacy activities included personalized instruction, guided practice, development of vocabulary understanding, clarification, and modifications/adaptations (Figure 4.5). Although some of these behaviors
were not observed routinely, it is possible that the behaviors occurred at times during the day when I was not present.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>AS NEEDED TEACHER BEHAVIORS</th>
<th>% OF DAYS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Personalized instruction</td>
<td>34</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Clarification</td>
<td>47</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Guided practice</td>
<td>47</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Modifications/Adaptations</td>
<td>53</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vocabulary understanding</td>
<td>58</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Figure 4.5 Question A: As Needed Teacher Behaviors

**Personalized instruction.** Ms. May employed personalized instruction as spontaneous teachable moments arose within her classroom. She personalized instruction when she used examples that related new learnings to herself, the children, or other familiar people close to the students.

In one instance, the class was participating in an author study on Bill Martin, Jr. After sharing several books and giving bibliographic information on the author, Ms. May shared with the students a photograph of Bill Martin taken with the school’s curriculum coordinator. This personalization helped the children relate to the real world of authors.

In another instance, Ms. May personalized instruction by relating the text to the children. Using the book *Chicka Chicka Boom Boom* (Martin, 1989) to reinforce letter names, the class discussed an illustration with all the capital and lower case letters jumbled up under a tree and falling over. Ms. May asked the children to think of the letter that began their names, and then she compared the position of the letter in the text to the proper position of the letter when they wrote their names on paper. In this way, Ms. May involved the children in the text by directly relating it to each child as she increased their observational skills and knowledge of print concepts.
**Guided practice.** An interaction was considered to be guided practice if Ms. May provided one-on-one or small group assistance to insure success in her holistic language-based curricula. Ms. May first modeled all tasks that she expected the students to complete independently. For those students who were not ready to attempt the task independently, she guided their efforts to help them accomplish the task.

As Ms. May was leading a small group lesson on presidential duties, she asked Nancy to read the title at the top of her paper. It said, "What Does the President of the United States Do?" Nancy was unable to begin the reading, so Ms. May helped her achieve success by pointing to the words and reading them with her.

Another example of guided practice occurred in a small group setting when the children were reading their own copy of the poem *January* from the book *Chicken Soup with Rice* (Sendak, 1962). Ms. May first instructed the students to underline the word *rice* in the poem. Ms. May went individually to each child having difficulty with this task, and helped him or her find the word. This task, with Ms. May's guidance as needed, continued as the children found other words and phrases.

**Vocabulary understanding.** When children encountered difficult words in texts that might contribute to comprehension problems, Ms. May led the students to understand the meanings through discussion, by example, or by showing an illustration. She gave concrete examples of the meanings of words and allowed the children to respond by giving their meanings of unknown words. She clarified when students provided meanings that were inappropriate. Field notes indicated that vocabulary development was accomplished as needed.
When the children encountered the word *host* in the book *Chicken Soup with Rice* (Sendak, 1962), Ms. May explained that a *host* was the person in charge of a special dinner at his house. Ms. May further explained the difference between a host and a hostess.

In another situation, Ms. May was sharing the book *Honest Abe* (Terkel, 1991). She questioned as they observed the cover, "What does *honest* mean?" Kevin said that *honest* means *truth*. Other children spontaneously added that it meant, "you can not tell a big lie" or "tell a story," etc. Then Ms. May asked how this word would relate to the story. She quizzed, "Who do you think is going to be honest in the story?" This illustration clarified how Ms. May not only allowed the students to provide meanings for words, but also how she related these word meanings to the text under discussion.

One of the unfamiliar vocabulary words students encountered in the book *Chicka Chicka Boom Boom* (Martin & Archambault, 1989) was *stooped*. Lauren volunteered what this word meant to her, saying that it meant *bended*. Then Ms. May encouraged children to use their bodies to illustrate their understandings of this word.

The field notes were filled with examples of vocabulary development. Ms. May seized each opportunity that arose to explain vocabulary words that were unfamiliar to the students.

**Clarification.** Clarification occurred as needed in Ms. May's classroom when she cleared up confusion and uncertainties. For instance, when Ms. May came to a part of a book that was confusing, she would read it again to help the children clarify the meaning.

For example, when the class was reading the book *The Napping House* (Wood, 1984), Ms. May led a discussion on sequence to help the children see the beginning, middle, and end of the story. Several children were uncertain
about the sequence of events, so Ms. May referred to the text to confirm their thoughts or clarify their misunderstandings.

**Modifications/adaptations.** Ms. May made modifications and adaptations for all children who needed differentiated instruction or modified tasks. The adaptations were a natural part of her instructional day and appeared to come spontaneously from Ms. May to meet the needs of all children.

In one instance, Ms. May was introducing the book *The Bugs, the Goats, and the Little Pink Pigs* (Martin & Archambault, 1987), on the cover of which was an illustration of a chalkboard with bugs, goats, and pigs. As Ms. May integrated math into her language arts lesson by having the students count the number of animals, John, a regular education student, was unable to count the number of bugs. Instead of correcting him or telling him he was wrong and skipping to another child, Ms. May had the children join in and count the bugs together. In this way, John was supported in his efforts to respond in a manner that was adapted for his individual need.

Another time Ms. May was helping Robert, a special education inclusion student, count the words in the title of the story. Robert had significant learning problems and was having difficulty with the task. Ms. May supplied him with a ruler to help him point to the individual words, thus insuring his success.

One of my original theories was that Ms. May would have to make accommodations for the five special education full inclusion children that were different from the modifications she made for regular education students. The data analysis completely refuted this hypothesis. It should not be inferred that Ms. May did not differentiate her assignments appropriately. It simply meant that making adaptations in tasks or instructional approaches was a natural act
that Ms. May performed for all children when modifications or adaptations were needed.
CHAPTER 5
TEACHER BEHAVIORS TO ENCOURAGE STUDENT ENGAGEMENT IN LITERACY PROCESSES

Teacher Behaviors Encouraging Student Engagement in Literacy Processes

Question B: What behaviors did the teacher exhibit to engage students in the literacy processes of reading and writing?

As field notes were coded, patterns emerged similar to those described in the last chapter. The behaviors of Ms. May which encouraged literacy processes fell into two broad categories: (a) routine teacher behaviors and (b) as needed teacher behaviors. Teacher behaviors were considered routine behaviors if they were observed on 70% or more of the days on which rich data illustrating literacy activities were collected. As needed teacher behaviors were those noted on less than 70% but more than 57% of the days. Although I did not observe some of these behaviors in this category routinely, it was possible that the behaviors occurred at other times of the day. An interpretation of each category and concrete examples from observations have been included to examine each aspect of Ms. May's behavior that encouraged student engagement in literacy processes.

Routine Teacher Behaviors

Observations identified seven routine teacher behaviors in which Ms. May engaged to involve her students in the literacy processes of reading and writing. Routine behaviors included rereading, encouraging student reading, teacher reading, exposing students to whole texts, providing book extension activities, participating in book talks with the students, and maintaining a print-rich environment.
Figure 5.1 Question B: Routine Teacher Behaviors

**Rereading.** Rereading (also known as repeated reading) was defined as those times when Ms. May had previously read a text to the students and then reread it, often more than once, to develop print concepts, an awareness of learning how to read, word recognition, comprehension, and oral reading fluency. Rereading was done daily in Ms. May’s classroom during the repeated read aloud lessons and at other times throughout the day. It was done with entire texts as well as parts of texts, words, phrases, and the literature-based experience charts. Ms. May believed that rereading was essential for students to have opportunities for reinforcing and extending their knowledge of a particular text, sentence, phrase, or word. She further believed that students learned about reading by having someone reread to them and by engaging in rereading themselves.

The act of rereading promoted a social community of learners. This was evidenced as the students would spontaneously join in the readings; there were no reprimands or discouraging words by Ms. May during this spontaneous reading. Rather, the students were encouraged to read along with the teacher. Students at all reading levels were given opportunities to experience reading success through the support of the rereadings.
Rereading also provided the less able students an opportunity to take risks in reading. Through rereading of selections, students were given support and learned from one another. Rereading allowed those students who made reading mistakes to self-correct by listening to Ms. May and the other students. The rereadings served as a good oral reading model. More importantly, the readings promoted a noncompetitive atmosphere where engaging in the act of reading was a successful venture for all students. It promoted a home-like atmosphere where children asked to reread their favorite storybooks for the sheer enjoyment of reading and developed a feeling of connection with a particular text. Rereading also allowed these students to truly know and understand the texts that were reread.

The children not only reread texts in whole group situations, but also at the teacher table during the group rotation time of the daily schedule. On one occasion, Ms. May had read the book *One Cold Wet Night* (Melser & Cowley, 1980) to the entire group. During the group rotation time at Ms. May's table, she and the students (in small groups) revisited the book. Ms. May and the students reread the book together with Ms. May running her hand under the print. Ms. May said to me, "It is hard for me to remember to run my hand under the print because I get so caught up in the story." During this session, Patty began to imitate Ms. May and ran her hand under the print. Ms. May assisted Patty. After this rereading, Ms. May and the students reread the story again. During this rereading they took an in-depth look at the pictures and again talked about them. They read the story for what was then the third rereading. Ms. May helped the students in this group (six children) run their hands or fingers under the print to aid the students in seeing the correspondence of a word in print with words they were reading. In the field notes I observed, "This is an excellent way of modeling real reading, and some of the children are
I definitely picking up on many of the words as they reread this text.” I also
reflected that the students did not appear bored rereading the books
numerous times.

Encouragement of student reading. Ms. May planned situations daily
that encouraged students to read. Her classroom environment invited children
to read through the use of the reading center, author corner, books and tapes,
and a computer with interactive CD-ROM storybooks. She structured
opportunities throughout the day so students would read individually, with a
partner, or as a whole group. She also provided opportunities for both silent
and oral reading.

Every day Ms. May provided Super Quiet UnInterrupted Reading Time
(SQUIRT), which was a sustained silent reading time. This regularly
scheduled activity provided uninterrupted reading time for the students and
Ms. May. With Ms. May serving as a role model and the students seeing that
she valued time to read, SQUIRT became a cherished part of the day for the
students. SQUIRT was not necessarily silent as Ms. May believed that the
social nature of young children must be considered when asking them to sit
and read. She further believed that in the beginning stages of learning to
read, the children require many opportunities to read to an audience. Thus
partner reading was done for reinforcement. Students were also allowed to
leave the room and read to other adults including the principal, custodian,
curriculum coordinator, secretary, etc. during this time.

Ms. May encouraged individual student reading, whether it was in a
one-on-one situation, small group, or whole class setting. One example was
quite evident. Ms. May had just introduced the book *I Was Walking Down the
Road* (Barchas, 1975) and shared information about the dedication page. Ms.
May then turned to the next page and stopped. She allowed the children a
long time to observe the picture, and then Joey began reading the page. Ms. May did not say a thing as he read. Without speaking she turned to the next page, and Joey continued to read. When he stopped, Ms. May asked, “Could you read when you came to kindergarten?” Joey commented, “No, but I can read now.” By allowing this child to read spontaneously and continue his reading instead of stopping him, Ms. May encouraged Joey and also provided a strong incentive for the other students to read.

Ms. May had a sign-up chart for conference time. On this chart, the children signed up to spend time with Ms. May for one of three tasks: (a) reading to Ms. May, (b) getting writing help from Ms. May, and (c) having Ms. May read to the student. This planned time allowed Ms. May to assess their reading and writing progress, serve as an audience for the students, and provide one-on-one assistance. Nicole, a full inclusion student, had signed up to read to Ms. May. She brought a Bill Martin, Jr. book over to Ms. May to share. She had practiced this text with a friend and bounced excitedly over to read it to Ms. May. Her enthusiasm was celebrated by Ms. May as she listened intently as Nicole read to her. Time with the teacher provided an incentive for Nicole and others to do individual student reading, and allowed Ms. May time for individualized assessment and direct reading instruction with Nicole.

Just prior to recess one morning, Kevin bounded over and said to me, “I want to read to you.” Ms. May informed me that he had been anxiously awaiting my return to the classroom so he could share a book with me. The bell rang and the other children got their snacks and ran out the door to play. Kevin, who was one of the most challenging students in the class, brought the book *The Ghost Eyed Tree* (Martin & Archambault, 1985) over and leaned up close to me. Kevin began by running his finger under the print as he had observed Ms. May and the other children doing each day. He was unable to
read the words, but he retold this story perfectly. He knew the names of all of
the characters in the story and pretended to read to me. I asked myself, “Does
Kevin know that he is not reading the words?” Ms. May believed that he
viewed himself as a reader, and this time for individual reading that she
provided was an incentive for him to become a real reader. As Kevin grabbed
a snack and exited for recess, he turned and said, “I will read you another
book after recess.” During the time in this classroom, there were many other
opportunities for Kevin and his friends to engage in student reading with Ms.
May, their friends, and other adults important to them.

Following the repeated read aloud sessions, Ms. May provided a time
for partner reading with the small books that accompanied the big books.
When she had only one copy of a book, it was placed in the book rack and
students were encouraged to read it with a friend during free time. This
occurred frequently on numerous times during my visits to the classroom.
Students were also encouraged to use the tape recorder to record themselves
reading a text after it had been practiced. The tape recorder served as an
audience as well as an incentive for the students.

One of Ms. May’s peer teachers commented, “Ms. May’s students know
so many books and authors. Her students love books; they love to read.” This
was a compliment to Ms. May and her holistic, language-based curricula.

**Teacher reading.** According to Anderson, Hiebert, Scott, & Wilkinson
(1985), “The single most important activity for building the knowledge required
for eventual success in reading is reading aloud to children” (p. 25). Ms. May
believed that reading aloud to children was critical to developing listening
comprehension, encouraging imitation of good reading behaviors, and
cultivating a love of books.
She read to the students several times during every day from a variety of literary genres and for a myriad of purposes. She was skilled at integrating books across the curriculum to include the content areas of social living, science, and mathematics. Each book shared had been carefully selected for a purpose. When reading aloud, she used a voice appropriate for the character’s dialogue, and she read with enthusiasm for the story.

During one observation, I noted that the students were very excited because Ms. May was going to read them a scary story. A child told me that Ms. May’s favorites were scary stories like the ones she read at Halloween. As Ms. May prepared to read the scary story, the students asked, “Are we going to turn the lights off?” Ms. May did, in fact, turn the lights off and had just one lamp burning to set the mood. A simple example such as this indicated that she did more than just read a book; she made the book exciting to her audience of young students.

Ms. May also imparted to the students’ parents the importance of reading aloud. She involved parents in the preparation and maintenance of her Take Home Reading Program. As part of this program, books in plastic bags were provided for the children to take home. Parents or significant others read and discussed the books with the children. Parents worked in the classroom each week preparing the books for the children to take home. To assist the parents in extending the reading of the book, Ms. May designed follow-up activities including sample questions as part of the packets. Ms. May had often read these take-home books to the children; thus they were able to relate prior experiences to the text when it was again read at home.

**Exposure of students to whole texts.** Ms. May believed that only by exposing students to whole books could they develop the comprehension necessary for higher level thinking skills. Fragmenting books into parts was
unacceptable to her because her students needed exposure to quality children’s literature in the form of whole texts.

Students in Ms. May’s classroom were exposed to hundreds of whole texts. She had an extensive personal collection of books, some purchased with her personal funds, others donated by students, and still others obtained through grants. In addition, she obtained books from other sources such as the school library, public library, and peer teachers. Ms. May never stopped adding to her collection of books and was always excited to share new books with the students and her peers. “Ms. May is always buying new books,” was a quote from one of Ms. May’s peers in an informal interview.

Students did not use workbooks or work texts from the basal reader series. Ms. May was aware of the skills required by the local district and those delineated in the state curriculum guide. Ms. May searched for quality literature with which to extend the skills needed to develop these children into readers.

Ms. May also read whole texts written by students in her classroom as well as texts written by other students from past years and from other classrooms. Group or class rewrites of books were shared and compared to the texts after which they were patterned.

Ms. May’s style of reading to the children involved reading and rereading of lines or passages from whole texts to insure that the children understood the intent of the author. As Ms. May read, she clarified vocabulary, helped the children search for ideas or understandings in the illustrations, and reread parts of the text to emphasize a particular point.

**Book extension activities.** To involve students further in quality literature and develop targeted skills, Ms. May provided book extension activities for her students. Extension activities took many forms: art work, students’ writings,
literature-based experience charts, student-made books, comprehension development activities, audio and videotapes of the text, choral readings, dramatizations, and retellings.

Art work was used regularly as an extension activity for a book. As part of a geography unit focusing on the continent of Australia, the children had listened to the book *Possum Magic* (Fox, 1983). They extended their enjoyment and understanding of the text by creating koala bears with brown paper, cotton balls, crayons, markers, and other necessary art supplies. These supplies had been provided and arranged at the art table.

At the Writing Center and independent table, students were given varied types of writing tasks to extend texts. For example, Ms. May wrote the title of the book *Possum Magic* (Fox, 1983) on a sentence strip and strategically placed it on the easel as a model. The children were told to write the title of the book on their paper and complete the extension activity by writing or drawing their favorite parts of this book. By allowing the students to write or draw, Ms. May adapted to meet individual needs since some students were still scribbling and drawing while others were writing, thereby accommodating individual developmental writing stages of the students.

Several formats of literature-based experience charts were used to extend books. The literature-based experience charts were developed as Ms. May questioned and the students responded. The literature-based experience charts including comprehension webs, sequenced sentence strips, Venn diagrams, compare/contrast charts, and generated lists of words were used throughout the repeated read aloud sessions. These visual aids provided a deeper understanding of the story and developed pertinent skills.

Student-made books were extension activities prevalent in Ms. May's classroom. Some student-made books were compiled by individuals, while
others were created by pairs, small groups, or the entire class. Assembled blank books as well as materials necessary for making a book from scratch were always in the Writing Center. The students were observed producing their original book *Kangaroo, Kangaroo* as a culmination of the study of Australia.

When Ms. May developed a class book with the students, she provided an incentive and served as a model for individuals or groups of children to develop their own books. Outstanding examples of student books were submitted for the school's coveted Bulldog Award. To receive the Bulldog Award, a student submitted a student-made book to a committee of teachers, who judged the work on a predetermined set of criteria (Appendix E). If the book met or exceeded these criteria, then a special gold seal and the school's publishing house label were placed on the book denoting it as a *Bulldog Award Book* (Appendix F). Previous Bulldog Award winners were available for the children to review in Ms. May's Reading Center and the school's library. On many occasions, Ms. May and the students discussed this special award and worked on books to submit for judging.

Comprehension development activities, such as providing the students with a long strip of paper and guiding them in drawing or writing the retelling of events in a story, were common. Ms. May was creative at adapting and extending comprehension activities to insure a thorough understanding of relevant books.

When possible, Ms. May extended a book by having an audiotape and copy of the book in the listening center. Students were observed mouthing the words or moving their bodies to the music as they listened to books on tape. This activity provided another channel for those students who benefited from the auditory reinforcement provided by listening to the tape using the
headphones without the distraction of outside noises. Ms. May occasionally extended a book by showing the students a version of the book on video. An example of this practice was noted when the students observed the video *Chicken Soup with Rice* (Sendak, 1962) with another kindergarten classroom.

Choral readings and dramatizations were viewed as ways to extend a story. For example, one of the poems from the book *Chicken Soup with Rice* (Sendak, 1962) was typed on a ditto in big, bold print from the computer. Ms. May used this as a small group lesson at her table during group rotation. The children used the poem for a choral reading and took part in dramatizing parts of stories. Ms. May allowed the children to act out parts of the story based on the text. The children used their bodies to dramatize the positions of the letters in parts of the book *Chicka Chicka Boom Boom* (Martin & Archambault, 1989).

Another example of dramatization occurred after the students read the story *One Cold Wet Night* (Melser & Cowley, 1980). This follow-up activity involved a small group at Ms. May's table during group rotation. The students were assigned the parts of the characters in the story. Ms. May portrayed the role of the farmer and narrated the story as the students were involved in dramatizing their parts.

Retellings of stories were common. Ms. May used her skill at questioning to assist the students with story retellings. Retellings extended the story by involving students. The most effective use of the retellings occurred with the repeated read alouds. After the students had listened to and reflected on a text several times, the story retellings then appeared to be quite natural for them. On several occasions, I noted that students corrected each other if they mistold a part of a story.
Participation in book talks. Book talks were defined as the conversations between Ms. May and her students (individually, in small groups, or as a whole class) that centered around books, authors, and illustrators. These book talks were a prominent part of Ms. May's instructional approach. Ms. May integrated book talks into her daily routine, but sometimes they evolved at the teachable moment.

Ms. May introduced books through "book talk." She always shared information about the author, illustrator, and title prior to beginning to read the text. Further, she talked throughout her reading of the story and continually related the information in the text to other personal behaviors or events relevant to the students. For example, Ms. May introduced the book *I Was Walking Down the Road* (Barchas, 1975) and began by sharing with the students that she had a difficult time finding a special book for the repeated read aloud strategy that week. She looked for a book to tie in with springtime and their Easter unit. Ms. May placed the book on the easel and immediately two or three children began to read the title on the cover page. The students spontaneously began to talk about the picture on the cover without prompting from Ms. May. They were deducing that it was not fall because there were green leaves on the trees. They observed the clothing on the little girl and discussed that she had on a short-sleeved dress so it was probably spring or summer. They also associated the flowers on the front with summer and spring. David said that in the winter the snakes became "dormant" and "hibernate," and because the girl was holding a snake it had to be a warm time of the year. This was book talk generated by the students. During this observation these young students were remarkably observant of the illustrations and discussed these concepts with finesse.
Ms. May began to read the story after the title had been read by the students. She asked the students for the meaning of road and the children related it to a street. Then Ms. May asked, “Do you live on a road or a street?” Crystal said that people drive on streets and live on roads. In the field notes I recorded, “What a comparison!” This informal book talk continued throughout the reading of this book and all books.

These book talks seemed to naturally evolve, but in reality Ms. May skillfully involved all students in book talk. She carefully extended the text and the illustrations as a means of providing a deep, rich understanding of texts.

**Maintenance of a print-rich environment.** The print-rich environment in Ms. May’s room consisted of books, magazines, labels, signs, posters, newspaper articles, and other forms of print strategically placed throughout the classroom. A mailbox, classroom library, writing center, author’s corner, reading center, and appropriate labels were major components of Ms. May’s print-rich classroom environment. Ms. May’s physical classroom environment promoted literacy development, as it exuded a hominess that beckoned one to stay. The effect of the soft lamps was inviting. The physical evidence of books and materials for writing was everywhere, but these items were not just lying unused; the children were actively engaged in using them.

Upon entering this classroom, observers noted that the calendar and Book and Author Center were focal points. Calendar activities included a weather chart where students graphed the weather for a month; dressed bears daily to indicate the names of the days for today, yesterday, and tomorrow; graphed attendance; tallied marks to show the date; and recorded the mathematical concept of ones, tens, and hundreds on a small chalkboard. Displayed in this same vicinity was the Book and Author Center. This center included a photograph of the author currently being studied, copies of his or
her books, biographical information about the person, and a tape recorder so students could listen to the taped version of books. The actual Book Center was well organized and filled with hundreds of books. Small plastic tubs were labeled and filled with the works of favorite authors whom the children had already studied. A special area was set aside for books that students had brought from home to share with their friends or for Ms. May to read to them. In a free-standing bookcase were books Ms. May had recently shared and/or copies of the books she used for the week’s repeated read aloud text and other theme-related books.

When a student brought a special book to share with the class, it was celebrated. For example, one day a child brought a book for the school library’s Birthday Book Club Program. Ms. May was jubilant and shared information about the author and illustrator. Then she read the book prior to sending it to the library. These books were also celebrated school-wide as part of a special recognition assembly.

The Writing Center was filled with pencils, crayons, pens, markers, and different kinds of paper as well as mini-chalkboards. Picture dictionaries and student-made dictionaries were available for these eager young writers to locate spellings of words they were struggling with in their own writing. There was also a word wall of high frequency words. Throughout other areas of the classroom were word lists generated by the students and recorded by Ms. May. These word lists on charts were available as long as they were pertinent to activities being conducted; then they were stored. Ms. May would gladly retrieve the word lists if a child needed help with spelling a particular word.

Completed student writings were displayed in the classroom and in the school’s hall area. Books written by students were housed in the school’s library or in the classroom Book Center. The screen saver on the computer
contained a daily message to the children. This unique attention getter was also a part of the print-rich environment that Ms. May carefully planned and created. Several simple word processing programs had been installed on the computer so students could compose and print their own books. That the students manipulated both the computer and the printer without adult assistance was noteworthy.

As part of a print-rich environment, all items in the classroom were labeled. There were labels on the gerbil’s cage, lockers, lamps, computer, bathroom, mailboxes, tables, chairs, teacher’s desk, windows, blinds, door, and every other place imaginable. This labeling had been done with input from the students at the beginning of the school year. Current pictures or newspaper articles were placed in centers or in strategic locations. When the replica of Christopher Columbus’s ship the Nina visited the area, Ms. May set up a center with newspaper articles and pictures for the students to view prior to their field trip to see the vessel.

The school newsletter was a part of their Book Center. Ms. May shared the information in the newsletter with the students and then placed it in the center for the students’ attention. She encouraged them to share it with their parents when they took the newsletters home each month.

Mailboxes were located near the classroom entrance. Each student and Ms. May had a mailbox. These were used for sharing notes and memos with each other. Ms. May also placed important notes to the children in the mailboxes.

The Center Sign-Up Chart (Figure 4.3) and the Committee Chart (Figure 5.1) were integral working components of the classroom. The Center Sign-Up Chart served a genuine purpose for viewing and using print. The students signed up to go to the center they selected for each day. The
Committee Chart was comparable to a reminder board. Students were assigned to certain committees such as the art committee. Students serving on this committee were responsible for keeping this center supplied with paint, paper, and other necessary materials. If supplies needed to be obtained, it was their responsibility to write a short note and place it in Ms. May's mailbox so she could obtain the necessary items.

The preparation of this print-rich environment had been carefully planned to promote and celebrate literacy. All of the elements of this

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Committees</th>
<th>Books</th>
<th>Writing</th>
<th>House</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.</td>
<td>1.</td>
<td>1.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.</td>
<td>2.</td>
<td>2.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Blocks</th>
<th>Art</th>
<th>Supplies</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.</td>
<td>1.</td>
<td>1.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.</td>
<td>2.</td>
<td>2.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Hall &amp; Sink</th>
<th>Beans &amp; Tubs</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.</td>
<td>1.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.</td>
<td>2.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.</td>
<td>3.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Chairs &amp; Tables</th>
<th>Calendar &amp; Folders</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.</td>
<td>1.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.</td>
<td>2.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
classroom, including furniture arrangement, selection of materials, and the aesthetic quality created by the soft lamp light, were an important part of this literacy program promoting reading and writing. The beliefs and practices of Ms. May were reflected in her classroom environment. It was also obvious that she had not only spent a tremendous amount of time, but also money in providing this type of print-rich environment.

**As Needed Teacher Behaviors**

The following were behaviors that Ms. May engaged in as needed to involve her students in literacy activities. Ms. May's as needed behaviors included: allowing students to read spontaneously, modeling of writing, promoting student writing, and giving direct instruction to encourage student engagement.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>AS NEEDED TEACHER BEHAVIORS</th>
<th>% OF DAYS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Spontaneous student reading</td>
<td>58</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Promoting student writing</td>
<td>66</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teacher modeling of writing</td>
<td>66</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Direct instruction</td>
<td>68</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Figure 5.3 Question B: As Needed Teacher Behaviors

**Spontaneous student reading.** When children chimed in as Ms. May read a text, she encouraged them to continue reading spontaneously. Because of the predictable nature of many of the books she read to her students, along with the repeated readings of texts, children were often able to read along with their teacher. Ms. May's philosophy of maintaining a community of learners allowed the children to feel comfortable reading along spontaneously.
For some teachers, allowing students to read spontaneously would be a distraction and consequently would not be allowed in their classrooms. But in the classroom of Ms. May, the students were encouraged to spontaneously read the text with her. When students were reading spontaneously and a student miscalled a word, there was always assistance from a peer. This assistance was not done in a degrading or critical manner, but more in the manner of a friend helping a friend.

The use of the book *Chicka Chicka Boom Boom* (Martin & Archambault, 1989) was an excellent example of spontaneous reading. This text involved simple, predictable language. After using this book for a week with the repeated read aloud strategy, Ms. May had all the students in her class reading this text spontaneously during the whole group time and with partners. Ms. May was working with the book on the second day of the week and already the students were reading the title. They immediately began to read spontaneously on the first few pages of the story. This book promoted spontaneous reading and Ms. May encouraged this activity by reading the first part of the book in a sing-song rhythm, which encouraged the children to join in. When the words *BOOM BOOM* were written in huge, capital letters, Ms. May asked, "Why are these letters written like this?" Then she compared the way the phrase was written on several prior pages. The children were able to compare and tell why these letters were written in large capital print. From then on, they read these words with great gusto. Ms. May continued reading the story and omitted words in sentences, thus encouraging the children to orally insert words from the text. Ms. May suggested that the students reread the book, and this time Ms. May read very little. The children were able to read the text. The more proficient readers provided a model, and by the end of the week all of the students were reading the text spontaneously and loving it. In
Teacher modeling of writing. When writing in front of the class or conferencing one-on-one, Ms. May modeled the conventions of writing. Modeling of writing was accomplished when Ms. May wrote her ideas for the students or when the teacher and students composed collaboratively. She demonstrated conventions such as progressing from left to right; starting at the top of the page; using invented spelling; gripping the pencil correctly; employing appropriate spacing and proper punctuation; using capital and lowercase letters appropriately; writing a list, sentence, paragraph, or story; reading back her own writing; using legible penmanship; and writing for an authentic purpose. Ms. May introduced her class to student-made books by making books with them and sharing examples of books made by students in previous classes. Ms. May also shared with her students models of writing such as notes, memos, newsletters, and letters that she had received from children and adults.

Ms. May modeled writing in many ways. She modeled journal writing as a means of introducing and reminding the students of the manner in which they would date and make entries throughout the school year.

She used small sentence strips for labeling items around the classroom. Something new such as the hermit crab or hamster was brought into the classroom environment, Ms. May would talk about the item with the children and they would agree on a label or name. As the children observed, Ms. May prepared a printed label and attached it to the item, or in the case of animals, to their homes.

Story extension activities were excellent examples of Ms. May modeling writing for the students. Ms. May compiled story events to retell the story with
input from the students who supplied her with responses and observed as she wrote their responses on a piece of chart paper. Ms. May also used student responses to produce numerous word lists for the students' reference as they composed their writings. These word lists were amended on a regular basis as students engaged in writing and needed to be able to spell additional words. At one point when students were writing about the month of January, one student needed to spell Christmas. Ms. May had already stored the list of words compiled during December, but she retrieved it for the child to view and check his spelling of Christmas.

The students observed Ms. May writing purposeful notes, such as notes to peer teachers or the office staff asking to borrow a book or other item. She compiled lists when the students who were in charge of committees informed her of items that needed to be supplied for certain centers. On one occasion, the class was planning to make chicken soup to correlate with the book, Chicken Soup with Rice (Sendak, 1962). With the help of the students, Ms. May listed ingredients that she needed to purchase and bring to school on the following day to make the chicken soup.

On another occasion when students were to write or draw their favorite part of a story, one of the students suggested that Ms. May write her favorite part. She immediately placed a huge piece of white butcher paper on the easel and composed her favorite part of the story including not only words but also pictures. This modeling served as a strong incentive as well as a pattern to encourage students to write no matter what their stage of writing development. Ms. May modeled good writing, but she also encouraged and worked with the students having difficulty. When working with an individual student, Ms. May often modeled directly on the student's journal page or writing paper, thus promoting student writing success.
Through modeling the writing process, Ms. May also demonstrated the editing and rewriting steps of the process by marking out a word or sentence she had written and writing the correct word or sentence above the original. This indicated to the students that it was acceptable to make mistakes and demonstrated that adults have to edit and rewrite also.

**Promoting student writing.** Ms. May encouraged her students to write for varied authentic purposes throughout each school day. Students participated in journal writing daily at a specified time, but other writing occurred when appropriate. Children also wrote notes; letters; messages; greeting cards; labels; shopping lists; stories; books; and adaptations of familiar stories, songs, and poems. These writings were prominently displayed in the classroom and throughout the school.

The school's Bulldog Award, which was compared to the Caldecott or Newbery Award, was coveted by the children. Ms. May shared examples of books written by other students who had received the school's Bulldog Award. She also explained the criteria for earning the award. During my observations, students engaged in writing a class book, which Ms. May submitted for a Bulldog Award. It was a ceremonious day when the students received this valued honor (Bulldog Award) in a school-wide assembly program. Individual students were also encouraged to submit their writings and work with peer editors to make corrections. Ms. May assisted students in producing quality writings and completing them through the publishing stage. The criteria for receiving a Bulldog Award and a replica of the coveted certificate received by the students is in the Appendix (Appendixes E and F).

Ms. May promoted daily writing as an extension to stories shared. One example involved a follow-up activity after several readings of the book *The Wolf's Chicken Stew* (Kasza, 1987). Ms. May told the students they were
going to write or draw the various parts of this story. She further explained how the students were to turn their manila paper so that the writings or drawings would be consistently placed on pages vertically or horizontally and could be incorporated into a class book. First, she demonstrated the task exactly as she wanted the children to complete it, and then they moved to a writing area to complete their projects. As they wrote, Ms. May visited the students and made suggestions, modeled conventions of writing, and assisted as needed. After revisions and rewrites over several days, the students and Ms. May compiled a booklet depicting their retelling of this story.

In another instance, Ms. May had a large sheet of paper folded into thirds. She explained to the students that on the first section, they were to write or draw what happened first in the story, and then move to the middle section and write or draw what happened in the middle of the story. In the last box, they were to write or draw what happened at the end of the story. The results of this activity were remarkable. Some students were observed returning to the book *The Napping House* (Wood, 1984) as they worked on this project. The students also conversed with their peers about the details of the sequence of events. The interaction with Ms. May, the explicit modeling of the task to be completed, as well as the collaborative way the children worked promoted writing and contributed to the success of the students on this project.

Journal writing was done daily in Ms. May's classroom. Each student made daily journal entries at a specified time of the day called JET (Journal Enrichment Time). The journals provided any observer with an understanding of the varying writing stages within the classroom. These entries ranged from a few marks on a page to simple stories. As observations progressed, so did the journal entries of the children. At the end of the observational period, tremendous individual differences in the developmental writing level of each
child still existed. Observations indicated continuous growth over time with students progressing from scribbling to drawing; from writing individual letters to stringing letters together to form words; from spelling simple words and words using invented spellings to sentences and then moving to correctly spelling challenging words; and finally to a story which might include both drawings and words. Review of the students personal journals were indeed a record of their growth in the area of writing from the first day of school to the final observation.

Direct instruction. In the previous chapter, Ms. May's interaction with students through direct instructional opportunities was discussed. She also used direct instruction to engage students in literacy processes. Direct instruction certainly contributed to the success of students in many of the planned activities; however it was needed more by some students than by others. The use of direct instruction was also a means of adapting the tasks and providing modifications for those students in both regular and special education who needed additional assistance. Although direct instruction is not considered by some to be necessary in whole language classrooms, Ms. May employed direct instruction freely when she felt it was necessary.

One example of direct instruction occurred as the students were rereading parts of the book *The Wolf's Chicken Stew* (Kasza, 1987). Annette came to a word in the story that she mistakenly believed to be *cookies*. Ms. May assisted her with the word by discussing the initial sound in the word and providing assistance with context clues. With the direct instruction from Ms. May, Annette succeeded in comprehending the word and continued reading the passage.

At a specified time during the day, Ms. May allowed students to read with her or get assistance on pieces they were writing. During this one-on-one
time with the students, Ms. May was observed providing direct instruction for the students in a conferencing situation. Ms. May also was able to assess students' reading and writing behaviors during this time as well as at other times during each day.
CHAPTER 6
THE REPEATED READ ALOUD STRATEGY

Encouraging Students to React to Books
Using a Specific Repeated Read Aloud Strategy

Question C: What behaviors did the teacher exhibit to encourage students to react to books using a specific repeated read aloud strategy?

Coded field notes showed no differences between how Ms. May encouraged students to react to books using the repeated read aloud strategy as opposed to how she encouraged children to become engaged in literacy processes in general throughout the day (see Chapters 4 and 5). Using the repeated read aloud strategy, as with all other literacy activities, Ms. May managed student behavior; asked appropriate questions; reviewed, clarified, and checked for understanding; provided appropriate instruction; modified and adapted as needed; developed understanding of text vocabulary; made connections between the known and unknown; and interacted with the students to develop literacy skills. Using the repeated read aloud strategy, she read and reread quality texts, encouraged student reading and writing, provided book talk and literature extension activities, exposed students to whole texts, modeled writing, provided direct instruction, and created a print-rich environment.

Explanation of the Strategy

The goal of using this specific repeated read aloud strategy with the kindergarten students in Ms. May's classroom was to develop emergent literacy skills through listening and interaction with text. Reading to children was viewed as an enjoyable activity by both the children and the teacher, but by using a specific interactive strategy, and expanding the activities used with
the reading of a particular selection, crucial skills were developed. The specific objectives Ms. May planned to accomplish were development of (a) listening skills, (b) thinking skills, (c) reading skills, and (d) writing skills. These objectives were accomplished with the utilization of a carefully selected children's book over a five-day lesson sequence. A companion book was introduced on the fifth day of the lesson sequence. The children were totally immersed in the text and spent time reading, listening, talking, thinking, and writing about the book. They were engaged in making meaning of this text, not just listening to a cursory, one-time reading and then moving on to other books and activities.

**Day one.** On day one of the lesson sequence, Ms. May read the book. This sharing was similar to what a mother or father might do with a young toddler. Prior to reading the book, Ms. May shared the cover of the book, gave information about the author and illustrator, and guided the children in predicting and anticipating what was to come in the book. She asked questions such as (a) Who do you think the main characters will be? (b) Why do you think this is happening? (c) What caused it? This questioning built suspense and anticipation about the story. It also provided a time to share background information that might have been needed by some or all of the students to understand or relate to the book.

After an introductory discussion, Ms. May would begin reading the story. She read the book slowly, observing details, anticipating, predicting, and allowing the children ample time to respond to the story. The children were allowed to join in the reading of the text. The children were not asked to raise their hands during any portion of the time; they were allowed to provide spontaneous comments and thoughts. Ms. May engaged in informal
conversation with the children as she read the book, much like an adult would if discussing a book with a friend.

Ms. May provided a good oral reading model by using differing voices, intonation, and expression, thereby enhancing the reading of the book and exciting the children. She modeled thinking as she questioned the children and guided them in the thinking process.

Ms. May pointed out repeated phrases, print conventions such as speech balloons, and other concepts about print that adults often assume children know. Repeated words or phrases were written on a piece of tag board or a chalkboard so students could read them in isolation, but also relate them to the text.

At the conclusion of the first reading on day one, Ms. May guided the children in responding to the literature. The students were allowed to identify their favorite parts of the story by showing that page in the book or rereading or telling their favorite phrase or section. In a follow-up small group activity the children drew or wrote about their favorite parts of the story. They were asked to explain why a particular part of the story was their favorite. By allowing children to either write or draw or use a combination of the two media, Ms. May met the developmental needs of all children. She was also able to use this small group time to expand the activity, assess, and teach one-on-one or small group lessons. Those children who needed clarification were given more attention to help them understand the story. Since Ms. May believed in allowing children time to share, there was always an audience with whom the children could share the work assignment when it was completed. Sometimes the audience consisted of Ms. May, a classmate, a small group, the entire class, or myself.
**Day two.** On day two, the story was reread to the children. This rereading provided a time to build on good listening skills and extend the meaning of words and concepts.

Ms. May reread the story and allowed children to join in as she read the book. She had written specific repeated words or text on the chalkboard or on sentence strips prior to the children's arrival at school on the second day. The children often noticed the words or phrases that were strategically placed on the easel and read them, used these words in their journal writing, or called attention to them with a friend.

Following the rereading of the story on the second day, Ms. May began what she referred to as a literature-based experience chart. This chart was developed on a long strip of white butcher paper. She printed the words *who, when, where,* and *what happened* on the paper. During this activity the book was visible, and often the children and Ms. May referred to the book. Ms. May began by asking questions such as, “Who are the characters in our book?” As the children responded, she wrote what they supplied her. During this activity, there was a tremendous amount of conversation and interaction among the children and Ms. May. When there were doubts about answers to questions, either Ms. May or the children suggested looking back in the book. Ms. May was reading and rereading everything she was writing as the children supplied the answers to the *who, when, where,* and *what happened* questions. On several occasions, a child returned to the book to recheck information without being prompted by Ms. May. After the completion of the chart answering the *who, when, where,* and *what happened* questions, Ms. May reread it. She often read it several times so the children were provided multiple exposures.
Wolf’s Chicken Stew

Who? wolf, chicken, and the chicks
When? days and nights
Where? forest
What happened? The wolf had a craving for chicken. He crept out to look for a chicken. He found a chicken who was kind of fat. He got an idea, “If I can make this chicken fatter.” He cooked 100 pancakes and took them to the house. He cooked 100 doughnuts and took them to the house. He cooked a big cake that weighed 100 pounds. The wolf went to the chicken’s house. The mother said these presents were from Uncle Wolf, not Santa Claus. Mother Chicken cooked supper for wolf. The wolf said, “Aw shucks. Tomorrow I’ll make the little critters 100 scrumptious cookies.”

Figure 6.1 Literature-based Experience Chart

Day three. Day three began with the children and Ms. May rereading the literature-based experience chart with the who, when, where, and what happened questions and answers from the day before. The book was then reread with explicit directions for the children to listen for and picture in their minds certain events or things. During this rereading of the text, just as when the book had been reread previously, children read along with Ms. May and spontaneously responded to the text. Ms. May continued to question and guide their thoughts about the text. During each reading, Ms. May explained,
demonstrated, and assisted the children in understanding the meanings of words that might be foreign or unknown to them.

After the third day’s rereading of the story, the children worked with Ms. May to retell the story using visual aids such as a story map; sequence strip; or beginning, middle, and end circles. Ms. May determined which of several visual aids would be used each week for the activity, based on its appropriateness for the particular book. While the children created this visual aid with Ms. May by providing oral responses, she continually engaged in conversation with the children to make them think and recall events and happenings from the story. She extended their thinking far beyond that which was typical of a kindergarten child. The responses that she got from these young children were impressive.

After the visual retelling of the story, Ms. May reviewed and reread the book or visual aid with the children. The children then moved into the group rotation part of the daily schedule and produced their own visual aid to retell the story. As always, sharing with an audience was the final step.

Day four. Day four involved extending the story even further. The book was first reread with an emphasis on the feelings expressed by the characters in the story. Ms. May discussed and compared the feelings of the character/characters to similar feelings that the children may have experienced. Time was also spent discussing punctuation marks, specific print characteristics, and enlarged text as well as other symbolic clues found in books, but often neglected by teachers.

Day five. On the fifth day of the repeated read aloud teaching sequence, a companion book was shared with the children. Ms. May carefully selected the companion book to promote student identification of likenesses and differences and to allow for comparing and contrasting. As Ms. May read
the companion book, she used the same conversation, questioning, and interactions with the children to develop understanding as well as insure enjoyment of the story. When Ms. May read the companion story, she continually asked thought-provoking questions. After the companion book had been read, a compare/contrast chart, a Venn diagram, or a transparency was used to compare the two stories. During this process, it was often necessary

![Venn Diagram Comparing Two Books](image)

Figure 6.2 Venn Diagram Comparing Two Books

for the children and Ms. May to return to the two books to clarify or reread parts of the selections. The literature-based experience chart was also reread and provided assistance in developing the comparison of the two books.

**Daily Activities.** Throughout the five days of the repeated read aloud strategy, the teacher modeled both reading and writing. The children were exposed to text in a variety of ways with repetition being at the heart of the process. The in-depth use of a book developed basic reading skills such as top-to-bottom progression, left-to-right progression, sight word recognition skills, concepts about print, as well as critical comprehension skills. Meaning or understanding was the focus. Writing skills such as invented spelling, rehearsing before writing, and collaborative writing and sharing were also
emphasized. The children handled this process at differing levels, but for those students who were reading and writing, the opportunity was afforded them. For those students who were still drawing and possibly labeling pictures, opportunities were available to them. All students were exposed to quality literature and given the opportunity to listen, read, write, and think with direct guidance from the teacher.

Excerpts from Field Notes

One particular week of the field notes was selected to show exactly how the modified repeated read aloud strategy was implemented in this classroom. The narrative from the field notes is necessary to depict the intricate interactions involved in this process. Excerpts from each day of the five-day lesson sequence demonstrated the interaction between Ms. May and the children that occurred when the students reacted to a book using this modified repeated read aloud strategy. Examples of visual aids compiled by Ms. May and her students have been included.

Day one. The children were seated on the carpeted area in front of Ms. May. She began by telling the children about Pig Out on Books, which was a kindergarten through second grade activity that involved the children returning to school on a Friday night to participate in reading, singing, exercising, and storytelling. She related to the children that there would be lots of reading and even a pignic. She continued to inform them that they would be involved in many pig activities throughout the week and that they might bring pig books to class for her to read to them. Then Ms. May introduced the new book for the repeated read aloud strategy, The Bugs, the Goats, and the Little Pink Pigs (Martin & Archambault, 1987). One of the children immediately guessed that the book was written by Bill Martin, Jr. Ms. May called attention to the details on the cover of the book. The children discovered with guidance from Ms. May
that the green rectangle on the front of this book was a chalkboard and that the title of the story was written on the front of the chalkboard. She called on various children to tell how many pigs, goats, and bugs were on the cover of the book. One child had difficulty telling her how many bugs were on the front cover of the book. Instead of correcting him, Ms. May and the children joined in for the entire group to count the bugs together so that this particular child did not feel bad that he was unable to supply the answer.

Ms. May returned to the book and asked if anyone could read the title of the book. She first guided the children in picking out words in the title with which they were familiar. Then she suggested to the children that they read the title of the book together again.

Ms. May called attention to the commas in the book title. She explained that the comma meant a little pause, and she demonstrated how the commas were used in the book title to separate the things that were listed (The Bugs, the Goats, and the Little Pink Pigs).

Ms. May began to question the children as to what they thought the book would be about. She moved from child to child and came to one young boy who did not respond immediately. She gave him ample wait time and finally he did respond. Then Ms. May reread the title of the story. She turned to the inside cover page and called attention to the brick wall on this page. As they discussed the page, she led the children to predict. As she moved to the next page, the children began predicting with no prompt from Ms. May. On the next page, the children observed the picture and began to read the spines on the book covers in this picture. The book titles located on the spines had color words such as "The Pink Book of Bugs." There were nine books, all with color words in the title, which the students were able to discover. Observation
indicated that this was an excellent way to teach the color words in print rather than in isolation on a color chart hanging in the room.

Children moved to the next page, which pictured the bugs in a garden. Ms. May led them to discover that the bugs were reading the signs in the garden which were the seed packets to identify each row in the garden. The children immediately read the print on this page which said, "'We can read,' said the little green bugs." The only word on the seed packets that the children had difficulty reading was the word *spinach*, and with guidance from Ms. May one child read it.

On the following page was a vision chart, and the children deduced that the bugs were now in the doctor's office. Since there was no picture of a doctor, Ms. May questioned the children about how they arrived at the idea that the bugs were in the doctor's office. Ms. May read the print on the sign that was used to check eyes and the children joined her in reading both the print on the sign and in the text. One child commented that all of the pages were just about the same. Inserted in the field notes was the comment that this child had discovered predictable language. Another child commented that the next page was different. This prompted the entire group to become more aware of each page as it was read.

The children observed on the next page that the word *WE* was written in giant, green letters. Many of the children called out the word *WE*. Ms. May had one child read the page and then questioned how the goats were writing. She attempted to have the children discover that the goats were writing by eating the outline of the word *WE* in the grass.

One child remarked that Bill Martin and John Archambault (authors) had tried to trick them in this book. On the following page, the goats were writing the word *CAN* in the sand in cursive. This was an excellent page to call
attention to the different forms of print such as manuscript and cursive. Next came the word WRITE written in the snow by the footprints of the goats. As the story continued, the children discovered that the story progressed from the bugs, to the goats, and then to the pigs.

Some of the thoughts were indicated within speech balloons. Ms. May helped the children recall seeing this previously. She assisted the students in recalling that the thinking bubbles, as they had referred to them before, were the thoughts of the pigs on this particular page.

As Ms. May turned to the next page, she did not say anything, but allowed the children time to respond to the page. Some of the children read the entire line on this page. She referred to the picture and discussed why pigs like mud. She explained that pigs do not sweat and therefore, the mud made them feel better when it was hot.

She moved to the next page and allowed the children time to predict, talk, and think before jumping in to read the line to them. This line of text was difficult; it was not like the predictable lines on the previous pages.

Finally, she was on the last page of the story. Ms. May drew the attention of the children to the books and told them to look very closely as the children seemed to be assuming that the books were all the same. In reality, the books were all different in this picture. Ms. May did not tell them this, but rather guided them to discover this fact. Then the children were given time to read the titles on all of the books in the picture.

One child asked to read the book again and Ms. May agreed. They reread the text, but this time they did not stop to examine the pictures and discuss the text. Ms. May began reading the story, but stopped abruptly when the children did not immediately join her in reading. Without saying a word to the children, Ms. May had encouraged the children to begin reading with her.
At the end of this rereading, one child informed Ms. May that this was a good book because everyone could read it.

Ms. May then shared with the children that she had nine copies of this book in little book format as well as the big book. She said that there were enough books for everyone to sit down with a partner and read this book. She allowed the children to pick a good reading partner, obtain a copy of the book, and then take the time to sit with a partner and read.

Day two. Prior to the children entering the classroom, Ms. May had placed a large piece of white butcher paper on the easel in preparation for the day’s repeated read aloud lesson. The children returned from their enrichment class and rushed to the carpeted area. Ms. May prepared them for listening by asking them to sit on their bottoms with their hands in their laps. Several of the children informed Ms. May that they liked this book and that they could also read it. Ms. May had the girls read the title on the front cover. The boys read the title on the inside title page. A little boy who was one of the less able students read the first page in a firm voice, "We can read." He read it perfectly and felt so proud of himself. Pride in his accomplishment was apparent as he exhibited a big, broad smile.

Ms. May continued to go through the book allowing different children to read a page that they had selected the day before and practiced with a partner so that they could share that morning. Following the individual children reading their pages, the class reread the book together. This meant that they had read each page of the text twice. The children did not seem to even realize the repetition that was occurring since it was being done in a myriad of ways. Another important event to note was that when one little girl came to her page she had selected to read to the group, it was the longest and most difficult page in the text. The child mouthed a few words (she was truly unable
to read the text) and immediately Ms. May and the other children joined her so she could be a successful reader.

On the second group reading, the children had begun to use a very loud voice. Ms. May asked the children if she yelled when she read or if they would like to curl up next to their mom in bed and have her read in a loud voice. She never told them not to yell when they read together, but guided them to read in nice soft reading voices. The other activity noticed was Ms. May running her hand under the print as the children read the text individually and as a group.

Ms. May's classroom management assisted the students in becoming good listeners. Rather than identifying disruptive children by name and having them move to a specific area, Ms. May always told the children that they might need to move so they had a good reading spot. This option of choice seemed to work well for even those children who had a difficult time attending. The children inherently knew if they were sitting next to a person who would keep them from being a good listener.

At the end of the group reading, Ms. May did not allow the children to read the last page, which was really just a picture. The children immediately called her attention to this and coerced her into looking at and discussing the picture on this page. It was as if the children needed this closure to complete the activity.

Next, Ms. May moved to the easel which held the piece of white butcher paper that had been placed there prior to the children entering the classroom. She said nothing, but wrote the title of the book, *The Bugs, the Goats, and the Little Pink Pigs*, on the top of the paper. They began to discuss the title, and Ms. May questioned how many words were actually in the title. One of the full inclusion students suggested using the ruler to point to the words and count
how many words were in the title. Ms. May allowed him to do this. She explained that she thought this helped this child better understand that letters make up words and that words were units that were a part of the title of this story.

Ms. May began by writing the word *setting* on the butcher paper and then discussed that setting meant where the story took place. The responses come totally from the children, but Ms. May guided them in developing their thoughts as they related to the book. She also used the book to help the children recall details from the story. This dialogue between Ms. May and the children continued for *who, where, when, and what happened* until they were content with the results they had created. Below is an excerpt from the field notes indicating the information provided on this chart together with personal observer comments.

**The Bugs, the Goats, and the Little Pink Pigs**

**SETTING:** Where?

farm, outside, beach, garden, bug doctor, desert, school, library, field, in the snow (maybe the North Pole), in the clouds.

**OBSERVER COMMENTS**
(As they completed the setting component, Ms. May reviewed from the chart. Then she moved to the when question.)

**When?**

night and day

**OBSERVER COMMENTS**
(The various parts of the book took place at both night and day so the children decided to use tally marks under the words night and day to determine how much of the book occurred during the day and how much during the night. The use of the tally marks was an illustration of how Ms. May integrated curricula. In this particular instance, she integrated math with reading and writing.)
Who?
bugs, pigs, goats

What happened?

Bugs kept on reading - read books, signs (doctor sign), poster, and another sign.
Goats wrote - They wrote in the field, on a beach, and in the snow.

Pigs thought about love, corn, mud, and they thought about the riddle (food, dessert).

This chart depicted information shared by the children with Ms. May. The children had to think, converse, and even return to the text to develop some of these answers.

Ms. May then pointed to the top of the chart and questioned the children. She asked, "What is this called?" and was referring to the title on the top of the literature-based experience chart. The children did not supply her with the title from memory, but rather read it to her. She then reminded them that the setting told where the story took place and she read the words they had given her as to location of the setting. Then she continued to review the other parts of the literature-based experience chart.

The principal entered the room and the children wanted to read the book to her. Ms. May told the children that she would not read with them this time. The children were eager to share the book with this new audience, the principal. After the principal left the classroom, Ms. May moved to the group rotation part of the daily schedule. The children were again given a time to work in small groups and partner read as they did on the previous day. The only stipulation from Ms. May was that they must select a different partner.

Day three. Ms. May began the day by asking the children how many of them had an opportunity to read their special book by themselves yesterday.
She continued by reminding them that the copies of the little books were available for them to read anytime. They were also making a take-home copy of this book at Ms. May’s table during the group rotation part of the daily schedule.

Ms. May asked a particular child to recall the title of the book for the group. He was able to read the title, and then Ms. May and the other children joined in and read the title again. She asked the child who read the title independently if there were some clues on the front of this book that helped him remember the title. She said, “We have the title again on the title page,” and the children joined in reading the book again. They moved from page to page reading the book; Ms. May did not join them during this reading. She was turning the pages, but on this reading she was not moving her hand under the print. Some children were reading every word and others only sat and observed, but all students were attending and appeared to be involved in the activity.

After the completion of this reading of the text, Ms. May told the children that they were going to think about their story and make a comprehension web (Figures 6.3, 6.4, and 6.5). She directed their attention to the title of the book and the names of the authors that she had written on a piece of butcher paper attached to the easel. She also pointed out that she had drawn three big circles on this piece of paper. She allowed the children time to speculate why she had drawn the three big circles. The children supplied varied answers about why the circles were on the paper, but one child said that there was a circle for the bugs, one for the goats, and one for the pigs. The thinking and associations evoked by this skillful teacher using a specific strategy were outstanding.
Ms. May began the comprehension web with the children by brainstorming the things that the bugs did. The children immediately responded that the bugs read, and from there they responded that the bugs read books. As Ms. May continued with the part of the web for the bugs, she reread as she added new responses from the children.

Figure 6.3 Day 3: Extension Activity, Part I
Ms. May directed attention to the second circle, and they began to think of things associated with the goats. A child responded that the goats in the story were big. Although this was an incorrect response, Ms. May never said that the answer was wrong. She skillfully assisted the child in finding the page with the goats on it and read it to her. Through this technique, the child was able to discover her mistake and determine the size of the goats based on

Figure 6.4 Day 3: Extension Activity, Part II
what she had actually read in the story. In this manner, the child did not experience an unsuccessful questioning event. Rather she was able to discover for herself the mistake and clear up her own misconceptions.

Finally, they moved to the pig section of the comprehension web. The children were providing many responses and one little boy said that the pigs "thunk". Ms. May immediately responded by saying, "I bet the pigs thought." As the children were able to recall things that the pigs thought about in the story, the web became increasingly intricate.

Figure 6.5 Day 3: Extension Activity, Part III
When Ms. May completed the pig section of the web, she returned to review and circle words as she reread them. Again she talked the children through part of the story. It was this "talking through the story" (conversations) that enhanced the children's understandings of the text. As she continued to review, one boy said that can and sand rhymed. Ms. May said that there was another word in the story that rhymed better and then led him to discover the word man.

Prior to moving into the group rotation for the morning, Ms. May reminded the children that if they chose to go to the writing center they might enjoy writing about the bugs, pigs, or goats. She shared with them that she would leave the comprehension web on the easel so they could refer to it when they were working in the writing center.

Then she began her explanation of what the children would do at the independent table during rotation. She showed the children a piece of chart paper with connected circles which would become the comprehension web. One circle had the title of the story written inside it. She called attention to the

![Diagram](image)

Figure 6.6 Day 3: Independent Student Activity
first circle that was connected to the circle with the title written in it. Ms. May explained that in this circle she would like them to draw something on their own paper that had happened in the part of the story about the bugs. In the next circle, they would draw something that had happened with the goats, and in the last circle they would draw something that had happened with the pigs. She shared with the children that some of them had been adding words to their pictures and she encouraged them to do this with their drawings.

The children moved to the three areas to begin their independent work. One group came to the table where they worked with Ms. May. She said to this group that they would reread the story again. They began to read the story page by page with some children assisting others in a very unassuming way when a child was having difficulty. There were no consequences if a child took the risk to read and was not totally successful. The children and teacher worked together to make this a risk-free learning group.

Ms. May asked the children if they would like to read into the tape recorder as a group. Naturally, the children were eager to perform and read since they had experienced success by the repeated readings of the text. She shared that she would not read with them, but she was going to turn the pages. She also ran her finger under the print which helped them to stay together as they were reading in unison. Following the taping, Ms. May replayed the recording and the children listened intently. At one point where they had made a mistake, she stopped and questioned the children as to what had happened. They were able to hear their mistakes and self-correct their errors. As this activity was completed, she shared that she would have this book and blank tapes in the listening center for those who would like to record the story. Her only request was that they say their name into the tape recorder prior to beginning to read the book so she would know who was reading. This activity
continued as the three groups of children rotated through these carefully planned activities at each station and the centers. For the remainder of the morning, I continued to observe and reflect: (a) There was a sense of family or community in this classroom with the teacher helping children, and more importantly, children helping children. (b) When children made mistakes, there was no reprimand, but rather a manipulation of the activity or response so that success was ultimately achieved. (c) Conversations were continuous with a tremendous amount of dialogue between the teacher and the children.

Day four. As I entered for the fourth day of this week, the children were informally working in the various centers, writing in their journals and reading with Ms. May from their journals. As this unstructured part of their day came to an end, the children moved to the carpeted area with Ms. May singing a song to get them settled and ready to listen.

Ms. May had written several sentences from the text on sentence strips and placed them on the easel. As the children were getting settled on the

```
“We can read,"

“We can write,"

“We can think,"

said the little green bugs.

said the little white goats.

said the little pink pigs.
```

Figure 6.7 Day 4: Extension Activity--Phrase Strips
carpeted area, some of the children were reading the sentences on their own. Actually, the sentences were not in the order that the events had occurred in the story. Ms. May did not tell the children this, but rather allowed them to discover that the sentences were mixed-up. After their discovery, they helped Ms. May write the sentences forming the quotes from the animals in the story.

Next, Ms. May asked the children if they had read their story that she had typed on the computer and given them a copy to take home. She reminded them that they were the illustrator of their books. Then a child said that she remembered the colors on this page in the text without saying anything. Ms. May explained to her that this was reading silently, which meant that you could read the book with your eyes with or without moving your lips. This was my first time to actually hear a teacher explain what it meant to read a book silently. Most teachers simply told children to read silently. Some children probably had no idea what reading silently truly meant.

Ms. May returned to the book for the day and had the children observe the pictures on each page. As she shared a page, she turned the book over and questioned them about what they had seen, forcing the children to think and use their visual memories. They came to a page in the text where the bugs were on books. The children speculated that the bugs were at the library or school. Ms. May questioned, "If the bugs were at the library, what could this book be about?" She continued through the book, relating it to experiences of the children and probing to make them think, speculate, and comprehend. For the day’s follow-up activity, Ms. May had another large piece of white butcher paper on the easel. In bold print, she had written, “WE CAN”. The children completed the chart with Ms. May, sharing things they could do. As always, Ms. May reread the completed chart together with the children. The children were going on a field trip that morning and she informed them that upon
returning, they would draw or illustrate one of the things they could do that was listed on the chart. She informed them that she would use their drawings to compile a book titled *WE CAN*.

(Written by teacher prior to activity) (Student Responses)

- We can **play**
  - T-ball
  - soccer
  - hide and go seek

- We can **read**
  - books
  - signs
  - crayons

- We can **see**
  - T.V.
  - animals
  - people

Figure 6.8 Day 4: Follow-up Activity

**Day five.** The fifth day of the five-day lesson sequence incorporated a companion book. The companion book for *The Bugs, the Goats, and the Little Pink Pigs* (Martin and Archambault, 1987) was the book, *Goodnight Mr. Beetle* (Jacobs, 1974).

The children were seated on the carpeted area and Ms. May asked if they had discovered what they did with their story on the fifth day of the repeated read aloud strategy. They responded, and she shared with them that on the fifth day they worked with two books to compare and contrast the books. She explained to the students that they would decide in which ways the original book was like the companion book and how it was different. Ms. May then showed the students the companion book, *Goodnight Mr. Beetle* (Jacobs, 1974). Ms. May allowed the children time to attempt reading the title.
The first attempt at reading the title by a child produced, "Goodnight Mr. Battle," which was a good first try. Then two children read the title exactly as it was written.

Next, Ms. May allowed the children to observe the cover. As they were observing, they were discussing and speculating/predicting what was to come in the story. Ms. May told the children the name of the author and illustrator. The ensuing conversation between Ms. May and the students helped them determine if they had read other books by this author. The children observed that this book had been printed with the Spanish version of the text beneath the English version, and Ms. May actually read the title in Spanish.

As they prepared to read the first page of the text, Ms. May allowed the children time to make predictions before she actually turned to the first page. After she read the first page, she provided time for the students to speculate about who was actually saying the phrase "Goodnight Mr. Beetle."

On the next page is the phrase, "Goodnight Mr. Robin." Ms. May told the children that they had said this book would be about bugs and here was a robin. From this phrase, the children spontaneously decided that the book would be about things beginning with the letter "b". This connection had been made by the children because they were calling a robin a bird. They continued to the next page and again, speculated about the illustrations. The students had a difficult time decoding or recognizing the word wren. The word bedtime was a key word on the next page. Ms. May used this opportunity to teach a mini-lesson on compound words. This mini-lesson assisted the children in breaking apart and decoding the word bedtime. Ms. May thoroughly delineated the idea of putting two words together to form a compound word.
On the following page, one child was quite observant and commented that birds cannot fly as high as the moon. In the illustration on this page, the birds looked like they were flying above the moon. Ms. May captured this opportunity to teach a science mini-lesson about gravity. She related this to the text illustration showing the bird, thus integrating language arts with science on this occasion of the repeated read aloud strategy.

The following page contained print that allowed a child to deduce that the word *rooster* began with the same initial sound as *robin*. This association illustrated learning a reading skill in the context of an authentic piece of literature. Another child concluded that all the pages of this book had not been about animals. Ms. May, along with several other children, confirmed that the child was correct.

Dialogue between Ms. May and the children evolved as if it were informal conversation. This was a key to Ms. May's teaching style and success with the repeated read aloud strategy. She revisited the text by rereading the story to the children. During the rereading many of the children were able to spontaneously read with Ms. May, but some of the children only watched and listened. It was difficult to ascertain if these children were truly involved with the rereading.

As an extension activity, Ms. May had placed a piece of white butcher paper on the easel to produce a chart and began helping students relate how the two books used that week were alike and different. She also led the students to discover repetitive language during their comparison of the two books. She actually explained to the children that repetitive language meant that the text said the same thing over and over. Then she guided the children in remembering other books they had read containing repetitive language. Then Ms. May asked, "Could you write a book like this?" Ms. May built
confidence in their ability to accomplish the task of a simple rewriting of the story by telling them that they had done this in the past. The story rewriting would be accomplished at another time during the day with the whole group. Ms. May also reminded them that she would have small books, just like the big

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Alike</th>
<th>Different</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Bugs</td>
<td>Different Characters</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Animals</td>
<td>Rooster</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>We</td>
<td>Kitten</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Farm Animals</td>
<td>Pup</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rhyming Words</td>
<td>Horse</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>One-English</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Other-Spanish &amp; English</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Words</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>3 animals</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>lots of animals</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Repetitive language</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Figure 6.9 Day 5: Extension Activity

book she had just read to them, for partner reading in the book center. During the center time, several children were observed reading the small books to a friend; two of the children also shared the book with me.

Selection and Integration of the Books

In selecting appropriate books for the repeated read aloud strategy, Ms. May did not have a predetermined criteria for book selection. She relied on her knowledge of (a) skills necessary for young children to become successful readers and writers, (b) appropriate books for students of this age, (c) availability of books in the big book format, and (d) integration of literature with
other content area subjects and her thematic units or author studies. Using her knowledge as a guide, Ms. May reviewed the books in the school library, her private collection, and those belonging to other teachers. A complete list of the books used for the repeated read aloud strategy and the companion books is found in Appendix G.

As she reviewed books to determine appropriateness for the repeated read aloud strategy, she looked for books that were filled with high frequency basic sight words. To determine high frequency sight words, she used the word list from the school district’s adopted basal reader series and the Dolch Basic Sight Word List.

Ms. May also wanted the books to have a good story structure with meaning. She searched for books with repetitive language, but expressed that the books also needed more than repetitive language; they needed to have enough meaning to develop both literal and higher level comprehension skills. Books filled with rich vocabulary appealed to her. She further believed that these books could extend the child’s vocabulary and understandings of basic concepts.

Ms. May’s knowledge of the basic concepts needed by young learners was vital when she reviewed books to determine their appropriateness to developing or extending such basic understandings as letter knowledge, sequencing, rhyming, and opposites. Her selection of books reflected literature that was suitable to engage young children in the literacy processes of reading and writing using a repeated read aloud strategy.

Benefits of the Repeated Read Aloud Strategy

Ms. May was questioned early in the observational process and again at the end of the data collection period about her perceived benefits of the use of a specific repeated read aloud strategy as opposed to simply reading a
book once and discussing it with the children. She believed the benefits to be numerous and shared that if she had not seen benefits and growth in her children, she would certainly have discontinued the use of this strategy or any other. Ms. May conveyed her perception of recognized benefits of the repeated read aloud strategy: (a) repeated exposure to entire books or whole texts; (b) development of thinking skills, understandings, and vocabulary; (c) modeling of oral reading for the children; (d) teacher modeling of comprehension strategies such as predicting, using context clues, sequencing, comparing/contrasting, understanding character traits, drawing conclusions, and making interpretations; (e) repetition of words, phrases, and whole texts; and (f) the use of graphic organizers in the extension activities to develop a deeper understanding of the story, actually teaching specific comprehension skills rather than merely employing literal level questioning for specific recall.

**Teacher Concerns about the Repeated Read Aloud Strategy**

Although Ms. May believed the repeated read aloud strategy was beneficial in encouraging her students to react to books and in developing literacy skills, she expressed some concerns about using this teaching strategy. Her primary concern was the universal question, "Does this strategy work for all of the children in my classroom?" Ms. May felt that it was often difficult to ascertain (a) how much the weaker students were gaining, (b) if these students were participating at a superficial level, and (c) if they were indeed comprehending the text. Ms. May also said that, on many occasions, she believed responses by weaker students were evidence that they were developing beginning reading and writing skills by using the repeated read aloud strategy. However, she still felt that it was more difficult to obtain and hold the attention of her weaker students when utilizing this approach.
Nevertheless, it was her opinion that this was a better method than relying on ditto sheets or workbook pages from the adopted basal reader series.

Ms. May perceived that the big books were more effective for the repeated read aloud strategy. However, she was concerned about limiting the use of the strategy to big books only. She felt that using only big books would certainly decrease the possibilities for other quality literature that would be excellent for developing the skills she wanted to teach.

Ms. May also expressed apprehension that she had selected some books that were too difficult for the students. She believed that her reflections on book selection and the use of the strategy would help her improve as she continued to employ the repeated read aloud strategy as a technique for developing early literacy skills.
Ms. May epitomized the characteristics of an effective teacher as described in *The First Days of School* (Wong & Wong, 1991). Wong and Wong assert that the rewards in education go to the professional teacher who attends conferences, reads journals, works actively on committees, gives extra help to raise the level of achievement of all students, and has a continuing plan for personal growth. They further maintain that the rewards in teaching go to the professional who continues to learn, who shares with others, and who takes risks to accomplish goals. Information about Ms. May's activities and interactions was gathered primarily from interviews with key informants and conversations with Ms. May, observer comments in the field notes, and by reviewing Ms. May's professional portfolio.

**Continuing to Learn**

Ms. May's continued efforts to improve her professional knowledge contributed to her current beliefs about and practices with her young learners. Ms. May maintained memberships in professional organizations, read current journals, attended workshops and staff development opportunities, and had recently finished her Educational Specialist degree from a well-known university in Louisiana.

Ms. May had membership in several professional organizations, including the local, state, and international chapters of the International Reading Association, local and international Phi Delta Kappa, local and state
Association for Children Under Six, the Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development, and the Louisiana Federation of Teachers. Ms. May routinely attended monthly meetings of Phi Delta Kappa and bimonthly meetings of her local reading council. Ms. May regularly read the professional journals she received from her membership in the International Reading Association, Phi Delta Kappa, and the Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development. In addition, she read journals from her school's professional library, including Teaching K-8, Instructor, Arithmetic Teacher, Care Package, Mailbox, and others.

Between June 1988 and March 1995, Ms. May acquired over 200 workshop hours through her local school board's Staff Development Center. Workshops that Ms. May attended during the 1994-1995 school year included Portfolio Assessment, Self-Esteem I, Self-Esteem II, Whole Language I, Whole Language II, Elementary Language Development Program, Whole Language and Process Writing, and Evaluating Writing. She had also attended workshops presented outside her local district, including a one-week Math Their Way workshop and a one-week Bill Martin Literacy Conference. She regularly attended state and regional reading association conferences.

Ms. May had continued her education by taking graduate classes through a small liberal arts college in north Louisiana and a well-known university in the state. She finished her Masters Degree in 1994 and completed her Educational Specialist degree in August 1995. Both degree programs emphasized reading and writing instruction with young learners. Among her recent courses were The Writing Process, Authentic Assessment, and Qualitative Research.

Her kindergarten teacher colleagues reinforced the assessment that Ms. May continued her effort for professional learning. One stated that Ms.
May "always tries to bring the very latest teaching methods to her students."
Another teacher said that Ms. May "takes new programs and integrates them
into her program easily." Several kindergarten teachers commended Ms. May
for being well read, and one remarked that she admired Ms. May for "her
unending search for new ideas and strategies." Her curriculum coordinator
added that Ms. May was "continually growing and developing" and she "works
weekends and holidays and is very willing to be involved." Ms. May stated, "It
would be impossible for me to start my day at 8:00 and end at 3:00. I spend
hours each week reading and looking for new ideas."

**Sharing with Others**

Ms. May participated in professional activities and interacted with her
peers in a way that enabled her to share her knowledge with others. She
related,

> The door to my classroom is always open to all who wish to come. I feel the greatest contribution I can make to improve the teaching profession is to open my files, classroom and thoughts to other teachers. I am more than willing to share my successes and my failures with others. I am always willing to share and visit with colleagues informally on the phone, in the hall, the grocery store, or in a more formal workshop setting.

By sharing what she has learned with others, Ms. May strengthened her
instructional practices and clarified her personal philosophy of teaching.

Ms. May participated actively on school committees and had served as
grade level chairperson for several years. One kindergarten teacher
colleague noted that Ms. May had a "willingness to share materials and
expertise . . . takes time to answer questions . . . and is a great resource."
Another teacher appreciated the journal articles that Ms. May shared with her
and valued Ms. May’s input concerning appropriate graduate classes to take.
Another teacher looked to Ms. May “for her expertise” but wished that she
would share even more. The teacher added, "She'd share if I asked her." In the field notes were several instances when Ms. May had shared a book with other teachers or had encouraged others to observe in her classroom. She shared copies of the field notes with another kindergarten teacher interested in her instructional strategies.

Ms. May also shared with her students' parents through her program entitled Parent-Child Reading Program. Each week Ms. May's students took a bag containing a student book and parent activity sheet home. Ms. May felt that this program involved parents with their children and exposed them to the reading process. Ms. May has also presented several programs on the writing process for her students' families so they could understand the stages of writing development and encourage their children in the writing process.

Further sharing of her professional knowledge occurred when Ms. May trained student teachers. With her student teachers, Ms. May planned and held conferences daily. She encouraged her student teachers to observe in other classrooms throughout the school district. Ms. May shared appropriate journal articles and opened her files to the student teachers. She encouraged each student teacher to attend pertinent local workshops and conferences.

Ms. May gave an impressive number of presentations, which allowed her to share knowledge with teachers outside her school community. In the previous four years, Ms. May had spoken at conferences or meetings of the Louisiana Reading Association, Southwest Regional International Reading Association, Louisiana Effective Schools Program, National Coalition of Title I/Chapter I Parents, Public Education Foundation, and the Louisiana Association for Children Under Six. She had also given workshops at local schools and universities as well as in other school districts. After hearing Ms.
May speak on whole language, one person wrote, “Your success stories, the children’s work, and the energy with which you told of them were great motivators.”

At a presentation of the community’s Public Education Foundation, the director asked Ms. May to be an Education Ambassador. This task involved speaking to the business community to secure funds for the foundation. Ms. May reported that her reply to the director was, “Yes. What do you want me to do?” She explained, “Everyone must work together, because there’s no other way for a community to reach its full potential.”

**Taking Risks to Accomplish Goals**

The curriculum coordinator at Ms. May’s school described her as a “risk taker.” In her professional activities and interactions with peers, Ms. May has taken many risks to enhance her success as a kindergarten teacher. As Ms. May learned of innovative teaching strategies or techniques, she remarked that she was “always willing to try new things if I think they are a good idea. I will give 150% if I think it’s worthwhile and we get something out of the kids.”

Her professional readings often led her to try something new in her classroom. It was not unusual for Ms. May to share the contents of an article she had read and intended to implement with her children.

Ms. May also took risks as she gave workshops and presentations to colleagues. In addition, Ms. May taught mini-workshops with small groups of young children in a private clinic. Her mini-workshops using the repeated read aloud strategy for instruction with young children were unprecedented at the private clinic. Being a presenter or innovator made her vulnerable to failure.

Ms. May had written numerous grant applications to receive funding for classroom projects. This venturesome effort had resulted in the awarding of
four grants, two from the community Public Education Foundation and two from the Quality in Science and Mathematics Council, for a total of nearly two thousand dollars for her kindergarten classroom. Ms. May’s grants were entitled *Innovative Curriculum Integrating Reading and Content Areas, The Home Connection, Hands on the Cube, and Hands on Kindergarten Math and Science Activities*. The grant *Innovative Curriculum Integrating Reading and Content Areas* provided science, math, and social living tradebooks to be used for instructional purposes as a supplement to the units of study she had planned. These early reading content area books presented basic concepts and understandings with detailed pictures that intrigued these young children. The grant *The Home Connection* allowed Ms. May to establish her home/school reading connection. In this program, students took home emergent literacy tradebooks to share with their parents. Two parents volunteered on a weekly basis to rotate the books and fill the plastic bags so the students would have different books to take home and share. Ms. May had also developed activities for the parents to use at home with their children and these books. The grant *Hands on the Cube* involved the utilization of unifix cubes in unique mathematical concepts and applications. The grant *Hands on Kindergarten Math and Science Activities* allowed Ms. May to purchase equipment including binoculars, microscopes, butterflies, a butterfly tower, magnifying glasses, sorting rings for making sets and Venn diagrams, and mathematical graphing mats. All of these math and science manipulatives were used in the independent learning centers that were designated on the floor plan.

Ms. May’s biggest risk, in her opinion, was having a research project conducted in her classroom. She said at times she “felt overwhelmed” particularly as the research focus shifted from the students to the teacher.
Ms. May was concerned about the effects that the research might have on her relationship with her colleagues. She reported that she "tried to quietly do it without making a big deal." She also disclosed that having a researcher in the classroom made teaching feel "intense," but she knew that she was the source of the pressure she was putting on herself to perform well. Ms. May took a particularly risky step when she established her modified repeated read aloud strategy so that it would be a part of this research study. While she enjoyed the collaborative nature of being a research participant, Ms. May occasionally felt overwhelmed by the experience.

Other Interactions with Staff

Not all of the remarks by Ms. May's colleagues were positive ones. A common theme among the comments was that Ms. May was sometimes intimidating and abrupt with other adults. In fact, Ms. May recognized this herself and expressed that she was "overpowering to other teachers. I really don't want to be." When she was vocal about airing her views, one colleague expressed that Ms. May's strong opinions "alienate other teachers." One teacher stated that Ms. May "has a frank way of speaking," but her gruffness "is not intentional." Several of her peers felt intimidated by Ms. May's excellent skills as a teacher and worried that they were not up to her caliber. One teacher said, "It's almost like I need her approval." She shared her concern that Ms. May might be judgmental about other teachers.

Despite those negative comments, Ms. May's colleagues uniformly praised her dedication and child-centered approach to teaching kindergartners. School staff, without exception, saw Ms. May as "creative," "innovative," "a textbook kindergarten teacher," "consistent, firm, and loving," and "very knowledgeable in curriculum areas." She "works well with parents" and "works very hard to provide the best education for students in her class."
Ms. May is a "good decision-maker" and "thinks on her feet really well." In short, Ms. May was described by all as "an overall outstanding teacher."
CHAPTER 8
FINDINGS, LIMITATIONS, AND IMPLICATIONS FOR FUTURE RESEARCH

Findings

This study described a successful kindergarten teacher, her beliefs and behaviors, as well as her interactions with students as they acquired early literacy skills. Through a critical examination of each aspect of this teacher's behavior in depth, this investigation furnished information regarding the characteristics of a successful kindergarten teacher and explained how she employed a specific repeated read aloud strategy as one component of her holistic, language-based curricula. The study also examined the teacher's professional activities and interactions with her peers which contributed to her beliefs and practices. By providing an analysis of this successful kindergarten teacher, the research presented valuable insights into classroom teaching dealing with the development of early literacy skills for regular education students and full inclusion special education students.

This study answered four questions about Ms. May's beliefs and behaviors. The four questions were:

(a) What was the interaction of the teacher with regular education and special education inclusion students in an inclusive kindergarten classroom with holistic, language-based curricula?
(b) What behaviors did the teacher exhibit to engage students in the literacy processes of reading and writing?
(c) What behaviors did the teacher exhibit to encourage students to react to books using a specific repeated read aloud strategy?
(d) What were the professional activities and interactions of the
classroom teacher with her peers that contributed to her beliefs and practices?

Coding of the field notes produced emerging themes. The following summary relates the findings to the research questions.

**Question A**

Question A investigated Ms. May's interaction with regular education and special education students in her classroom using holistic, language-based curricula. I found that Ms. May managed student behavior to insure a positive classroom atmosphere. The students were praised generously for appropriate behaviors. The negative behaviors of the students were redirected so they were on task and involved in productive activities. Routines and transitions were carefully manipulated so that few problems arose.

Ms. May reviewed regularly to check for understanding, clarified and provided guided practice when needed, and consistently questioned in a manner that encouraged higher level thinking. She routinely made connections for the students so that learning was more meaningful. Ms. May's instructional techniques were varied to meet the needs of her students. A pervasive theme throughout Ms. May's classroom was her use of instructional conversations. Ms. May was continually conversing with the students in all settings and situations as they discussed instructional topics. When appropriate, Ms. May personalized her instruction to relate new learning to previous experiences of the children. As students were exposed to new words in the literature they were sharing, Ms. May led them to understand and use the new vocabulary.

It was interesting to find that Ms. May made no accommodations for her special education inclusion students that differed from those she made for her regular education students. I found that Ms. May made modifications and
adaptations as a natural part of her instructional day to meet the needs of all students.

**Question B**

Question B addressed the behaviors exhibited by Ms. May that engaged students in the literacy processes of reading and writing. Ms. May read new texts and reread familiar texts to and with the children daily. She allowed and encouraged students to read spontaneously as she read orally. When sharing a book, Ms. May insured that students were exposed to whole texts, not text fragments, by reading the entire book at each sitting. She planned situations daily that encouraged students to read.

To involve students further in quality literature and to develop targeted skills, Ms. May provided book extension activities for her students. Her students regularly participated in book talks to discuss books, authors, and illustrators.

Ms. May modeled writing for her students so they could learn processes and conventions. She encouraged students to write for varied authentic purposes throughout each school day.

When it was needed, Ms. May gave direct instruction to insure student success with reading and writing activities. Direct instruction was provided to individuals, small groups, and the whole class.

Her classroom was always inviting and filled with print-rich materials and activities. It was apparent even to visitors and casual observers that students were actively engaged in meaningful learning activities.

**Question C**

Question C examined Ms. May's repeated read aloud strategy and her behaviors as she encouraged students to react to books using this specific strategy. Analysis of the data indicated that there were few observable
differences in how Ms. May encouraged students to react to books using this specific strategy as opposed to how she encouraged children to become engaged in literacy processes in general throughout the day. In other words, Ms. May used the same effective behaviors to encourage student engagement regardless of the literacy activity. However, several positive teacher and student behaviors emerged which indicated that the repeated read aloud strategy was an especially worthwhile activity. The positive aspects included (a) probing and questioning planned by the teacher; (b) extending the vocabulary and concepts through conversations about each of the books used; (c) student questioning of the teacher about the text and its contents; (d) more interacting during the read alouds by the less able students than had been previously noted when Ms. May simply read a book without planned book talk; (e) a deeper understanding of the book and a more thorough knowledge of the book by the students; and (f) reading of words, sentences, or phrases from the text by most of the students on the third and fourth day of rereading the book. With some of the books used for the repeated read aloud strategy, all students were able to read parts of the text by the end of the five-day lesson sequence. The repeated read aloud strategy seemed to be a beneficial technique for developing emergent reading behaviors.

Question D

Question D examined Ms. May’s professional activities and relationships with her peers that contributed to her beliefs and practices. Data analysis showed that Ms. May was a professional teacher who attended conferences, read journals, worked actively on committees, continued to take graduate classes, and had a continuing plan for personal growth. She continued to learn, shared with others, and took risks to accomplish her goals.
Summary

While these findings of Ms. May's behaviors were specifically reflective of her classroom setting, her effective practices were strongly supported by the literature. The National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYP) has promoted the use of developmentally appropriate practices in programs for four- and five-year olds (Bredekamp, 1987). Ms. May's classroom provided a model for the use of these age-appropriate practices. Following the recommendations of NAEYP, Ms. May viewed each child as unique with individual patterns of development. She planned lessons and activities which accommodated different levels of ability and learning styles. All interactions were intentional to build self-esteem in her young learners and to promote a positive feeling about learning. Ms. May grouped her students so they were working individually and in small groups, and provided multiple opportunities throughout the day for them to interact with various types of literature, writing, and other communicative activities.

Students in Ms. May's room were given many chances to view reading and writing holistically before they were instructed in skills such as letter names and sounds. Students experimented with writing; Ms. May encouraged drawing, copying, and invented spellings. She integrated activities in the content areas with language-based hands-on experiences. Differentiated instruction and modification of activities were routinely accomplished by Ms. May to meet the developmental needs of all her students. The developmentally appropriate practices delineated by NAEYP were seen daily in Ms. May's classroom.

Morrow and O'Connor (1995) offered a list of constructs of emergent literacy to guide the development of a successful program for beginning reading. These constructs included (a) focusing on the development of the
whole child; (b) emphasizing an optimal learning environment; (c) promoting learning rather than teaching; (d) stressing the importance of adult/child social interactions; (e) urging meaningful, natural learning experiences; and (f) exhibiting concern for children’s active participation in learning. Ms. May’s lessons and activities followed these constructs. She focused on the "whole child" and provided an optimal learning environment. She recognized and encouraged the importance of adult-child social interactions. Emphasis was placed on meaningful, natural learning experiences; Ms. May was concerned about supporting children’s active participation in learning.

Ms. May’s activities and centers provided many opportunities daily for her students to be actively involved in literacy activities. A significant theme throughout this study confirmed that Ms. May regularly used interactive storybook readings. Her book talks with the children allowed them to observe an adult role model engaged in reading and helped develop critical vocabulary, word recognition, and comprehension skills. Ms. May’s holistic, language-based curricula involved all children in literacy activities throughout the school day.

Ms. May believed that children enter kindergarten with meaningful language and the ability to extend this language into learning to read and write. She drew on the disciplines of linguistics, language development, sociolinguistics, psycholinguistics, anthropology, and education to help her build curricula as well as plan and evaluate instruction in her holistic, language-based classroom.

Ms. May’s instructional procedures followed Holdaway’s four-step developmental model for language learning (Holdaway, 1986). She first had her young students observe demonstrations of listening, speaking, reading, or writing. Next the children became participants and collaborated with Ms. May.
and others in the literacy activity. Later, the students role played and rehearsed the literacy activity without the direction or observation of their teacher, but with Ms. May available to assist if necessary. When each child felt competent, he/she became the demonstrator of the literacy act and performed for Ms. May and other meaningful adults as well as their peers. Holdaway's model of learning was an integral part of Ms. May's beliefs about literacy learning.

With repeated readings, the students became familiar with book language and were given time to sort out the meaning of the text, which then allowed them to direct their attention to print. Data analysis showed that Ms. May built rereading opportunities into most activities involving text. Ms. May or the students routinely reread books, charts, messages, excerpts, and poems. Ms. May's repeated read aloud strategy was a structured way to utilize the benefits of repeated reading.

Although not a focus of the research questions, an additional emerging theme of this study involved assessment procedures. The observations and field notes provided some information about how Ms. May viewed the process. She used portfolios to show student growth and change over time in all curricular areas. She incorporated report cards, checklists, rubrics, anecdotal records, and standardized tests with authentic assessment measures. Ms. May believed that real assessment occurs day-to-day, minute-by-minute. She continually observed, interpreted, and made instructional decisions based upon the actions of her students. Her daily assessment guided her planning for instruction in all areas of the curricula.

Ms. May expressed high expectations for all her students. Since children tend to conform to the expectations of their teacher, Ms. May's high expectations helped promote success in emergent literacy acquisition.
Ms. May’s expectations for her special education inclusion students were as high as those for her regular education children. A report by a coalition of educational associations sponsored by The Council for Exceptional Children has suggested a set of principles for inclusion (The Council for Exceptional Children, 1994). Ms. May followed those principles pertinent to the classroom teacher. She maintained high standards for her students, herself, and other adults who worked with her children. She communicated her high standards to all students and emphasized differing strategies or degrees in which educational outcomes were achieved by various students. Her inclusive classroom exhibited a feeling of belonging and acceptance and built a deep sense of community. Ms. May’s teaching strategies were research-based and provided authentic learning activities within a developmentally appropriate curricula. She worked collaboratively with the special education inclusion teacher and instructional aide who serviced students needing extra help. Parents were considered partners in the classroom and became involved in implementing strategies and activities suggested by Ms. May. Ms. May provided physical modifications to insure access and participation of all students.

Ms. May read aloud carefully-selected quality children’s literature to (a) promote enjoyment and appreciation of books, (b) extend a thematic unit, (c) model fluent oral reading, (d) develop vocabulary, (e) enhance listening comprehension, (f) link experiences to text, and (g) stimulate imaginations. When Ms. May read to her students, she was encouraging all areas of emergent literacy. Ms. May believed that reading aloud to children was valuable, well-spent time, and it was a planned priority in her classroom.
**Limitations**

With any research, there are limitations inherent in the methodology selected, whether one uses a qualitative or a quantitative approach. Researchers using either method work to insure validity and reliability as much as possible within the constraints of their studies. As a researcher, I recognized the limitations of case study research and attempted to delineate these limitations for the reader.

In some instances, the field notes did not provide information specific enough to fully interpret the data, particularly the data related to Ms. May's questioning strategies. However, I was able to determine if some questions asked by Ms. May were literal, inferential, and critical through the activation of prior experiences and knowledge. One excerpt from the field notes was, "Ms. May now questioned the students about the characters' feelings." Examples such as this one were easily coded as higher level questioning, but others were not easily categorized. Therefore, some of the data concerning Ms. May's levels of questioning were incomplete.

Varying the observational schedule periodically prohibited seeing deeper emerging patterns in the research. For example, because Ms. May felt strongly about the necessity for kindergartners to have repeated opportunities to encounter text, I perceived that Ms. May used rereading as an instructional strategy daily. The data, however, indicated that rereading was done on only 74% of the days observed. Because I was not in attendance to see everything daily, the data may have underrepresented patterns that actually occurred in the classroom.

The choice of a research site and subject was deliberate and carefully considered. The staff, particularly Ms. May, were secure with my regular appearance and welcomed me as a collaborator in the research project. The
close partnership between Ms. May and me helped to strengthen the quality of data acquired during the observations. One limitation that may impact the research data was that some key informants might have spoken less openly concerning Ms. May's weaknesses because they were familiar with our relationship.

**Implications for Future Research**

As I narrowed the analysis to study only the four research questions, I eliminated from the report other teacher behaviors that made the classroom an effective environment for learning. Further analysis of the data from the field notes would suggest answers to other research questions concerning Ms. May's effective teaching behaviors in a holistic, inclusive kindergarten. Examples of questions for further study might include (a) How does Ms. May deal with the affective domain in her classroom? (b) How does Ms. May involve parents in her holistic, language-based kindergarten program? (c) How does the organization of time, materials, and students correlate with the learning of literacy skills?

Ms. May's classroom offered further opportunities for in-depth research with information not available from the field notes. Future researchers may wish to study (a) how the integration of social living, science, and math into language arts instruction affects student learning in the content areas; (b) how Ms. May assesses the literacy learning of her students; (c) how Ms. May uses assessment information to guide instruction; and (d) how students interact among themselves in Ms. May's inclusive classroom.

This current research described one teacher's behaviors and beliefs which promoted literacy learning for her kindergartners. Ms. May's teaching behaviors could be compared and contrasted with other kindergarten teachers using a qualitative multiple-case study research design.
The repeated read aloud strategy utilized by Ms. May presented several topics for future quantitative and qualitative research studies. Pertinent information could be obtained if the repeated read aloud strategy was used with other school populations such as first graders, at risk readers, or learning disabled students.

Epilogue

Every classroom is unique. Ms. May and her students were no exception. What I have learned about teaching, holistic curricula, and literacy acquisition from Ms. May is in many respects peculiar to this setting. I recognize that in many kindergarten classrooms, teaching and learning are defined and illustrated very differently from what I have described in this study. Even though there are differences, there are a number of similarities between Ms. May's teacher behaviors and interactions and the descriptions of kindergarten settings researched by others.

From my perspective, Ms. May's classroom was unquestionably unique in many ways. I chose it not because it would give me a perspective of a normal kindergarten class or teacher, but because I thought it was a nurturing setting for literacy acquisition. The classroom was not unique due to its physical plant or the upbringing of the students. Rather, it was special because of Ms. May's philosophy about the students' abilities to become competent readers, writers, listeners, speakers, and thinkers. In Ms. May's words,

I believe in my students. I believe that all my students will learn. I believe that it is my responsibility to find the best way for them to learn. I believe the hours we spend together each day are precious and it is my responsibility to learn to make the best use of this time. I believe that learning is a lifetime goal, not to be restricted to school hours only or end with graduation. I believe I must continue to learn as much as I can in order to be a better teacher. My on-going goal is to be a better teacher tomorrow than I am today. I believe to be a better teacher I must evaluate myself daily and make adjustments
so I can provide the best learning environment possible for my students. I am rewarded daily for teaching by my students. As they continue to grow in independence each day, their accomplishments give me great pleasure and satisfaction. Every name that becomes legible, every shoe tied, every written word read, every discovery made, these are my rewards.

This study provided an in-depth look at one successful kindergarten teacher in an inclusive setting using holistic, language-based curricula. By focusing exclusively on Ms. May, I have developed for both practitioners and researchers a rich description of her beliefs and behaviors with students and adults. However, despite efforts to enrich our understanding of effective practices in a kindergarten setting, "... no research study, no brilliant discovery, no book, no seminal article, no journal, no program, no policy, no mandate, no law can change what happens to kids in our school. Only teachers can do that" (Goodman, 1992, p. 189).
REFERENCES


Allington, R. (1994). The schools we have. The schools we need. The Reading Teacher, 48, 14-28.


Dear Dr. Holt,

I will be taking the second part of a class in qualitative and quantitative research in the spring. The class assignment requires that I be involved in an actual research project. I would like to have permission to conduct my study in the kindergarten classroom of Ms. [Name] at [School Name] Elementary. Ms. [Name] is very excited about me selecting her classroom for this project.

My project will involve giving a short test called the Test of Early Reading Ability. I will administer the test to the students during their nap time and at other times designated by Ms. [Name] so that regular instruction will not be interrupted. I will also be visiting the classroom two or three times per week to observe the students and how they acquire beginning literacy skills, and interact with each other. The primary reason for the selection of this classroom is the make-up of the class which includes regular education students as well as full inclusion special education students with differing disabilities.

I will be happy to meet with the parents to explain this project. I feel that the information that I gain will be of benefit to me as a principal and may also be of benefit to others as they examine issues relating to full inclusion and how young children acquire beginning reading and writing skills.

Please call me if I need to answer any additional questions.

Sincerely,

Kerry Laster

CC: Ms. [Name], Principal
    Ms. [Name], Teacher
November 16, 1994

Kerry Laster
1034 Bauxhall Drive
Shreveport, Louisiana 71106

Dear Kerry:

Your letter dated November 15 requesting approval to conduct research at Shreve Island has been received. Approval is granted for you to involve one kindergarten class at [insert location] in your research project. Since the project involves the administration of a test, I recommend parent permission for student participation prior to student involvement.

Once the project is completed, please send me a copy of the results. I wish you well with the project and let me know if I can help further.

Sincerely,

[Signature]

Essie W. Holt, Ed.D.
Assistant Superintendent
Curriculum and Instruction

[Contact Information]

copy to: [Principal]
APPENDIX C

PARENT PERMISSION SLIP

Elementary School
Shreveport, Louisiana 71105

November 28, 1994

To Ms. [Redacted] Parents,

Let me introduce myself - I am Kerry Laster. I am the principal of Elementary Elementary on sabbatical leave pursuing a doctorate in reading education. During the spring semester, I will be doing a qualitative study of early literacy skills in Ms. [Redacted] classroom. I selected her kindergarten class for my study because of the outstanding integrated language arts program that is present. I will get to know your child on a very personal basis. I would like to work with each of them individually and administer the Test of Early Reading Abilities.

On Tuesday, December 6, 1994 at 3:15 P.M., I will be available in Ms. [Redacted] room to meet you and answer any questions that you have about the time that I will be spending in your child's kindergarten classroom. Please complete the bottom portion of this letter and return it to Ms. [Redacted].

Thank you for this opportunity. Please call me at 797-5644 if you have any questions.

Sincerely,

Kerry Laster, M.Ed. plus 30
Reading Specialist

Please check below and return to Ms. Yates.

[ ] Ms. Laster may administer the Test of Early Reading Abilities to my child.

[ ] I will attend the meeting on Tuesday, December 6, 1994. (This is only if you would like additional information about the project).

[ ] If there is an opportunity for photos or videos, my child may be in the pictures or video.

Parent's Signature
Ms. Kerry Laster  
1039 Bauxhall Drive  
Shreveport, LA 71106  

Dear Ms. Laster:

Your research project entitled "An Insider's View: The Teacher as Impetus in Literacy Acquisition" which was submitted to the Institutional Review Board for the LSU campus has been determined to be exempt from committee review.

Sincerely,

W. Sheldon Bivin, Chairman  
Institutional Review Board  

WSB/jdb
Teachers will nominate outstanding books toward the end of each nine weeks. Bulldog Award winners will be selected once per nine weeks. The presentation of the awards will be made at an Awards Assembly.

The Bulldog Awards will be given to books that are of exceptional quality in both writing and illustrations.

Nominated books may be written and illustrated by an individual, written by one student and illustrated by another, or written and illustrated cooperatively by a group of class.

At a faculty meeting before an Awards Assembly at the end of a nine weeks period, teachers in grade groups will judge nominated books to determine award recipients. Judging will be done as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grade Level</th>
<th>Entries</th>
<th>Grade</th>
<th>Judging</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Kindergarten</td>
<td></td>
<td>1st</td>
<td>Spec. Ed. and support staff</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>First grade</td>
<td></td>
<td>2nd</td>
<td>Kindergarten</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Second grade</td>
<td></td>
<td>3rd</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Third grade</td>
<td></td>
<td>4th</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fourth grade</td>
<td></td>
<td>5th</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fifth grade</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Special Ed.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Rating scale for judging will be:

- Creativity: 1 2 3 4 5
- Content: 1 2 3 4 5
- Appearance: 1 2 3 4 5
- Illustrations: 1 2 3 4 5

Any book receiving a score of 18 or higher will receive the Bulldog Award.

Recipients must agree in advance that they will make a second copy of the book to be placed in the school library. Teachers can write or type text, if desired, but students must do illustrations.
APPENDIX F

BULLDOG AWARD CERTIFICATE

Any School Publishing House

BULLDOG AWARD

is presented to

for excellence in writing

Name of Book: ____________________________
Author: ____________________________
Illustrator: ____________________________
Date: ____________________________
# APPENDIX G

## REPEATED READ ALOUD BOOK SELECTIONS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Practice Week</th>
<th>Companion Books</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Focus Books</strong></td>
<td><strong>Practice Week</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Week One</strong></td>
<td><strong>Pigs</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Mortimer</em></td>
<td>Robert Munsch</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Robert Munsch</td>
<td>Toronto: Annick Press, Ltd., 1983</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Week Two</strong></td>
<td><strong>Heckedy Peg</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>The Wolf’s Chicken Stew</em></td>
<td>Audrey Wood</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Week Three</strong></td>
<td><strong>The Alphabet Tree</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Chicka Chicka Boom Boom</em></td>
<td>Leo Lionni</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Week Four</strong></td>
<td><strong>The Talking Eggs</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>The Bugs, the Goats and the Little Pink Pigs</em></td>
<td>Retold by Robert D. San Souci</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bill Martin, Jr. &amp; John Archambault</td>
<td>New York: Scholastic, 1989</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Week Five</strong></td>
<td><strong>Goodnight Mr. Beetle</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>The Napping House</em></td>
<td>Leland Jacobs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Audrey Wood</td>
<td>Allen, TX: Developmental Learning</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Week Six</strong></td>
<td><strong>Silly Sally</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>I Was Walking Down the Road</em></td>
<td>Audrey Wood</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sarah Barchas</td>
<td>Orlando, FL: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1992</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Week Seven</strong></td>
<td><strong>Rosie’s Walk</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>The Very Hungry Caterpillar</em></td>
<td>Pat Hutchins</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Eric Carle</td>
<td>New York: Macmillian, 1968</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Week Eight</strong></td>
<td><strong>The Very Busy Spider</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>A House for Hermit Crab</em></td>
<td>Eric Carle</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Eric Carle</td>
<td>New York: Scholastic, 1984</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Week One* - *Week Eight* correspond to the weekly practice schedule for repeated read aloud sessions.
Kerry Pierce Laster was born on February 11, 1949 in Natchez, Mississippi, to Harry and Jeanette Pierce. She attended public schools in Ferriday, Louisiana. Ms. Laster is a graduate of Ferriday High School. She received a Bachelor of Arts degree in elementary education from Northeast Louisiana University in 1970. She received her master's degree from Louisiana State University in Baton Rouge, Louisiana, in 1979. She has also completed additional graduate hours at Centenary College, Auburn University, Northwestern State University, Louisiana Tech University, and Louisiana State University in Shreveport, Louisiana.

Ms. Laster has been an educator for twenty-four years. She has served as a classroom teacher in kindergarten, first grade, third grade, fourth grade, fifth grade, and ninth grade. She has also worked as a Curriculum Coordinator and Administrative Intern. For the past eight years, Ms. Laster has worked as an elementary principal. She also owns and operates a private reading clinic where she functions as a reading specialist providing diagnostic reading evaluations for both children and adults. Ms. Laster is currently completing the requirements for the Doctor of Philosophy Degree in Curriculum and Instruction from Louisiana State University in Baton Rouge, Louisiana.
DOCTORAL EXAMINATION AND DISSERTATION REPORT

Candidate:          Kerry Pierce Laster

Major Field:       Curriculum and Instruction

Title of Dissertation: An Insider's View: The Teacher as Impetus in Literacy Acquisition

Approved:

[Signature]
Major Professor and Chairman

[Signature]
Dean of the Graduate School

EXAMINING COMMITTEE:

[Signature]

[Signature]

[Signature]

[Signature]

Date of Examination: October 16, 1995