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Children's Literature and Literacy Instruction: "Literature-Based" Elementary Teachers' Belief and Practices

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In recent years, there has been growing interest nationwide among elementary teachers for using children's literature as the core of the reading program. A national survey (Cullinan, 1989) indicated that many states are involved in literature-based initiatives, and some states, led by California, have mandated the use of literature (Alexander, 1987). Therefore, many teachers are making the transition from highly structured commercial reading programs to literature programs that require extensive teacher decision-making regarding materials, grouping, instructional practices, and assessment. Concerns are now being raised in the profession about the nature and appropriateness of some literature-based programs' implementation (Gardner, 1988; Purves, 1990). For example, philosophical tension is growing between teaching *reading* with literature (suggesting a primarily *literacy* focus) and teaching *literature* (implying a stronger *literary* perspective). In fact, Purves (1990) bluntly pinpoints this conflict by

asking whether literature can be "rescued from reading" (p. 79).

Despite the sweeping nature of these changes, little systematic research has documented classroom practice in or teacher perceptions about literature-based reading programs (Lehman, 1989; Tunnell and Jacobs, 1989). Several studies have probed the effectiveness of literature-based reading instruction (Cohen, 1968; Chomsky, 1972; Eldredge and Butterfield, 1986), and research by Walmsley and Walp (1989) explored how literature is being used in six elementary schools. These investigations are supplemented by many teachers' first-hand accounts of implementing literature-based reading programs (Hancock and Hill, 1987; Nelms, 1988; Routman, 1988). Finally, Scharer's (1990) research documented the transition of teachers into literature-based reading programs, and research by Hoffman, Roser, Battle, Farest, and Isaacs (1990) probed teacher learning and change as a result of using children's literature in primary classrooms. Still, there is a need to provide more in-depth examination of the nature of literature-based reading instruction (Giddings, 1992; Hiebert and Colt, 1989; Zarrillo, 1989), for, as noted by Walmsley and Walp (1989), "the question of what constitutes the body of literary knowledge and experiences appropriate for children prior to secondary school... still remains largely undefined" (p. 37).

On the other hand, a growing body of research shows a relationship between teacher beliefs or perceptions and instructional decisions in reading. In 1977, Duffy (quoted in Meloth, Book, Putnam, and Sivan, 1989) studied the relationship between teachers' concepts of reading and their practices and found that these were congruent for just half of the participating teachers. Later, Buike and Duffy's (1979) research into this same relationship found it to be positive, at least at a

superficial level. However, a closer look showed the relationship to be "fluid" (p. 9), and influenced by other non-reading conceptions (such as classroom management) and by grade level and pupil ability level. Meanwhile, DeFord (1979) validated an instrument to determine teachers' theoretical orientation in reading instruction. This instrument was used by Richards, Gipe and Thompson (1987) to investigate teachers' beliefs about good reading instruction. They found that two of the theoretical orientations, the graphophonics and the whole language stances, were correlated strongly with different kinds of experiences, such as years of teaching experience, number of professional reading courses taken, and number of different grade levels taught. These findings tend to support Rupley and Logan's (1985) discovery that teachers' knowledge of reading content relates to their beliefs about reading, which, in turn, influences their decisions about the importance of reading outcomes — namely decoding-oriented versus comprehension-oriented outcomes. Furthermore, Richardson, Anders, Tidwell, and Lloyd's (1991) study of the relationship between teachers' beliefs and practices in reading comprehension instruction suggests that shifts in beliefs precede changes in practice and that at such times of transition, beliefs and practice may be incongruent. Finally, both Shapiro and Kilbey (1990) and Meloth, Book, Putnam and Sivan (1989) argue that a critical and reflective examination of teaching practices is essential for teachers to integrate their theoretical knowledge and beliefs with their instructional behavior.

In summary, this review of the literature demonstrates a need for more investigation of the nature of literature-based reading, while at the same time reveals a relationship between teacher beliefs and reading instruction. Specifically, examination of the relationship between teacher perceptions and practices in literature-based reading instruction is lacking. Thus, the purposes of this study were to investigate three

questions: 1) What are teachers' views about the role of children's literature in the literacy program?; 2) How do teachers implement literature-based reading programs in their classrooms?; and 3) What is the congruence between teacher perceptions and teacher practice regarding literature-based reading instruction?

Method

Data for this investigation were gathered in two phases. Phase 1 of the project consisted of a survey providing quantitative information about teachers' perceptions and practices. During Phase 2 of the study, qualitative data were collected in the classrooms of a sub-sample of 10 teachers to provide an opportunity for the researchers to validate the teachers' self-reports of practices and their congruence with teachers' stated beliefs.

Phase 1. To initiate our research project, we developed a two-part questionnaire that would assess teacher perceptions of and identify classroom practices in literature-based reading instruction. The questionnaire was designed by the researchers for specific use in this study (see Appendix A). The teacher perception component of the questionnaire was modeled after the Theoretical Orientation to Reading Profile (DeFord, 1979) and included 12 items to which teachers responded using a 5-point Likert scale. These items stated beliefs about the use of children's literature, to which respondents indicated their degree of agreement or disagreement. The second component — instructional practices involving the use of children's literature — was patterned after an instrument to survey practices in writing instruction (Freeman, 1989). It consisted of forced choice questions as well as items where multiple responses were possible. The questionnaire was pilot-tested and modified (with assistance from a consultant with expertise in survey instruments) based upon the

preliminary results. Redundant items were eliminated, ambiguous wording was clarified, and the format was altered.

The revised questionnaire then was given to 350 elementary teachers who attended a one-day conference on literature-based reading. The response rate was 55 percent (192 teachers). Although we recognized that this sample of teachers represented a select group, we deliberately chose them in order to identify teachers who already had a strong interest in using children's literature in the classroom. The respondents represented teachers in grades K-7, as well as reading teachers. While most of the respondents taught in public schools, 15 taught in private or parochial schools. School locations were characterized by 31 percent of the teachers as rural, 19 percent as suburban, 37 percent as small city, 7 percent as urban, and 6 percent were unknown. Teaching experience of respondents ranged from 0-4 years (20 percent) to 5-10 years (18 percent), 11-15 years (18 percent), and more than 15 years (41 percent); 3 percent gave no response.

The data from the questionnaires were analyzed using several procedures. For each item, the percentage of responses was determined; means also were calculated for those items where appropriate. Respondent characteristics (teaching location, years of experience, grade level) were used as variables in computing analyses of variance. In addition, a canonical discriminant analysis was computed to determine the congruence between teacher beliefs and practices for the questionnaire. This procedure indicates the relationships between criterion and predictor sets of variables. The technique provided insight regarding whether beliefs predicted which practice was used and which of the beliefs might be most related to the use of a particular practice.

Phase 2. At the end of the questionnaire, respondents indicated their willingness to participate in a follow-up structured interview. We purposefully chose to interview only those teachers who expressed a desire to be included in this phase of the study. A stratified random sample of 10 teachers (of the 54 who volunteered) was selected for these interviews. Three primary (K-2), five intermediate (grades 3-5), and two middle school (grades 6-7) teachers were chosen. Four taught in rural locations, three in small cities, and three in suburban areas. One teacher had 0-4 years of experience, three had 5-10 years, one had 11-15 years, and five had 15+ years. The interviews probed specific issues identified from the questionnaire results as needing more in-depth investigation and were structured around three general areas: teachers' knowledge and understanding about children's literature, how they make instructional decisions, and how they assess children's growth (see Appendix B).

Part of the interviews consisted of asking the teachers to read *Amos and Boris* (Steig, 1971). This children's picture book (appropriate for a wide age range) contains rich themes and language as well as striking illustrations. We wanted to find out what teachers would focus on as they thought about how they would use this book with children. We asked them to respond in writing to three open-ended questions: *What would you want children to take away from this book?*; *What questions would you use to stimulate discussion?*; and *How would you help children "revisit" this book?*

The interviews, which were conducted in the teachers' classrooms after school hours, were tape recorded and field notes were taken. Classroom inventories, guided by a checklist, focused on the literacy/literature environment and included evidence of displays about children's literature, the number and types of children's books in the classroom,

materials or equipment that support children's interactions with books, evidence of cross-curricular links involving children's literature, and resources (i.e., library availability and professional publications) for literature-based teaching (see Appendix C). Slides were taken to capture this information visually. In addition, selected artifacts of teacher-created planning materials and children's literature-related work were collected to provide further supportive information and to triangulate with the survey data. Interview and inventory data were content analyzed by the categories developed for the structured interview and the inventory checklist.

Results and discussion

Results from analysis of the survey data will be discussed first in relation to the three research questions, followed by additional findings from interview data collected in 10 classrooms.

Teachers' views about the role of children's literature. On the questionnaire, teachers indicated consistent beliefs in several areas: 73 percent *strongly agreed* or *agreed* that teachers should develop their own literature programs rather than relying on published programs; 94 percent *agreed* or *strongly agreed* that children's literature should be the primary component of the reading/language arts program; and 92 percent *agreed* or *strongly agreed* that children should be taught how to use critical thinking skills when they read books.

Other beliefs from the questionnaire produced varied responses. Much difference of opinion existed concerning whether it is more important for children to read widely or to engage in an in-depth study of one book. The beliefs of experienced teachers differed significantly from those with less experience ($F(3, 184) = 2.95, p < .034$), in stressing the importance

of reading widely. The value of a suggested list of children's books for each grade level also produced significant differences in responses. Teachers in rural and small city districts felt lists were significantly more important than those teachers in suburban and urban locations ($F(3,168) = 3.14, p < .027$). Teachers in suburban and urban schools felt more confident than their counterparts in rural and small city districts in teaching literature without the benefit of a published program ($F(3, 167) = 6.38, p .001$). There were wide differences of opinion regarding whether certain books should be read by every child and whether children should learn how to analyze books by their literary elements. Finally, rural and small city teachers were more in agreement than suburban and urban teachers that children's literature should be studied using a structured, sequential curriculum ($F(3, 171) = 4.45, p < .005$).

Teachers' implementation of literature-based reading.

Ninety-one percent of the teachers reported on the questionnaire that their students have *very positive* or *moderately positive* attitudes toward reading, and 85 percent read aloud at least once a day. Children read books of their own choice on a daily basis in 78 percent of the classrooms, three times each week in 13 percent, at least once a week in 7 percent, and in 1.6 percent such reading does not occur on a regular basis.

Teachers stated on the questionnaire that they use a variety of instructional materials including teacher-made and commercially-prepared worksheets, multiple copies of books, other media and a classroom library. Basals are used to varying extents in 54.5 percent of the classrooms, while 45.5 percent of the teachers do not use the basal at all. The fact that more than half of these teachers used basals in some manner while agreeing that literature should be the primary component of a literacy program (see "views" discussion) may reflect a lack of consistency between beliefs and practices, a

perception of newer basals as being literature-based, the use of basals in a manner different from traditional practice, or simply compliance with district/school requirements to use basals.

Responses to the survey question regarding how children are grouped for instruction varied considerably as follows: 11.7 percent group by reading ability, 11.7 percent by student interest, 0.6 percent by social interaction skills, 51.1 percent use flexible grouping, and 25 percent do not use any kind of grouping.

How do teachers assess literature-based reading? According to the survey results, projects/extension activities, conferences, and observation are used most frequently, while book reports, worksheets, and written tests are employed least frequently. Reading logs or journals also are used by a majority of teachers. Nine percent of the teachers report that they do not assess literature work. Observation as a method of assessment was used significantly more often by kindergarten and first grade teachers than by middle school teachers ($F(3, 118) = 7.02, p < .001$). Further, more experienced teachers use observation significantly more often than less experienced ones ($F(3, 148) = 4.06, p < .008$). However, less experienced teachers use projects significantly more often than experienced ones ($F(3, 149) = 4.54, p < .005$).

Congruence between beliefs and practice

The respondents' beliefs were used as predictors for each of the 12 practices. The canonical discriminant analyses indicated that the measured beliefs could predict the use of six of the practices. The results revealed that teachers' perceptions significantly predicted: 1) how much time students read a book of their choice in class; 2) the role of the basal reader in the classroom (i.e., if and how much it is used); 3) the primary

resource used by teachers in planning the literature program (such as teacher-made guides, published teacher's guides, or commercial literature programs); 4) how book extensions are selected (whether by teacher or student choice); 5) the types of materials used in instruction (such as teacher-developed or commercially prepared materials, children's books and other media, and the basal reader); and 6) whether conferences are used as an assessment technique. It does appear, then, that teacher beliefs do correlate with certain classroom practices as reported by the teachers on the questionnaires.

Additional insights from interviews and inventories. These findings are grouped according to the general categories developed for the structured interviews and include substantiating evidence from the classroom inventories.

Knowledge and understanding about children's literature. Teachers' agreement on the questionnaire about the primacy of children's literature in reading and language arts programs was supported by the presence of many children's books in the classrooms of teachers interviewed. However, the numbers in individual rooms ranged from approximately 200 to more than 1,500 books. The types and genres of these books were varied: Big Books, predictable books, novels, information books, fantasy, poetry, and picture books.

Interviewed teachers' opinions about best children's literature were eclectic. When asked to name three outstanding children's books, the 10 teachers listed a total of 25 different books, only five of which were named by more than one teacher. Their reasons for selecting these books were fairly evenly divided among children's and their own personal interest/enjoyment, literary merit, and curricular or educational concerns. Likewise, with respect to which authors are important for children to know, these teachers named 40 different

ones, 10 of whom were mentioned more than once. The main reason for choosing these authors (given for 11 of the 40 authors) was child interest, followed by literary and curricular/educational priorities, a particular book of the author's, and teacher enjoyment or contact with the author.

These teachers' definitions of a literate person provide insights about their understanding of the role of children's literature in general. Their comments showed a wide range of interpretations, with many global characterizations about enjoying reading, being a lifelong reader, choosing to read, losing oneself in reading, having varied reading interests, and reading to learn more. More specific or utilitarian definitions emphasized the ability to read print and function in society and being an "eighth grade level reader."

Although no one included an understanding of what literature is within these definitions, classroom inventories provided evidence that teachers were helping children to explore some dimensions of literary elements and of the writer's craft. Children studied the work of one author in-depth, focused on a particular genre, or examined and compared several versions of one folktale. They compared and contrasted two books with a similar focus, they looked at how authors developed character, and they created story maps. Along with these observational data, teacher responses to the *Amos and Boris* questions highlighted its themes and characterization, stylistic choices made by the author, and children's personal response. However, few of the questions or activities suggested by these teachers would lead children to focus on the illustrations of this picture book or to explore Steig's poetic use of language. Every classroom showed evidence of cross-curricular links with children's literature. Many teachers used interdisciplinary themes, like wolves, panda bears, China, or the human body.

All but one classroom had displays created by children, including bulletin boards, group projects, book posters, murals, models, and mobiles. Children's books were organized or arranged in varied ways, but every classroom illustrated ways of making books accessible and inviting for children. Books around a topic sometimes were grouped in boxes and baskets or tucked under tables. Chalk trays, small tables, and even tops of filing cabinets held book displays. We found that rooms became too small to hold all that they were doing; displays sometimes spilled into the halls — an added invitation for children in other classes to enjoy books.

When teachers were asked to name their most valuable professional resources in planning for literature-based instruction, by far the greatest number of aids mentioned were specific books, such as *Children's Literature in the Elementary School* (Huck, Hepler, and Hickman, 1987) or authors, such as Lucy Calkins. These were followed by other teachers, colleagues, and classroom visits; professional journals or articles; conferences, institutes, and inservices; children's bookstores; and professional organizations. Very few said that they relied upon published instructional materials, such as book guides or book collections with manuals. Their reasons for citing these resources suggest that while they like specific ideas about activities and "how-to instructions," these teachers prefer to use resources selectively, for their own professional growth, and to remain current. Thus, the interview data supported teachers' belief, stated on the questionnaire, that developing their own literature programs is preferable to relying on published programs.

Instructional decisions. Overall, interviewed teachers' considerations in book selection were not as clear-cut as shown in the questionnaire results (child interest and literary

quality). Rather, selection factors mentioned in the interviews were more evenly balanced among curriculum concerns and the need to avoid overlap with other grades; children's needs, interests, and reading levels; literary quality, themes, style, authors and illustrators, genres, and connections or comparisons with other books; the teacher's personal evaluation of books as enjoyable and suitable for the grade level or of literary merit; and the need for variety. The tools they use in book selection reflect a reliance on literary merit (such as American Library Association recommendations, the Newbery award, or *The Hornbook Magazine* reviews) or recommendations from other people (such as librarians, conference presenters, various booklists, or children).

Interview and inventory data supported the questionnaire findings on grouping for instruction, with most teachers indicating that they use flexible groupings in many permutations: whole class for reading or listening to books and working on book extensions, small groups for reading and discussing books and completing book projects (teacher-selected heterogeneous, homogeneous, or random; child-selected by interest, friendship, or book), pairs for buddy reading, individuals for independent, self-selected reading and teacher conferences. Sometimes the purpose of these groupings was for discussing books and other times for skills instruction.

The findings about teachers' use of professional resources imply that most teachers we interviewed did develop their own literature programs. Furthermore, these teachers believe that they have freedom to make decisions concerning how to teach reading and language arts. At the same time, however, they expressed perceptions of constraint about what to teach from state and local curricular guidelines or mandates, standardized tests, the district structure, the school schedule, and other teachers' concerns about children's

preparation. Lack of money for materials and books and parental or community concerns about the content of children's books or the absence of dittos also posed constraints for these teachers, and some admitted to self-restraints in order to avoid community controversy.

Assessment. In the interviews, the 10 teachers told us what they wanted to learn through assessment: overwhelmingly, their priorities reflected a skills and comprehension orientation, rather than a literary focus. This fact is not consistent with their reasons for choosing books and authors which, as noted before, were much more evenly divided among enjoyment, literary, and educational foci. Their means of assessment, however, correlated well with the questionnaire findings: the five most frequently used means involved observation, conferences, reading journals or response logs, and book projects. Other kinds of writing and records of books read by children were mentioned several times, while worksheets or written answers to questions about books were low on the list. Only one mention each was made of portfolios or student self-assessment and group book discussions. These teachers indicated that they used assessment mostly in planning for instruction or for grades, report cards, and communicating with parents. Less important was using assessment to get to know children, to watch their progress, or to provide feedback to children.

In addition, although there was strong agreement on the questionnaire about the importance of teaching critical thinking when children read books, this was not supported by the interviews. Nine of the 10 agreed on the questionnaire that "children should be taught how to use critical thinking skills when they read books," but only three of these teachers indicated in the interview that they considered critical thinking as an area they wanted to follow in terms of children's growth

and progress in a literature-based program. Also, the *Amos and Boris* data revealed that teachers' questions did not require children to support their answers with evidence from the story. Nor did their suggested activities for the book require critical thinking; most would not require re-examining the book, while some could be done without even reading the book.

A last insight from the interviews is that none of these 10 teachers had a primarily literary focus in their literature-based teaching. Instead, most had either a balanced (and fairly well-integrated) literacy-literary focus or a stronger literacy than literary perspective. A couple of the teachers viewed literature and literacy more separately, rather than in an integrated manner. One teacher focused mainly on reading and enjoying books, though not in any systematic literary way.

Conclusions

As we analyzed all the components of this investigation, several overall conclusions began to emerge.

Agreement. The teachers who participated in the questionnaire part of this study widely agreed to certain beliefs and practices: that teachers should develop their own literature programs, that children's literature should be the major component of elementary reading programs, that children should be taught to think critically about books, that these teachers read aloud to their students daily, and that their children independently read books of their own choosing every day.

Disagreement. These teachers disagreed considerably on other practices and beliefs as reported on the questionnaire: on the importance of reading many books versus studying one book in-depth, on the importance of recommended grade level reading lists, about their own confidence level for

teaching literature, about the role of basals in a literature-based program, about how children are grouped for instruction, and about how to assess children's learning in literature-based reading.

Teacher perceptions and teacher practice. We found with the questionnaire that there is congruence between teacher perceptions and teacher practice regarding literature-based reading instruction in areas where beliefs predicted practice. Specifically, beliefs predict practice in six areas: two issues related to teacher-versus child-centered instruction (time for children to read books they choose and who selects the book extensions children do); three items related to materials used for planning and instruction in literature-based classrooms (whether teacher-developed or commercially prepared and the role of basal readers); and one practice related to using conferences in assessment. At the same time, we found (as expected) that, among the 10 teachers we interviewed, there were various interpretations of literature-based instruction that included both literary and literacy perspectives.

Teacher variables. We discovered (as did Buike and Duffy, 1979, and Richards, Gipe and Thompson, 1987) that certain other teacher variables relate to their beliefs and practices. In particular, teaching location correlated with teachers' perceptions of the need for structure. Suburban and urban teachers felt more confident than rural and small city teachers about developing their own literature programs without the benefit of book lists, published programs, or tightly sequenced curricula. (The suburban and urban teachers who participated in our study tended to have had more experience with literature-based teaching as well as more support from their districts and contact with nearby universities.) Also, more experienced teachers believed more strongly in the importance of children reading widely, and they were more apt to use

observation as an assessment tool. On the other hand, less experienced teachers were more inclined to evaluate literature work through projects, and teachers of older children used observation in assessment less often.

Assessment. On the issue of assessment, the 10 teachers we interviewed were able to talk more specifically about how they assessed (projects, book discussions, etc.) than *what* they assessed. Their ideas about what they were looking for in children's development in literature-based programs were not clearly defined. For example, as noted earlier, one area that they largely overlooked for assessment was critical thinking, although this was identified in their questionnaire responses as something that should be taught.

Experience. The 10 teachers we interviewed represented a high level of experience: nine had five or more years' teaching experience, while five had more than 15 years of experience. Thus, they were not likely to have received much exposure to literature-based ideas when they were in their preservice teacher education programs. Yet we found them to be motivated, supported by their belief in teacher-designed programs, to continue their professional development through conference and inservice attendance and reading current professional literature. It is clear that they are interested in and say they espouse literature-based reading and language arts, but most are still in a state of transition. Their comfort level with using literature in their teaching and their literary understanding are not yet solid. This conclusion related to Rupley and Logan's (1985) finding reported earlier that knowledge relates to beliefs, which influence instructional decisions. It also supports Richardson, Anders, Tidwell, and Lloyd's (1991) suggestion that, at transitional points, teachers' beliefs and practices may appear incongruent. Thus, if

teachers' own literary knowledge is still maturing, then their beliefs and practices may not yet be well integrated.

Implications

This study has important implications for those involved in teacher education programs at both preservice and inservice levels. Clearly, as more and more schools are moving to the use of literature, teachers need to acquire a solid framework for a critical understanding of literature. What makes a book strong? What are the special qualities of particular books? What knowledge can/should children acquire about the writer's craft? Furthermore, they need to link this knowledge with the framework they have about language and literacy. Otherwise, there can be dissonance when a teacher holds a view of literacy development that is skills-based and tries to link literature into that system. For example, some teachers believe that certain books should be taught exclusively at one particular grade level. Or sometimes they seem to be using children's literature as just another program for teaching reading.

Secondly our research suggests that teachers' perceptions do influence their practices, and therefore more self-awareness about their beliefs will benefit their practice. Teachers need time to sort out their beliefs and to reflect upon their practices. Teacher education programs need to emphasize reflection, promote integration of subject matter with methods for teaching that content, and offer a seamless and coherent view of curriculum.

Finally, universities and schools need to work together to develop appropriate assessment strategies that will help teachers answer such questions as: What growth points in children are they looking for? How do they use this knowledge to move children ahead? Do they look at what children

could do on their own and contrast it with what children could do with support either from the teacher or peers?

If we are able to do the above, it will provide support to teachers at both the preservice and inservice levels as they work: 1) to develop a literature-based program that helps children draw meanings and make connections, and 2) to plan and implement such programs.

Suggestions for further research

Because of the relatively small sample size and the possibility of sample bias, a follow-up investigation could extend this research to a wider area with a larger sample of randomly selected teachers. The results of such a study among teachers who may or may not profess interest in literature-based teaching would surely make for interesting comparisons with this study.

Finally, additional research should explore how teachers help children use and understand literature from multiple perspectives: knowledge about the content of literature itself; literature as it supports children's growth as readers and writers; literature as it supports the curriculum; and literature as it supports children's understandings of self and others. The trend toward literature-based reading is laudatory, we believe, but the implementation of such programs should be scrutinized carefully, for interpretations of what "literature-based" instruction means vary widely. Our study supports other findings that teachers' beliefs do influence their practices and extends that research to the arena of literature-based literacy instruction.

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APPENDIX A

Teachers' beliefs and practices about the use of children's literature

Directions: Please read carefully each of the following statements. We want you to tell us how much you agree or disagree with each statement. To respond, circle the number that best corresponds to the degree to which you agree or disagree with the statement. Use the following scale to make your responses: 1 = *strongly agree*, 2 = *moderately agree*, 3 = *neutral*, 4 = *moderately disagree*, 5 = *strongly disagree*.

	SA		N		SD
1. I believe that teachers should develop their own literature programs rather than relying on published programs.	1	2	3	4	5
2. Children's literature should be the primary component of a reading/language arts program.	1	2	3	4	5
3. It is more important for children to read widely than to engage in an in-depth study of one work.	1	2	3	4	5
4. It is important for schools to have a suggested list of children's books by grade level.	1	2	3	4	5
5. Children should be taught how to think critically about books they read.	1	2	3	4	5
6. I feel confident about teaching literature without benefit of a published program.	1	2	3	4	5
7. It is more important for children to informally experience literature for themselves than to receive direct teacher instruction in literature study.	1	2	3	4	5
8. The purpose of activities and questions for a book is more to assess comprehension than to develop literary understandings.	1	2	3	4	5
9. Children's literature should be taught in a separate program from reading/language arts instruction.	1	2	3	4	5
10. There are certain books that every child should read.	1	2	3	4	5
11. Children should learn how to analyze books by their literary elements (i.e., theme, style symbolism).	1	2	3	4	5
12. Children's literature should be studied using a structured, sequential curriculum.	1	2	3	4	5

Directions: For this next set of items, please circle the item that best answers the question or that best completes the sentence.

1. How would you describe students' attitudes toward reading in your classroom?
 - a. very positive
 - b. moderately positive
 - c. neutral
 - d. moderately negative
 - e. very negative

2. I read children's books aloud to my class
 - a. at least once a day
 - b. about 3 times per week
 - c. at least once a week
 - d. occasionally (not on a regular basis)
 - e. hardly ever

3. Students in my classroom have time to read a book of their choice
 - a. at least once a day
 - b. about 3 times per week
 - c. at least once a week
 - d. occasionally (not on a regular basis)
 - e. hardly ever

4. The role of the basal reader in my classroom can best be described as follows:
 - a. the basal reader is used more frequently than literature
 - b. the basal reader is used as frequently as literature
 - c. the basal reader is used less frequently than literature
 - d. only the basal reader is used in my classroom
 - e. basal materials are not used in my classroom

5. In planning my literature program, the resource I primarily use is
 - a. my own teaching guides/lesson plans
 - b. a published teacher's guide of my own choosing
 - c. a district-provided teacher's guide(s)
 - d. a published literature program (e.g., *Scholastic Bridges*)
 - e. other (please describe) _____

6. In doing extensions of books (activities after reading a book), children in my classroom most frequently:
 - a. develop their own ideas for activities
 - b. select from a list
 - c. are assigned a specific activity or activities
 - d. do some combination of a, b, c
 - e. do not do extensions

7. When I group students for literature, the groups are determined primarily on the basis of:
 - a. student reading ability
 - b. student interest in the book or project
 - c. student social interaction skills

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- d. flexible grouping depending on the specific project or activity (a combination of a, b, c)
e. I do not use grouping
8. The most important thing I do to prepare for teaching literature is
- a. read a wide variety of children's literature
b. read primarily those books used in instruction
c. read reviews of children's books
d. follow a published teacher's guide or commercially developed program
e. other (please specify) _____
9. I believe the most important reason for using children's literature is
- a. student enjoyment/enrichment
b. for students to gain knowledge
c. to teach children how to read
d. for literary study
e. other (please specify) _____
10. I use the following materials in literature instruction: (check all that apply)
- _____ teacher made worksheets/activity cards
_____ commercially prepared worksheets/activity cards
_____ multiple copies of books
_____ filmstrips/videos of books
_____ classroom library
_____ basal reader
_____ other (please specify) _____
11. Look over the reasons why you select children's books. Rank order these reasons from 1-5 in terms of the frequency with which they guide your choices. Use 1 for MOST FREQUENTLY USED reason and 5 for LEAST FREQUENTLY USED reason. Do not repeat ranks — each number should appear only once. Rank only those that apply.
- _____ my curricular needs
_____ the skills that the books can be used to teach
_____ the literary quality of the books
_____ children's interest in the books
_____ mandates from my district or building
12. Look over the following types of assessment procedures. Rank order these from 1-7 in terms of the frequency with which you use them in your classroom. Use 1 for MOST FREQUENTLY USED and 7 for LEAST FREQUENTLY USED. Do not repeat ranks — each number should appear only once. Rank only those that apply. If you do not assess literature, check the appropriate space.
- _____ projects/extension activities
_____ conferences with students
_____ book reports
_____ reading logs/journals
_____ paper and pencil tests
_____ observation
_____ worksheets
_____ I do not assess literature

RESPONDENT INFORMATION

1. What grade level do you teach?
 - a. Kindergarten
 - b. 1st grade
 - c. 2nd grade
 - d. 3rd grade
 - e. 4th grade
 - f. 5th grade
 - g. 6th grade
 - h. 7th grade
 - i. 8th grade

Other (reading, split, etc.) _____
2. Where do you teach? a. public school b. private/parochial school
3. How would you describe your school?
 - a. rural
 - b. suburban
 - c. small city
 - d. urban
4. How many years have you been teaching?
 - a. 0-4 years
 - b. 5-10 years
 - c. 11-15 years
 - d. more than 15
5. What preparation have you had to teach literature-based reading? Circle all that apply.
 - a. undergraduate coursework
 - b. post graduate coursework
 - c. inservice programs
 - d. conferences and/or seminars
 - e. professional materials
 - f. assistance from other teachers
 - g. other (please describe) _____
6. Would you be willing to participate in an individual interview?
 - a. yes
 - b. no

If yes, please provide the following information.

Name _____
 School name and address _____
 Home phone _____ Work phone _____

APPENDIX B
Teacher interview

1. Teacher's knowledge and understanding about literature
 - a. What three children's books would you choose as outstanding? What sets these books apart from others?
 - b. Which children's authors are ones that you think all children should be acquainted with? Why?
 - c. What is a literate person? What behaviors would you expect of such a person?
 - d. What professional resources would you recommend to another teacher who is interested in using literature as a part of the reading program?

2. Teacher's instructional decisions
 - a. How do you select children's literature for use in your classroom?
 - b. How do you group children to read and talk about books?
 - c. What kind of freedom do you have in making programmatic decisions? What constraints?
 - d. What are the most difficult instructional decisions you make? What are the least?
 - e. What kinds of support are available to you? What kinds of help do you want that you do not currently have?

3. Assessment of children's growth
 - a. In terms of assessment, what do you want to find out about children's growth and progress in a literature-based program?
 - b. How do you gather this information?
 - c. How do you use the information?

4. Other information
 - a. How long have you been using children's literature as a major component of your language arts/reading program?
 - b. Is there anything else that you would like me to know?

APPENDIX C
Classroom inventory checklist

PRESENT ABSENT

1. Displays about children's literature
 - a. children's own work
 - b. teacher-made
 - c. commercially-prepared
 - d. other

	PRESENT	ABSENT
2. Children's books in the classroom		
a. How are these organized?		
b. How are these displayed?		
c. How many books are there?		
d. What types of books are there?		
3. Other classroom materials or equipment that support children's interactions with books		
a. centers (i.e., listening)		
b. furniture (i.e., cushions)		
c. props (i.e., puppets)		
d. art materials		
e. other equipment (i.e., tape recorder)		
4. Evidence of cross-curricular links involving children's literature		
5. Teacher-created planning materials for literature-based lessons		
a. Schedule		
b. Plan book sample pages		
c. Web, unit plan, teacher's guides		
d. Other		
6. Resources for literature-based teaching		
a. school library (how used, how extensive)		
b. public library (how used)		
c. professional books, journals, published teacher's guides or programs		
d. other		
7. Artifacts of children's literature-related work		
a. artwork		
b. writing		
c. videotapes of literature events		
d. other		