

Andrews University

Digital Commons @ Andrews University

Dissertations

Graduate Research

1998

Integrated Thematic Instruction : a Descriptive Case Study of Students' Attitudes Toward School and Learning

Ginger Heinrich O'Neal
Andrews University

Follow this and additional works at: <https://digitalcommons.andrews.edu/dissertations>



Part of the [Educational Methods Commons](#)

Recommended Citation

O'Neal, Ginger Heinrich, "Integrated Thematic Instruction : a Descriptive Case Study of Students' Attitudes Toward School and Learning" (1998). *Dissertations*. 614.
<https://digitalcommons.andrews.edu/dissertations/614>

This Dissertation is brought to you for free and open access by the Graduate Research at Digital Commons @ Andrews University. It has been accepted for inclusion in Dissertations by an authorized administrator of Digital Commons @ Andrews University. For more information, please contact repository@andrews.edu.



Seek Knowledge. Affirm Faith. Change the World.

Thank you for your interest in the

**Andrews University Digital Library
of Dissertations and Theses.**

*Please honor the copyright of this document by
not duplicating or distributing additional copies
in any form without the author's express written
permission. Thanks for your cooperation.*

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

Andrews University

School of Education

INTEGRATED THEMATIC INSTRUCTION: A DESCRIPTIVE
CASE STUDY OF STUDENTS' ATTITUDES
TOWARD SCHOOL AND LEARNING

A Dissertation

Presented in Partial Fulfillment

of the Requirements for the Degree

Doctor of Philosophy

by

Ginger Heinrich O'Neal

December 1998

UMI Number: 9929071

Copyright 1998 by
O'Neal, Ginger Heinrich

All rights reserved.

UMI Microform 9929071
Copyright 1999, by UMI Company. All rights reserved.

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

UMI

300 North Zeeb Road
Ann Arbor, MI 48103

© Copyright by Ginger Heinrich O'Neal 1998
All Rights Reserved

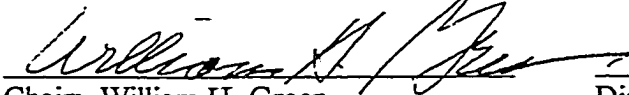
INTEGRATED THEMATIC INSTRUCTION: A DESCRIPTIVE
CASE STUDY OF STUDENTS' ATTITUDES
TOWARD SCHOOL AND LEARNING

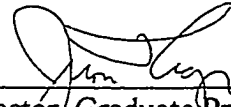
A dissertation
presented in partial fulfillment
of the requirements for the degree
Doctor of Philosophy

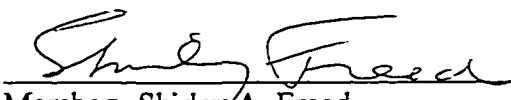
by

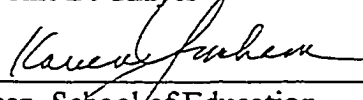
Ginger Heinrich O'Neal

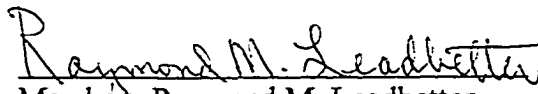
APPROVAL BY THE COMMITTEE:

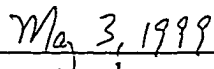

Chair: William H. Green


Director, Graduate Programs
Jerome D. Thayer


Member: Shirley A. Freed


Dean, School of Education
Karen R. Graham


Member: Raymond M. Leadbetter


Date approved

ABSTRACT

**INTEGRATED THEMATIC INSTRUCTION: A DESCRIPTIVE
CASE STUDY OF STUDENTS' ATTITUDES
TOWARD SCHOOL AND LEARNING**

by

Ginger Heinrich O'Neal

Chair: William H. Green

ABSTRACT OF GRADUATE STUDENT RESEARCH

Dissertation

Andrews University

School of Education

Title: INTEGRATED THEMATIC INSTRUCTION: A DESCRIPTIVE CASE
STUDY OF STUDENTS' ATTITUDES TOWARD SCHOOL AND LEARNING

Name of researcher: Ginger Heinrich O'Neal

Name and degree of faculty chair: William H. Green, Ph.D.

Date completed: December 1998

Problem

In America today, there is a current emphasis on brain research and implications for school improvement and reform in education. Specific curriculum models that address brain research results need to be studied to provide evidence of their effectiveness. Integrated Thematic Instruction is one curriculum design that does address this need. Is this curriculum a viable answer to school improvement and reform? Does Integrated Thematic Instruction have an impact on students' attitude toward school and learning?

Purpose

The purpose of this study was: (1) to describe what was taking place instructionally in classrooms where Integrated Thematic Instruction was being

implemented; and (2) to determine the attitudes and emotions students have toward school and learning when Integrated Thematic Instruction was being used.

Methodology

This qualitative case study was completed using ethnographic tools for data collection including student interviews, direct observation, surveys, and checklists. A domain analysis was used to organize and analyze the data. A cross-case analysis was used to search for themes. The findings were presented using educational criticism as an organizational structure.

Three teachers in a private Christian system of education were chosen based upon their high level of implementation of Integrated Thematic Instruction. A total of 66 students in three classes at different grade levels were interviewed to determine what attitudes were present toward school and learning. Parents of these students filled out surveys. Direct observation of each classroom was completed for a total of 60 hours at each location.

Findings and Conclusions

One hundred percent of the students in this study were found to have positive attitudes toward school and learning. Each of the students showed an awareness of the theme or topic being covered. It was determined that thematic instruction was an important factor in the development of positive attitudes. The data were analyzed further to determine what specific qualities of Integrated Thematic Instruction created these positive attitudes. Three themes emerged in the development of positive attitudes: (1) students felt accepted, (2) students were engaged in active learning, and (3) students felt competent in a specific subject area.

While Integrated Thematic Instruction shows promise as an effective model for school improvement, the implications of this study go beyond the value of one curriculum

model. The following conclusion can be drawn from this study: Elementary educators and administrators will find that positive attitudes will emerge when acceptance, engagement, and competency are prevalent in their programs.

To my husband, John, and my entire family,
who encouraged me throughout
my graduate experience

TABLE OF CONTENTS

LIST OF TABLES	viii
ACKNOWLEDGMENTS	ix
Chapter	
I. INTRODUCTION.....	1
Background of the Study.....	1
Open Classroom Movement.....	2
The Importance of Attitude	3
The Integrated Thematic Model.....	4
Rationale for the Study	5
The Problem.....	6
Purpose of the Study	8
Benefits of the Study	8
II. METHODOLOGY.....	10
Site Selection	11
Data Collection	12
Direct Observation.....	14
Student Interviews.....	14
Survey of Parents.....	15
Data Analysis	15
Interpretation and Evaluation of the Data	16
Search Strategy for the Literature Review	17
Organization of the Study.....	18
III. THE LOCATIONS	19
Description of Orange Park Elementary.....	20
The School	20
The Staff.....	21
Classroom Environment.....	21
Class Profile.....	24
Teacher Profile	25
Verification That Integrated Thematic Instruction Is Being Implemented.....	25
A Typical Day in Mrs. Smith's Classroom	30

Description of Rolling Hills Junior Academy.....	34
The School	34
The Staff.....	35
Classroom Environment.....	35
Class Profile.....	36
Teacher Profile	36
Verification That Integrated Thematic Instruction Is Being Implemented	37
A Typical Day in Mrs. Jones's Classroom.....	40
Description of Flat Rock Elementary	43
The School	43
The Staff.....	44
Classroom Environment.....	45
Class Profile.....	46
Teacher Profile	46
Verification That Integrated Thematic Instruction Is Being Implemented	47
A Typical Day in Mrs. Adler's Classroom.....	50
Summary.....	54
 IV. THE MAIN FINDINGS	 55
Positive Attitudes Toward School and Learning.....	56
Student Awareness of Curriculum.....	58
Excitement Toward Learning.....	61
Conclusion	62
 V. ACCEPTANCE.....	 64
The Triune Brain Theory	65
The Brain Stem.....	66
The Limbic System	66
The Neocortex.....	67
The Proster Theory	67
The Role of Emotions.....	68
The Importance of a Positive Climate	70
Observations of Climate in This Study	71
Dimensions of Learning.....	72
Maslow's Basic Human Needs	73
Glasser's Control Theory	74
Kovalik's Integrated Thematic Instruction Model.....	75
Absence of Threat.....	75
Collaboration.....	76
Building a Learning Community	77

Summary	78
VI. ENGAGEMENT	79
School Improvement	81
Motivation and Engagement	82
Collaboration.....	83
Cooperative Learning.....	84
Content.....	85
Meaningful Learning and Engagement.....	87
Challenges With Content.....	87
Choice	89
Summary	90
VII. COMPETENCY	92
The Importance of Choice	94
The Importance of Immediate Feedback	95
The Importance of Mastery	96
VIII. SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS	100
Introduction	100
Implications of This Study	102
Generalization	103
The Research Base	104
Recommendations for Further Research.....	106
Final Thoughts	107
 Appendices	
A. CORRESPONDENCE.....	108
B. DOMAIN ANALYSIS OF STUDENT INTERVIEWS.....	114
C. KINDERGARTEN SKILL CHECKLIST.....	135
D. GAIKWAD'S INNOVATION CONFIGURATION; TEACHER SELF-REPORTS	137
E. DAILY SCHEDULES	159
F. WESTWARD MOVEMENT RAP	163

SELECTED BIBLIOGRAPHY	166
VITA	176

LIST OF TABLES

1.	Maslow's Human Needs	74
2.	Glasser's Basic Needs	75
3.	Kagan's Cooperative Learning Principles	85
4.	Kovalik's Six Types of Input.....	89
5.	Elements That Build Positive Attitudes Toward School and Learning.....	101

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

The completion of this dissertation would not have been possible without the support, encouragement and guidance of several individuals.

Most of all, I have appreciated being taught how to conduct qualitative research from a master teacher, **Dr. William Green**. His expertise and knowledge of qualitative research have been a tremendous resource throughout my work on this study. I am grateful for the many hours he spent helping me reach completion.

During the final stages of this project, **Dr. Shirley Freed** gave valuable suggestions and advice. I am thankful for her thorough understanding of qualitative research. I appreciated her help in key areas.

I also would like to thank **Dr. Ray Leadbetter** for his timely responses. His positive comments about my study were encouraging.

Many thanks go to **Bonnie Proctor** for her efficient editing and kind notes. Thank you to **Dr. Thayer** for prompt responses to my questions and for providing helpful advice.

To my mother, **Judy Heinrich**, thank you for reading each chapter and providing me with helpful suggestions, support, and encouragement. To my father, **Oscar Heinrich**, thank you for showing me the importance of always having a vision and reaching a goal. I love you both. To my husband, **John**, thank you for being there for me and all the support you have given.

Throughout this project, **God** has answered my prayers. I am thankful for His blessings. I dedicate my life to service for Him.

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Background of the Study

In the early 1900s, Dewey (1938) discussed reform in education, calling for active learning by student participation in the learning process. His ideas revolved around forming an educational "philosophy of experience" (p. 91).

Maria Montessori's work brought her to similar conclusions. In The Secret of Childhood, Montessori (1966) gives numerous examples of the importance of not only cognitive development but the social, emotional, and physical development as well. She speaks of acquiring a sensitivity to the needs of children as they pass through stages of development (p. 109). Her philosophy centers on the idea that a child should feel a sense of empowerment and an inner motivation to learn. Ellen White (1903) speaks of educating the "whole being" (p. 13). She also advocates active learning, especially through nature's "living lessons" (p. 21). Throughout this century, educators have expressed this same philosophy as they discussed the need for school improvement.

Gardner's (1983) theory of Multiple Intelligences (MI) reinforces these same ideas. The MI theory raises serious questions about current instructional methods being used in classrooms. Armstrong (1994) suggests that "the MI theory makes its greatest contribution to education by suggesting that teachers need to expand their repertoire of techniques, tools, and strategies beyond the typical linguistic and logical ones predominantly used in American classrooms" (p. 48).

In Goodlad's (1984) study of 1,000 classrooms, the observations revealed that almost 70% of the school day was dominated by lectures and instructions. During the remaining classroom time, students were working on written assignments in workbooks or on worksheets (p. 230). The reality of classroom life reported by Goodlad is in direct conflict with the research suggesting that learning occurs through active participation and through experiences.

Open Classroom Movement

The "Open Classroom" movement in the 70s was an attempt to move toward a curriculum designed around active participation and experiences. This movement became labeled as a fad that came and went within the decade. Katz and Chard (1994) feel the failure was due, in part, to the teachers' attitudes toward the program. Instead of implementing the program slowly, educators felt the need to take a stand for either open or traditional methods. Katz and Chard (1994) point out that many educators tried to implement the new ideas too quickly, and parents became skeptical of the results. The program failed because of several factors. Operational definitions were never properly communicated, and teachers were poorly trained in using the concepts of the "Open Classroom." Even though the open education movement lost its popularity, educators today are taking a second look at the concepts and ideas behind this movement (Katz & Chard, 1994).

Walberg (1984) reviewed 153 studies, including 90 dissertations, on open education. He reported that students in this environment performed no better in academics and achievement, but they displayed positive attitudes toward school and teachers. The next section discusses the importance of attitude.

The Importance of Attitude

Research suggests that the enjoyment students experience at school plays a vital role in their total success and achievement. Caine and Caine (1991) state that "it is impossible to isolate the cognitive from the affective domain" (p. 90). It is extremely important for teachers to understand that "a student's feelings and attitudes will be involved and will determine future learning" (p. 90). Katz and Chard (1994) explain that positive attitudes toward school and learning come from providing students with experiences that make them feel "accepted, comfortable, and competent" (p. 39). Attitudes are a result of a child's feelings about many aspects of school. Parents and educators share concerns over the feelings children develop about school. Daniel Goleman (1995), author of Emotional Intelligence, feels that emotional well-being may actually be more important than IQ for success in life.

Activities and experiences that enlist the interest of the student promote enjoyment and positive attitudes toward school. Bruner (1960) points out that "interest in the material to be learned is the best stimulus to learning" (p. 14). Students should be engaged in activities that "evoke pleasure and excitement in the pursuit of a question" (p. 22). White (1903) speaks of the value of student interest: "The mental powers must be awakened, the interest aroused" (p. 41).

In Insult to Intelligence, Smith (1986) discusses feelings and learning. He states, "Learning is never divorced from feelings. . . . We don't just learn something. We simultaneously learn how we feel as we learn" (p. 60). Smith goes on to explain that if we learn something when we feel uneasy or embarrassed then "we will experience the same miserable feelings whenever we try to practice whatever we learned" (p. 60). In fact, Hart (1983) says that when students feel threatened or uncomfortable, their brain shifts into a different mode. In other words, students stop making connections to find understanding of what is being taught. According to MacLean (1978), the limbic system of the brain

controls both memory and emotion. Concepts and emotions are interconnected and cannot be separated. Therefore, the feelings and emotions a child experiences while at school are imperative to concept formation.

From his theory of the triune brain, MacLean (1978) points out that connections between attitude and concepts should be expected. As people learn, emotional connections are in the mind, creating a feeling about the experience (p. 310). In Making Connections, Caine and Caine (1994) explain that emotions are critical to patterning. They believe our emotions and mind set directly influence what we learn.

Because some experts have found that emotions play an important role in the total success of a student, this study focuses on student's feelings toward school and their teacher. With this information in mind, we look toward finding a model of instruction which fosters positive attitudes. Educators need a curriculum model that promotes positive feelings and attitudes toward school and learning.

The Integrated Thematic Model

One such model developed by Susan Kovalik (1994) integrates content areas so that students can make connections between subject areas. She calls this approach Integrated Thematic Instruction (ITI). Integrated Thematic Instruction brings three areas of research together: brain research, teaching strategies, and curriculum development. Teachers have used themes for many years, but Kovalik expands this idea into using a theme or topic to enlarge the pattern-seeking capabilities of the brain. Her model is organized around making instructional practices fit the learning patterns of the brain.

Susan Kovalik (1994) outlines eight brain-compatible elements imperative to properly implement Integrated Thematic Instruction. The eight brain compatible elements are: (1) absence of threat; (2) meaningful content; (3) choices; (4) adequate time; (5)

enriched environment; (6) collaboration; (7) immediate feedback; and (8) mastery of skills (p. 10).

According to Kovalik (1994), Integrated Thematic Instruction provides continuity of a student's total development and integration of subject matter. As Street (1993) points out, "rather than fragmenting the day into subject time blocks, the teacher can interweave many subjects around a specific theme or topic" (p. 26). Experts agree that "learning does not occur in narrowly defined subject areas; development and learning are integrated" (Bredekamp, 1987, p. 3). David Elkind (1987) refers to this as "permeable learning" (p. 143). Children do not organize their day into categories of skills or specific subjects. They enjoy working on projects and activities that include various skills (Elkind, 1987). When students can begin to make connections between what is being learned at school and their outside world, a purpose for their learning emerges. If students have a purpose for learning, positive attitudes are more likely to be present (Street, 1993).

Rationale for the Study

Several years ago while I was teaching in Florida, I attended a seminar on excellence in education. The speaker asked the group of about 200 educators a serious question, "How many of you feel the parents of the children you teach are 100% satisfied and happy with your educational program?" I raised my hand. The only other teacher who raised her hand was the teacher with whom I was co-teaching. We looked at each other in amazement because no one else raised a hand. Maybe some teachers were embarrassed and preferred not to raise their hands because it might appear that they thought they were exceptional teachers. And it made me wonder if we were naive to think our parents and students were happy and had positive attitudes. When we returned to our classrooms, we sent out surveys to the 35 families we were serving. These were all returned with positive comments.

About this same time, I was introduced to Kovalik's Integrated Thematic Instruction Model. As I studied the model, I realized I was already implementing thematic instruction in my own classroom with the exception of a few components. Since I was using this model and attitudes were positive, I wondered if Integrated Thematic Instruction was an important element in a classroom environment where positive attitudes were present.

As a teacher, I was always interested in the area of curriculum design. Now, as a school principal, I have a sincere desire to build a school program where meaningful learning occurs, and to provide a program where all students, teachers, and parents have positive attitudes toward school and learning.

Gaikwad (1991) describes the adaptation and implementation process of Integrated Thematic Instruction. In her study, she developed an Innovation Configuration (Hall & Loucks, 1978), which was used in this study to determine the level of implementation of Integrated Thematic Instruction at each location. Gaikwad recommends conducting an evaluative study of ITI to look at students' outcomes. With an interest in thematic instruction and student attitudes toward learning, I decided to build upon Gaikwad's research and look at the attitudes present in students when thematic instruction was being implemented at a high level. I wanted to determine if thematic instruction holds promise in creating positive attitudes toward school and learning.

The Problem

This study was conducted to determine if thematic instruction promotes positive attitudes toward school. The majority of children enter school as natural learners with eager curiosity. Wakefield (1993) says, "Eagerness to learn is a condition to nurture. When children are eager and ready to learn, their attempts and efforts must be valued and encouraged" (p. 139). Jackson (1968) wonders why we place our children in an

institution where most of the day is spent with children having continual interruptions due to a fragmented schedule.

Donaldson (1978), in his research on academic burnout, reports that children enter school with an eager, happy attitude. But, by the time they reach adolescence, many of them leave school feeling like failures. Hart (1986) states, "If we observe children, we see that they learn magnificently and with joy until they go to school and encounter aggressive teaching" (p. 48).

In A Place Called School, Goodlad (1984) reports that in over 1,000 classrooms studied, lower grades were dominated by written work whereas lecturing dominated instructional time in the upper grades. His extensive research indicates that active learning, where teachers involve students using as many of their senses as possible, is an endangered teaching strategy.

Research in brain-compatible learning theory gives us valuable information to consider. Nummela and Rosengren (1986) observe that "the brain is continually attempting to categorize information and pattern information with what is previously stored" (p. 50). Caine and Caine (1991) tell us that the brain is always searching for meaning so that we can make "sense of our experiences" (p. 89). Activities involving increased sensory impressions promote more opportunities for the child's brain to find patterns and make connections during the learning process. Hart (1986) feels that "instruction must be compatible with the nature of the brain" (p. 48).

In America today, we are faced with a dilemma in education. Thematic instruction is a curriculum design that might be an answer to school improvement and reform. ITI combines brain research with teaching strategies to plan the curriculum (Kovalik, 1994). A thematic instruction model might be the light we need to brighten the dark hallways of boredom in school and enlighten the minds of our youth.

Ellis and Fouts (1997) have conducted a synthesis of research on current educational innovations. In the chapter on Interdisciplinary Curriculum, they explain, "Effective school research has been conducted for several decades, yielding a variety of lists of school characteristics that distinguish more effective schools from schools that are less so" (p. 160). Their emergent findings from this research suggest that the use of an integrated curriculum is an important characteristic of "more effective" schools.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study is to: (1) describe what is taking place instructionally in classrooms where thematic instruction is being implemented; and (2) determine the attitudes and emotions students have toward school and learning when Integrated Thematic Instruction is used.

Through a qualitative research approach the following questions are addressed:

1. What attitudes do students have toward school and learning when thematic instruction is used?
2. What feelings about school and learning are reported to parents?
3. What was taking place instructionally within the classroom at the time the student interviews were conducted?

Benefits of the Study

This research will add to the knowledge of the value thematic instruction might play in the feelings students have toward school when they are engaged in this type of instruction. Because we know from previous research that student attitudes toward school and learning have an impact on success (Katz & Chard, 1994), this research will add insight as it uncovers student attitudes present during thematic instruction.

This study will be of particular interest to educators when evaluating whether thematic instruction is a valid practice for use in their own classroom. Beyond the classroom teacher's use, this research can also benefit curriculum planners as decisions on curriculum development are made for the future. Administrators may find it helpful as they make decisions about implementing thematic instruction within their school or school system.

Gaikwad (1991) has already studied Integrated Thematic Instruction in the context of describing the process of implementation. This study builds upon her research by looking at student attitudes present when thematic instruction is implemented.

This study may be useful by providing evidence that instruction can be organized in such a way that the principles of brain research are implemented.

CHAPTER II

METHODOLOGY

This is a descriptive multiple case study using ethnographic tools for data collection and Eisner's (1991) educational criticism in the analysis stage. Spradley (1979) explains that ethnography goes beyond observation of behavior to discover the meaning behind the behavior (p. 6). It would be impossible to report student attitudes and feelings during thematic instruction without observing and describing the instructional practices taking place in the classroom. Direct observation and individual student interviews are an important part of this study. Since this study attempts to discover the feelings and attitudes present in students, a qualitative approach was chosen. A qualitative design allowed students to share verbally and express their feelings while I attempted to gain insight from their perspective.

Eisner's (1991) main aim in discussing qualitative research is "to contribute to the improvement of education" (p. 2). He explains that to make sense of the information we are being given, we must understand the context. In his words, "We need to have the kind of account that will enable us to know what it would feel and look like if we were there" (p. 89). Therefore, the detailed description of what is taking place in each classroom becomes a valuable part of this research project.

Caine and Caine (1991) make this observation about research: "Educational research, like teaching, has focused heavily on the pieces without giving us a greater sense of how those pieces interact in more complex wholes" (p. 20). They point out that research should help to create "healthy, humane, and supportive environments that foster

more integrated human beings" (p. 22). This study, using qualitative methods, seeks to describe an environment that accomplishes that very goal.

The qualitative method gives an opportunity for natural freedom of information and insights to unfold. People walking by a rosebush full of buds have no idea of the beauty inside the bud. But, if they watch carefully day by day as the flower unfolds, bending down to smell the rose and touch the soft petals, they will begin to appreciate the real beauty of the rose. Eisner (1991) says, "To know what schools are like, their strengths and their weaknesses, we need to be able to see what occurs in them and we need to be able to tell others what we have seen" (p. 22). In this study, a description of what is actually taking place in each classroom is imperative to understanding the attitudes formed by the students. It is the heart of this qualitative inquiry. Being a qualitative research project, the design remained flexible, leaving room for adjustments to be considered as data were gathered and analyzed.

Caine and Caine (1991) point out the need for more qualitative research to be used in the field of education. For too long, we have been looking at bits and pieces of classrooms and teaching. They feel the need for more ethnographic research to be done, giving educators actual illustrations of what is taking place in actual classrooms. Through descriptive written accounts, educators are able to gain insight into what is actually taking place in an educational setting and then draw their own conclusions in making applications to their own situation.

Site Selection

Since I am currently working and plan to continue my career in the Seventh-day Adventist educational system, I chose to use Adventist schools in this study. Purposive sampling was used in the selection process of the schools. In this type of sampling

procedure, specific criteria are outlined and then locations are chosen which best fit the criteria (Chien, 1981).

The following criteria were used to select the locations and teachers used in this study:

1. Teachers are currently implementing Kovalik's (1994) model of Integrated Thematic Instruction.
2. Teachers have been recognized by their colleagues for their work with Integrated Thematic Instruction.
3. Teachers have given a presentation on thematic instruction at a teacher convention or in a college class.
4. Teachers are currently teaching in a Seventh-day Adventist school.
5. Teachers have taught a minimum of 5 years.
6. Each classroom represents a different grade on the elementary level.

Three classrooms in the SDA system where teachers met the above criteria were located. The schools were located in three different regions of the country. A kindergarten, lower elementary, and fifth/sixth-grade classroom were chosen to provide a picture of different levels in elementary school. Each location was visited for 7 hours a day during a 2-week time frame during the spring quarter of the school year. The locations and teachers are described in detail in chapter 3.

Data Collection

Several research techniques were used to complete this study. First, it was important to determine whether Integrated Thematic Instruction was being implemented at each location at an ideal level on at least 11 of the 12 components, as outlined in Gaikwad's (1991) Innovation Configuration (Hall & Loucks, 1978) for ITI. To verify this important part of the study, each teacher was asked to fill out a self-report using

Gaikwad's (1991) checklist for ITI (Appendix D). Each teacher was asked to fill out the checklist including examples of how they met the criteria. Their principal was asked to read and validate this report. Through direct observation, I was able to verify the report as being an accurate description of the implementation of ITI. The use of these multiple sources to provide evidence that thematic instruction is actually being used is called "structural corroboration" or "triangulation" (Eisner, 1991, p. 110). According to Eisner (1991), coherence and consensus of the data analysis can be secured through triangulation. Various methods of data collection resulted in the ability to triangulate the data during the analysis stage of the work, enhancing the study's comparability and translatability (Wiersma, 1991).

To determine the attitudes present among the students at the locations in this study, the following techniques were used to collect data: (1) direct observation, (2) student interviews, and (3) an open-ended survey of parents.

A pilot study was conducted using this same research design. A kindergarten classroom in Tennessee with 21 students was used for the pilot study. The pilot study was discussed and approved by all members of my dissertation committee. The pilot study gave practice in taking and organizing field notes during direct observation. It helped me refine the data collection procedures and aided in the development of questions for the student interviews and the parent surveys.

An important part of this study is a description of the instruction taking place in each classroom. Eisner (1991) says, "To know what schools are like, their strengths and their weaknesses, we need to see what occurs in them, and we need to be able to tell others what we have seen" (p. 22). Direct observation was used to gather the information needed to write an accurate description. Through the descriptions in chapter 3, the reader has an opportunity to understand what was taking place instructionally in each classroom.

Direct Observation

Marshall and Rossman (1989) outline the fundamental techniques of qualitative research as observation and in-depth interviewing. They say, "Observation entails the systematic description of events, behaviors and artifacts in the social setting chosen for study" (p. 79).

In this study, each of the three locations was visited for 2 weeks, 7 hours a day, in the spring of 1995. Field notes were taken daily. During the second week of each visit, 10-to-15-minute interviews were conducted with each student to gather information about their attitudes toward school.

Student Interviews

Interviews were conducted using open-ended, semi-structured questions. The following questions were chosen to guide the interview. Each student was asked the same questions in the same order. However, follow-up questions were asked when needed to qualify or expand a student's response. All students were interviewed individually in a location where other students could not hear the responses being given.

1. Tell me what you like most about school?
2. What do you not like about school?
3. What is your favorite thing to do at school? Why?
4. What do you not like to do at school? Why?
5. Do you enjoy coming to school each day? Why or why not?
6. Tell me about what you are learning at school?
7. How do you feel about what you are learning?
8. In one word how would you describe how you feel about school?

Survey of Parents

An open-ended survey asking parents to report the feelings of their children toward school provided another source to validate the findings from the interviews and participant observation. The survey included a cover letter explaining the research project (Appendix A). Students reported feelings about school, their teachers, and themselves to parents. Parents did not sign their names, so the responses were anonymous. The following open-ended questions were included on the survey:

1. My child has made the following comments about school in the past three weeks.
2. My child reports the following feelings toward school and learning.
3. My child (does) or (does not) have positive feelings toward school because . . .

Ample space was provided for parents to respond to each question. The survey was passed out to parents during the last week of the visit to each location. A total of 66 surveys was given out and 64 were returned.

Data Analysis

Data collection and analysis go hand in hand during qualitative research (Marshall & Rossman, 1989). From the beginning of the collection of raw data, the search for patterns and connections took place. The student interviews were the main source for determining the attitudes of the students. The interviews were analyzed using Spradley's (1979) technique to create a domain analysis. A domain analysis was completed for each question at each location (Appendix B).

After the domain analysis was complete, an initial cross-case analysis was completed in search for the main findings. This was done by carefully comparing the domains across the locations. An approach described by Yin (1989) as "explanation building" was used. The findings of each individual case were compared against a

statement, then the statement was revised, compared to other details, then revised again (p. 155). For example, it seemed thematic instruction was mentioned in many of the interviews. An overall statement was formed: "All of the students mentioned the theme being studied." The data were then checked against this statement. It was found that all of the students did not mention the theme specifically, but, in some way, each student showed an awareness of the topic being covered. So, the statement was revised to read: "All of the students showed an awareness of the curriculum being taught in a thematic manner." Then parent surveys were analyzed by looking for statements to corroborate or not corroborate the student interviews. Observations in the field notes were also reviewed to support or contradict the analysis. This process provided triangulation and verified that the original statement formed from the student interviews was an accurate portrayal. It was then reported in chapter 4 as a finding in this study.

Interpretation and Evaluation of the Data

Interpretation of the descriptions begins to explain the meaning behind what has been described. This involves "putting what has been described into context" which "provide reasons that account for what has been seen" (p. 95). After it was determined that 100% of the students had positive attitudes toward school and that the thematic instruction was a factor in the development of these positive attitudes, the interpretation process focused on looking at specific qualities of thematic instruction which promoted the development of positive attitudes. At this point in the student interviews, parent surveys and field notes were carefully reviewed for statements about the curriculum. The field notes contained direct quotes made by students during the observations. The quotes were organized into categories. Three main categories emerged. These three categories became the themes in chapters 5, 6, and 7.

Triangulation was achieved by using direct observation, student interviews, and the collection of information from parents. This adds structural corroboration to the study. Eisner (1991) explains that "structural corroboration is a means through which multiple types of data are related to each other to support or contradict the interpretation and evaluation" of the data. He says that we should seek recurrent actions or behaviors, looking for "theme-like features of a situation that inspire confidence that the events interpreted . . . are not exceptional, but rather characteristic" (p. 110). It is like putting all the pieces of a puzzle together to finally frame a whole picture of the event. Eisner points out that, because qualitative research and educational criticism depend upon the researcher's personal judgments, it is important to collect information from a variety of sources. Triangulation of the data was also used in the collection of information about each classroom. The teacher's self-report, verified by the principal and then direct observation, gave three sources to show that Integrated Thematic Instruction was taking place.

Search Strategy for the Literature Review

An initial literature search on thematic instruction and Kovalik's (1994) Integrated Thematic model was conducted at the beginning of this study. This search provided the background information needed to complete the proposal and research design. After the data were collected, analyzed, and interpreted, a literature search was conducted on each of the themes which emerged. A review of the literature on each of these themes is included in chapters 5, 6, and 7. A final literature search was conducted near the completion of the study to see where the findings fit into the research base at the present time. This is reported in chapter 8.

Organization of the Study

This study is organized using Eisner's (1991) dimensions of educational criticism: (1) description, (2) interpretation, (3) evaluation, and (4) thematics (p. 88). These themes form the plot for a story, giving a firsthand look at the attitudes of students involved in thematic instruction. Educational criticism techniques were used to write the descriptions about each location as well as the reports on each theme after analysis and interpretation were complete. The description process gives the information needed to let a reader know what it "would feel and look like" if they were there themselves (p. 89). Eisner (1991) explains that the description process is really like giving an account of what happened, while the interpretation process explains the meaning behind what happened. In this study, the interpretation process was on-going during the observations in the classrooms and then in the data analysis of student interviews and parent surveys.

The description of each location is provided in chapter 3. Chapter 4 presents the main findings of the study and lays the foundation for the three themes that developed. The themes consist of: Acceptance (chapter 5); Engagement (chapter 6); Competency (chapter 7) . These three chapters discuss relevant research along with information gleaned from this study. Chapter 8 provides a summary, conclusions, and recommendations for further studies.

CHAPTER III

THE LOCATIONS

This chapter describes the locations used in the study and the level of implementation of Integrated Thematic Instruction at each school. For each location, a description of the school, staff, classroom environment, class profile and teacher profile; verification of implementation of integrated thematic instruction; and a typical day in the classroom are included.

The schools visited in this study are all private schools operated by the Seventh-day Adventist (SDA) church. Pseudonyms have been used to maintain anonymity of the students, teachers, parents, principals, and schools that participated.

The SDA church maintains a large educational system with 87 colleges and universities, 940 secondary, and 4,416 elementary schools worldwide (Cash, 1996). This church organization has regional union offices and multi-state conference offices with educational departments. Each entity has an educational superintendent, and most have associate directors who make decisions on general guidelines and maintain teacher certification records. Teachers must have at least a 4-year degree from an accredited college or university and keep up certification with continuing-education credits. Each school is sponsored and supported locally by at least one constituent church. Larger schools may be supported by more than one church.

Seventh-day Adventist schools maintain an open-acceptance policy to any student willing to maintain Christian standards and take part in the religious curriculum being offered. Bible is taught on a daily basis, and the overall program is approached from a Christian perspective and philosophy.

Description of Orange Park Elementary

The School

Orange Park Elementary is located in the southern part of the United States, in a metropolitan area. The school is supported by three constituent churches. This school serves many children whose parent or parents work at a nearby Adventist hospital. Because the school has built a reputation for having an exceptional educational program, it is currently experiencing growth in the student body. In the past 3 years, four new classrooms have been added, including a 4-year-old Pre-K. During the '94 - '95 school year, Orange Park Elementary had 278 students enrolled in kindergarten through the eighth grade. The school has 14 classroom teachers, a media specialist, music teacher, principal, secretary, and receptionist.

The campus is located in the heart of a lower middle-class neighborhood. Two blocks away from the school is a city park.

The main school building has 13 carpeted classrooms, two offices, student rest rooms, faculty rest rooms, library, and a teacher workroom. All classrooms have a sink and adequate storage for teacher supplies. Primary classrooms are equipped with a bathroom. The classrooms in the main building have doors opening into a long, carpeted hallway. Six of the classrooms also have outside doors leading to a large, fenced, grassy field. Adjacent to the main building is a full-size gymnasium with a stage and two locker rooms. This building also has an oversize classroom, two music rooms, and a kitchen.

The school plant is 20 years old. It has recently gone through a renovation including carpet, vertical blinds, a rock-maple gym floor, and paint both inside and out. The upper grades use a regulation-size football field for recess. The lower grades have a fenced playground with two huge oak trees. The playground equipment is all new. A full-time maintenance worker keeps the plant and grounds well maintained. The classrooms are full of inviting displays of students' work and class projects.

The Staff

The majority of teachers at Orange Park Elementary have taught together for at least 5 years. Only 2 of the 14 classroom teachers have joined the staff within the past 2 years. The faculty meets each morning for worship and announcements. As one listens to their discussions, it becomes apparent that there is a tremendous team spirit and a caring attitude among the staff, not only for the students but for each other. The teachers stay in touch on a daily basis informally, meeting in small groups after school to discuss concerns and make plans for the school program. On a weekly basis the different grade levels meet formally. The teachers meet together on a social basis once a month.

The primary-grade teachers are dedicated to providing an early-childhood program where all children can find success. They provide classroom environments where students are involved in working on group projects. The lower-grade teachers are moving toward using thematic instruction in their classrooms. Because this is a gradual, individual process on the part of each teacher, the level of implementation in each classroom varies. Since the teachers agree on their philosophy toward instructional practices, students have an easier time making the transition from one grade to another. Teachers attend at least one educational workshop per year together with at least one other member of the staff. Seven of the teachers hold master's degrees in various specialties. The teachers feel comfortable asking questions and taking advice from each other.

Classroom Environment

The study at Orange Park Elementary focuses on the kindergarten class. The room is located in the main building, halfway down a long hallway. The classroom has ample space, measuring 40 ft. x 25 ft. Windows shaded by vertical blinds line the longer wall. There are two bathrooms, and two doors lead into the hallway. A carpeted floor provides a padded surface for children to work and play on the floor. Students can clean

up and wash their hands at one of the two sinks, which are located at each end of the room.

The classroom is arranged in various centers strategically placed throughout the room. There is a center for art, math, reading, science, Bible, writing, blocks, computer, housekeeping, dress-up, and a store. Students are responsible for completing one project a week at the art, math, reading, Bible, science, and writing centers. The projects are introduced and specific instructions are given by the teacher at the beginning of the week. On a checklist, the teacher keeps track of which projects have been completed by each student.

The art center includes an easel, large table, and a bookcase filled with art supplies. Besides special projects, students are encouraged to create their own masterpieces. The teacher varies materials so the children have a chance to try painting many different ways.

A 55-gallon saltwater tank is the focus of the science center. Here, children can watch a sea horse feeding on grass shrimp, clown fish darting in and out of a sea anemone, mandarin gobies hiding among rock, and red-banded shrimp shedding their skin. A cardboard tree house serves as a miniature theater where the children can sit inside and watch nature filmstrips. A bulletin board above the science center showcases the lesson for the week, and a table provides a place to display experiments and science projects.

The math center is filled with more than 100 games. The games give the children practice in a variety of skills such as number recognition, counting, sorting, classifying, patterning, adding, and subtracting.

The reading center consists of a tall bookcase with books displayed on both sides. Beanbag chairs and large pillows provide a comfortable place to relax with a book. The children are encouraged to re-tell stories with felts that go along with a familiar book. A different book is featured each week at the felt board. Recorded stories give students an opportunity to read along in a book as they play the story on a cassette player.

The Bible center is in a long ark made from fiberglass. When the door to the ark is open, a felt board in the background displays a variety of activities. These activities, or projects, go along with the story the children are learning that week.

The writing center is stocked with everything children need to make their own books. Paper, pencils, markers, crayons, word books, and children's dictionaries are easily accessible. Each child has a file to store work that is in process. A bulletin board is used for sentence strips that have been dictated by the children. The students can use these sentences to create their books. The teacher encourages a natural writing process and invented spelling, as well as looking up words in picture dictionaries. When a book is completed, the students are expected to share it with a friend and then the teacher.

The play centers are inviting. The housekeeping area is a castle. The children role play housekeeping inside the castle. The building area contains a large variety of wooden, plastic, and cardboard blocks. Legos and other small building materials provide opportunity for development of fine-motor skills. Some of the blocks are painted pink to encourage the girls to spend more time building with blocks. A floor mat painted with streets and buildings is used as a backdrop for creating cities.

Students sit together in groups of four at tables. They can take projects from the centers and work on them at their own space. The children sit in a circle on the floor when they meet together as a class. The teacher calls them together for stories, sharing time, focus lessons, and project instructions. The students also meet in small groups for short lessons with the teacher or a classroom volunteer.

Student creations and group projects line the walls and hang from the ceilings. The hallway, which has become a gallery, displays pieces of unique work. It is evident that the students are encouraged to be creative and are free to use their own ideas. No two projects look the same.

Class Profile

The kindergarten at Orange Park Elementary is divided into two groups of children. Each group spends a morning with one teacher and then spends the afternoon with another teacher. Mrs. Smith's morning group has 16 students, 10 girls and six boys. Her afternoon group has 15 students, 10 girls and five boys. The students' backgrounds vary a great deal. While some come from upper-class and middle-class families, others come from lower-income families who are dependent upon their church to help them send the children to a private school. The class has 13 Caucasian students, 10 African American, five Spanish, two Korean, and one American Indian.

To be admitted into the kindergarten program, students must turn 5 years old by September 1. There are no developmental or skill tests administered prior to the time when the students come to school. Thus, students are not divided into classes according to developmental or skill level. Teachers aim for each group to have a similar gender ratio, ethnic mix, and an age range from 5 years/no months to 5 years/11 months. The '94 - '95 kindergarten classes were both heterogeneous groups of children.

In the first 2 weeks of school, Mrs. Smith screened each child using a skill checklist (Appendix C). This revealed a vast difference among student abilities. The teacher reported that about 20% of the students entering kindergarten were working on a high level. A majority of the students, around 70%, fell into an average category. They were within a range of what would normally be expected of a kindergarten student. There were about 10% of the students who needed extra help with time to grow and develop their basic readiness skills.

Mrs. Smith keeps track of individual growth throughout the year by using a portfolio system. Student work, skill check lists, teacher observations, taped stories, pictures, and parent-teacher conference reports all become a part of an individual portfolio.

Teacher Profile

Janice Smith is 37 years old. She has taught for 8 years in the primary grades. The past 4 years have been in the kindergarten at Orange Park Elementary. She is working on a master's degree in Early Childhood Education. Mrs. Smith started using thematic instruction 3 years ago. Each year she has added several units until now the curriculum is organized into a year-long theme.

Mrs. Smith team teaches with another kindergarten teacher. She has one class of children in the morning and another in the afternoon. The teachers work together to plan activities and projects that complement each other within the thematic unit.

Each year, Mrs. Smith attends at least two workshops directly related to the thematic approach. She has received training in whole-language techniques, singing-reading connections, multiple intelligences, cooperative learning, and creating brain-compatible learning environments. She is following Kovalik's (1994) Integrated Thematic Instruction model as she continues to implement thematic approaches in her classroom. Mrs. Smith has a pleasant personality, and she is well liked by her colleagues. The following observations were made in Mrs. Smith's classroom to verify the use of Integrated Thematic Instruction.

Verification That Integrated Thematic Instruction Is Being Implemented

It is important to establish whether Integrated Thematic Instruction was being used in Mrs. Smith's classrooms at the time of this study. To achieve this goal, Mrs. Smith was asked to complete a report of her curriculum practices. Mrs. Smith used Gaikwad's (1991) Innovation Configuration Checklist (Appendix D) to show Integrated Thematic Instruction was taking place in her classroom. Her report was read by the principal who signed it, thus verifying it was accurate. That report and the observations I made in the

classroom provide triangulation of the data. The following observations were made during a 2-week visit I made to Mrs. Smith's classroom. The components listed follow Gaikwad's Checklist.

Component 1—Curriculum. The theme for the year is displayed on a large painted world with the words, "God's World and Me." All around the world are self-portraits of each child in the kindergarten program. A sample project from each unit is also on display. When students are asked what they have been studying, they lead visitors over to the board and go into great detail explaining the various topics and how they fit together. Adequate time is provided for the children to work at centers. The daily schedule is flexible.

Component 2—Instructional materials and immersion in theme. A visitor to this classroom would have no question about the topic being studied. When the classroom door opens, there is a clucking sound. The room is filled with eggs—large ones, small ones, brown ones, white ones. The book center is filled with books about eggs. At the art center, Easter eggs are being dyed. At the cooking center, eggs are being fried. At the science center, an incubator holds a dozen eggs ready to hatch. The saltwater aquarium has a transparent shark's egg, and the children can actually see the embryo growing inside. For 3 months, they have been watching the yolk sac shrink as the shark grows. It is almost ready to hatch.

There are numerous projects displayed all over the room. There are lists of all the creatures that lay eggs. There are real egg shells filled with cotton-ball chicks, an Easter-egg tree with decorated eggs, and books the students made to tell the story about chicken eggs.

At the puppet center, the children have access to animals and insects and plastic eggs to re-tell stories. At the math center, they have fluffy little chicks and eggs to sort, count, and match. All kinds of games that promote numbers are tied into the theme.

The block center has been turned into a farm where eggs are gathered and chicks are raised. Charlotte, the spider, has just laid her eggs in her web at the farm. It is obvious that students are totally immersed in learning about eggs.

After units have been completed, photographs displayed on a bulletin board show the different celebration days. These are pictures of students taken when they performed and paraded around the school in space costumes, bee suits, and flower and butterfly costumes.

Component 3--Physical set-up of the classroom. This classroom environment is a place that promotes exploration. The arrangement of centers and tables and open spaces has been carefully planned. Adequate work space has been provided on tables or on the floor. Every possible space has been utilized by the teacher for optimum usage. The room has a home-like inviting atmosphere.

Component 4--Grouping. Students work in different groups throughout the day. The teacher uses different methods to group the students randomly. They also work together at centers by choice. At no time are the students grouped by skill level.

Component 5--Social and personal skills. It is evident students have learned to work together and use a variety of the social skills they have learned. There are very few behavioral problems. Students have learned to solve individual problems by calmly letting classmates know how they feel. One child became frustrated with another student leaning over his work space. After asking him several times to stop, he made up a little song and sang it to the tune of "Skip to My Lou." He sang, "Please get off my paper right now. Please get off my paper, right now. Please get off my paper right now, or I will be real mad!" The other student said "Oops, sorry" and walked away. The boy had seen his teacher use this strategy to alter behavior so he used it for himself.

Several charts on the wall show that students have learned the words "honesty" and "patience." The students helped the teacher make a list of what those words look like

and sound like. During the day, the teacher referred to the chart on "patience" to help a child remember how he should act when waiting for a turn at the easel. At story time, a puppet show about playing tag on the playground was presented by two students. These same students had a problem knocking classmates on the ground during a game of tag. They had their puppets talk about the way they feel when a game gets too rough. Later during the day, the two students played tag using proper social skills. When problems arise, the teacher works them out by teaching the children how to use the right social and personal skills.

Component 6--Teacher's role. The teacher is just as excited about teaching as the students are about learning. She plays an active role by asking questions, providing feedback, working on the floor with the students, and running with them on the playground. She provides about 15 minutes of direct instruction in large and small groups during a 1-hour time frame. She co-teaches and plans with another kindergarten teacher.

Component 7--Assessment of pupil learning. Observations are being made by the teacher at all times. When she wants to remember a specific event, it is recorded on a clipboard. Skill checklists are done on an individual basis four times a year. Student work samples that show growth are saved in individual portfolios. Photographs of the students working at centers and participating in field trips become a part of the record. During the year, students tape a story they have written. This taped story is played to the parents at a parent-teacher conference. All of these things become a part of the child's portfolio. This portfolio is then shared with the first-grade teacher at the close of the school year.

Component 8--Outreach and political action. The students are given opportunities to do things for their community. By picking up trash in a nearby park, they help keep their community clean. They visit a nursing home to sing songs and give cards they have made to the residents. At Thanksgiving, food was collected and taken to a homeless

shelter. When the children met some of the children and talked to them, they decided to collect toys for them at Christmas time.

Component 9--Choices and adequate time. The students are provided with choices throughout the day. They choose the center project and then decide whether they want to work as a group or individually. The schedule is structured to allow the children adequate time to finish what they start. If they do not finish, they are provided a place to save work so it can be completed later.

Component 10--Use of instructional thinking and learning strategies. Mrs. Smith uses a variety of strategies to stimulate thinking. During story time, she pauses to pose a question. These questions include prediction, brainstorming, and categorization. She uses these same techniques when working with the children individually. Students are given an opportunity to think about their answer, pair up with a partner, and then share their answer. At the reading and writing centers, students are encouraged to use different endings to finish their stories. Memory devices from other units are on display. One activity involved having the students reflect on the feelings of a character in a story and then draw a picture. During each day, the teacher talks with students about their progress.

Component 11--Inclusion of students. In the kindergarten program, all students are included. Special needs are met by altering individual expectations and time frames. Individual development is measured by first determining the level of the students when they entered the program and then measuring the progress made during the school year.

Component 12--Use of relaxation and reflection techniques. A variety of activities is planned during the day to help students relax. Mrs. Smith uses songs and finger plays to move from one subject to another. The students are given opportunity to lie down after lunch and listen to music and stories.

Component 13--Discussion of brain research. Brain research is not discussed in this classroom. This is, however, an area the teacher will be adding to her curriculum.

Along with this report, the following description of a typical day in Mrs. Smith's classroom provides insight on the level of implementation of Integrated Thematic Instruction. It is important in this study to establish the climate of each classroom with specific examples of what is taking place. Every effort has been made to give an accurate account of a typical day based upon actual observations made during the data-collection process.

A Typical Day in Mrs. Smith's Classroom

At 8:20 every school morning, Mrs. Smith stands at the classroom door greeting her students with a smile. Soft music plays in the background. One by one, the children place their lunches and belongings in the red, yellow, and blue crates stacked just inside the classroom door. Each day the children are eager to see what is new in the classroom. Today, the class gathers around a glass incubator containing six chicken eggs. For 20 days, the class has kept track of the progress of the eggs. The time has come. Hatching day is here! There is excitement in the air!

Josh asks, "What time will it happen?" Mrs. Smith answers, "We don't know for sure, but it should be close to lunch time. Just then, one of the eggs moves. The children squeal with excitement. Amy jumps up and down. "I can't wait!" she squeals.

Mrs. Smith lets the children watch the eggs until she senses they are ready for another activity. Then, she calls them over to a table. "Let's take a look at some other chicken eggs," she says. On the table are eight white and eight brown eggs. Mrs. Smith tells her class that the eggs have been refrigerated. Sammy speaks up, "That means there's no chicken inside." "That's right," replies Mrs. Smith. She tells the students to carefully pick up an egg and then select a partner with an egg of a different color. At work tables, each couple has a bowl and a piece of wax paper. The students are asked to compare the eggs and discuss how they are different. After 2 minutes, Mrs. Smith cracks an egg into a

bowl. Each pair of students then cracks their eggs and drops them into their bowl. Mrs. Smith asks the students to look at the eggs carefully and then decide which one had the brown shell and which one had the white. The children are not able to tell the eggs apart. The group sits down in a circle. Mrs. Smith holds up pictures of children. Together, they make a list of differences. This exercise helps the children understand that there are many ways people are different in outward appearance, but on the inside people are very much alike. Judy says, "We can all love Jesus." Mrs. Smith smiles as they all begin sharing ideas.

It is time for morning prayer. Each child finds a partner and goes to a selected place in the room. The lights are dimmed. It is obvious the students understand reverence. All around the room tiny voices lift thoughts toward heaven. As each couple finishes, they return to the circle to wait for instructions.

Before "center" time begins, two students demonstrate a new math game. Then, new art projects are introduced by Mrs. Smith. Students are dismissed one at a time to get a ticket and choose a center. Each center has a board with four pockets for library cards. When children visit a center, he or she places the cards in a pocket. When all the pockets are full at one center, the students know they must choose a different center.

Specific projects must be completed by each student every week. It is the student's responsibility to make sure he or she has finished the projects by the end of the week. The teacher keeps track of each student's work on a progress chart. On Thursday, she checks each child's progress. Those who are behind do not have a free choice of centers on Thursday and Friday. This system helps students learn to be responsible for completing tasks on their own. Most students complete everything by Friday.

The centers are busy places. Supplies are readily available and clean-up procedures are taught. Students soon learn what they need to do, so the teacher is free to facilitate learning. She might ask a probing question, make suggestions, or present a small

group with a mini-lesson. It gives her time to observe students working and gives a good picture of their interests, strengths, and weaknesses. From these important observations, students are guided to centers or activities that help with their total development.

Observations also provide insight into social and personal skills which need to be taught.

Mandy and Tommy are working at the math center. They are filling eggs with different materials, then weighing the eggs on a balance scale. They are trying to find different combinations to keep the scale balanced. Mrs. Smith is impressed with the way Mandy and Tommy are working together. She asks the class to freeze. The students know that means they should stop talking and look at her. The class listens carefully as Mrs. Smith points out the positive way Mandy and Tommy are working together.

The writing center is full of individual and class books completed during the year. It is evident the writing center is a popular place for students to work. Today, Amanda, Sara, and Angela are working on egg-shaped paper. They are finishing the sentence, "If I were an egg, I would . . ." They can choose simply to draw a picture and verbally explain their sentence or actually finish writing the sentence. Sara wrote, "I wod slep and et tl I am redy to htch." Mrs. Smith asked her to read it aloud. Sara read, "I would sleep and eat till I am ready to hatch."

At the science center, Aaron and Jamie are checking on the shark's egg inside the saltwater tank. The reading center is filled with books about eggs--not just chicken eggs, but all kinds of eggs. Mary is sitting in a bean bag reading the book, Chickens Aren't the Only Ones by Ruth Hellar. She knows it by heart. Katlyn and Evan are using the felt board to re-tell the story, Hatch Egg, Hatch by Shen Roddie.

Every so often, students slip away from the centers where they are working to peek at the eggs in the incubator. Mrs. Smith glances at the clock and is amazed to notice it is almost 10 o'clock--time to go outside. On the playground, the children discuss the

eggs hatching. They begin singing their current favorite song, "Peck, Peck, Peck." At 10:30, it is time to go inside.

The first two children back in the classroom discover one of the eggs has a crack on the side. They squeal with delight. In seconds, the entire class is struggling to see the egg. Mrs. Smith moves the incubator over to a round table where all the children can see the eggs. The children position themselves so everyone can see the eggs. They all want to talk at once. Mrs. Smith tells them that, if they are very quiet, they might hear the chick peep. The room becomes silent. Soft peeps come out from the egg, and shrieks of delight come from the children. About every 5 minutes, small pieces of shell fall from the egg. Donny reminds everyone the chick is using its egg tooth to crack open the egg. Mrs. Smith points to the calendar with pictures of the chick's daily development. "Here we are at day 21," she says. For 45 minutes, the students' eyes are glued to the egg. Two other eggs are showing small cracks. Finally, the first egg is cracked all the way around. The chick pushes with its head and legs. Part of its wet body becomes exposed to the world. With one final push, the chick hatches! As the little chick lies resting, the children clap. Maria exclaims, "I will never forget today!"

It is time to eat. The students take turns washing their hands and collecting their lunches. Together, they walk outside to the lunch tables. The entire noon-time conversation is focused on the newly hatched chick.

In the afternoon, the second group of students spend their time at centers and watch the rest of the eggs hatch.

After school, many of the children bring their parents inside to see the new little chicks. The students describe the hatching process to their moms and dads. When everyone is gone, Mrs. Smith puts some feed into the little brooder box. The chicks begin eating. Then she feels something tugging on her dress. She turns around and there is one of her students. Devin looks at the chicks and then at his teacher. He pauses and says,

"Mrs. Smith, you are the mother hen. It's like we are all baby chicks and you are the mother hen watching us grow. You are a good mother hen!" As quickly as Devin had appeared, he is gone. A smile breaks out on Mrs. Smith's face.

This was a special day in Mrs. Smith's class. It was a celebration for the study on eggs. But in many ways it was a typical day. In a few weeks, the shark egg will hatch. And there will also be a field trip to the beach where endangered turtle eggs will be hatching. Mrs. Smith believes in making her classroom a place where active learning takes place every day.

The students in Mrs. Smith's classroom were interviewed to determine what attitudes are present among this specific group of students.

Orange Park Elementary provided a picture of a kindergarten-level classroom. The next location is a multi-age classroom at the elementary level. Even though Thematic Instruction is being implemented at each location, each place is unique and has its own flavor. The following account provides another taste of Thematic Instruction.

Description of Rolling Hills Junior Academy

The School

Rolling Hills Junior Academy is located on the West Coast of the United States in a rural town. This school is supported by four constituent churches. The school plant sits by itself in a large field with a backdrop of rolling hills. The closest town, seven miles to the west, has a population of 650.

At the beginning of the '94 - '95 school year, 64 students were enrolled in kindergarten through 10th grade. The staff consists of four classroom teachers, one teacher's aide, a full-time secretary, and a principal who teaches ninth and 10th grades. Music is taught twice a week by a parent volunteer.

The school facility includes five classrooms, a library, large kitchen, gymnasium with a stage, two offices, a teacher workroom, a computer lab, and rest rooms. The computer lab has 15 Mac computers. These are used throughout the day by all of the students in first through 10th grade. Two of the classrooms have doors that open directly into the computer lab. This makes the computers easily accessible to the students.

The halls are completely decorated with displays of artwork and projects. The school plant is clean and well-maintained.

The playground equipment consists of a slide, a merry-go-round, monkey bars, swings, and large tires. Wood chips have been put underneath to provide cushioning for falls. A grassy field provides plenty of room for outside team sports.

The Staff

A friendly atmosphere exists at Rolling Hills Junior Academy. All staff members are dedicated to their students and display a caring, respectful attitude. The staff meets each morning for worship and announcements. Teachers in two of the classrooms are using Integrated Thematic Instruction exclusively. The other teachers use themes on a limited basis and are supportive of the idea of using Thematic Instruction.

Classroom Environment

The study at Rolling Hills focuses on a multi-age classroom, Grades 1 through 4. The classroom area measures 35 ft. x 24 ft. One wall has storage space with a countertop, which serves as a space for student centers. A chalkboard covers another wall and is used to post assignments, projects, and reminders. The other two walls are filled with bulletin boards depicting the year-long theme of creation.

This is one of the classrooms that has a door going into the computer center. The library is conveniently located across the hall from the main entry door, and students are allowed to go to the library at any time.

A reading loft and bathtub filled with pillows provide comfortable places for students to study in a relaxed position. The room has a home-like atmosphere. At the beginning of each month, students decide where they feel they can work the best. The floors are carpeted, allowing students to sit or lie down to work. Some desks are close together; others are placed in a corner. Students are encouraged to go wherever they are most comfortable.

The teacher's desk serves as a work station. The teacher does not sit behind the desk but constantly interacts with the students.

Class Profile

A total of 14 students is enrolled in first through fourth grades. There are eight Caucasian children, five Spanish, and one Macedonian. Entrance ages range from 6 years/4 months to 9 years/11 months. There are four first-graders, five second-graders, two third-graders, and three fourth-graders. There are eight girls and six boys.

Skills vary a great deal in this age variation. Informal screenings are given along with reading inventories. The majority are working above their grade level, according to the screenings given from standard popular textbook curriculums.

Teacher Profile

Laura Jones's career in elementary education happened by accident. Her undergraduate degree was in business education. Her husband was teaching at Rolling Hills, and the school needed another teacher. The school board approached her and asked if she would be interested.

Mrs. Jones completed classes for certification in elementary education and has been teaching at Rolling Hills for 13 years. For the past 5 years, she has been using the ITI model. Before beginning ITI, she felt her students were bored. She explained how they grew weary of working in textbooks and workbooks, and she felt there had to be a better way to teach. One day she introduced a "theme for the day." The students loved it. The day was exciting and fun, and learning took place. Gradually she expanded the idea, and then she learned about the ITI model and decided to begin organizing the curriculum within a variety of themes. It took several years to make the change from teaching subjects in isolation to using themes integrating subject areas. Students began making connections between real life and what they were learning in school. Mrs. Jones says learning then became meaningful to the students.

It is important in this study to determine the level which Integrated Thematic Instruction is being used in each classroom visited. The following report describes the level of implementation.

Verification That Integrated Thematic-Instruction Is Being Implemented

Mrs. Jones, using Gaikwad's (1991) Innovation Configuration Checklist, reports that Thematic Instruction was taking place in the classroom at the time of this study (Appendix D). This checklist was read by the principal, who signed the report, verifying it was an accurate account of what was taking place in Mrs. Jones's classroom. Through this report of my observations over a 2-week period, the teacher checklist, and the principal's verification, triangulation of the data is achieved. The components covered in this report correspond with Gaikwad's checklist of ideal levels for implementation of Integrated Thematic Instruction. The following observations of a thematic unit on dinosaurs were made during my visit to Mrs. Jones's classroom.

Component 1--Curriculum. One wall in the classroom is a complete display of student projects. The work is from a variety of mini-units fitting into the year-long theme of Creation. Student journals have provided an excellent source to verify the topics covered and the skill levels. Mrs. Jones has copied scope and sequence charts from a textbook series approved by the local State Education Department. She refers to these skill lists as she plans for each unit. Throughout the day, all subjects are taught, and there are two time frames which focus specifically on reading and math. However, even during these focus periods other subject areas are covered as well.

Component 2--Instructional materials and immersion in theme. The classroom is filled with materials on dinosaurs. There are at least 50 books available on the subject, and the science center has several ongoing experiments. There are dinosaur pictures, plastic dinosaurs, gummy dinosaurs, a CD-ROM, fossils, cassette tapes, and videos on dinosaurs. The students are completely immersed in the topic.

Component 3--Physical set-up of the classroom. The daily agenda is on the board. There are hands-on materials relating to the theme in every part of the room. Work stations are student created. There are comfortable places to work everywhere.

Component 4--Grouping. It is a multi-age classroom. The students work in small cooperative groups as well as alone. Sometimes they choose their group, and sometimes Mrs. Jones creates a group to work together.

Component 5--Social and personal skills. Social skills are taught throughout the day. Because students are working together, Mrs. Jones has many lesson opportunities during the day. For example, she approached two students who were arguing about their project. She led them into an evaluation of what they were accomplishing by arguing. In about 10 minutes, they were back on track with a lesson in the art of compromise.

Component 6--Teacher's role. Mrs. Jones is a model facilitator. She moves about the classroom spending just enough time with each student.

Component 7--Assessment of pupil learning. Mrs. Jones is beginning to use a portfolio system for assessment. Students are involved in the process. They write in journals to record what they are learning and fill out checklists on the progress they are making. Letter grades, however, are still used as a final evaluation by the teacher because the school still requests a traditional system for permanent records.

Component 8--Outreach and political action. Numerous field trips have been taken. In one unique outreach each month, the students make cookies or food baskets and deliver them to older members in the community.

Component 9--Choices and adequate time. Students make choices about assignments, groups, and where to work in the classroom. The schedule provides adequate time to complete work without frustration.

Component 10--Use of instructional thinking and learning strategies. Mrs. Jones uses prediction, brainstorming, problem solving, a K-W-L chart, imagery, and memory devices. For instance, when she reads a story, she stops and asks the students to predict what might happen in the story. She uses a K-W-L chart for each unit. At the beginning of the unit, the students list what they know and what they want to know. At the end of the unit, they record what they have learned.

Component 11--Inclusion of students. All students, regardless of skill level, are admitted to the school. Students are not grouped according to level.

Component 12--Use of relaxation and reflection techniques. The classroom environment is relaxed. However, there are times when Mrs. Jones turns out the lights and plays music, and the children lay down their heads. Sometimes, she asks them to close their eyes and imagine they are in a relaxing, restful place.

Component 13--Discussion of brain research. Brain research is not yet discussed with the students. Mrs. Jones is currently reading a book on the topic and plans to make brain research a part of the curriculum before the end of the current school year.

Integrated Thematic Instruction is being used at an ideal level of implementation with the exception of brain research discussion. Implementation of ITI is a growth process for any teacher. Having one component missing does not take away from the overall effectiveness of this curriculum model (Kovalik, 1994).

In addition to descriptions of individual components of an Integrated Thematic Instruction classroom, it is also important to understand how ITI works on a daily basis. The following account provides a glimpse into Mrs. Jones's classroom during a unit on dinosaurs. Every effort has been made to provide an accurate picture of what actually takes place on a daily basis in a classroom where ITI is being implemented at an ideal level.

A Typical Day in Mrs. Jones's Classroom

Students arrive between 8:30 and 8:40 a.m. each school day. The classroom is filled with materials pertaining to the current unit, which is on dinosaurs. Students start each day by looking for any new books or materials the teacher may have added to the classroom. Several students pull out their personal folder, which has poems they have collected, songs, stories, information sheets, and vocabulary words on dinosaurs.

Each child is busy discussing dinosaurs, when Mrs. Jones calls them to gather around her chair for morning worship. She reads several Bible texts about great beasts. The discussion soon revolves around dinosaurs and how they fit into the Bible. Tamara stops Mrs. Jones by saying, "I can't believe how every single thing we study has God right in the middle." Mrs. Jones agrees with Tamara and then closes the discussion with prayer.

Buster, the pet bunny, who has complete freedom in the classroom, hops right into the middle of the group. He is just in time for a story. Mrs. Jones reads a book about dinosaurs while students take notes on a fact sheet. This information will be added to a personal folder on dinosaurs.

For the next hour, students choose from a variety of activities. The choice may be journal writing, composing a poem, reporting on a specific dinosaur, doing a pretend story, practicing spelling words with a partner, creating a skit or play, making up a song, writing a riddle, or working at the science center. Mrs. Jones places a star beside those projects that must be completed during the unit. While students are busy working, Mrs. Jones moves around the room, encouraging them and making sure they are on track.

In this relaxed environment, students are completely engaged in projects they enjoy. Rachel and Carolyn are lying on the floor playing with plastic dinosaurs. They are working together, creating a skit to present to the class. Touching and moving the dinosaurs give them ideas for their storyline.

Tom and Joey are busy researching how dinosaurs travel. Joey says, "Tyrannosaurus Rex must not travel in groups, but Raptors do!" They are looking at many pictures to come to their conclusions. They record their findings on a graph.

Susan is taking a chicken egg out of a jar of vinegar. She feels the surface of the shell and discovers it is soft. She writes her findings in her journal.

The entire classroom is filled with students who have become investigative reporters probing for information. These students are like a real paleontologist on a digging quest for knowledge.

Mrs. Jones gives a 5-minute warning. It is almost 10:30, time for physical education. The classroom is put in order, and the students proceed to the gym where Mrs. Jones asks them to lineup. They pretend they are dinosaurs as she tells them to "waddle like a Stegosaurus"; "charge like a Triceratops"; "munch on leaves like a Apatosaurus." Recess concludes with the song, "Dancing Like a Dinosaur." Students choose their favorite dinosaur and move to the music in a way they think that a dinosaur would have moved.

At 11:00 everyone returns to the classroom. Mrs. Jones introduces four books and asks the students to choose the book they would like to read. Even though the books are at different levels, she permits the students to voluntarily form groups. Two volunteers come into the classroom to read with the different groups for the next hour. If a leader feels a student is losing interest in a story because it is too difficult, the student is encouraged to move to a different group. During this hour, the stories are discussed, parts are re-read, and ideas for follow-up activities are discussed. The next day, each group will begin working on an activity it has decided upon and will continue working on the story for about a week. The students will do everything from building a vocabulary list to creating a class book based upon the pattern of the story.

At noon the students get ready for lunch. They eat at their desks when the weather does not permit them to eat outside. Today, the sun is shining so the class is eating together at picnic tables, and their conversations are revolving around dinosaurs. When the students finish eating, some begin to play on the playground equipment. Others begin digging in the dirt, pretending they are paleontologists. They do not know that Mrs. Jones has buried some chicken bones for them to find as they dig.

Suddenly, Ariel uncovers a bone. "Look!" he cries out. All of the students surround him while he carefully removes it from the dirt. Mrs. Jones smiles as the students discuss the bone. Back in the classroom, they decide the bone is much too small to have once been a dinosaur. And they also wonder about the likelihood of finding a dinosaur bone in their playground. Then Mrs. Jones confesses that she planted the bones so they could experience the excitement of finding them while they were digging.

Mrs. Jones brings out several plaster molds with bones barely sticking out the top. She models the process of chiseling the plaster one chip at a time so the bone will not break. She places the molds at the science center so the students can work with a hammer and chisel like a paleontologist.

Now, it is time to work specifically on math. The students form two groups. An eighth-grade student comes in to work with one group on "place value." They use dinosaur counters to count out numbers on "place value" mats. The other group sits in a circle on the floor with Mrs. Jones. She gives each student a sheet of paper with a geometric dinosaur drawn on it. The students take tanagrams and fill in the spaces on the dinosaur. For the next 45 minutes Mrs. Jones asks questions: How many blocks did it take to fill the space? What shape did you use the most? If this triangle space is worth one, what value does your dinosaur have? The students use a variety of problem-solving techniques. Mrs. Jones has them explain to each other how they arrive at their answer. It becomes apparent to the students that there are different ways to arrive at the same answer. At the end of the lesson, Simon exclaimed, "Mrs. Jones, we did great! That was a real brain buster!"

During the last hour of the school day, the students are at their work centers or busy with their ongoing projects. There are no behavioral problems because the students are busy working. At the very end of the day, Mrs. Jones calls a class meeting to talk about the day's accomplishments. After a review of their activities, the students make a journal entry that tells what they have learned.

Buster, the pet bunny, hops around the classroom all through the day. Sometimes, he hops outside, but he always returns to see what is going on with his friends. The freedom Buster is allowed is the same freedom the students enjoy--freedom to learn without boundaries of textbooks in a relaxed, safe, and enriched environment.

Description of Flat Rock Elementary

The School

Flat Rock Elementary is located about seven miles from a metropolitan city in northern Texas. The campus is located in a rural wooded setting. The school is supported

by one constituent church, which has about 500 members. An Adventist health-care facility is nearby.

The campus consists of two buildings. The main building has a principal's office, library, teacher workroom, and four classrooms. Each classroom has a rest room, sink, storage closet, and storage cabinets. Two doors are in each room. One leads into the hallway of the building, and the other leads outside to the playground.

The adjacent building houses the kindergarten classroom, music room, kitchen, general storage room, and gymnasium with a stage area. A covered walkway connects the two buildings. Three huge oak trees, with picnic tables beneath them, stand between these buildings. There are two outside water fountains in this same area. The school plant is 15 years old. The facility is clean and well-maintained. It has recently been carpeted and painted. All of the classrooms are colorful and attractive. Student work is displayed in each room and in the hallways.

The playground has a softball field. Play equipment consists of swings, monkey bars, and a slide. There are sufficient trees to provide adequate shade.

The Staff

The school maintains an enrollment of around 130 students in kindergarten through eighth grade. There are seven teachers including a principal who teaches part-time. Each grade has its own teacher with the exception of the fifth and sixth, and seventh and eighth grades, which are multi-grade classrooms. Other part-time staff members include a librarian, physical education teacher, teacher's aide, and a piano instructor.

The seven teachers and teacher's aide meet each morning for worship. After the worship talk and prayer, the teachers discuss schedules and special plans for the day. It is evident there is good rapport among the staff members. This group of teachers has been working together for 3 years. They attend workshops and training seminars together

based upon the grade level of training. If the training pertains to all levels, they all attend together. Three of the teachers are implementing Integrated Thematic Instruction and meet weekly to share ideas. During the 2 weeks I visited the school, the entire staff made me feel welcome and comfortable as a guest.

Classroom Environment

The fifth- and sixth-grade room, located in the main building, is the specific classroom used in this case study at Flat Rock Elementary. The room measures 25 x 25 feet. Student desks are grouped together to form a tabletop where three to four students can work together. The teacher's desk is located in one corner of the room. A chalkboard and marker board are on the wall nearest to the teacher's desk. Books and other materials are stored in a bookcase and filing cabinet. Windows on one side of the classroom furnish a view of a wooded area, which adds to the pleasant atmosphere inside the classroom. Bookcases under the windows store for a wide variety of art supplies, available to the students at any time. Across the room, there are storage cabinets, three computer tables with computers, and a printer. The rest room is adjacent to this area of the classroom. A floor-to-ceiling bulletin board displays the theme being studied.

In a reading corner where a couch and three bean bags provide comfortable places to read. The teacher sits on a swivel stool in the middle of the classroom while she gives directions or reads stories to the class.

Coat racks and a set of cubbies near the entrance door provide a place for the personal belongings of each student. Each wall is covered with student projects and artwork.

Class Profile

The fifth- and sixth-grade classroom at Flat Rock Elementary has 21 students. Eight are fifth graders and 13 are in the sixth grade. There are 14 girls and seven boys, representing a variety of skill levels. Mrs. Adler reports four of the students are working well above grade level and require enriched work to remain challenged. Three students who are bilingual need remedial work in reading.

There are 13 Caucasian, three Mexican, three American Indian, and two African American students.

The California Reading Inventory is administered at the beginning of the year to determine reading level, and a math placement screening from a current Macmillan textbook series is given to determine math ability. These screenings, along with writing samples, give the teacher an idea of the academic level of each student. The teacher uses this information for instruction planning, assessment, and evaluation.

Entrance ages range from 10 years/1 month to 11 years/8 months. It is evident this fifth- and-sixth-grade class is a heterogeneous group of children.

Teacher Profile

Karen Adler is 35 years old. She has taught 11 years in Grades 1 through 6. The past 5 years have been in the fifth and sixth grades. Most of her experience has been in public education. However, the past 3 years have been in the Seventh-day Adventist educational system.

Karen holds a master's degree in reading education. While in public schools, she received extensive training in the writing process, cooperative learning, whole language, and instructional strategies to promote a higher order of thinking skills. She also received training in thematic instruction, including training from Susan Kovalik. Because of her training and reputation as a teacher, she is frequently asked to present workshops at in-

service meetings. While in the public system, she was invited to participate in a teacher-training video.

Karen says she became familiar with Integrated Thematic Instruction about 6 years ago. It made sense to her because it brought together all the strategies she had learned. She has been using Susan Kovalik's model for implementation for the past 3 years, adding each component slowly. Karen believes teachers must learn right along with their students, so she is always adding new ideas and materials to her units. The following observations were made during a 2-week period in the spring quarter. This record, along with the teacher's self-report, verify Integrated Thematic Instruction is being used.

Verification That Integrated Thematic Instruction Is Being Implemented

Mrs. Adler was asked to complete a self-report using Gaikwad's (1991) Innovation Configuration. Her report (Appendix D) was reviewed by her principal, who signed it, thus verifying that it was an accurate description of her current practices. This report and my observations provide triangulation of the data. The components listed follow Gaikwad's checklist.

Component 1--Curriculum. The yearly theme is called "Follow Me." It encompasses six units of study which all have to do with people who were following a leader or working together to accomplish a goal. The six units are: European Explorers in the New World, Colonial Times, The Revolutionary War, The Civil War, The Westward Movement, and Current Government. A mini-unit on The Exodus in the Bible is also included during the year along with other Bible stories that involve leadership and following God. Karen integrates all subjects through social studies and historical topics. Even though the students have a separate science class, science is especially integrated within the theme being studied. Karen works with the science teacher to ensure continuity between her classroom and the science class.

Component 2--Instructional materials and immersion in theme. Inside the classroom, there is no doubt about the topic being studied. The students are now studying the unit on the Westward Movement. More than 40 books on the topic are available to the students. A life-size wagon is on display in one corner of the room. A huge map displaying trails from Oregon to California fills an entire wall. A wide variety of projects is on display. Songs about the Wild West are playing. Student journals, filmstrips, videos, antique items, and poetry are all a part of the room environment. Textbooks are used only as a resource.

Component 3--Physical set-up of the classroom. Hands-on materials are everywhere in the classroom. Students are not expected to work at their desks. The desks form tables or work stations. Some students work at computers while others work at a table on an art project. The room has good lighting, comfortable places to read, and several plants that create a restful setting.

Component 4--Grouping. Students are grouped randomly at the beginning of a unit. Each group is called a family. A family works on projects and completes assignments together, with the exception of individual journals and books. Students are encouraged to work with family members, and for certain activities new groups are formed.

Component 5--Social and personal skills. Teachable moments are used to teach social skills. All through the year, different skills are taught. A list of character-building traits is posted on the wall of the classroom. The students are asked to do things like write a puppet show to teach a lesson about patience. Skits are also used in the same way. When Karen encounters a social problem, she calls a class meeting to discuss what can be done to correct the problem.

Component 6--Teacher's role. Karen works as a facilitator of learning. She spends 30 minutes a day reading to her students. She is constantly moving among them,

providing immediate feedback. When needed, direct instruction is given to a group or to the entire class. Days are designed for direct instruction to be given when needed so students are not bored with lengthy lectures. Karen co-teaches with the science teacher and also works with the other teachers on staff to make sure there is continuity within the curriculum.

Component 7--Assessment of pupil learning. While Karen is required by the school system to give traditional letter grades, she uses a qualitative approach to her grading. She uses rubrics to grade all writing and projects. Students know ahead of time what criteria will be used. After grades are issued, students are given the opportunity to re-do their work or do extra assignments to improve by a letter grade. Expectations are high for all students. Work must be comprehensive, correct, and complete. Only work that matches the student's ability is accepted.

Component 8--Outreach and political action. The class responded to a newspaper on a local issue by writing a letter to the editor. The letter was published, and a copy hangs in the classroom. Resource speakers are invited to visit during each unit.

Component 9--Choices and adequate time. Students are given choices throughout the day. When projects are assigned, Karen suggests a variety of ways students can complete the work. Creativity is fostered and encouraged. As assignments are planned, Bloom's Taxonomy and Gardner's Multiple Intelligences are taken into consideration. The daily schedule (Appendix E) is divided into large blocks of time.

Component 10--Use of instructional thinking and learning strategies. Several strategies are used to stimulate thinking in Karen's classroom. The students are involved in prediction, brainstorming, categorizing, problem solving, imagery, memory devices and reflection. K-W-L charts are on the walls. Student-teacher conferences are held on a daily basis.

Component 11--Inclusion of students. All students are grouped together regardless of ability. A wide variety of skill levels is obvious when reviewing the journal writing and assignments on display. But, even though different levels of ability are apparent, it is evident quality is stressed. The students show respect for each other's work and seem to understand their abilities.

Component 12--Use of relaxation and reflection techniques. The schedule is flexible. When students tire of working on a particular project, they are given opportunity to relax, read, or do something they enjoy in the classroom. Quiet music is played during transitions from one activity to the next. The students seem to enjoy it when the teacher reads to them.

Component 13--Discussion of brain research. Karen has a diagram of the brain in her classroom. She refers to it on a weekly basis. Several times during my 2-week visit, she reviewed with the students how the brain stores and processes information.

All components listed above fell within the ideal range for implementation of Integrated Thematic Instruction. The following account of a typical day gives a descriptive outline of what actually takes place on a daily basis in Karen Adler's classroom.

A Typical Day in Mrs. Adler's Classroom

At 8:30 a.m., fifth- and sixth-grade students open a classroom door covered with brown paper and white fabric in the shape of a covered wagon surrounding the door. A sign above the door reads, "Westward Ho." The students are about to continue on a simulated journey across the Oregon Trail. A huge map, covering an entire wall from floor to ceiling, shows the way. The students gather around the map to check their wagon's progress along the trail.

The classroom is divided into five family groups. Each family has a home base at their desks. In the morning, they meet at home base for worship and then plan their day's

agenda. Today's worship activity is written on the message board. The assignment is for each family to find Bible texts that will give them courage as they travel across the West. A piece of paper with an outline of a wagon is provided to each student. The texts are to be written on the wagon in cursive. Each family member must agree on all the texts chosen by their group and then decide who will write which text on the wagon. After about 20 minutes, the group shares the text they have chosen as their favorite.

Mrs. Adler lets the students know they are going to participate in a "one-word" prayer. The class is familiar with this prayer strategy. Mrs. Adler begins the prayer, "Lord, we ask you to be with us in school today, we ask for . . ." One by one the students add one word to the prayer, "safety," "kindness," "love," "purity," "patience." When all the students have spoken, Mrs. Adler closes the prayer with, "Lord, we want to follow you."

The schedule on the wall reflects a flexible time frame. On the board is a long list of projects. Beside this list is a file with folders containing the instructions and criteria for each project. At the beginning of a unit, three projects are introduced. Then, every day one or two new projects are explained and added to the list and file.

Each group fills out an agenda for the morning. They determine how they will spend their time for the next hour and 30 minutes until recess. During this planning time, they decide on a new assignment or finish up a project already started. Once Mrs. Adler signs the agenda, work begins. The "Carson" family has chosen to finish making a miniature wagon using paper mache, along with corn-cob dolls. A conversation script for the dolls must also be written to complete this project.

Tara and Tabitha are practicing spelling words for an old-fashioned spelling bee on Friday. Extra points are to be awarded for the three best spellers. Three other students are at the science area. They are shaking cream in a baby-food jar and recording the time

it takes to turn into butter. After examining a butter churn, they will record an entry in their science journal.

Frank and Sammy choose to finish designing a stamp. They pick a famous pioneer to honor with a commemorative stamp. A monetary value must be placed on the stamp and a short paragraph must accompany the artwork for it. Several questions are to be answered in the paragraph including: When was the person born? What part of the West did they explore? How did they travel West? What did they contribute to the Westward Movement?

Each project has a certain number of possible points. When a project is complete, Mrs. Adler adds points to the family's total, and they then move their paper wagon along the trail as many miles as the number of points earned. When all the families complete the trail, the students know there will be a giant celebration.

It was 10:30 before anyone realized it. Mrs. Adler gave a 5-minute warning. Projects were placed in a safe location. It was time for recess! After 5 minutes of free time, Mrs. Adler called the students together and explained how children during the Westward Movement had to be creative with their play. Tag was a favorite game of children during those days, so she explained the rules of "squat tag." One of the rules was that to be "safe," when they squat down, they must name a pioneer. The students had a good time playing squat tag for the rest of recess.

At 10:50 the students return to the classroom. The lights are dim and soft music is playing. The students take 5 minutes to listen as Mrs. Adler reads a poem about the Old West and Life on the Trail.

Now, it is time for a focus lesson in math. Mrs. Adler takes 15 minutes to review percentages. She gives each student a list of supplies and how much each weighs. She explains they can take only 2,000 pounds on their wagon, so they must decide which supplies they want to take along. After they have decided, they must then figure what

percentage of food, clothing, and equipment they are taking. As the students work, Mrs. Adler circulates around the room to answer any questions. This activity lasts until lunch.

The students eat their lunches at picnic tables under the shade trees. Even during lunch, they are imagining what it must have been like on the wagon trip across the West. When they are finished eating, they are free to play softball or relax outside.

After the noon hour, everyone returns to the classroom. It is time to listen to Mrs. Adler read the book If You Traveled West in a Covered Wagon by Ellen Levine. The students are captivated by the story and beg for more, even though it is time for them to read silently. Many books about the Old West are available right in the classroom.

Students find a spot to read quietly for the next half hour. It is silent in the room. Students seem to be placing themselves within the setting of their story. At one point, Mrs. Adler has them turn to the closest classmate and tell about what they are reading.

When silent reading time is over, Mrs. Adler asks them to recall everything they know about traveling in a wagon. Then she reads a rap written on another topic and asks each family to work together to create ideas for a wagon rap. As the afternoon progresses, the students become so excited about their ideas that soon the entire class is working together. Finally, the rap is typed into the computer and then performed by the entire class. The students are so excited, they want to share it with the class next door. Mrs. Adler checks with the teacher, and they go to the next classroom to perform the rap (Appendix F).

It is time to go to science lab. The science teacher is aware of what the fifth- and sixth-graders are learning and is working on a unit on weather since the "explorers" had to travel in all kinds of weather. The class is conducting research on how real explorers used the sky and weather to their benefit. All too soon the day is gone. As they walk back from science class, Tonya says, "Mrs. Adler, every day it seems like school goes faster. Can't we slow it down?" Mrs. Adler smiles.

Summary

This chapter provided a descriptive account of the level of implementation of Kovalik's (1994) model of Thematic Instruction at each location in this study. Each classroom in this study represents an example of an ideal level of implementation as described in Gaikwad's (1991) Innovation Configuration Checklist. These descriptive accounts show the students interviewed in this study were in classrooms where Integrated Thematic Instruction was being used. Chapter 4 presents the main findings from the student interviews and parent surveys. Chapters 5, 6, and 7 present the themes that emerged from these findings.

CHAPTER IV

THE MAIN FINDINGS

This chapter presents the main findings of this study. It sets the stage for the following chapters that deal with three major themes that emerged as being important in the development of student attitudes through the use of thematic instruction. In this study, a total of 66 students, from ages 5 years to 10 years/11 months, were interviewed to find out what feelings and attitudes they had toward school during the use of thematic instruction. Although the students knew the interviews were for a research project, they did not know the purpose of the study. The answers they gave were completely candid.

Spradley explains, "Using a strategy for discovering cultural themes will help pull together the major outlines of the scene you are studying" (p. 201). Using Spradley's (1979) techniques, a domain analysis was completed. The answer to each question at each location was analyzed separately. This was done by compiling the responses to each question from each location on separate pages. From the responses, a list of all possible categories or domains was compiled so that every response fit into a category. The domains were categorized using semantic relationships like X is a type of Y or X is an attribute of Y. Then, a title for each category was determined. Student responses to each question were placed under a domain and tallied (Appendix B).

After the domain analysis was completed, a cross-case analysis was done by carefully studying and comparing the domain analysis, field notes, and parent surveys in search of the main findings. The following areas stood out from this comparison: (1) positive attitudes, (2) themes were being studied, and (3) there was excitement toward learning. The first two areas came mainly from the domain analysis, and the third area

had stronger evidence from the field notes and parent surveys. An approach called "explanation building" (Yin, 1989) was used to form the statements in reporting the main findings. A statement was formed based upon the analysis of the domains. The statement was compared once again against the three sources of information, then, if needed, the statement was revised. It was compared again to make certain the data confirmed the findings. An example of how "explanation building" was used in this part of the data analysis is included in chapter 2 in the section on Data Analysis.

Through this careful process, the following statements of findings were formed: (1) students had positive attitudes toward school and learning during the use of thematic instruction; (2) students were aware of the theme being used and were eager to discuss it; (3) students displayed tremendous excitement toward learning and an awareness of the interconnections between subject areas. The remaining part of this chapter discusses these main findings, cites examples, and provides sample quotes that support their emergence.

Positive Attitudes Toward School and Learning

Daniel Goleman, author of Emotional Intelligence (1995), has made a strong case toward recognizing the role that emotions and feelings play in our lives. He points out that it includes being completely aware of one's own feelings as well as looking toward understanding the feelings of others. The feelings and emotions we have play an important role in the success we experience in life. Brain researchers believe our two amygdala is where control of our emotions reside. A number of educators in their secondary research write about the role of the brain (Ellis & Fouts, 1997). Sylwester (1995) feels that emotion and logic cannot be separated. He believes educators must understand that emotions and feelings play a role in the ability of a child to learn. In fact, more attention should be given to the relationship between the two (p. 75).

Ornstein and Sobel (1987) explain that everything we learn is directly influenced and organized by our emotions and feelings. Caine and Caine (1990) say that what has been learned about the connection between emotions and learning is actually challenging the methods involved in traditional education. In other words, research on emotions points toward the need for educators to think seriously about the importance of student attitudes toward school and learning (p. 67).

In this study, at the end of each interview, students were asked to use one word to describe how they feel about school. One hundred percent of the responses were positive. The word "happy" was used 19 times. Ten students used the word "good" to describe their feelings. Other words used were: fun, exciting, interesting, perfect, nice, great, challenging, and fine. A second-grade boy answering this question said, "I wish I could use six words because I like school so very much" (Field notes, vol. 1, p. 64). It was evident at each location that students had positive feelings toward school.

When students were asked, "Do you enjoy coming to school each day?", 63 out of the 66 quickly answered with a "yes." Two kindergarten boys said "no"; however, both qualified their answers by saying they like school, but "just not all the time." A kindergarten girl responded with "sometimes," and then explained she did not like getting up in the morning. But even the three students who did not answer with a "yes" did not report negative feelings toward school and had positive reports in the rest of their interview.

The observations of student behavior and interactions backed up the direct responses in the interviews. Students smiled often, worked well together, and maintained an eagerness toward completing activities and learning. Behavioral problems were non-existent, which added to the positive environment. Students were focused on learning and actively engaged. At each location, the unit being studied was so engaging that students

did not stop talking about it. On a daily basis, they talked at lunch, recess, and as they left school about the things they were learning.

Parent surveys confirmed the student interviews and classroom observations. Of the 66 parent surveys sent out, 64 were returned. Data from these surveys supported what students said in their interviews. Sixty-three parents reported that their child had positive feelings toward school. Only one parent reported that her child is extremely sensitive and sometimes has negative feelings about "being accepted." This same parent felt that once the child was at school, he was happy and actually enjoyed being there. Observations of this particular child indicated that he does enjoy school and gets along very well with his classmates. When this child was interviewed, he showed positive feelings about school. Overall, parents expressed that their children were eager to attend school and had positive attitudes toward it.

Student Awareness of the Theme Being Studied

At each location, 100% of the students, at some time in the interview, mentioned the theme being studied. When students were asked "What do you like most about school?" approximately 80% of them gave three answers. The "things they were learning about" was named two-to-one over "friendships," "free time," or "recess." It was evident that the topic being studied was important to the students. Ten students commented that they find learning about one topic interesting and fun. One stated: "I like the projects we do where we don't do stuff right out of a textbook" (Field notes, vol. 2, p. 96). Seven students reported they remember things better when they are learning in depth about one topic. Thirty-one of the students were kindergartners with no previous school experience. Six of the students in other grades had attended other schools, and, without being prompted, they made comparisons based on the curriculum. A first-grade girl said, "The first school I went to was boring. You never got to get up from your desk, and you

couldn't talk either" (Field notes, vol. 2, p. 58). A second-grade boy reported, "We had to fill in the missing letters. Mrs. Jones teaches science. My other teacher filled in sheets. I like this school the best" (Field notes, vol. 2, p. 64). A fourth-grade girl said, "My teacher used to use lots of papers at one time. It was only fun to work on them when we worked in groups" (Field notes, vol. 2, p. 69). A sixth-grade girl explained, "I enjoy this school more than my old school because you really get into a subject. Here we have time to learn more about each topic" (Field notes, vol. 2, p. 98). Another fourth-grade girl said she likes this school so much that she rides 1 1/2 hours each way to be in Mrs. Jones's class. She said, "Whatever we are studying, we learn everything about it" (Field notes, vol. 2, p. 67). And, a first-grade boy said, "I think it is good to learn about one thing at a time. If I wasn't here and I was at a different school, I wouldn't be learning as much as I am here" (Field notes, vol. 2, p. 71).

When students were asked "What is your favorite thing to do at school?" quick responses were given. Fifty of the students answered this question by mentioning something about what they were "doing" or "making" at school. Each answer involved the theme being studied. For example, a first-grade student said, "I like to do math, like when we measured how big the ark was when we were learning about rain" (Field notes, vol. 1, p. 68). Only 13 students said "recess." The fact that more students mentioned activities and the theme being studied than recess provides evidence that students were enjoying the theme being studied.

When students were asked, "What do you not like to do at school?" they hesitated. The delay in response was in direct contrast to a very quick reply to the question about what they liked most. After thinking for considerable time, 17 of the students had no response. Answers from younger students indicated they were more concerned about behavioral issues and comfort. Students who responded in Grades 2 through 6 talked

about specific subject areas they did not like. However, they went on to explain that this was because they feel they are not good at that subject.

All of the students showed an awareness of the theme in their classroom. At some time in the interview, 80% of them talked specifically about the theme they were learning right at that time. They said things like, "I can't wait until the chicks hatch" (Field notes, vol. 1, p. 27) and "We are learning about dinosaurs" (Field notes, vol. 1, p. 60). Sixteen of the students mentioned the themes they had studied in the past. For example, "We have studied about stars and constellations" (Field notes, vol. 1, p. 60).

The parent surveys revealed an awareness of thematic instruction. In 50% of the surveys, parents reported they were aware of what their child was learning at school and the child talked about the theme being studied. They said things like, "My daughter is counting the days until the chicks hatch" (Field notes, vol. 3, p. 22), and "My child tells me about how much fun she is having on the wagon trail" (Field notes, vol. 3, p. 61). One parent made a direct comment about thematic instruction. She said, "My child went to a different Christian school prior to this one but was never this excited about the mode of study, which was not thematic" (Field notes, vol. 3, p. 39). Many parents of the kindergarten students reported that their child sings songs they have learned about the theme they are studying at school.

Several students specifically talked about connections between subjects. A second-grade boy said, "While we are doing science, we are also doing math and reading, spelling and everything" (Field notes, vol. 1, p. 64). While working on a science project which involved some mathematical operations, a fourth-grade boy looked up at me and said, "Now I see why I need to work hard in math. I won't be able to be a scientist if I can't do math" (Field notes, vol. 2, p. 38). A sixth grader said, "When subjects are put together, it helps you learn better. When you have something you can apply it to, it helps you see how things work together" (Field notes, vol. 1, p. 103). One of the parents of a

kindergarten student said, "My child loves the centers in the classroom. I like how they learn reading, math, writing, art, and science all on one topic" (Field notes, vol. 3, p. 2).

Excitement Toward Learning

One hundred percent of the students interviewed were excited about school and learning. Their eagerness to share what they were learning gleamed in their eyes, and it was clear the curriculum was the spark igniting the fire under their burning desire to learn. I observed that each morning the students arrived happy and eager to begin the day. When students were asked, "How do you feel about school?" there was a 100% positive response. Students were anxious to share facts and specific information on a variety of themes. During the year, they had used journals to record their learning. A second-grade boy wrote, "I'm so glad we are studying about dinosaurs because I already know a lot of dinosaur names" (Field notes, vol. 1, p. 93). I observed that the student conversations during the day revolved around the theme being studied. At each location in this study, there was total immersion in the topic.

Eighty percent of the parents said, in some way, that their child was excited about school. They reported such things as: "My child enjoys school" or "My child has fun at school every day" (Field notes, vol. 3, pp. 33-34).

One parent's experience sums up the feelings expressed by most of the parents about their child's excitement toward school. The parent stated that she had picked up her daughter from school to go to the doctor. When the doctor came into the exam room, the girl was crying. The doctor assumed she was upset about the injection he was about to give, so he tried to comfort her. She looked at him and said, "I'm not crying because of the shot. I'm crying because I am missing school." The mother was shocked, and instead of taking her home for the rest of the day, she took her back to school (Field notes, vol. 3, p. 1).

The first part of this chapter has reported on the main findings in this study. The next section concludes the findings and introduces an important question that arose when 100% of the students' attitudes were found to be positive.

Conclusion

Each hour of a school day plays an important role in a child's perception of school. The feelings that students develop are shaped by every experience they have during a day. Through structural corroboration of the data from student interviews, parent surveys, and direct observation, it became clear that thematic instruction was the key opening the door to positive attitudes among the students in these three classrooms. An appreciation for the organization and implementation of thematic instruction came out over and over again in the 66 student interviews.

Because 100% of the student attitudes were positive, it is important to evaluate the reasons behind these findings. Thematic instruction emerged as the main contributing factor behind these students' positive attitudes. This brings up a new question: "What qualities of thematic instruction were most important in the formation of these positive attitudes toward school?" To answer this question, the student interviews, parent surveys, and field notes were analyzed once again to look for specific qualities present when thematic instruction is used. Recurring events were highlighted and organized into categories. The data fell into three areas: (1) classroom environment; (2) activity; and (3) accomplishments. These categories were formed by using Eisner's (1991) techniques of interpretation and evaluation. He explains that "a theme is like a pervasive quality," and it is important to find the recurring events that are the dominant features of the situation (p. 104).

As this process unfolded, the categories, or themes, were named according to the qualities present. An analysis of the qualities led to the selection of a one-word title for

each area: (1) classroom environment became "Acceptance," (2) activity became "Engagement," and (3) accomplishments became "Competency."

Acceptance, engagement, and competency were the recurring themes discussed by the students, mentioned by the parents, and observed through direct observation. After the themes were determined, a literature search was conducted in each area. Chapters 5, 6, and 7 present a review of the literature pertinent to each theme as well as observations and quotations that show how each theme was established as an important quality in the development of positive attitudes.

CHAPTER V

ACCEPTANCE

At each location in this study, observations and student interviews showed students desired to be accepted. It was a recurring theme. This chapter presents a review of literature pertinent to creating a classroom environment where students feel accepted. This chapter also includes examples from the analysis of how the theme of acceptance emerged.

During the interviews, the student responses showed evidence of feelings of acceptance. The following comments were made by the students: "I like this school because people care about me" (Field notes, vol. 1, p. 68); "It's o.k. for us to make mistakes" (Field notes, vol. 1, p. 62); "Everyone is my friend" (Field notes, vol. 1, p. 69); "My teacher helps me" (Field notes, vol. 1, p. 18). A sixth-grade student said, "My teacher is nice and she cares about me" (Field notes, vol. 1, p. 104). Another student said, "School is like my home away from home" (Field notes, vol. 1, p. 62). It was evident that students had feelings of acceptance.

The parent surveys supported what the students reported in the interviews. Parents said, "My child loves their teacher" (Field notes, vol. 3, p. 2); "My child has warm feelings toward school and the teachers" (Field notes, vol. 3, p. 15); "My child cries during vacations" (Field notes, vol. 3, p. 18); "My child talks about her teacher in a special voice" (Field notes, vol. 3, p. 21); "My child has great feelings toward her teachers and friends" (Field notes, vol. 3, p. 27); "My child can't wait to get to school" (Field notes, vol. 3, p. 28); "My child attended a different school last year. Since she started at

this school, I have seen a big change. She is happy and considerate of others" (Field notes, vol. 3, p. 34); "My child enjoys the positive friendly atmosphere" (Field notes, vol. 3, p. 58). Three parents reported that there were times when their children talked about having hurt feelings or small disagreements. However, they still said their child had a positive attitude toward school. It was evident the parents felt their child had good relationships among peers and with their teacher. A later section in this chapter describes the observations of a positive classroom climate and provides triangulation of the evidence.

In Susan Kovalik's (1994) Integrated Thematic Instruction model, eight brain-compatible elements are outlined. She believes these elements must be present for thematic instruction to be effective as a model for instruction. The eight brain-compatible elements are: (1) absence of threat; (2) meaningful content; (3) choices; (4) adequate time; (5) enriched environment; (6) collaboration; (7) immediate feedback; and (8) mastery. These elements relate to the themes found in this study. Two of these eight elements, absence of threat and collaboration, relate to the student's need for acceptance. These two elements are discussed later in this chapter along with other closely related theories dealing with acceptance. Many factors must come together to create a positive climate for learning. Over the past 20 years, brain-research findings have been applied to education, providing us with information vital to creating classroom climates where students feel totally accepted and safe.

The Triune Brain Theory

Paul MacLean (1978) suggests that the human brain is actually three brains in one. He believes the brain is separated into three distinct layers: the brain stem, the limbic system, and the neocortex. While each layer maintains different functions, the layers interact with one another. Hart (1983) believes that the triune brain theory is a valuable

tool in understanding how the brain functions in our daily lives and has important implications for planning effective curriculum models (p. 102). Understanding how each of these three parts of the brain functions helps us to understand better what actually needs to take place in a classroom for meaningful learning to occur. First, we will look at the function of the brain stem.

The Brain Stem

The brain stem deals with basic survival (Hermann, 1990). It helps to control involuntary functions, such as heartbeat, circulation, and respiration. As Brown et al. (1990) note, "Signals from the limbic system affect the rate and duration of brain stem activities" (p. 85). This important part of the brain responds to visual stimulus and reacts immediately to any negative or threatening input. It is the portion of the brain always on the lookout for life-threatening events. The brain stem can cause the brain to downshift or shut down when any threat is perceived. This information has important implications for creating a positive learning environment and is discussed later in this chapter.

The Limbic System

The limbic system is the emotional center of the brain. With one of the richest blood supplies in the body, this system plays a role in regulating eating, drinking, sleeping, waking, body temperature, blood pressure, hormones, emotions, and sex. The hypothalamus and amygdala are both part of the limbic system, and each plays a role in regulating emotions. The hypothalamus, a little smaller than a dime, deals with how we feel and express our emotions. The two amygdala serve as the aggression center in our brain, where hostile and angry emotions are formed (Brown et al., 1990). LeDoux's (1993) research revealed that the amygdala has an important position as an emotional guard. He tracked the circuitry of sensory responses and found the amygdala could begin

to respond before the neocortex. The neocortex, or "thinking brain," must carry input through several levels of circuits before sending a signal to react to the stimulus. Since the amygdala can send out a signal to react immediately, it has the ability, in a sense, to hijack the brain. This information has important implications for the outlook on the role emotions play in our daily lives (Goleman, 1995). In summary, the limbic system works like a switching device. It is "the gatekeeper" for our emotions (Hermann, 1990). The third section of the brain in the Triune Theory is the neocortex (Caine & Caine, 1991).

The Neocortex

The neocortex, commonly called the cerebrum, comprises five-sixths of the human brain (Caine & Caine, 1991). It serves as a multi-modal, multi-path processing center processing thousands of tiny bits of information each second (Brown et al., 1990). The cerebrum consists of two hemispheres. In most people, the left hemisphere deals with language and the right hemisphere stores information having to do with spatial concepts, visual patterns, and music. At one time, researchers believed these two hemispheres acted independently. New research shows that the two hemispheres are connected through a bridge called the corpus callosum. This area contains over 200 million nerve fibers. Information is carried back and forth between the two hemispheres constantly. It should be noted that while there are different sections of the brain, no single section acts independently at any time (Springer & Deutsch, 1985).

The Triune Theory describes how the brain functions. Another brain theory called the Proster Theory provides data on how the brain stores information.

The Proster Theory

Developed by Leslie Hart (1983), the Proster Theory combines findings from several disciplines. According to this theory, the brain operates much like a complex,

powerful computer with the ability to interconnect information simultaneously down hundreds of paths at the same time. The name for the theory came from the compression of two words, program and structure. Hart (1983) defines the concept: "A proster may be defined as a collection of stored programs, related to a particular pattern" (p. 95).

Three main principles have been derived from the Proster Theory and are included in different models of instruction. The principles are: (1) freedom from threat; (2) a communication emphasis; and (3) a reality emphasis (Neve, 1985). Each principle is included in Kovalik's (1994) Integrated Instruction model. A connection with the three themes discovered in this study can also be made to these same principles. The idea of "freedom from threat" ties into the student's need for acceptance. The need for engagement in the curriculum goes along with "communication emphasis," and "reality emphasis" relates to the competency theme.

While other applications between instructional practices and classroom environment could be made between all these theories, Caine and Caine (1990) believe that the greatest challenge for educators lies in discovering "the role of emotions, stress and threat in learning" (p. 69).

The Role of Emotions

Hart (1983) says, "The brain is the organ for learning. The decisions that underlie purposeful activities are made in the brain; and equally, in health, emotions are controlled by this organ" (p. 10). Everything we learn is affected and organized by our emotional mind-set involving prejudices, self-esteem, and the need for social contact. Therefore, it is not possible to separate emotions from cognition (Ornstein & Sobel, 1987). Since emotions facilitate storing and recalling information, they are crucial to memory (Rosenfield, 1988). Caine and Caine (1990) observe that "the emotional impact of any lesson or life experience may continue to reverberate long after the specific event that

triggered it" (p. 67). The interconnectedness of emotions and learning should not come as a surprise, since the limbic system mediates memory and emotion (Caine & Caine, 1991).

In Emotional Intelligence, Goleman (1995) explains that an understanding of the circuitry in the brain should help us grasp the concept that emotion is crucial to being able to think clearly. When we are upset, information is unable to reach the prefrontal cortex to be stored in our working memory. Strong emotions, like anger or anxiety, actually block the input from being stored, and we become consumed with our emotional state, feeling as if we "just can't think straight" (p. 27). Goleman concludes that we actually have two minds, the emotional and the rational. Our intellect will not function at its highest potential without a stable emotional backing. There must be a balance between emotions and our ability to reason.

The implication for education is that emotional stress in a child creates a condition in the brain that makes it difficult for the child to store information. Teachers must realize that students' feelings and attitudes have a direct effect on learning. For meaningful learning to occur, the emotional climate must be taken into account. It is imperative to make certain that the emotional climate of a classroom "is supportive and marked by mutual respect and acceptance" (Caine & Caine, 1990, p. 67).

Goleman (1995) believes that emotional intelligence can be learned. When students are exposed to a safe, positive emotional environment, where social skills are taught, they can learn to manage their own emotions better. As they learn the skills needed to deal with frustrations, anger, and other strong emotions, they become more effective learners and ultimately will be more successful in life. In fact, Goleman feels emotional health is as much as four times more powerful a predictor of life success than IQ.

The next section explains the importance of creating a positive classroom climate where students can find acceptance.

The Importance of a Positive Climate

The word "climate" first appeared in educational literature in an article by Withall (1949). At that time, the concept was introduced to represent the emotional tone of the classroom. It revolved around the idea that the classroom should be learner-centered versus teacher-centered. Ten years later, Cornell, Lindvall, and Saupe (1959) looked at differences between classrooms in regard to management, motivation, and communication of influence. Then, Brown (1960) conducted a study to determine which students fit best into certain classroom climates. He based his research on the idea that a teacher's personality forms the basis for the climate of a classroom.

More current research has shown that many factors shape the climate of a classroom. Moos (1987) says that classroom climate is shaped by the students, teachers, and school management. Even factors that individuals bring from their home life may influence the learning environment at school.

While social interactions are extremely important to classroom climate, the physical and material aspects of the classroom play a role as well. Classroom climate is an important variable that must be looked at as a part of the curriculum not as an outcome of the curriculum (Van der Sijde, 1998).

O'Neil (1997) discussed the success of the School Development Program in New Haven, Connecticut, a 20-year project for school improvement. James Conner, the leader of the project, said, "As we planned this project, we found that the problems children had often grew out of conditions in the school that weren't child-friendly. So, we learned from children's problems what we had to do to change the school" (p. 10). The leaders of this project immersed themselves in the school system and tried to determine what was wrong. They determined the climate was not right. The teachers were using a mechanical model of teaching and had no understanding of what was lacking in the total picture of education. So, along with his associates, Conner set out to create a good social climate.

The teachers were then able to integrate academic learning, and the social and emotional development was also a part of the curriculum. They found that when children had the chance to form a bond with adults, learning became meaningful and important to them (p. 8).

Lewis, Schaps, and Watson (1996) found that "students work harder, achieve more, and attribute more importance to school work in classes in which they feel liked, accepted and respected by the teacher and fellow students" (p. 18).

Joyce and Calhoun (1997) worked on a project to promote school community. Once they had achieved true community, they found that "the social system of an entire school community, including parents as assistants, encourages students to excel academically, socially, and emotionally" (p. 63).

It has been established that emotions are important to learning as well as the climate of the classroom. The next section reports on data collected in this study which have to do with positive classroom climate.

Observations on Climate in This Study

The last section discussed the importance of a positive climate in a classroom. A positive climate refers to a place where students feel "at home." The classroom should be an inviting place (Kovalik, 1994).

In the classrooms visited in this study, two main ingredients formed the climate: (1) the physical environment and (2) the social interactions. The following physical elements were observed at each location: carpeted floors, areas of comfortable seating, accent lighting, live plants, animals, and soft music. A variety of books and materials was organized and displayed, sparking interest and arousing student curiosity.

The social atmosphere was pleasant. Good manners were used by both the students and teacher. Mutual respect between teacher and student was observed through

verbal and body language. Behavioral problems were almost non-existent. At one of the locations, I did not observe any misbehavior or conflict during my 2-week visit. The majority of students in this particular classroom had been in school together for more than 1 year. They had learned how to work together as a community of learners. When the students at this location were interviewed, they did not report any social problems.

At the other two locations, behavioral and social conflicts were limited. In the interviews at these locations, when students were asked, "What do you not like about school?" nearly 25% of them mentioned a specific social problem like fighting or not getting along with a classmate. These students were asked, "Does this happen very often?" In each case they answered, "No, just once or twice." Even though these were isolated incidents, it was evident that the social element was very important.

The students talked about looking forward to seeing their friends everyday. They made comments like, "I enjoy coming to school to see my friends" (Field notes, vol. 1, p. 31). They made comments about their teacher. A sixth-grade student said, "My teacher cares about me" (Field notes, vol. 1, p. 104), and a kindergarten student said, "My teacher helps me" (Field notes, vol. 1, p. 18).

The observations recorded from these case studies go along with what educational experts are saying about the need for acceptance. The next section deals with models and theories involved in creating a positive climate. One framework for creating a positive climate is included in a practical model developed through research in an effort to improve instructional practices in K-12 programs. This widely used framework is called *Dimensions of Learning*.

Dimensions of Learning

The *Dimensions of Learning* framework has five critical aspects of learning: (1) positive attitudes and perceptions about learning; (2) thinking involved in acquiring and

integrating knowledge; (3) thinking involved in extending and refining knowledge; (4) thinking involved in using knowledge meaningfully; and (5) productive habits of mind. These five elements all work together to improve the quality of instruction. The first and last dimension are always present and lay the foundation for the other dimensions.

It is the first dimension--positive attitudes and perceptions about learning--that provides guidelines to help students feel accepted. This dimension is divided into two sections. The first section deals with the social aspect. Here are guidelines for teachers: (1) establish a relationship with each student; (2) monitor your own attitudes; (3) engage in positive classroom behaviors; (4) respond positively to students' incorrect responses; (5) provide students with opportunities for cooperative learning; and (6) have students develop strategies for gaining acceptance from peers.

The second section of this dimension covers that of helping students to develop a sense of comfort and order. These guidelines are: (1) to use activities which involve physical movement; (2) to have students identify their own standards for comfort and order; (3) to teach students how to block out troublesome thoughts; (4) to develop and communicate classroom rules and procedures; (5) to establish clear policies about the physical safety of students; (6) to be aware of malicious teasing or threats in or out of the classroom and take steps to stop such harassment (Marzano et al., 1992). In The Teacher's Manual for Dimensions of Learning, Marzano et al. (1992) recommend that teachers plan specifically for each dimension. Forms included in the manual are helpful in the planning process. The next two sections in this chapter give a brief overview of two theories which add to the scope of a discussion on acceptance.

Maslow's Basic Human Needs

Maslow's (1970) theory suggests that people maintain a hierarchy of needs. He separates these into lower-level needs and higher-level needs. The lower-level needs are:

(1) survival and safety; (2) love and belonging; (3) self-esteem. These lower-level needs must be fulfilled before the higher levels are pursued. The higher-level needs include: (1) intellectual achievement; (2) aesthetic appreciation; and (3) self-actualization. Table 1 shows how the findings in this study fit into Maslow's theory.

TABLE 1
MASLOW'S HUMAN NEEDS

This Study's Themes	Maslow's Basic Needs
Acceptance	Survival & Safety Love & Belonging Self-Esteem
Engagement	Intellectual Achievement Aesthetic Appreciation
Competency	Self-Actualization

Glasser's Control Theory

Glasser (1986) developed a theory dealing with motivation. In this theory, he says humans are born with five basic needs: (1) survival, (2) love, (3) power, (4) fun, and (5) freedom. Glasser (1992) maintains that everything we choose to do is an attempt to satisfy one of these desires. Control theory is based upon a "constant attempt to control both ourselves and others" in order to satisfy one of the basic needs. In creating a positive classroom climate, educators who understand control theory can use this knowledge to help students in the self-actualization process (p. 44).

Table 2 illustrates how the themes found in this study fit into Glasser's theory.

TABLE 2
GLASSER'S BASIC NEEDS

This Study's Themes	Glasser's Basic Needs
Acceptance	Survival: met through feeling safe and belonging Love: met through meaningful relationships
Engagement	Fun: met through active involvement in the curriculum Freedom: met through choices in a meaningful learning experience
Competency	Power: met through feeling accomplishment and capability

These tables show that the themes of acceptance, engagement, and competency are congruent with Glasser's and Maslow's theories. In the beginning of this chapter, Susan Kovalik's eight brain-compatible elements were outlined. It was mentioned that the need for acceptance fits into two of these: (1) absence of threat and (2) collaboration.

Kovalik's Integrated Thematic Instruction Model

Absence of Threat

In order for students to feel accepted, they must not feel threatened in any way. In explaining how to make sure an absence of threat exists, Kovalik (1994) outlines three areas which can all be controlled by the teacher: (1) relationships; (2) classroom management; and (3) behavioral guidelines. The way a teacher handles these three areas play an important role in whether a student feels threat in the classroom.

Kovalik advocates building relationships by creating a comfortable physical environment. Through a powerful engaging curriculum with clear guidelines and procedures, classroom management provides students with a structure in which participation is nurtured and expected.

The behavioral guidelines of Kovalik's Integrated Thematic environment are called "lifelong guidelines." They include trustworthiness, truthfulness, active listening, personal best, and no "put-downs." Kovalik believes that one of the most important of these guidelines is for teachers not to allow put-downs. Brain research backs up this claim. Hart (1983) explains that when a person feels a threat in any way, the brain downshifts or shuts down. Therefore, when a student is put down by a teacher or a classmate, embarrassed, rejected, or feels conflict, then learning stops or is impeded. To help students achieve these guidelines, social skills are taught and become an important part of the curriculum (Kovalik, 1994). The second brain-compatible element that needs to be mentioned in this chapter is collaboration.

Collaboration

Webster (1978) defines collaboration as "to work in association with; to work with another" (p. 278). Certainly providing students with opportunities to work together will promote social interaction. Positive social interaction through collaboration helps students feel acceptance. Kovalik (1994) points to cooperative learning as one way to structure collaboration. While she does not recommend any one specific model, she does feel that student groups should remain flexible. Different groups should be formed for different tasks, which might include a family group or home base. An interest group would work on projects or special assignments of like interests, and a work group would complete classroom tasks.

In this study, cooperative learning is seen as a major part of the engagement theme. It is discussed in chapter 6.

Many factors involved in creating a positive learning climate have been presented in this chapter. These same elements are found within a learning community. The next section discusses the importance of community and provides suggestions for building a learning community.

Building a Learning Community

M. Scott Peck (1987) defines community as "a group of individuals who have learned how to communicate honestly with each other . . . whose relationships go deeper than their masks of composure" (p. 59). He goes on to explain, "In genuine community there are no sides. People know how to listen and how to respect each other" (p. 71).

In his book Beyond Discipline, Kohn (1996a) points out that many educators talk about the need to create learning communities, but very few really understand exactly what it means to achieve community. Kohn says a school community "is a place where students feel cared about and are encouraged to care about each other." They feel valued and respected. They think together rather than separately and feel emotionally and physically safe (p. 101).

Building a learning community begins with developing caring relationships among a group of people. There is total inclusion (Peck, 1987, p. 61). Glasser (1992) in his book The Quality School says, "Quality is a product of warm, caring, relationships" (p. 175). Perkins (1992) feels smart schools are places where people think about each other's needs and are sensitive to other people's feelings.

Kohn (1996a) feels that in a school, positive relationships must be modeled for children by adults. Teachers must become real people willing to listen and respond to individual needs. There must be emotional support. Students should feel comfortable if

they give a wrong answer or make a mistake. This provides a feeling of safety while strengthening the relationship between teacher and student (Kohn, 1996a).

The curriculum itself can have a strong impact on strengthening a community. Class meetings, cooperative learning structures, and activity-based projects all provide opportunity for growth toward community. The following quotation raises an important question and shows how attention must be given to both curriculum and climate.

How could we create a caring community in the classroom when children's own needs--to make sense of the world, to be known and liked by others, to influence the environment--were being ignored by a skill-and-drill curriculum? A curriculum that holds little intrinsic interest for children forces teachers to use "motivators", "consequences", and "competition" to keep children on task, thereby undermining community and demonstrating that some children are more valued than others. (Lewis et al., 1996, p. 552)

Summary

To build community and a positive classroom climate, relationships must be built within an engaging curriculum (Kohn, 1996a, p. 118). It makes sense, then, that students interviewed in this study reported that their need for acceptance was fulfilled. Many factors must be present for students to feel accepted. The models included in this chapter provide educators with practical guidelines to create positive learning climates where students feel acceptance. In this study, it was evident that acceptance was a fundamental component in each classroom for positive attitudes to form.

Students also reported a desire to be engaged in an active curriculum. The next chapter reports on engagement in an active curriculum.

CHAPTER VI

ENGAGEMENT

The term *engagement* refers to the extent that students are emotionally, physically, mentally, and socially connected to their learning environment. Engagement is more than just an interest or commitment to learning. It is a total participation in all facets of what takes place in a classroom. Engagement involves the willingness to take an active role in learning (Steinburg, 1996).

In this study, I repeatedly observed students who were engaged in meaningful learning. In chapter 3, the sections titled "A Typical Day" provide descriptions of student engagement at each location. There are numerous examples of students talking about the things they were learning. Even during lunch breaks and at recess, students were talking about things in their classroom. On the playground, I heard a student who was learning about dinosaurs say, "Tyrannosaurus Rex does not travel in groups! Raptors do! (Field notes, vol. 2, p. 36). Another group of students learning about the Oregon Trail were overheard discussing their project at lunch. As the students learning about eggs were walking down the hall to go home for the day, they were discussing what the chicks might look like inside the egg. These are examples of what I observed on a daily basis. It was a pervasive quality present at each location. Students were mentally, emotionally, socially, and physically engaged in the topic being studied.

In the student interviews, 80% of the students used such words as "busy," "working," "making," "doing," "experimenting," and "activities." Kindergarten students used the

word "play" to describe what they were "doing" at school. They would say such things as, "I like playing at centers" (Field notes, vol. 1, p. 14). The activities for the unit were at the centers. Older students also included the activities in their comments. A fifth-grader said, "We made stamps about the people who were on the Oregon Trail" (Field notes, vol. 1, p. 87). Another student explained, "We get a feel for what the settlers did when we do things like pan for gold and make butter" (Field notes, vol. 1, p. 94). Five students reported that they remember things better when they "do it." A sixth-grader said, "At this school you really get into a subject. We learn a lot more about each topic" (Field notes, vol. 1, p. 98). When a second-grade student was asked, "What are you learning at school?" he gave the following answer:

Well, when we first started school, we were learning about ourselves, our body, the skeleton stuff, and the bones. Then for a unit about living long ago, we went on a campout. Then, we studied light and color and how the sun shines on the earth. Then, we studied stuff like how air pressure brings us weather and the layers of the atmosphere, and how it affects our lives. We learned about two air masses and how the hot air and cold air meet. Also, about lightning, tornadoes, and hurricanes. Then we started on the solar systems, planets, and the diameter of each planet. It takes the sun 8 minutes to shine on the earth. If you could travel the speed of light, you could go around the earth in 1 second. Isn't that amazing! We studied about the moon, and we studied star constellations. I bet you know that now we are studying about dinosaurs, like how tall they were and about the ark. We learned that before scientists called them dinosaurs, they weren't called that. The Bible talks about a behemoth beast. You should come back next year and see what we are learning about. (Field notes, vol. 1, p. 64)

This student captured the essence of what was taking place in each of the classrooms in this study. Students were actively engaged in learning at each location. Parent surveys gave support to student interviews. A kindergarten parent said, "My child is very excited about going to the centers" (Field notes, vol. 3, p. 13). A parent of an upper-grade student told me, "My child enjoyed learning about the constellations and made her own constellation projector. She points out constellations in the sky and names them" (Field notes, vol. 3, p. 32). Parent responses showed that they were aware of what

their child was learning at school and that the students were discussing the projects and activities at home. The remaining part of this chapter provides a review of literature relating to the topic of engagement.

Total engagement, with meaningful content, was a main factor in the development of the positive attitudes reported by the students. Engagement is a topic discussed by educators, psychologists, and social scientists interested in school improvement and change. I found that much of the literature on school improvement reports on the problems occurring in education and then offers solutions. The next section points out a few of the problems in classrooms today.

School Improvement

Tracy Kidder (1989), in a few sentences, gives us a glimpse inside the American classroom. She says:

The problem is fundamental. Put twenty or more children of roughly the same age in a little room, confine them to desks, make them wait in lines, make them behave. It is as if a secret committee, now lost to history, had made a study of children and, having figured out what the greatest number were least disposed to do, declared that all of them should do it. (p. 155)

In a chapter on quality education, Glasser (1992) reports that what students complain about most is boredom. He explains that when students complain about being bored, they actually mean they cannot relate the material being studied to the outside world. When students are asked to memorize facts without any connection to real life experiences, they become extremely bored. Caine and Caine (1991) express the same idea: "One of the fundamental reasons schools fail is that they impose on learners a single state of unrelieved boredom" (p. 34).

While experts point to current instructional practices as the problem in schools, teachers are pointing toward the student as the problem. There are more labels for children than ever before (Steinberg, 1996). Healy (1990) reports that Margaret Wang, a

noted learning-disability educator, has expressed concern over the growing number of students being diagnosed as "learning disabled." Wang says that over 80% of children could easily be diagnosed with that label by the testing being done in schools today. Healy then responds to this information: "The only clear fact that can be derived from these statistics is that there is a serious misfit between large numbers of children and their schools" (p. 139).

Hart (1983) discusses the prevalence of "aggressive teaching" in schools. He points out that this places students in a passive role rather than an active one. The main component used in aggressive teaching is the lecture. In today's age of information, the teacher is no longer the only source of knowledge. The teacher must become a facilitator and a motivator. The next section explains the relationship between student engagement and motivation.

Motivation and Engagement

Motivation and engagement work together. If children are motivated, they, in turn, become engaged in an activity (Steinburg, 1996).

Kohn (1993) points out that much time has been spent on the study of human motivation, especially the importance of intrinsic versus extrinsic motivation. Katz and Chard (1994) explain that children come to school naturally motivated and ready to learn. They need very few extrinsic rewards to maintain their level of curiosity. However, when students encounter boredom, the natural motivation disappears.

Kohn (1993) goes on to explain that when children are in the right environment where they are actually "encouraged to think about what they are doing (rather than how well they are doing it) students of any age will generally exhibit an abundance of motivation and a healthy appetite for challenge" (p. 199). The real job for educators is to provide conditions where students will be intrinsically motivated to engage in active rather

than passive learning. Adelman and Taylor (1983) say, "The challenge is not to wait until an individual is interested but to offer a stimulating environment that can be perceived by students as vivid and valued options which can lead to a successful learning and performance" (p. 385).

Educators must think of instruction in terms of encouraging students to become engaged in specific tasks. Kohn (1993) reports that current research shows students should stop focusing on their performance level and begin looking at what their performance is contributing to the classroom as a whole. There are steps which need to be taken to lead students into learning through discovery. He offers the following suggestions to accomplish this goal: (1) allow active learning; (2) elicit curiosity; (3) set an example; (4) welcome mistakes; and (5) give reasons for assignments. When these guidelines are followed, motivation happens naturally and a high level of quality learning occurs. He has also developed a framework for motivation. I found the major findings of research dealing with engagement fit within Kohn's three main components of motivation. The three components are: (1) collaboration, (2) content, and (3) choices. I found each of these components to be a major factor involved in engaging students in meaningful learning. In an attempt to report the findings from this study, along with pertinent research, in a succinct manner, I have chosen to use these three components as the subheadings in this chapter.

Collaboration

Collaboration is one of the eight brain-compatible elements in Kovalik's (1994) model of Integrated Thematic Instruction. Her rationale for including collaboration is based upon brain research. Hart (1983) says the brain is capable of large quantities of input. Opportunities must be given to manipulate the input so it can be organized and stored in memory. Students should be allowed to work together and discuss what is being

learned. The most promising instructional strategy for collaboration is cooperative learning. The next section gives an overview of cooperative learning.

Cooperative Learning

Cooperative learning is an instructional strategy designed to provide students with an opportunity to work together in groups to achieve a specific goal (Wade, Abrami, Poulsen & Chambers, 1995). There is a rich body of research available on cooperative learning. After conducting a meta-analysis on 122 studies, Johnson and Johnson (1981) found that, through cooperative learning, student achievement and competency are much higher than from individual learning activities. This is true for different subject areas, projects, and ages of students.

Slavin (1983) looked at 46 controlled research studies comparing cooperative learning to traditional instruction. He discovered 63% of these studies found that cooperative learning produced superior outcomes in student achievement while only 4% of the studies found that traditional programs showed gains in student achievement.

Kagan (1992) describes seven outcomes of cooperative learning: (1) synergy from cooperative learning creates motivation; (2) students learn from each other; (3) social interaction increases intellectual activity; (4) relationships are built, producing positive feelings; (5) self-esteem is increased; (6) there is opportunity for response; (7) students' ability to work together increases. Each of these outcomes has been mentioned in this study as being important in the development of positive attitudes toward school. It is evident that cooperative learning is a powerful model of instruction.

Cooperative learning places students in active roles, increasing the possibility they will become engaged in the learning experience (Karnes, Schwedel, & Williams, 1983). Kagan (1992) cites three fundamental principles which educators should use when implementing cooperative learning. Table 3 outlines these principles.

At each location in this study, teachers were effectively using cooperative learning. Students were assigned group projects, and I observed a variety of cooperative learning structures being used throughout each day. Cooperative learning was one component used to engage students in the curriculum. The next section discusses the role that content plays in the curriculum to engage students in the learning process.

TABLE 3
KAGAN'S COOPERATIVE LEARNING PRINCIPLES

Kagan's Principles	Explanation
1. Simultaneous Interaction	This structure provides for each student to participate by taking turns speaking and interacting.
2. Positive Interdependence	The success of each student should contribute to the success of others or contribute to the success of the entire team. The strongest form of interdependence is when the success of the team is not possible without contributions from each member.
3. Individual Accountability	Tasks or projects should be structured so each student is accountable for a specific contribution.

Content

Content is the second component in Kohn's (1993) motivational framework. In the Integrated Thematic model, Kovalik (1994) includes meaningful content and an enriched environment as two of the eight brain-compatible elements. Both meaningful content and enriched environment are discussed in this section, because both of these elements play a crucial role in student engagement in learning.

Caine and Caine (1991) say, "The search for meaning (making sense of our experiences) and the consequential need to act on our environment are automatic" (p. 89). They explain that the classroom environment should provide stability while also arousing curiosity. The lesson content should be life-like, exciting, and relevant. Students will then become active participants. As one source indicates, "When children see how the ideas and skills of school help them understand and act upon the world--how they are genuinely useful--they begin to practice these skills throughout their home and lives" (Lewis et al., 1996, p. 21)

Hart (1983) strongly affirms the importance of understanding the brain as a pattern-seeking device. He says, "There is no concept, no fact in education, more directly important than this: the brain is, by nature's design, an amazingly subtle and sensitive pattern-detecting apparatus" (p. 60). Patterning refers to a meaningful way to organize and categorize information (Nummela & Rosengren, 1986).

Glasser (1992) points out that "much of the material presented in school strikes many students as alien" (p. 149). Students are unable to make connections with things they already know, so their brain is not able to store the information for later use. He calls for teachers to continually connect "lesson" to "real-life" experiences so the information will become valuable to the student.

In the book Endangered Minds, Healy (1990) emphasizes the need for "instruction that links rather than separates. One of the biggest gaps in children's experiences these days is in seeing connections between all the bits of information they have accumulated" (p. 300). From this book, one concludes that real-life experiences should be a framework for the curriculum.

Caine and Caine (1990) explain the difference between surface knowledge and meaningful knowledge. Surface knowledge is anything memorized for the sake of learning

a fact. Meaningful knowledge is "anything that makes sense to the learner" (p. 7). The next section relates this information to engagement.

Meaningful Learning and Engagement

Some educators are concerned over the emphasis of factual knowledge. When factual knowledge is emphasized, it actually undermines teachers' attempts to engage students in meaningful learning (Cardellichio, 1995). In Glasser's (1992) Quality School curriculum, skills, not facts, are emphasized. These are practical skills that the student can use rather than isolated facts that have no relation to the student's point of reference.

Steinberg (1996) asserts, "In order to be emotionally engaged in school, students must believe that what they are learning there is either interesting or valuable--and preferably both" (p. 72). With this information in mind, we look toward the challenges that face educators as they seek to provide students with meaningful content.

Thematic instruction seeks to provide students with meaningful content. Ellis and Fouts (1997) point out numerous researchers claim meaningful learning is improved when interdisciplinary or thematic instruction is used. While Ellis and Fouts find no reason to dispute these claims, they feel more research is needed to support the claims.

Challenges With Content

One of the challenges educators face in presenting meaningful content is the prevalence of a textbook curriculum where each subject is taught in isolation and few connections are made between subject areas (Gardner, 1991). Even within subject areas, fragmentation can occur. Hart (1983) is concerned over the notion that students are able to assemble bits and pieces of information without being presented with the whole. Healy (1990) agrees that a fragmented curriculum does nothing to help children link ideas together to form meaning. In this study, I observed students making connections between

what was being studied and life beyond the classroom. Students made comments to each other throughout the day relating things they were learning to experiences outside of school. It was evident these applications helped the students draw meaningful conclusions from their learning. The students showed excitement when they could relate their learning to something they already knew.

Even years ago, Maria Montessori (1948) understood the needs of a child to make sense of the world. She wrote:

Let us give them (the elementary children) a vision of the whole universe. The universe is an imposing reality. . . . All things are a part of the universe and are connected with each other to form one whole unity. This idea helps the mind of the child to become fixed, to stop wandering in an aimless quest for knowledge. The child is satisfied, having found the universal center of self in all things. (p. 8)

Montessori's idea of giving children the world goes beyond meaningful content alone. She brings to light the importance of creating an enriched environment. In her book on Montessori education, Lillard (1996) relates the importance of an environment that leads the students beyond the confines of a classroom into the community. Zoos, gardens, libraries, museums, universities, parks, and observatories are all places that children should visit. Inside the classroom, resource people and real-life objects should be a part of the environment. Students can then be encouraged to explore and discover.

In her chapter on creating an enriched environment, Kovalik (1994) outlines six kinds of input and discusses each as being necessary to create an enriched environment. Table 4 lists these in order, from the most stimulating to our senses to the least stimulating. Each has a place in creating an enriched environment.

TABLE 4

KOVALIK'S SIX TYPES OF INPUT

Types of Input	Description
Being there	A firsthand experience
Immersion	Re-creation of an experience incorporating as many senses as possible
Hands on the real thing	Bringing in actual objects
Secondhand	Movies, videos, pictures books
Hands on representational things	Using objects to represent specific parts of an experience
Symbolic	Formulas/writing/math equations

Cambourne's (1988) research on language acquisition has important implications for curriculum design. He found that children learn to talk by total immersion in language. He feels this same principle should be applied to all learning. When students are immersed in a rich environment, learning occurs.

Smith (1986) says, "Most learning takes place without anyone even suspecting that it is occurring" (p. 81). Therefore, creating a rich environment and presenting meaningful content should be considered key elements in curriculum planning. The next section shows how the element of choice plays a role in student engagement.

Choice

Kohn's (1993) third component of motivation is choice. It is also one of Kovalik's (1994) brain-compatible elements. Choice, as it relates to engagement, has to do with students taking control of their learning. As Kovalik (1994) notes, "Clearly, all children do not learn the same way" (p. 53). The element of choice allows for individual preferences and differences in children. Holt (1983) feels children should decide on their own how they want to learn.

Katz and Chard (1994) explain that all children have different dispositions, personalities, likes, and dislikes. To reach individual children, it is necessary to utilize a wide variety of teaching strategies as well as provide choices for them. To engage students in learning, they must be given freedom and choice. Children want to make sense of their world (Gardner, 1991). The element of choice gives children the opportunity to engage in activities they find interesting. The idea of choice is also important in order for students to gain competence.

In the classrooms I observed in this study, students made choices throughout the day. Students chose from a wide variety of activities and projects based upon their learning styles and preferences. The element of choice seemed to help the students maintain interest and kept them engaged in the learning experience.

Summary

This chapter outlined three elements--collaboration, content, and choice--as vital ingredients to engage students in learning.

Cooperative learning is one of the most effective ways to engage students in a collaborative effort. When students are working together to complete a task, they are learning much more than just content. They are gaining important interpersonal skills needed to be successful in life. When the content of the curriculum includes challenging, meaningful, and relevant material, all students can find successful learning.

In this study, at some time in each interview, 80% of the students said they enjoyed "doing" projects or activities. They talked about specific areas of the curriculum where they were actively involved in some way.

I observed that engagement was a pervasive quality important in the development of positive attitudes. The design of thematic instruction engages students in meaningful learning which, in turn, creates positive attitudes. Chapter 7 deals with choice as it relates

to competency and presents the need for a feeling of competency in the development of positive attitudes.

CHAPTER VII

COMPETENCY

In this study, competency was found to be an important element in the development of students' positive attitudes. Throughout the interviews in this study, students mentioned a need to feel competent or to excel in specific skill or subject areas. When students were asked what they do not like about school, 20% of them reported a specific subject area because they were not good at that particular skill or subject. They said things like: "I don't like reading and math because they are hard" (Field notes, vol. 1, p. 58); "I don't like spelling because I have to work hard on it" (Field notes, vol. 1, p. 85); and "I don't like reading or math because I'm not very good at them" (Field notes, vol. 1, p. 87). Over half of the students mentioned a specific subject they enjoy. They liked it because they feel good about their abilities in that area. They reported things like: "I like math because I know a lot about it" (Field notes, vol. 1, p. 90); "My favorite subject is reading. I am a good reader" (Field notes, vol. 1, p. 91); and "I like to be creative. It takes time, but when you're done, you can be proud" (Field notes, vol. 1, p. 93).

In my observation, students wanted to show me their accomplishments. They would call me to them and say things like: "Look at what I made" or "How do you like our dinosaur?" The students showed an eagerness to learn and become competent at specific skills. Parent comments included examples that show the child felt good about their accomplishments. They reported, "My child is eager to learn" (Field notes, vol. 3, p. 19); "My child is proud of the work she has done" (Field notes, vol. 3 p. 23); "My child loves to recite his memory verse to me" (Field notes, vol.3, p. 25). Parents also reported

things that showed their child felt good about themselves. They said, "I see his academic skills developing every day. His self-esteem is great" (Field notes, vol. 3, p. 29); "My child feels confident about herself" (Field notes, vol. 3, p. 34). The need to feel competent in a skill or subject area emerged as one of the main themes in this study.

Competency is one outcome of motivation (Holt, 1983). In an extensive study on student motivation, Silver, Strong, and Robinson (1995) say, "Students want and need work that enables them to demonstrate and improve their sense of themselves as competent and successful human beings" (p. 9). Schlectly (1994) explains that, when students are motivated, three characteristics emerge: (1) students are attracted to their work; (2) students persist in their work; and (3) students take visible delight as they become competent. Kohn (1993) points out that motivation is the highest when students have the opportunity to acquire competence in a new skill. In chapter 6, the connection between student engagement and motivation was discussed. Therefore, it makes sense that students in this study also reported a need to feel competent.

In his book, How Children Learn, Holt (1983) explains that children have a desire to make sense of things and to become competent. Connell and Wellborn (1991) explain competence as the need to be effective, capable, and worthy of respect. Webster (1978) defines competence as "well qualified, capable" (p. 289).

A major study on the development of self-esteem was conducted by the U.S. Office of Education. This study reveals that instructional methods that boost self-esteem the highest are those methods emphasizing competency (Stebbins, St. Pierre, Proper, Anderson, & Cerva, 1977). Lerner's (1996) "earned self-esteem" theory was backed up by these findings. Lerner says, "Self-esteem is not a precondition for learning, but a product of it" (p. 10). In other words, Lerner feels that self-esteem is earned by the learner when skill level is high and feelings of competency are developed.

Ellis and Fouts (1997) point out that Lerner's theory is contrary to the majority of what educators, psychologists, and counselors believe about the impact of self-esteem on achievement. After carefully looking at seven exhaustive reviews of the thousands of studies done on self-esteem, they found the findings were all the same. They report, "The relationship between self-esteem and achievement and other related behaviors is minimal at best, and more likely nonexistent" (p. 47). Therefore, credibility is added to Lerner's "earned self-esteem" theory, which takes an opposite view to the development of self-esteem. With this information in mind, the idea of a student's need to become competent becomes even more important.

Because this study has focused on Kovalik's Thematic Instruction framework, we now look at three areas of Integrated Thematic Instruction directly related to building competency: (1) choices, (2) immediate feedback, and (3) mastery. The following sections of this chapter discuss each of these areas as they relate to building competence.

The Importance of Choice

In the early 1980s, Howard Gardner introduced the theory of multiple intelligences. His ideas about the nature of human intelligence have changed the way many educators and psychologists view intelligence. Recently, he has added one more intelligence to the original seven (Checkley, 1997). When the Multiple Intelligence theory is applied to instructional strategies, the need to allow students to make choices is a key component (Armstrong, 1994).

In his book, Multiple Intelligences in the Classroom, Armstrong (1994) explains that providing students with choices can be done in a variety of ways. Choices can be related to content or process. These choices may be small and limited or significant and open-ended. He says, "Giving students choices is as much a fundamental principal of good teaching as it is a specific intrapersonal teaching strategy" (p. 83).

Kohn (1993) points out the importance of providing students with choices. He maintains that the rationale is threefold: (1) it is a respectful way of dealing with others; (2) it adds excitement and variety to the classroom; and (3) it is important for students to have a say in what they do at school. Included in his book, Punished by Rewards, are many success stories involving choice. Kohn states, "There is no question about it; choice works" (p. 223). Gregorc (1982) developed a learning style delineator. He believes that the primary method of meeting learning style differences is by providing choice.

In this study, 100% of the students mentioned center time or working on projects at some time during the interview. From my observations, the busiest and most productive time of the day was when students were working at centers or on projects. Centers and projects were the part of the curriculum that provided the most student choice. Katz and Chard (1994) advocate projects and centers in classrooms. They say, "To achieve the same objectives with diverse children, different teaching strategies and curriculum elements are called for" (p. 45). In other words, the more choices offered to children, the wider variety of learning styles and preferences will be reached.

When students were working at centers and on projects, I observed the teachers spending their time walking around the room providing feedback and answering questions. The next section discusses the need for immediate feedback.

The Importance of Immediate Feedback

Consider this scenario--a student completes an assignment and turns it in to the teacher. The work is graded and returned several days later. By this time, the student cannot readily remember the assignment and is now being asked to isolate a skill outside the context of the work. The connection between the skill or concept is gone. Compare it with this story: While students work, a teacher is circulating around the room answering questions, checking over work in progress, having students re-work problems or

sentences, and teaching mini-lessons when needed. In this scenario the students are receiving immediate feedback.

In a synthesis of research on immediate feedback, Clifford (1990) points out the following principles: (1) immediate feedback enhances learning, motivation, and performance; (2) immediate feedback increases feelings of competency; and (3) immediate feedback improves future performance.

Kovalik (1994) includes immediate feedback as a necessary element in the classroom. She talks about the way young children learn. From the time children are born, they receive immediate feedback on everything they do. She points out that feedback should be instantaneous and continuous.

Kohn (1993), in Punished by Rewards, expresses the need for feedback to be immediate and meaningful. Bruner (1961) says, "Feedback indicating a student is on the right track or the wrong one is what produces improvement" (p. 23).

In this study, teachers were observed providing immediate feedback to students throughout the day. As students received the feedback from the teacher, they were anxious to make corrections and do their best on the work. In my observations, I saw teachers walking around the room when students were working on projects. The teachers answered questions immediately and made suggestions to the students as they worked. The next section deals with quality of student work and the expectations teachers should have for their students.

The Importance of Mastery

The concept of mastery learning in the U.S. started when John Carroll (1963) wrote an article outlining his concept that all students can learn if they are given enough time and spend enough time on a given skill. Benjamin Bloom (1981) took this idea a step further when he developed an instructional system based on students fully mastering basic

skills before moving along to more difficult skills. Ellis and Fouts (1997) point out through their synthesis of research that mastery learning has one of the strongest research bases in education.

In the book ITI: The Model, Susan Kovalik (1994) makes clear the meaning of mastery from her perspective: "The goal of the ITI model, and the innate drive of the human mind is mastery. Mastery, not in the sense of 'mastery learning' with its 834 discrete skills of reading, but rather mastery as in competence" (p. 111). She goes on to explain that the importance of mastery lies in being able to make connections with the real world and to apply the skill to something meaningful. Kovalik feels this type of mastery, or competence, is the core of self-concept.

The idea of 100% mastery is contrary to the use of the term "mastery learning" in most research. In general, "mastery learning" has more to do with the organizing and sequencing of curriculum than a percentage of correct responses to questions. While "mastery learning" can be traced over centuries, it was Ralph Tyler who applied mastery to curriculum. He felt students should move through clearly defined objectives and not move forward until "mastery" was achieved (Ellis & Fouts, 1997).

The difference between Kovalik's definition of mastery and the mastery as defined in programs like Tyler's is the criteria level that determines when mastery is reached. Through an extensive research synthesis, Ellis and Fouts (1997) found in most mastery programs that criteria is set around 80%. In other words, students are not expected to reach 100% mastery before moving on to the next level or skill. Kovalik (1994) advocates 100% mastery of the basic skills needed to function in society.

In their synthesis of "mastery learning," Ellis and Fouts (1997) report that results show "mastery learning" programs do raise test scores. But, they are quick to point out, educators must decide if raising test scores is the only factor to take into consideration when looking at the total educational plan for an individual student.

Kovalik (1994) gives specific guidelines for setting standards for mastery. She calls them the "3 C's of Assessment" (p. 115). The following criteria are used to determine when material has been mastered: (1) complete, (2) correct, and (3) comprehensive. In the areas of reading, math, and writing skills, 100% mastery is expected. Assessment includes making certain students are able to: (1) solve real-life problems using a variety of language, math, and communication skills, (2) teach the skill to someone else, and (3) be able to use language in social settings as well as complex situations. When students meet this type of criteria, Kovalik feels mastery has been achieved. Kovalik is taking the idea of mastery learning one step further from a 80% mastery level to a 100% mastery level of basic skills. Students in this study were observed to be showing high levels of competency. When they were asked in the interviews to tell about what they are learning, not one student hesitated. They quickly responded, giving expanded versions of their experiences. Seventy-five percent reported specific information or facts about the topic being studied. Students were observed teaching each other skills they had mastered. A feeling of pride was present during this part of each interview.

It was apparent that feeling competent in specific areas as well as an overall feeling of accomplishment was important to the students. They made comments like: "I like working on computers because I already know a lot about them" (Field notes, vol. 1, p. 62); "I'm thinking about being an artist because I am good at art" (Field notes, vol. 1, p. 64). When they discussed what they were learning and their abilities, the students were genuinely excited. When they talked about what they are good at doing, they smiled and became eager to share the information.

In this study, competency was found to be an essential factor in the development of positive attitudes. The three themes that emerged in this study--acceptance, engagement, and competency--were equally important. Chapter 8 provides a summary of

the findings in this study, conclusions of these findings, and recommendations for further research.

CHAPTER VIII

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

Introduction

This study was conducted to determine what attitudes were present among elementary students during the use of thematic instruction. A large part of the study was devoted to describing what actually took place in each classroom. The intent of this description was twofold. It provided the reader a firsthand look at each location used in the study. Along with other information, it established the fact that Kovalik's model of thematic instruction was being implemented at an ideal level in each classroom. The main findings from the data were presented in chapter 4. The findings were: (1) 100% of the students had positive attitudes toward school and learning during the use of thematic instruction; (2) students were aware of the theme being used and were eager to discuss it; and (3) students displayed tremendous excitement toward learning and an awareness of the interconnections between subject areas.

As the data were analyzed, a much broader application emerged. When 100% of the students reported positive attitudes, the focus of the interpretation included determining the qualities of thematic instruction that were important in the formation of student attitudes. Three main qualities--acceptance, engagement, and competency--were found important in the development of positive attitudes. Chapters 5 - 7 discussed each of these qualities as they relate to attitude formation. Table 5 presents a summary of the three elements found to be necessary qualities in a curriculum design for positive attitudes to form.

TABLE 5

**ELEMENTS THAT BUILD POSITIVE ATTITUDES
TOWARD SCHOOL AND LEARNING**

Negative Feelings	Needed Quality	Results
Students feel unwanted.	Acceptance by teacher/students	Students are part of a learning community immersed in a positive learning climate.
Students feel learning has no purpose or connection to real life.	Engagement - in an active hands-on environment along with a variety of instructional strategies	Students find meaning and reasons behind learning. Students make connections to the real world.
Students feel defeat and have low self-concept.	Competency - in specific skills which students are able to demonstrate at a high level of proficiency	Students feel useful. They are able to identify strengths to maximize their potential and compensate for weaknesses.

In this study, these three qualities were all found in each of the classrooms. Thematic instruction was reported by the students as a main factor in producing these qualities. However, other curriculum designs or innovations could also produce positive attitudes. Although the results of this study show that when teachers are using thematic instruction, positive attitudes are created, there are other factors to consider when evaluating whether to implement thematic instruction. These factors include the extensive training needed and budgeting for materials and supplies. Another important consideration is that all teachers may not be comfortable using thematic instruction when they first are introduced to the model.

The teachers in this study, as well as Kovalik (1994), point out that it takes from 3 to 5 years to switch from a traditional textbook curriculum to a totally thematic approach. Special training is needed to ensure that teachers feel secure and are able to make certain all the needed skills are taught. Furthermore, there are more materials used than in a textbook-centered curriculum. The added cost and time of gathering materials must be considered. In a study examining the perspectives of educators who had used thematic instruction, Floyd-Levin (1995) found the following challenges were reported by teachers: (1) teachers felt they had no preparation time because they were facilitating learning throughout the day; and (2) teachers were concerned about securing quality resources. Gaikwad (1991) points out that it helps if teachers work together to develop thematic units and support each other through the training process. Support for resources is also needed from administration.

Implications of This Study

The implications of this study go beyond whether there is value in the implementation of thematic instruction. The considerations mentioned above should be taken into account when making decisions on curriculum plans and designs. It is my hope that two things will be accomplished from this research: (1) educators and administrators will realize it is possible to achieve and maintain positive attitudes from all students in a classroom; and (2) the three qualities of acceptance, engagement, and competency are factors which are used when deciding about whether a particular curricular innovation will result in positive attitudes within a school program.

If positive attitudes are held as an important educational element within a program, these questions should be asked by educators when making curriculum decisions:

1. Does this curriculum design allow for a positive climate where students will feel accepted by both teachers and students?

2. Does this curriculum design engage students in active learning and thinking?
3. Does this curriculum design outline high expectations and promote 100% mastery, which will lead to higher levels of competency?
4. Do teachers support the ideas behind this curriculum design?
5. Will administrators use the ideas behind the curriculum design when selecting personnel?

If students in a particular classroom, school, or educational system do not have positive attitudes toward school, it might be determined what qualities the current approach is lacking by looking at acceptance, engagement, and competency. It is my hope that these three elements will become a part of the criteria used to determine whether a particular teaching and learning model is used. While this study was conducted within a private Christian school system, the findings can be applied to a much larger population. The next section discusses the possible generalization and applications that could be made from this study.

Generalization

This study was conducted in a parochial church school system. An educator dealing with small schools and multi-grade settings will find that the results of this study can fit their population. By looking at the classroom descriptions in chapter 3, comparisons can be made to their current educational setting, and determinations of applications can be made. But, the results of this study should not be limited to small schools or even multi-grade settings. It should be noted that, after the three themes were found in the data analysis process, a literature search was then conducted. At that time the themes of acceptance, engagement, and competency were found to fit into two well-known existing theories. Table 1 outlines how these three themes fit into Maslow's (1970) theory of Basic Human Needs. Table 2 shows the themes fitting into Glasser's (1986)

Control Theory, which includes five basic human needs. These theories are directed at the general population. Because the findings in this study are supported by pre-existing theories, it increases the possibility of generalization and application to the general population.

The Research Base

Thematic instruction fits within an interdisciplinary approach to curriculum. In my search of journal articles written about thematic instruction and interdisciplinary curriculum, I found they focused mainly on the implementation process and attitudes toward implementation rather than on student attitudes. Teachers who have used thematic instruction and interdisciplinary approaches make many claims.

In a synthesis of the research base for interdisciplinary curriculum, Ellis and Fouts (1997) point out that the following claims are made for interdisciplinary approaches: (1) higher level thinking skills are improved; (2) learning is less fragmented; (3) real-world applications are made thus increasing the opportunity for learning to be transferred; (4) mastery of content is achieved; (5) students' learning experiences help them approach learning in a positive way; and (6) students are motivated to learn in interdisciplinary classes. They go on to explain that, while the claims are largely unsupported at this time, they should not be considered false. They believe the research base is simply not strong enough to support all these claims. They believe that the reason more studies have not been conducted is probably because the interdisciplinary curriculum has so many variables that it makes it difficult to use classic research methods.

Ellis and Fouts (1997) go on to explain that educators looking only for higher test scores should proceed with caution toward an interdisciplinary approach. However, they make a strong statement that is important to keep in mind. They say, "Perhaps this is the time and place to say that higher test scores, a very admirable goal, are not alone a

sufficient reason for having schools" (p. 162). In other words, if an innovation brings out positive attitudes, even though academics and achievement are not affected, the innovation may still be worthwhile simply because of the development of positive attitudes.

Lake (1994) looked at all of the studies she could find on integrated and interdisciplinary curriculum dating back to 1965. She concluded in her synthesis that there are "no detrimental effects on learning when students are involved in an integrated curriculum" (p. 7). She concluded that because of the small research base it is important to be careful about drawing conclusions that integrated studies are beneficial.

Vars (1996) reports that he found over 100 studies where students in interdisciplinary settings do just as well as or better than students in a traditional classroom. However, his review of the research is a summary of findings and not a critical examination of the quality of the studies.

Cotton (1995) conducted a synthesis on effective schools. This synthesis shows promise for interdisciplinary curriculum. Three of the many attributes of effective school research are: (1) teachers integrate traditional subjects as appropriate; (2) workplace skills are integrated into content areas; and (3) the curriculum is integrated by teachers and administrators. The research being conducted on effective schools shows support for an interdisciplinary or thematic approach.

In a search of dissertation abstracts, I found the following studies which had implications for this study. Osbourne (1996) conducted a study on a multi-age, non-graded program. One of the critical attributes identified was the use of varied instructional strategies, including the use of thematic instruction.

Several studies have been conducted on multi-age classrooms and attitudes toward school. DeGeorge (1998), Decotis (1993), and Zernial (1992) found students have positive attitudes toward school in a multi-age setting. In each study, thematic or interdisciplinary approaches were being used in each of the classrooms. So, while they

were looking at multi-age grouping as a main factor in the formation of positive attitudes, the fact that thematic instruction was being used supports the findings in this study.

Two of the classrooms in this study were multi-age. While the multi-age grouping may have contributed to the positive attitudes, none of the students or parents made any reference to the multi-age grouping. Green (1995) says, especially in multi-age settings, "Integrated thematic instruction seems like a natural way to organize curriculum and instruction" (p. 35).

Recommendations for Further Research

There is a great need for further research in the area of curriculum innovations. Follow-up studies could be done on other curriculum innovations to determine if positive attitudes are present. The students interviewed in this study could be followed to see if positive attitudes continue.

There is also a need for study to be given to determine if academic achievement is improved during the use of thematic instruction. Kovalik (1994) points out that there is need for a research base showing whether academic achievement levels are improved when thematic instruction has been used. Other forms of thematic instruction need to be studied as well at all levels of instruction.

Final Thoughts

In the book Education, White (1903) wrote, "Love, the basis of creation and redemption, is the basis of true education" (p. 15). As a Christian educator, I believe love must be the core of the curriculum. In classrooms where feelings of love and respect exist, it appears that meaningful learning occurs. Positive attitudes begin with acceptance. Students within a positive learning climate should also be engaged in active learning. Engagement in learning, in turn, builds competency. Through this process, positive

attitudes can be maintained. I believe acceptance, engagement, and competency are three important elements to consider when choosing and evaluating curriculum designs.

Kovalik's (1994) Integrated Thematic Instruction model creates an atmosphere in the classroom where students feel safe, secure, and loved. Each element of Kovalik's model seemed to strengthen emotional ties among teachers and students.

From my experience as a direct observer in three ITI classrooms, I have been led to the following conclusion. Thematic instruction as a curriculum design has real potential and can excite students and teachers on a daily basis. Over the 6-week time frame I spent in the classrooms, I found every day to be a joy. The teachers in this study believe that thematic instruction brought "life" to their teaching. They were learners right along with the students. In fact, the teachers in this study expressed how once they got used to using a theme, the whole day became easier and seemed to go by quickly.

In closing, I would like to add my personal thoughts from my experiences in this study. While thematic instruction may not be for every teacher or every school, it certainly deserves some attention. This study focused on the lower elementary grades. In the three classrooms I visited, it was being used as an effective model to create learning communities where students, teachers, and parents were maintaining positive attitudes toward school and learning.

Thematic instruction allows teachers to teach, not from a textbook, but from their hearts.

APPENDIX A
CORRESPONDENCE



ANDREWS UNIVERSITY

February 1, 1995

Ginger O'Neal
4280 Memorial Drive
Decatur GA 30032

Dear Ginger:

The Human Subjects Review Board (HSRB) has reviewed your proposal, "Integrated Thematic Instruction -- A Descriptive Case Study of Student Attitudes Toward School and Learning," under the Exempt Review Category. You have been given clearance to proceed with your research plans.

Some proposals and research designs may be of such a nature that participation in the project may involve certain risks to human subjects. If in the implementation of your project an incidence occurs which results in a research-related adverse reaction and/or physical injury, such an occurrence must be reported immediately in writing to the Human Subjects Review Board. Any project-related physical injury must also be reported immediately to the University physician, Dr. Loren Hamel, by calling (616) 473-2222.

All changes made to the study design and/or consent form after initiation of the project require prior approval from the HSRB before such changes are implemented. Feel free to contact our office if you have any questions. The duration of the present approval is for one year. If your research is going to take more than one year, you must apply for an extension of your approval in order to be authorized to continue with this project.

We wish you success as you implement the research project as outlined in the approved protocol.

Sincerely,

James R. Fisher, Director
Office of Scholarly Research

c: Bill Green

Teacher Consent Form

As part of a research effort in the School of Education at Andrews University, a study is being conducted on student attitudes toward school and learning during the use of thematic instruction. It involves observation and interviews to be conducted in classrooms where thematic instruction is taking place. There are no known risks or discomforts associated with these procedures.

While there may be no direct benefit to you at this time for participating in this project, we are hopeful that we will learn something that will help teachers implement new instructional strategies.

All information collected will be held in strictest confidence. This information may be published in a dissertation as part of the fulfillment of a degree at Andrews University. Student names will not be identified in the study. You are free to terminate this consent at any time and withdraw from the project without prejudice. If you have any questions concerning this project or this consent, please feel free to contact Ginger O'Neal at 404-296-6102 or Dr. Bill Green at 616-471-3577.

I, _____ hereby consent to participate in the project described above. I have read and understand this statement and I have had all my questions answered.

Date: _____ Signature _____

Witness: _____

Principal Consent Form

As part of a research effort in the School of Education at Andrews University, a study is being conducted on student attitudes toward school and learning during the use of thematic instruction. It involves observation and interviews to be conducted in classrooms where thematic instruction is taking place. There are no known risks or discomforts associated with these procedures.

As you are aware, _____ has been using thematic instruction in their classroom. We would like to collect data on the student attitudes toward school and learning in this classroom. The data will be collected through student interviews and observation.

While there may be no direct benefit to you at this time for participating in this project, we are hopeful that we will learn something that will help teachers implement new instructional strategies.

All information collected will be held in strictest confidence. This information may be published in a dissertation as part of the fulfillment of a degree at Andrews University. Student names will not be identified in the study. You are free to terminate this consent at any time and withdraw from the project without prejudice. If you have any questions concerning this project or this consent, please feel free to contact Ginger O'Neal at 404-296-6102 or Dr. Bill Green at 616-471-3577.

I, _____ hereby consent to participate in the project described above. I have read and understand this statement and I have had all my questions answered.

Date: _____ Signature _____

Witness: _____

ANDREWS UNIVERSITY
SCHOOL OF EDUCATION

INFORMED CONSENT

As part of a research project to complete a dissertation for a degree at Andrews University, a study is being conducted on student attitudes toward school and learning. Your child's teacher uses themes to organize the material and content being taught in her classroom. This study is seeking to find out if students have positive or negative attitudes towards school and learning when this type of curriculum is used.

There are no known risks or discomforts which you or your child will be subjected to during this project.

I would like to collect data on the students attitudes toward school, through the use of observation in the classroom, informal interviews of the students and a questionnaire to be filled out by the parents. Data collection will be taken over a period of several weeks. The interviews will be conducted in the classroom during the regular school day. All information will be held in strictest confidence. While this information may be published, at no time will your name or your child's name be used. In addition, you are free to terminate this consent at any time and withdraw from the project without prejudice.

While there may be no direct benefit to you or your child at the time of this study, we are hopeful that we will learn something that will add to the knowledge we have of the benefits of using themes as a way to organize curriculum.

If you have any questions concerning this project or this consent, please feel free to call Ginger O'Neal at 404-296-6102 or Dr. Bill Green at 616-471-3577.

I, _____, hereby consent to allow my child to participate in the project described above. I am willing to participate myself by filling out a short one page open-ended questionnaire as a part of the study. I have read and understand this statement, have had all my questions answered and have received a copy of this consent.

My child has been made aware of this study verbally and understands that they will be participating by answering questions about their feelings toward school.

Date: _____

Signature of Parent: _____

Witness: _____

**RESEARCH PROJECT ON THEMATIC INSTRUCTION
PARENT SURVEY**

As you are aware we are conducting a research project on student attitudes toward school and learning during the use of thematic instruction.

We would like to receive feedback from you regarding your child's reactions to school. This information will be helpful in evaluating the effectiveness of using this type of curriculum.

You have already indicated your willingness to help us in this project by signing an Informed Consent. We would appreciate your answering the following questions and mailing this survey in the envelope provided. Your responses will be kept anonymous.

For each survey returned your child's teacher will receive \$3.00 to purchase materials for your child's classroom. Thank you for your help in this project!

My child has made the following comments about school in the past three weeks.

My child reports the following feelings toward school and learning to me at home...

I can tell my child (does) or (does not) have positive feelings toward school because...

Use back of page if needed. A stamped envelope has been provided.
Mail to: Ginger O'Neal-PO Box 85-Avondale, Est. GA 30002

APPENDIX B

**DOMAIN ANALYSIS OF
STUDENT INTERVIEWS**

ORANGE PARK ELEMENTARY
CHART #A -1 - What do you like most about school?
N - Girls - 20 Boys - 11

DOMAINS	Responses	
	GIRLS	BOYS
Interaction/Play		
Activity Centers	1	3
Art	7	3
Computer	1	2
Math	1	1
Story	1	
Writing (focused on theme)	8	2
Play Centers	3	1
Blocks	8	1
Housekeeping	3	1
Toys	2	1
Friends	5	2
Outside/Recess	1	4
Teacher	3	
Curriculum		
Thematic Units		
Eggs/Chicks(current unit)	2	2
Spiders.Butterflies (previous units)		1
Letters/Numbers	2	
"Different things"	3	

ORANGE PARK ELEMENTARY
CHART #A-2 - What do you not like about school?
N - Girls - 20 Boys - 11

DOMAINS	Responses	
	GIRLS	BOYS
No response	2	1
Relationships		
Friends/Misbehavior	2	4
Behavior		
Time Out in Classroom	3	1
Principal's Office Visit	1	1
Rest Time	5	
Physical Comfort		
Heat Outside	2	2
Waiting/Sitting Still	4	
Working		
Too hard/don't feel like it	1	2
Short center times	1	

ORANGE PARK ELEMENTARY**Chart #A-3 - What is your favorite thing to do at school?****N - Girls - 20 Boys - 11**

Responses		
DOMAINS	GIRLS	BOYS
Play		
Centers	10	2
Outside/Playground	3	4
w/Friends	1	1
Lunch	1	1
Curriculum		
Writing		1
Reading	4	
Art	1	
Singing		2
Computer		1

The first response by each child was recorded.

ORANGE PARK ELEMENTARY**Chart # A-4 - What do you not like to do at school?**

N - Girls - 20 Boys - 11

DOMAIN	Responses	
	GIRLS	BOYS
No response/nothing	5	2
Waiting/Listening	3	2
Specific Centers		
Doughnut shop	1	
Cleaning up	1	2
Coloring	1	
Nap Time	3	1
Behavior Concerns	4	3
Work		
Doing something already know	2	
Doing hard work	1	
Outside Recess	1	
Playing Ball		1

Three of the response were actually positive response toward school like:

I don't want to go home.

I hate short center times.

I don't like to stay out of the centers.

ORANGE PARK ELEMENTARY**Chart #A-5 - Do you enjoy coming to school each day? Why or Why not?****N - Girls - 20 Boys - 11**

Responses		
GENERAL RESPONSE	GIRLS	BOYS
Yes	20	9
No		2
Sometimes	1	
DOMAINS		
Fun	8	6
Play w/ friends	6	
Centers		
Making things	4	2
Teachers		1
Lunch	1	
Learning	1	

The two boys who said "No" qualified their answers saying that they did like school just not all of the time. The one girl who said "Sometimes" said it was because she stays up to late and is tired sometimes when she comes to school.

ORANGE PARK ELEMENTARY**Chart #A-6 - What are you learning about at school each day?****N - Girls - 20 Boys - 11**

Responses		
GENERAL RESPONSE	GIRLS	BOYS
Thematic Units		
Butterfiles (previous unit)	2	
Ocean (previous unit)	1	
Chickens & Eggs	19	10
Religion		
Jesus	1	1
Bible	2	
Words/Numbers	8	4
Songs		3

All responses recorded.

Every child at some point in the interview mentioned the thematic topic being studied at that time -- it was a focus for the entire class.

Along with mentioning eggs & chicks % of the students mentioned the activity of reading and writing things about the theme being studied. This shows that they are aware that skills are being learned while engaged in the theme.

ORANGE PARK ELEMENTARY

**CHART #A - 7 - In one word, how would you describe how you feel about school?
N - Girls - 20 Boys - 11**

One-Word Response	Responses	
	GIRLS	BOYS
Happy	13	5
Good	2	2
Fine	1	2
Love it	1	1
Nice	2	
Glad		1
Great	1	

100% Positive feelings toward school - No negatives responses.

ROLLING HILLS ELEMENTARY
CHART #B -1 - What do you like most about school?

N - Girls - 8 Boys - 6

DOMAINS	Responses	
	GIRLS	BOYS
Curriculum		
Reading	1	2
Math	4	4
Art	1	1
Bible	1	1
Science	2	3
Computers	2	1
Spelling		2
Dinosaurs (current theme)	1	1
Interaction		
Friends	1	
Recess	3	5
Lunch	1	
Teacher	1	1

*All responses were recorded. Most students mentioned three things they liked about school.

ROLLING HILLS JUNIOR ACADEMY
CHART #B -2 - What do you not like about school?
N - Girls - 8 Boys - 6

Responses

DOMAINS	GIRLS	BOYS
No Response	2	2
Relationships		
Friends/fighting	2	2
Curriculum		
Reading	2	
Math	1	
P.E.		1
Homework	1	1

The concerns over relationships had to do with fighting on the playground or rough play. When asked if this happened often, the response was "No". Students who had concerns over the curriculum explained it was because they did not feel they were good at that subject. These concerns came from first grade students who were comparing themselves to the older students.

ROLLING HILLS JUNIOR ACADEMY**CHART #B -3 - What is your favorite thing to do at school?****N - Girls - 8 Boys - 6****Responses**

DOMAINS	GIRLS	BOYS
Curriculum		
Reading	1	
Math	1	
P.E.	1	
Computers		1
Science		1
Everything	1	1
Spelling Tests		1
Bible	1	
Art	1	
Dinosaurs (current theme)		1
Interaction/Play		
Recess	1	1
Lunch	1	

The first response by each student was recorded. One student who responded with "everything" explained, "while we are doing science we are also doing math, reading and spelling. We do everything together."

ROLLING HILLS JUNIOR ACADEMY
CHART #B -4 - What do you not like to do at school?
N - Girls - 8 Boys - 6

DOMAINS	Responses	
	GIRLS	BOYS
No response/Nothing	6	4
Curriculum		
Writing	1	
Reading	1	
Practicing for programs		1
Doing jobs/cleaning		1

ROLLING HILLS JUNIOR ACADEMY**CHART #B -5 - Do you enjoy coming to school each day?****N - Girls - 8 Boys - 6****Responses**

	GIRLS	BOYS
General Response		
Yes	8	6
No		
Sometimes		
DOMAINS		
Fun	5	2
Friends	1	1
Learning		1
Classroom Environment	1	
Riding the bus		1
Unit study (themes)	1	1

ROLLING HILLS JUNIOR ACADEMY**CHART #B -6 - What are you learning in school each day?****N - Girls - 8 Boys - 6**

DOMAINS	Responses	
	GIRLS	BOYS
Thematic Units		
Dinosaurs	6	6
Previous units	1	
Specific Skills		
Cooperation	1	

Each student who responded about the thematic units gave specific information about what they were studying.

FLAT ROCK ELEMENTARY
CHART #C- 1 - What do you like most about school?
N= Girls 14 Boys 7

DOMAINS	Responses	
	GIRLS	BOYS
Interaction		
Relationships		
Friends	6	1
Teachers	2	1
Recess	2	
Curriculum		
Projects/Theme	5	4
Specific subject areas		
Reading	2	1
Art	2	
P.E.		2
Math	1	

All responses were recorded. One student said, "I like the projects where we don't do stuff right out of a textbook."

FLAT ROCK ELEMENTARY**CHART #C - 2 - What do you not like about school?**

N = Girls - 14 Boys - 7

DOMAINS	Responses	
	GIRLS	BOYS
Specific Tasks		
Homework	4	1
Hard work	1	2
Tests (in science class)	2	
Time		
Waking up early	2	
Relationships		
Teacher not attentive	1	1
Curriculum		
Math	2	1
Reading	1	
Spelling	1	
Textbooks	1	
Music		1
Science	1	
School Plant		
No lockers		1

Students who mentioned specific subjects said they did not like or enjoy them because they did not feel they were good at the subject. All but two students gave one response.

FLAT ROCK ELEMENTARY**Chart #3 - What is your favorite thing to do at school?**

N= Girls 14 Boys 7

DOMAINS	Responses	
	GIRLS	BOYS
Curriculum		
Projects/Theme	4	2
Reading	3	2
P.E.	2	2
Math		1
Science	1	
Art		1
Writing stories	1	1
Field trips	1	
Computer	1	
Free Time		
Recess	4	
Playing games		2
Drawing		2
Interaction -		
Friends	1	1
Teacher has neat ideas	1	

All responses were recorded.

FLAT ROCK ELEMENTARY**Chart #4 - What do you not like to do at school?**

N= Girls 14 Boys 7

DOMAIN	Responses	
	GIRLS	BOYS
Curriculum		
Reading	3	
P.E.	1	1
Math	2	
Writing		2
Spanish	1	
Music	1	
Spelling	1	
Drawing		1
Specific Tasks		
Homework	1	
Hard work		2
Interaction		
Working alone	1	
Missing Recess		1
No Response	1	1

All responses were recorded. A wide variety of subject areas are mentioned. Students all said the reason they did not enjoy or like the subject was because they do not feel they are good in that area. The three girls who do not enjoy reading are bi-lingual and do not feel comfortable with English yet.

FLAT ROCK ELEMENTARY**Chart #C - 5 - Do you enjoy coming to school each day? Why or Why not?****N = Girls - 14 Boys - 7****Responses**

GENERAL RESPONSE	GIRLS	BOYS
Yes	14	7
No		
DOMAINS		
Activities/Learning	10	4
Friends	3	2
Enjoy teacher	1	1

FLAT ROCK ELEMENTARY**Chart #C - 6 - What are you learning about at school each day?****N = Girls-14 Boys-7****Responses**

GENERAL RESPONSE	GIRLS	BOYS
Curriculum		
Current theme/ Westward Movement	14	7

Seven students reported they remember things better when they are learning about one topic in depth. Ten students said they find learning about one topic interesting and fun. All of the students made positive comments about the theme they were studying.

FLAT ROCK ELEMENTARY**CHART #C -7 - In one word, how would you describe how you feel about school?****N - Girls - 14 Boys - 7**

One-Word Response	Responses	
	GIRLS	BOYS
Good		1
Fun	7	3
Neat	1	
Great	1	
Exciting	2	2
Education		1
Unique	1	
Interesting	2	

100% Positive feelings toward school - No negatives responses.

APPENDIX C
KINDERGARTEN SKILL CHECKLIST

Kindergarten Skills Assessment

September - Red Ink
 October - Blue Ink
 March - Black Ink

Name _____

Dominate Hand - Right Left

Aware of Right & Left _____

Color Recognition

red ____ blue ____ yellow ____ orange ____ purple ____ brown ____
 pink ____ white ____ black ____ green ____

Shape Recognition

circle ____ square ____ rectangle ____ oval ____ triangle ____

Letter Recognition

A B C D E F G H I J K L M N O P Q R S T U V W X Y Z
 a b c d e f g h i j k l m n o p q r s t u v w x y z

Sound Symbol Recognition

A B C D E F G H I J K L M N O P Q R S T U V W X Y Z

Number Recognition

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12 13 14 15 16 17 18 19 20

Counts to _____

Knows parents names _____

Knows address _____

Knows telephone # _____

Knows birthday _____

Ties shoes _____

Motor Skill Development

runs ____ jumps ____ hops ____ skips ____ climbs ____ balances ____

catches ____ bounces ____ throws ____

can tear paper ____ cuts with scissors ____ hold pencil correctly ____

prints name ____ (samples on back)

Comments:

APPENDIX D

**GAIKWAD'S INNOVATION CONFIGURATION
TEACHER SELF-REPORTS**

**Teacher's Self Report Using
Gaikwad's Integrated Thematic Instruction
Innovation Configuration Check List**

**Janice Smith
Kindergarten Teacher
Orange Park Elementary**

- *Component variations above interrupted line are ideal.
- *Component variations between solid and interrupted lines are acceptable.
- *Component variations below solid lines are unacceptable.

Component 1. Curriculum

- X a. Teacher uses yearly theme and integrates all subjects and skills; aligns curriculum materials with state, district and school curriculum requirements.
-
- b. Teacher uses yearly theme and integrates two, three, etc. (not all) subjects.
-
- c. Teacher uses unit themes only.
- d. Teacher uses no theme.

Teacher Report: My yearly theme is God's World and Me. I begin the year with an "All About Me" unit designed to develop good self-concepts. The other units we do throughout the year include: family, friends, homes, neighborhoods, community helpers, colors, insects, space, seasons, and a spring unit. Within the units I integrate reading, math, science, social studies, writing, art and Bible. I make sure my curriculum includes the basic skills for kindergarten outlined in my local conference and state guidelines.

Component 2. Instructional materials and immersion in theme

- X a. Teacher uses multiple resources, based on the need of content and students; includes a variety of books; textbooks used as one of the resources, as applicable; an occasional worksheet when appropriate; at least three closures during the year after the major units.
-
- b. A variety of books on theme used as main sources and other supplementary materials used; textbooks used in subjects not integrated; dittos may be used in limited ways as seen fit; at least one closure per year.
-

- c. Ready-made theme packages, books and dittos are used; no closures.
- d. Used mainly textbook; dittos used on a regular basis; no closures.

Teacher Report: My classroom is completely child-centered. I believe materials should be hands-on for discovery and immersion in the topic. I bring in real-life materials like plants, eggs to hatch, a salt-water tank and real-life objects at the play centers. I belong to an early childhood book club. I use numerous thematic teacher resources to glean ideas. At the end of each unit we have a celebration of learning by combining different activities into a fun day culminating our unit. For instance, we performed songs and finger plays while wearing space suits for an assembly during our space unit. For each unit, I bring between 30 and 40 library books to our classroom.

Component 3. Physical set-up of the classroom

- a. Immersion in the theme is evidenced by theme displays, daily agenda, first-hand and hands-on theme materials in the room; healing environment including appropriate lighting, heat, music, potpourri, plants, colors; desks arranged for small group work and not in rows.

- b. Materials on display are mostly on theme context; have at least one closure during the year; room arrangements are appropriate enough but not particularly set up to create a healing environment; desks arranged in groups.

- c. Conventional classroom displays; desks/chairs arranged in rows.

Teacher Report: All of the centers have games and manipulatives relating to the theme. Student work is on display throughout the classroom and the hallways. We have tables rather than desks. Students move freely from table to table working on various projects. I strive to create a home-like atmosphere. We have plants, proper lighting and plenty of comfortable places to sit.

Component 4. Grouping

- a. Class consists of small cooperative, heterogeneous groups (including special education and chapter I students) of two to five students, who may also work on individual assignments as needed.

- b. Larger cooperative heterogeneous groups of more than six members working as groups as well as individuals.
-
- c. Whole class working on individual basis, with occasional group work.
- d. Non-interactive group work planned.

Teacher Report: Small and large group activities are both used. All the children are accepted into our program regardless of their developmental or skill level. We do not administer pre-screenings for school readiness. We believe in accepting children with whatever skills they have acquired. We work with each family on an individual basis. Two weeks into the school year I administer an informal skill checklist. The students in the class vary from being able to read to not recognizing a single letter. Math skills vary from understanding addition to no knowledge of number sense.

Component 5. Social and Personal Skills

- a. Social and personal skills (Megaskills) and classroom rules (standards to live by) are made part of teaching and behavior; teachable moments are used to internalize the principles.
- b. Social skills are deliberately taught, though not on a regular basis.
-
- c. Social skills are not taught deliberately, but when occasion calls for them.

Teacher Report: My class rules are: take care of yourself, take care of your classmates, take care of your classroom. I teach social skills through stories, puppet plays, and role playing. We also use a T chart to talk about what something looks like and sounds like when we are learning about social skills. Bible and character building stories are shared on a daily basis. When I see a teachable moment, I stop and take advantage of discussing what choices the child could make. We have class meetings when needed to discuss appropriate behavior. I use cooperative learning structures when students are working in groups.

Component 6. Teacher's Role

- a. Teacher orchestrates curriculum, is a facilitator of learning, provides immediate feedback during learning process; direct instruction provided for maximum 15 minutes/hour; co-plans (monthly/weekly/daily) and co-teaches (regular, special education and chapter I teachers).
-

- b. Teacher uses direct instruction but gives students time for interactions and investigations; co-plans and co-teaches with team members.
-
- c. Teacher mainly uses direct instruction with a little time for student interactions and investigation; co-plans and co-teaches once in a while.
- d. Teacher mainly uses direct instruction, no co-planning or co-teaching.

Teacher Report: I look at what concepts the students need, and design hands-on projects to facilitate learning those skills. I walk around the classroom working with individual students. I co-teach along with another kindergarten teacher. I provide immediate feedback to individual students throughout the day.

Component 7. Assessment of Pupil Learning

- a. Assessment is made for mastery using the selected criteria comprehensive, correct, complete; qualitative evaluation rather than letter grade; individual and group assessments are made for the differentiated abilities of students.
-
- b. A combination of traditional and qualitative assessment are made; letter grades are also given.
-
- c. Test results are the major means for assessment; only letter grades are given.

Teacher Report: I use portfolio assessment, collecting individual work throughout the year. I keep files on each child, writing down anecdotal comments. At parent-teacher conferences I write a narrative on each child using the checklist information, and writing samples I have collected. No letter grades are given. They have either mastered the work completely or are still working on the development of a skill.

Component 8. Outreach and Political Action

- a. Regular field trips, parent and other resource person involvement; sharing of student projects, expressing oneself through letters, etc., opinions and concerns; real action taken where appropriate.
-
- b. Occasional outreach activities
-
- c. No particular outreach activities

Teacher Report: We have taken one-field trip a month along with each unit. Parents come in and give talks about their jobs or hobbies. We take a trip to the nursing home once a month for the children to perform songs or plays for the residents. We have collected food for the homeless and delivered it to a local shelter. We take class books to the children's ward at a nearby hospital.

Component 9. Choices and Adequate Time

- a. Students choose from assignment/projects; choices are based on Bloom's Taxonomy and Gardner's Multiple Intelligence; adequate time is given for mastery; time decided by learning and not the clock. Teacher chooses theme, theme components and key points.
-
- b. Students are given choices of assignments in a limited way; teacher-generated themes and theme materials are used.
-
- c. No choices are given to students on assignments; teacher uses ready-made theme and theme materials.

Teacher Report: Centers are set up around the room. Students can choose any center they would like to work at providing the center is not full. They have a ticket that helps keep track of how many people are at each center. They can move from place to place working on various projects. There are also choices of different projects to work on at each center. There are activities based on Bloom's Taxonomy and Multiple Intelligence's.

Component 10. Use of Instructional Thinking and Learning Strategies

- a. Teacher uses a variety of strategies to stimulate thinking before, during and after lessons; strategies of prediction brainstorming, categorization, problem solving, K-W-L, SQ3R, student-teacher conferencing, anticipation guides, imagery, memory devices, and reflection are used.
-
- b. Teacher uses a limited amount of instructional strategies. Lesson and questioning are mainly for the knowledge/comprehension levels.
-
- c. Little use, if any, is made of higher level thinking skills, conventional end of chapter questions.
- d. There is no evidence of higher level thinking skills.

Teacher Report: I use a variety of instructional strategies. Prediction when reading stories, categorizing, problem solving, sequencing, KWL charts, memory devices and reflection are used on a daily basis.

Component 11. Inclusion of Students

- a. Regular, gifted, special education, and chapter I students work together all day.
-
- b. Students work together most of the day. Slow learners are pulled out for a short time for individual help.
-
- c. Students work together part of the day. Slow learners are taught separately by the resource room teacher most of the day.

Teacher Report: No students are pulled out from the class. We have two students who would be considered gifted. There are three students working below normal kindergarten level.

Component 12. Use of Relaxation and Reflection Techniques

- a. Relaxation and reflection techniques are regularly used while making a transition from a high-energy activity to a contemplative activity.
-
- b. Relaxation and reflection techniques are used once in a while.
-
- c. No relaxation and reflection techniques are used.

Teacher Report: The schedule is designed to gradually move from passive to active activities. We listen to music during the day. We have a thirty minute rest time after lunch to give students a quiet time to relax. During the rest time we listen to story tapes or relaxing music.

Component 13. Discussion of Brain Research

- a. Teacher discusses the aspects of brain research including Triune Brain, Multiple Intelligence and Proctor Theory in the class.
-
- b. Teacher does not discuss brain research in the class.

Teacher Report: I do not discuss brain research with the kindergarten children. This component will be added in the future.

My signature ensures that the information in this self-report is correct and accurate.

Janice Smith
Kindergarten Teacher
Orange Park Elementary

Date _____

I have read this report and verify that the information reported by Janice Smith is accurate and I have observed these components to be present in her classroom. My signature verifies that this report is accurate.

Mr. Jackson
Principal
Orange Park Elementary

Date _____

**Teacher's Self Report Using
Gaikwad's Integrated Thematic Instruction
Innovation Configuration Check List**

**Laura Jones
Elementary Teacher
Rolling Hills Junior Academy**

- *Component variations above interrupted line are ideal.
- *Component variations between solid and interrupted lines are acceptable.
- *Component variations below solid lines are unacceptable.

Component 1. Curriculum

- a. Teacher uses yearly theme and integrates all subjects and skills; aligns curriculum materials with state, district and school curriculum requirements.
-
- b. Teacher uses yearly theme and integrates two, three, etc. (not all) subjects.
-
- c. Teacher uses unit themes only.
- d. Teacher uses no theme.

Teacher Report: My theme for this year is Creation. Because I work with multi-age students and will have many of the same children next year. my theme will change. Within this year's theme, we have studied about topics like air, water, light, color, ourselves, plants, trees, the solar system, and dinosaurs. The creation theme is broken down into seven days and then divided into mini-topics or units. For example, for the third day of creation we studied forests, trees, soil, seeds and plants.

I use curriculum guidelines from our school system to check the scope and sequence to make plans and make sure I cover all the skills. The subject matter is covered within the mini-unit. In my mind, I separate subject matters to make certain they are included on a daily and weekly basis.

Component 2. Instructional materials and immersion in theme

- a. Teacher uses multiple resources, based on the need of content and students; includes a variety of books; textbooks used as one of the resources, as applicable; an occasional worksheet when appropriate; at least three closures during the year after the major units.
-

- b. A variety of books on theme used as main sources and other supplementary materials used; textbooks used in subjects not integrated; dittos may be used in limited ways as seen fit; at least one closure per year.
-
- c. Ready-made theme packages, books and dittos are used; no closures.
- d. Used mainly textbook; dittos used on a regular basis; no closures.

Teacher Report: I check out many books from the library, and the students bring in books. I provide a variety of hands-on materials. I refer to numerous journals and teacher resource materials to get ideas. I keep files on topics so I can save things I come across for later dates. Parents are wonderful resources, too. I include field trips at the beginning of a unit and celebrations of learning at the end. For example, at the end of the dinosaur unit, we will have a dinosaur luncheon. We will eat sandwiches shaped like dinosaurs and macaroni salad made with dinosaur-shaped macaroni. We will play games related to dinosaurs and the students will present skits and poems.

Component 3. Physical set-up of the classroom

- X a. Immersion in the theme is evidenced by theme displays, daily agenda, first-hand and hands-on theme materials in the room: healing environment including appropriate lighting, heat, music, potpourri, plants, colors; desks arranged for small group work and not in rows.
-
- b. Materials on display are mostly on theme context; have at least one closure during the year; room arrangements are appropriate enough but not particularly set up to create a healing environment; desks arranged in groups.
-
- c. Conventional classroom displays; desks/chairs arranged in rows.

Teacher Report: When someone walks in my room, I want them to be able to tell by the classroom displays and student work what we are studying. I write the daily agenda on the board so students can make choices for the day. I change it daily and let the students know what I expect from them. I let the students work wherever they are comfortable. Each month the students choose where their desk is placed.

Component 4. Grouping

- a. Class consists of small cooperative, heterogeneous groups (including special education and chapter I students) of two to five students, who may also work on individual assignments as needed.
-
- b. Larger cooperative heterogeneous groups of more than six members working as groups as well as individuals.
-
- c. Whole class working on individual basis, with occasional group work.
- d. Non-interactive group work planned.

Teacher Report: Our school accepts students who have been diagnosed with learning disabilities. I make certain that the parents understand what my classroom is like and that I allow for individual differences by making plans to include activities that involve different learning styles. My classroom is made up of multi-age students with all of them working on different levels in different subjects. They work in small groups and have opportunity to choose the group where they feel most comfortable.

Component 5. Social and Personal Skills

- a. Social and personal skills (Megaskills) and classroom rules (standards to live by) are made part of teaching and behavior; teachable moments are used to internalize the principles.
- b. Social skills are deliberately taught, though not on a regular basis.
-
- c. Social skills are not taught deliberately, but when occasion calls for them.

Teacher Report: We have class meetings to discuss how the students are getting along. This is a perfect time to teach social skills. We discuss how we are all the same, but yet we are individuals and need each other to help with our weaknesses. Worship is another time when we focus on how we should treat others. I also use puppets with a story to teach a specific skill. For the dinosaur unit, we wrote Kind-a-sauras notes to each other.

Component 6. Teacher's Role

- a. Teacher orchestrates curriculum, is a facilitator of learning, provides immediate feedback during learning process; direct instruction provided for maximum 15 minutes/hour; co-plans (monthly/weekly/daily) and co-teaches (regular, special education and chapter I teachers).

-
- b. Teacher uses direct instruction but gives students time for interactions and investigations; co-plans and co-teaches with team members.
-
- c. Teacher mainly uses direct instruction with a little time for student interactions and investigation; co-plans and co-teaches once in a while.
- d. Teacher mainly uses direct instruction, no co-planning or co-teaching.

Teacher Report: I try to provide an atmosphere where students take charge of their learning. I keep direct instruction to a minimum and, by using cooperative learning, the student's interest and attention is not lost. I have several volunteers that work with me and help carry out the plans. My husband teaches in an adjoining classroom, so we make plans together. We actually work on the same theme. We take field trips together, and sometimes his class sets up experiments and then shares them with our class.

Component 7. Assessment of Pupil Learning

- a. Assessment is made for mastery using the selected criteria comprehensive, correct, complete; qualitative evaluation rather than letter grade; individual and group assessments are made for the differentiated abilities of students.
-
- b. A combination of traditional and qualitative assessment are made; letter grades are also given.
-
- c. Test results are the major means for assessment; only letter grades are given.

Teacher Report: I am headed toward using a totally qualitative assessment, but I am still working on it. I make up a portfolio of the student's work and select pieces I feel should be a part of it. At the end of the unit, I have the students write what they have learned so they can see their accomplishments. I use traditional assessment in grades three and four. For my younger students I use the following assessment scale ... O for outstanding, S for satisfactory and N for needs improvement.

Component 8. Outreach and Political Action

- a. Regular field trips, parent and other resource person involvement; sharing of student projects, expressing oneself through letters, etc., opinions and concerns; real action taken where appropriate.
-

b. Occasional outreach activities

c. No particular outreach activities

Teacher Report: We have taken numerous field trips. This year we went on a three-day campout to a weather station and to the forest where we visited a logging plant and helped plant trees.

Parents send resources and come for visits. We have had experts visit our classroom as well.

Component 9. Choices and Adequate Time

a. Students choose from assignment/projects; choices are based on Bloom's Taxonomy and Gardner's Multiple Intelligence; adequate time is given for mastery; time decided by learning and not the clock. Teacher chooses theme, theme components and key points.

b. Students are given choices of assignments in a limited way; teacher-generated themes and theme materials are used.

c. No choices are given to students on assignments; teacher uses ready-made theme and theme materials.

Teacher Report: Students are allowed many choices throughout the day. When I decide which choices to give the children, I make sure to include a variety of the multiple intelligences; and I think about Bloom's Taxonomy.

Component 10. Use of Instructional Thinking and Learning Strategies

a. Teacher uses a variety of strategies to stimulate thinking before, during and after lessons; strategies of prediction brainstorming, categorization, problem solving, K-W-L, SQ3R, student-teacher conferencing, anticipation guides, imagery, memory devices, and reflection are used.

b. Teacher uses a limited amount of instructional strategies. Lesson and questioning are mainly for the knowledge/comprehension levels.

c. Little use, if any, is made of higher level thinking skills, conventional end of chapter questions.

d. There is no evidence of higher level thinking skills.

Teacher Report: A variety of instructional strategies are used on a daily basis. A large number of choices are provided daily so students are involved in different activities. I conference with the students on a daily basis and use many different methods, including prediction, brainstorming, categorization, imagery, memory devices, and reflection.

Component 11. Inclusion of Students

- a. Regular, gifted, special education, and chapter I students work together all day.
-
- b. Students work together most of the day. Slow learners are pulled out for a short time for individual help.
-
- c. Students work together part of the day. Slow learners are taught separately by the resource room teacher most of the day.

Teacher Report: No students are pulled from the class. We have two students who can be considered gifted. There are three students working below normal kindergarten level.

Component 12. Use of Relaxation and Reflection Techniques

- a. Relaxation and reflection techniques are regularly used while making a transition from a high-energy activity to a contemplative activity.
-
- b. Relaxation and reflection techniques are used once in a while.
-
- c. No relaxation and reflection techniques are used.

Teacher Report: I use relaxation techniques with music during quiet times.

Component 13. Discussion of Brain Research

- a. Teacher discusses the aspects of brain research including Triune Brain, Multiple Intelligence and Proctor Theory in the class.
-
- b. Teacher discusses the aspects of brain research including Triune Brain, Multiple Intelligence and Proctor Theory in the class.
-
- c. Teacher does not discuss brain research in the class.

Teacher Report: I do not discuss brain research with the kindergarten children.

My signature ensures that the information in this self-report is correct and accurate.

Laura Jones
Elementary Teacher
Rolling Hills Junior Academy

Date _____

I have read this report and verify that the information reported by Laura Jones is accurate and I have observed these components to be present in her classroom. My signature verifies that this report is accurate.

Mr. Johnson
Principal
Rollings Hills Junior Academy

Date _____

**Teacher's Self Report Using
Gaikwad's Integrated Thematic Instruction
Innovation Configuration Check List**

**Karen Adlers
Elementary Teacher
Flat Rock Elementary**

- *Component variations above interrupted line are ideal.
- *Component variations between solid and interrupted lines are acceptable.
- *Component variations below solid lines are unacceptable.

Component 1. Curriculum

- a. Teacher uses yearly theme and integrates all subjects and skills; aligns curriculum materials with state, district and school curriculum requirements.
-
- b. Teacher uses yearly theme and integrates two, three, etc. (not all) subjects.
-
- c. Teacher uses unit themes only.
- d. Teacher uses no theme.

Teacher Report: The theme for this year is called "Follow Me". I chose this theme because it encompasses all of the units I cover for social studies and Bible. The units all have to do with people following a dream, a movement, or reaching a goal. I integrate reading, writing, spelling, math, and Bible through social studies topics. I bring in science even though the students have a separate science class during the day. I am part of an upper-grade team. Science, physical education, and music are taught by different teachers. I have been able to integrate all of the subjects for which I am responsible.

Component 2. Instructional materials and immersion in theme

- a. Teacher uses multiple resources, based on the need of content and students; includes a variety of books; textbooks used as one of the resources, as applicable; an occasional worksheet when appropriate; at least three closures during the year after the major units.
-
- b. A variety of books on theme used as main sources and other supplementary materials used; textbooks used in subjects not integrated; dittos may be used in limited ways as seen fit; at least one closure per year.

-
- c. Ready-made theme packages, books and dittos are used; no closures.
- d. Used mainly textbook; dittos used on a regular basis; no closures.

Teacher Report: I bring in numerous books, including picture books from the library, for each unit covered. As student projects are developed, our theme begins to unfold. My students are involved in creating the atmosphere for the theme. Textbooks are used as resource material. Projects are done on blank paper and include journals, individual books, class books, artwork, filmstrips, multi-media reports, poetry, raps, etc. At the end of each unit, we have some type of celebration with food and games relating to the topic, or we take a trip.

Component 3. Physical set-up of the classroom

- a. Immersion in the theme is evidenced by theme displays, daily agenda, first-hand and hands-on theme materials in the room; healing environment including appropriate lighting, heat, music, potpourri, plants, colors; desks arranged for small group work and not in rows.
-
- b. Materials on display are mostly on theme context; have at least one closure during the year; room arrangements are appropriate enough but not particularly set up to create a healing environment; desks arranged in groups.
-
- c. Conventional classroom displays; desks/chairs arranged in rows.

Teacher Report: My top priority is for my students to feel emotionally safe in my classroom. I strive to create a relaxing, comfortable place where students can work together to achieve learning goals. Student desks are arranged in groups of four to facilitate cooperative learning. The student work displays in the room leave no question about what we are studying.

Component 4. Grouping

- a. Class consists of small cooperative, heterogeneous groups (including special education and chapter I students) of two to five students, who may also work on individual assignments as needed.
-
- b. Larger cooperative heterogeneous groups of more than six members working as groups as well as individuals.

-
- c. Whole class working on individual basis, with occasional group work.
- d. Non-interactive group work planned.

Teacher Report: Students are grouped randomly on assignments in each unit. The class consists of students who have been tested for gifted programs in the public system as well as remedial students. The school has a non-discriminatory policy regarding acceptance. Every child works at their own pace and level. As in any normal classroom, there is a wide variety of student ability.

Component 5. Social and Personal Skills

- a. Social and personal skills (Megaskills) and classroom rules (standards to live by) are made part of teaching and behavior; teachable moments are used to internalize the principles.
- b. Social skills are deliberately taught, though not on a regular basis.
-
- c. Social skills are not taught deliberately, but when occasion calls for them.

Teacher Report: I use Christ as the example to teach social and personal skills. Character-building stories and plays are an important part of instilling values and morals within my students. When I see a problem arise, I stop and address it individually or as a group. I use teachable moments to help students develop these skills.

Component 6. Teacher's Role

- a. Teacher orchestrates curriculum, is a facilitator of learning, provides immediate feedback during learning process; direct instruction provided for maximum 15 minutes/hour; co-plans (monthly/weekly/daily) and co-teaches (regular, special education and chapter I teachers).
-
- b. Teacher uses direct instruction but gives students time for interactions and investigations; co-plans and co-teaches with team members.
-
- c. Teacher mainly uses direct instruction with a little time for student interactions and investigation; co-plans and co-teaches once in a while.
- d. Teacher mainly uses direct instruction, no co-planning or co-teaching.

Teacher Report: My units are planned with the student's interests in mind. I see myself as a facilitator of learning. I teach mini-lessons each day. The students are then free to work on projects. While students work in groups, I rotate throughout the room providing feedback and re-direction where it is needed. I co-teach with the science and music teachers. We meet weekly to coordinate curriculum plans.

Component 7. Assessment of Pupil Learning

- a. Assessment is made for mastery using the selected criteria comprehensive, correct, complete; qualitative evaluation rather than letter grade; individual and group assessments are made for the differentiated abilities of students.
-
- b. A combination of traditional and qualitative assessment are made; letter grades are also given.
-
- c. Test results are the major means for assessment; only letter grades are given.

Teacher Report: I use a rubric to grade projects and all writing. The students know ahead of time what the requirements are to make the top grade. Students complete a showcase portfolio for each unit. Working portfolios are kept for the students to evaluate and publish their work.

I am required by administration to give letter grades on a traditional report card. Through the qualitative grading approach, all students have the opportunity to make an "A". The expectation I have for my students is high. I will not accept work that does not measure up to the student's ability. Work must be comprehensive, correct, and complete before I will accept it.

Component 8. Outreach and Political Action

- a. Regular field trips, parent and other resource person involvement; sharing of student projects, expressing oneself through letters, etc., opinions and concerns; real action taken where appropriate.
-
- b. Occasional outreach activities
-
- c. No particular outreach activities

Teacher Report: We responded to a newspaper article by writing our concerns to the editor. Resource people have been brought in to speak to the students. For example, a Civil War expert came in during our Civil War unit. The pastors from the church also

come in to help facilitate learning. We have had five field trips this year. My students share our projects with their parents and other classes in the school.

Component 9. Choices and Adequate Time

- a. Students choose from assignment/projects; choices are based on Bloom's Taxonomy and Gardner's Multiple Intelligence; adequate time is given for mastery; time decided by learning and not the clock. Teacher chooses theme, theme components and key points.
-
- b. Students are given choices of assignments in a limited way; teacher-generated themes and theme materials are used.
-
- c. No choices are given to students on assignments; teacher uses ready-made theme and theme materials.

Teacher Report: I let students decide which project they would like to work on for the day. Students have freedom to be creative within the guidelines for a specific project. I use Bloom's Taxonomy and Gardner's Multiple Intelligence as I plan assignments. We work in blocks of time and do not worry about the clock, except for lunch and recess time.

Component 10. Use of Instructional Thinking and Learning Strategies

- a. Teacher uses a variety of strategies to stimulate thinking before, during and after lessons; strategies of prediction brainstorming, categorization, problem solving, K-W-L, SQ3R, student-teacher conferencing, anticipation guides, imagery, memory devices, and reflection are used.
-
- b. Teacher uses a limited amount of instructional strategies. Lesson and questioning are mainly for the knowledge/comprehension levels.
-
- c. Little use, if any, is made of higher level thinking skills, conventional end of chapter questions.
- d. There is no evidence of higher level thinking skills.

Teacher Report: A variety of instructional strategies include K.W. L. problem solving, brainstorming, prediction, SQ3R, imagery, and memory devices like graphic organizers. I work on building study skills so the students will learn how to study for themselves. Projects and cooperative learning provide many opportunities to stimulate thinking.

Component 11. Inclusion of Students

- a. Regular, gifted, special education, and chapter I students work together all day.
-
- b. Students work together most of the day. Slow learners are pulled out for a short time for individual help.
-
- c. Students work together part of the day. Slow learners are taught separately by the resource room teacher most of the day.

Teacher Report: We have "study buddies" who tutor those who need help. I have at least six students who can be considered as gifted. Three are working below grade-level. Other students have different ability levels within certain subject matter. The students all work together throughout the day.

Component 12. Use of Relaxation and Reflection Techniques

- a. Relaxation and reflection techniques are regularly used while making a transition from a high-energy activity to a contemplative activity.
-
- b. Relaxation and reflection techniques are used once in a while.
-
- c. No relaxation and reflection techniques are used.

Teacher Report: My schedule is set up to provide smooth transitions. At different times during the day, students are given the opportunity to sit and relax, read silently, or listen to quiet music.

Component 13. Discussion of Brain Research

- a. Teacher discusses the aspects of brain research including Triune Brain, Multiple Intelligence and Proctor Theory in the class.
-
- b. Teacher discusses the aspects of brain research including Triune Brain, Multiple Intelligence and Proctor Theory in the class.
-
- c. Teacher does not discuss brain research in the class.

Teacher Report: I often discuss brain research with my students. I talk with them about the reason we do things a certain way to help us remember. I give options and use a

variety of strategies. I teach them about learning styles and how people have different intelligences. We study about the brain and how it works.

My signature ensures that the information in this self-report is correct and accurate.

Karen Adlers
Elementary Teacher
Flat Rock Elementary

Date _____

I have read this report and verify that the information reported by Sally Adlers is accurate and I have observed these components to be present in her classroom. My signature verifies that this report is accurate.

Mr. Hickson
Principal
Flat Rock Elementary

Date _____

APPENDIX E
DAILY SCHEDULES

Mrs. Smith's Daily Schedule

8:30 - 8:45	Arrival - Worship
8:45 - 9:45	Work time
9:45 - 10:15	Recess
10:15 - 10:30	Story & Juice
10:30 - 11:30	Work time
11:30 - 12:00	Lunch
12:00 - 12:30	Quiet time
12:30 - 1:30	Work time - Afternoon group
1:30 - 2:00	Recess
2:00 - 3:00	Work time

Mrs. Jones Daily Schedule

8:30 - 9:00	Worship
9:00 - 9:30	Circle time/Focus Lesson
9:30 - 11:00	Project time
11:00 - 11:35	P.E.
11:35 - 12:05	Reading
12:05 - 12:30	Lunch
12:30 - 1:00	Outdoor break
1:00 - 1:50	Math Focus
1:50 - 2:10	Recess
2:10 - 3:15	Project time

Mrs. Adler's Daily Schedule

8:30 - 9:00	Worship
9:00 - 10:35	Unit Studies
10:35 - 10:55	Recess
10:55 - 12:00	Unit Studies/Focus Lesson
12:00 - 12:30	Lunch
12:30 - 12:45	Recess
12:45 - 1:45	Read Aloud/Silent Reading
1:45 - 2:30	Group Project
2:30 - 3:15	Science Focus/Lab

APPENDIX F
WESTWARD MOVEMENT RAP

Westward Movement Rap
Written by Fifth & Sixth Grade
at Flat Rock Elementary

Part 1

Come on along and have some fun!
 Grab your family and your gun.
 It's gonna be hot, dirty, and dusty,
 And the wagon smells a little bit musty!

The Platte River was really muddy!
 I was so thirsty and so was my buddy.
 We wanted a river clear to drink,
 But when we got there, we started to sink!

I fell into the Platte River
 It gave me quite a shiver.
 When crossing Chimney Rock
 I lost my favorite sock!

Crossing the river was really yuck!
 Our wagon wheels got stuck in the muck.
 Pushing and pulling all the day long,
 We go out singing a happy song.

Out on the plains, so much dust,
 Winds blew with so much gust.
 I shot a buffalo with my gun,
 Then dried the meat in the sun.

Traveled over plains,
 And got stomach pains.
 Traveled over a mountain,
 And saw Soda Springs Fountain.

We heard Chimney Rock was really a sight,
 But we couldn't see it cause it wasn't light.
 As we crossed the Rockies, it started to rain,
 It drove me crazy and I went insane.

Meeting the Indians was a frightful sight,
 I was so scared there might be a fight.
 We crossed the mountains at South Pass,
 And we made it without any gas!

Part 2

My wagon's a saggin!
 My wagon's a saggin!
 Repeat

Our wheels a bustin!
 Our wheels a bustin!
 Repeat

Oh, what a sight!
 Oh, what a sight!
 Repeat

We're in for a fright!
 We're in for a fright!
 Repeat

As we crossed the snake river
 We began to really quiver
 All of a sudden a snake jumped out
 Pardon me it was just a trout.

The river's a roarin!
 The river's a roarin!
 Repeat

We traveled west to Sutter's Fort
 Looking for gold and metals of sort.
 But all I found were pebbles and dirt,
 All I did was muddy my shirt.

Have you ever been to Devil's Backbone?
 Well I have and it's made of stone.
 The narrow path was quite a sight
 Except for all of the insect bites.

Devil's Backbone!
 Devil's Backbone!
 Repeat

The Oregon trail was really long,
 During the months a lot of things went wrong.
 So now we're here,
 Let's have a cheer.

We made it!
 We made it!
 Repeat

When we reached our destiny.
 It really brought out the best in me.
 Being a pioneer was lots of fun,
 And now I'm glad our trip is done!

The day is done!
 The day is done!
 Repeat

If this trip were made in my day,
 I would have done it all my way!
 Sitting in the wagon watching Super Sonics,
 Then I noticed I lost my Hooked on Phonics!

SELECTED BIBLIOGRAPHY

SELECTED BIBLIOGRAPHY

- Adelman, H.S., & Taylor, L. (1983). Enhancing motivation for overcoming learning and behavior problems. Journal of Learning Disabilities, 16, 384-392.
- Armstrong, T. (1987). In their own way. New York: Tarcher Press.
- Armstrong, T. (1994). Multiple intelligences in the classroom. Alexandria, VA: Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development.
- Bloom, B. (1981). All our children learning. New York: McGraw Hill.
- Bredenkamp, S. (1987). Developmentally appropriate practice in early childhood programs serving children from birth through age 8. Washington, DC: National Association for the Education of Young Children.
- Brown, G. I. (1960). Which pupils to which climate? Elementary School Journal, 60, 265-269.
- Brown, H., Burchard, P., Caras, D., Christopher, R., Christopher, T., Ernest, K., Flory, M., Flowers, C., Fritz, S., Killgore, J., Marks, M., Moore, M., Murphy, W., Pfarrer, D., Robinson, T., Wartik, N., & Wilkinson, J. (1990). Reader's digest ABC's of the human mind. Pleasantville, NY: Reader's Digest Association.
- Bruner, J. S. (1960). The process of education. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.
- Bruner, J. S. (1961). The act of discovery. Harvard Educational Review, 31, 21-32.
- Caine, R. N., & Caine, G. (1990). Understanding a brain-based approach to learning and teaching. Educational Leadership, 48(2), 66-70.
- Caine, R. N., & Caine, G. (1991). Making connections: Teaching and the human brain. Menlo Park, CA: Addison Wesley.
- Cambourne, B. (1988). Natural learning and the acquisitions of literacy in the classroom: The whole story. Richmond Hill, Ontario: Scholastic.

- Campbell, L. (1997). How teachers interpret MI theory. Educational Leadership, 55(1), 14-19.
- Cardellichio, T. (1995). Curriculum and the structure of school. Phi Delta Kappan, 76(8), 29-32.
- Carroll, J. B. (1963). A model for school learning. Teachers College Record, 64, 723-733.
- Cash, R. W. (1996). 134th annual statistical report of Seventh-day Adventists. Compiled by Office of Archives and Statistics. Silver Spring, MD: General Conference of SDA.
- Checkley, K. (1997). The first seven and the eighth: A conversation with Howard Gardner. Educational Leadership, 55(1), 8-13.
- Chein, I. (1981). Appendix: An introduction to sampling. In L. Kider (Ed.), Selltiz, Wrightsman & Cook's research methods in social relations (4th ed.). New York: Holt, Rinehart & Winston.
- Clifford, M. M. (1990). Students need challenge, not easy success. Educational Leadership, 48(1), 32-36.
- Connell, J. P., & Wellborn, J. G. (1991). Competence, autonomy and relatedness: A motivational analysis of self-system process. Minnesota Symposium of Child Psychology, 22, 43-77.
- Cornell, F. G., Lindvall, C.M., & Saupe, J.L. (1959). An exploratory measurement of individualities of school and classrooms. Champaign: University of Illinois.
- Cotton, K. (1995). Effective schooling practices; A research synthesis. Portland, OR: Northwest Regional Educational Laboratory.
- Creswell, J. W. (1994). Research design: Qualitative and quantitative approaches. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Davis, G. B., & Parker, C. A. (1979). Writing the doctoral dissertation. New York: Barrons.
- Decotis, J. (1993). The effects of continuous progress, non-graded primary school programs on student performance and attitudes toward learning. Unpublished doctoral dissertation, Athens: University of Georgia.

- DeGeorge, T. (1998). Student participation in multiage classrooms at a public elementary school: A case study. Unpublished doctoral dissertation, Chester, PA: Widener University.
- Dewey, J. (1938). Experience and education. New York: Macmillan.
- Donaldson, M. (1978). Children's minds. Glasgow, Scotland: Fontana.
- Eisner, E. W. (1991). The enlightened eye: Qualitative inquiry and the enhancement of educational practice. New York: Macmillan.
- Elias, M. J., Bruene-Butler, L., & Blum, L. (1997). How to launch a social and emotional learning program. Educational Leadership, 54(8), 15-19.
- Elkind, D. (1987). Miseducation: Preschoolers at risk. New York: Alfred A. Knopf.
- Ellis, A.K., & Fouts, J.T. (1997). Research on educational innovations. Larchmont, NY: Eye on Education.
- Floyd-Levin, R. (1995). Perspectives from England on using integrated curriculum: A thematic approach to social studies. Unpublished doctoral dissertation, Lawrence: University of Kansas.
- Gaikwad, P. (1991). Integrated thematic instruction: A descriptive study of its adaptation and implementation by project CUE teachers. Unpublished doctoral dissertation, Berrien Springs, MI: Andrews University.
- Gardner, H. (1983). Frames of mind: The theory of multiple intelligences. New York: Harper Collins.
- Gardner, H. (1991). The unschooled mind: How children think and how schools should teach. New York: Basic Books.
- Gardner, H. (1997). Multiple intelligences as a partner in school improvement. Educational Leadership, 55(2), 20-21.
- Glaser, B., & Strauss, A. (1967). The discovery of grounded theory. Chicago, IL: Aldine.
- Glasser, W. (1986). Control theory: A new explanation of how we control our lives. New York: Harper & Row.
- Glasser, W. (1992). The quality school. New York: Harper & Row.

- Goleman, D. (1995). Emotional intelligence: Why it can matter more than I.Q. New York: Bantam.
- Goodlad, J. (1984). A place called school. New York: McGraw-Hill.
- Green, W. (1995). The promise is in the practice: Professional imperatives. Journal of Adventist Education, 57(2), 33-36.
- Gregorc, A.F. (1982). An adult's guide to style. Maynard, MA: Gabriel Systems.
- Hall, G.E., & Loucks, S.F. (1978). Innovation configurations: Analyzing the adaptations of innovations. Austin: Research and Development Center for Teacher Education. (ERIC Document Reproduction Service No. ED 189 074)
- Hart, L. A. (1969). The classroom disaster. New York: Teachers College Press.
- Hart, L. A. (1983). Human brain and human learning. Village of Oak Creek, AZ: Books for Educators.
- Hart, L. A. (1986). A response: All "thinking" paths lead to the brain. Educational Leadership, 43(8), 45-47.
- Healy, J. M. (1990). Endangered minds. New York: Simon & Schuster.
- Henriquez-Roark, R. (1995). A descriptive case study of teacher study groups and teachers' perceptions of the impact of study groups on professional growth. Doctoral dissertation, Berrien Springs, MI: Andrews University.
- Hermann, N. (1990). The creative brain. Chapel Hill: Brain Books.
- Holt, J. (1983). How children learn. New York: Addison-Wesley Publishing.
- Isaacson, R. L. (1982). The limbic system (2nd ed.). New York: Plenum Press.
- Jackson, P. W. (1968). Life in classrooms. New York: Holt, Rinehart & Winston.
- Johnson, D. W., & Johnson, R. (1981). Effects of cooperative, competitive and individualistic goal structures on achievement: A meta-analysis. Psychological Bulletin, 89, 47-62.
- Joyce, B., Weil, M., & Showers, B. (1992). Models of teaching. Needham Heights, MA: Allyn & Bacon.
- Joyce, B., & Calhoun, E. (1997). From England: Inquiring and collaborating at an exemplary school. Educational Leadership, 54(8), 63-66.

- Kagan, S. (1992). Cooperative learning. San Juan Capistrano, CA: Resources for Teachers.
- Karnes, M., Schwedel, A., & Williams, M. (1983). Consortium for longitudinal studies. Hillsdale, NJ: Erlbaum.
- Katz, L., & Chard, S. (1994). Engaging children's minds: The project approach. Norwood, NJ: Ablex.
- Kidder, T. (1989). Among schoolchildren. New York: Avon Books.
- Kohl, H. R. (1969). The open classroom. New York: Random House.
- Kohn, A. (1992). No contest: The case against competition. New York: Houghton Mifflin.
- Kohn, A. (1993). Punished by rewards. New York: Houghton Mifflin.
- Kohn, A. (1996a). Beyond discipline: From compliance to community. Alexandria, VA: ASCD.
- Kohn, A. (1996b). What to look for in a classroom. Educational Leadership, 54(1), 54-55.
- Kovalik, S. (1994). ITI the model: Integrated thematic instruction. Kent, WA: Books for Educators.
- Lake, K. (1994). School improvement research series VII: Integrated curriculum. Portland, OR: Northwest Regional Educational Laboratory.
- LeDoux, J. (1993). Emotional memory systems in the brain. Behavioral and Brain Research, 58, 68-79.
- Lerner, B. (1996, summer). Self-esteem and excellence: The choice and the paradox. American Educator, 9-13, 41-42.
- Lewis, C., Schaps, E., & Watson, M. (1996). The caring classroom's academic edge. Educational Leadership, 54(1), 16-21.
- Lillard, P. (1996). Montessori today. New York: Schocken Books.
- MacLean, P. D. (1978). Education and the brain. Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press.
- Mager, R.F. (1968). Developing attitudes toward learning. Palo Alto, CA: Fearon.

- Marshall, C., & Rossman, G. (1989). Designing qualitative research. Newbury Park, CA: Sage.
- Marzano, J. R., Pickering, D. J., Arrendondo, D. E., Blackburn, G. J., Brandt, R. S., & Moffet, C. A. (1992). The teacher's manual for Dimensions of Learning. Alexandria, VA: Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development.
- Maslow, A. H. (1970). Motivation and personality. New York: Harper & Row.
- Montessori, M. (1948). To educate the human potential. Thiruranmiyur, Madras: Kolshetra Publications.
- Montessori, M. (1964). The Montessori method. Cambridge, MA: Robert Bentley.
- Montessori, M. (1966). The secret of childhood. New York: Ballantine Books.
- Moos, R. H. (1987). Learning environments in context: Links between school, work, and family settings. In B.J. Fraser (Ed.), The study of learning environments. Perth: Curtin.
- Morgan L., Richman, V., & Taylor, A. (1981). Beyond the open classroom: Toward informal education. Saratoga, CA: Century Twenty One.
- Neve, C. D. (1985). Brain-compatible learning succeeds. Educational Leadership, 43(2), 83-85.
- Nummela, R. N., & Rosengren, T. M. (1986). What's happening in students' brains may redefine teaching. Educational Leadership, 43(8), 49-53.
- Oliver, A. (1995). Teaching a thematic unit using cooperative learning. Journal of Adventist Education, 57(4), 24-27.
- O'Neil, J. (1996a). Multiple intelligences: A conversation with Howard Gardner. Educational Leadership, 54(1), 12-14.
- O'Neil, J. (1996b). On emotional learning: A conversation with Daniel Goleman. Educational Leadership, 54(1), 6-11.
- O'Neil, J. (1997). Building schools as community. Educational Leadership, 54(8), 6-10.
- Ornstein, R., & Sobel, D. (1987). The healing brain. New York: Simon & Schuster.
- Osborne, V. (1996). A study to determine which factors contribute to the implementation of a successful primary multiage/non-graded program. Unpublished doctoral dissertation, Orlando: University of Central Florida.

- Peck, M. S. (1987). The different drum: Community and peace making. New York: Simon & Schuster.
- Perkins, D. (1992). Smart schools. New York: Free Press.
- Pool, C. (1997). Up with emotional health. Educational Leadership, 54(8), 12-14.
- Pratt, D. (1994). Curriculum planning: A handbook for professionals. Orlando, FL: Harcourt Brace.
- Rosenfield, I. (1988). The invention of memory. New York: Basic Books.
- Roy, J. (1995). Cooperative education: Necessary tool for teaching and learning. Journal of Adventist Education, 57(4), 4-11.
- Sagor, R. (1996). Building resiliency in students. Educational Leadership, 54(1), 38-43.
- Schlecty, P. (1994). Increasing student engagement. New York: Free Press.
- Seely, A. (1995). Integrated thematic units. Westminster, CA: Teacher Created Materials.
- Silver, H., Strong, R., & Robinson, M. (1995). Integrating learning styles and multiple intelligences. Educational Leadership, 55(1), 22-27.
- Slavin, R. E. (1983). Cooperative learning. New York: Longman.
- Slavin, R. E. (1991). Synthesis of research on cooperative learning. Education Leadership, 48(5), 71-82.
- Smith, F. (1986). Insult to intelligence. Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann.
- Spradley, J. P. (1979). The ethnographic interview. New York: Holt, Rinehart & Winston.
- Spradley, J. P. (1980). Participant observation. Chicago: Holt, Rinehart & Winston.
- Springer, S., & Deutsch, G. (1985). Left brain, right brain (2nd ed.). New York: W. H. Freeman.
- Stebbins, L., St. Pierre, R., Proper, E., Anderson R., & Cerva, T. (1977). Education as experimentation: A planned variation model, IVA-D. Cambridge, MA: Abt Associates.

- Steinberg, L. (1996). Beyond the classroom. New York: Simon & Schuster.
- Stevenson, H. W., & Stigler, J. (1992). The learning gap: Why our schools are failing and what we can learn from Japanese and Chinese education. New York: Simon & Schuster.
- Street, M. T. (1993). What's so new about the project approach? Childhood Education, 70(1), 25-28.
- Sylwester, R. (1995). A celebration of neurons: An educator's guide to the human brain. Alexandria, VA: Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development.
- Van der Sijde, P. C. (1998). Relationships of classroom climate with student learning outcomes and school climate. Journal of Classroom Interaction, 23(2), 40-43.
- Vars, G. (1996). The effects of interdisciplinary curriculum and instruction. Annual review of research for school leaders. New York: Scholastic.
- Wade, A., Abrami, P., Poulsen, C., & Chambers, B. (1995). Current resources in cooperative learning. Lanham, MD: University Press of America.
- Wakefield, A. (1993). Developmentally appropriate practice: "Figuring things out." The Educational Form, 57, 134-143.
- Walberg, H. (1984). Improving the productivity of America's schools. Educational Leadership, 41(8), 19-30.
- Webster's II New Riverside pocket dictionary. (1978). Boston, MA: Houghton Mifflin.
- Wheatley, M. J. (1992). Leadership and the new science. San Francisco, CA: Berrett-Koehler.
- White, E. G. (1903). Education. Boise, ID: Pacific Press.
- Wiersma, W. (1991). Research methods in education. Boston, MA: Allyn & Bacon.
- Withall, J. (1949). The development of a technique for the measurement of social-emotional climate in classrooms. Journal of Experimental Education, 17, 347-361.
- Yin, R. R. (1989). Case study research: Design and methods. Beverly Hills, CA: Sage.

Youngs, B. B. (1991). How to develop self-esteem in your child: 6 vital ingredients. New York: Fawcett, Columbine.

Zemial, S. (1992). Self-efficacy, motivation to learn, and attitude towards school: A comparative analysis on rural students in multiage settings. Unpublished doctoral dissertation, University of San Francisco, CA.

VITA

VITA

NAME: Ginger Heinrich O'Neal

PLACE OF BIRTH: Meridian, Mississippi

EDUCATION:

1998 Ph.D. Leadership, Andrews University, Berrien Springs, MI.
1992 M.Ed. Elementary Education, Rollins College, Winter Park, FL.
1981 B.S. Elementary Education, Southern College, Collegedale, TN.

WORK EXPERIENCE:

1996 - 1998 Principal/Teacher, Atlanta North School, Dunwoody, GA.
1994 - 1997 Educational Film Producer, Photo Sound International,
Atlanta, GA.
1989 - 1994 Teacher, Orlando Junior Academy, Orlando, FL.
1981 - 1989 Writer/Producer of Christian Educational Films,
Mission Spotlight, Decatur, GA.

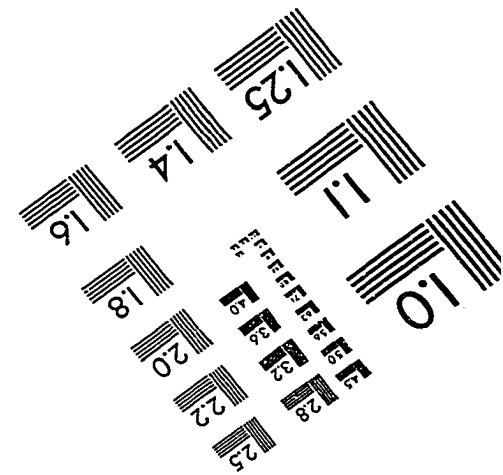
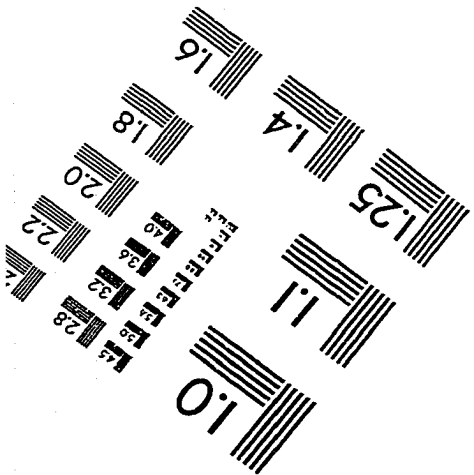
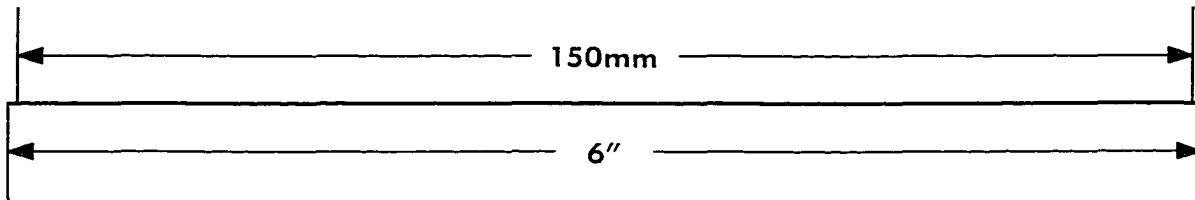
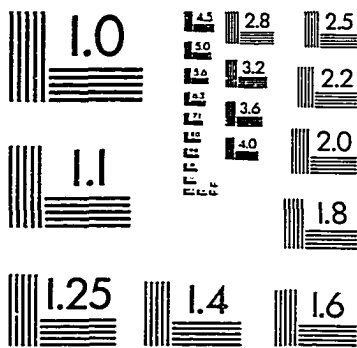
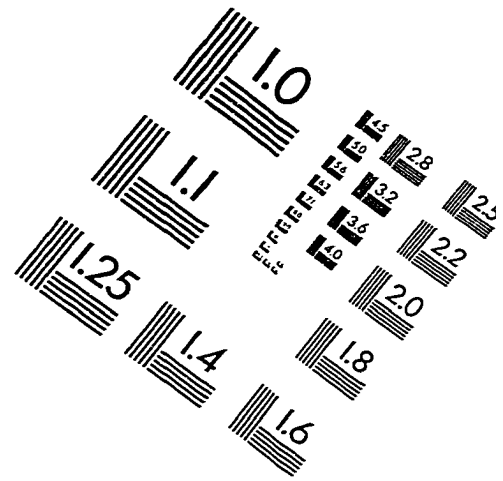
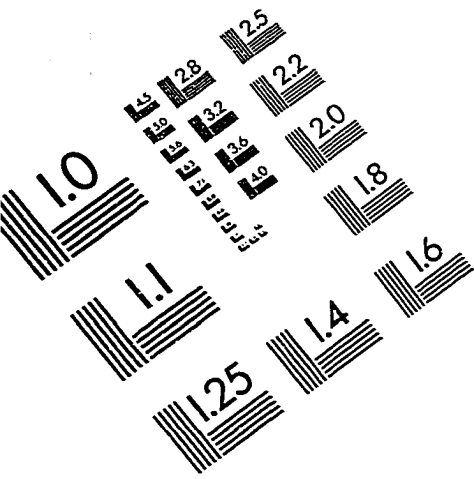
AWARDS:

Zappara Excellence in Teaching Award, 1993
Southern Union Innovative Teaching Award, 1998

HONOR SOCIETY MEMBERSHIPS:

Phi Kappa Phi, Education Honor Society, 1996
Pi Lambda Theta, Educational Honor Society, 1998

IMAGE EVALUATION TEST TARGET (QA-3)



APPLIED IMAGE, Inc
 1653 East Main Street
 Rochester, NY 14609 USA
 Phone: 716/482-0300
 Fax: 716/288-5989

© 1993, Applied Image, Inc., All Rights Reserved