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A QUALITATIVE STUDY OF HOW EIGHT TEACHERS MOVED TOWARD WHOLE LANGUAGE

A Dissertation Presented

by

MARIE LOUISE SORENSEN

Submitted to the Graduate School of the
University of Massachusetts Amherst in partial fulfillment
of the requirements for the degree of

DOCTOR OF EDUCATION

February 1994

Education

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MOVED TOWARD WHOLE LANGUAGE

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by

MARIE LOUISE SORENSEN

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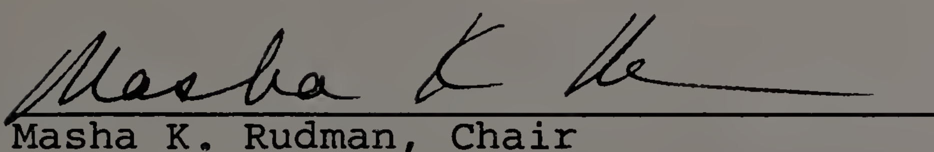

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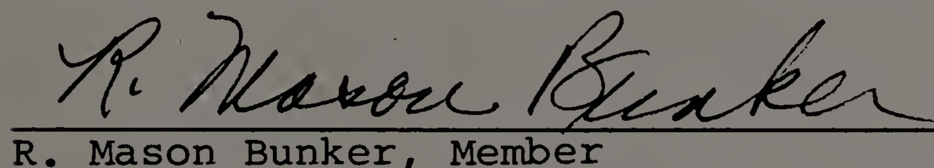

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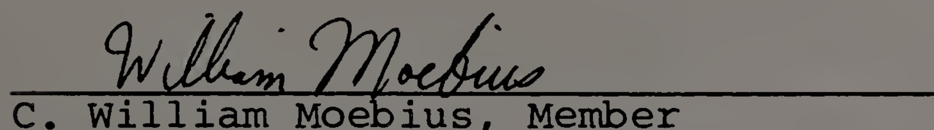

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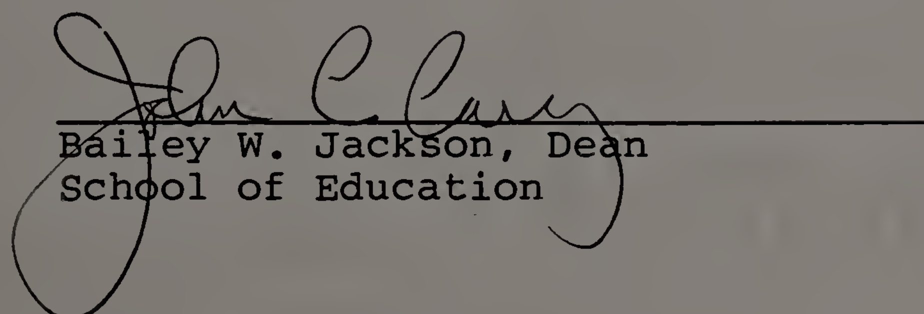

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I would like to thank all of the people who were willing to spend time talking with me--my colleagues, friends, preservice students, and especially the teachers who agreed to be interviewed--for sharing their views about teacher change, especially with regard to the ways in which they help children learn to read.

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And last but not least to my mother and all the relatives and friends who showed support by asking me when I was going to finish this project, assuming that I would.

ABSTRACT

A QUALITATIVE STUDY OF HOW EIGHT TEACHERS
MOVED TOWARD WHOLE LANGUAGE

FEBRUARY 1994

MARIE LOUISE SORENSEN, B.Ed., CHICAGO TEACHERS COLLEGE
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The purpose of this study was to gain insight into and knowledge about the perceptions and practices of teachers who have moved toward a whole language, literature-based, process approach to the teaching of reading. The data for the study came from interviews with eight teachers: four were teaching in elementary schools, two were language arts resource people, one was serving as a curriculum coordinator, and one was a university professor. The data are presented in the form of profiles of the eight educators who described their changed way of teaching in their own words. All interviewees reflect on how they feel they have changed the way they teach based on their understandings of how their beliefs about teaching and learning have changed.

The researcher's changed beliefs are also examined in this study. The information on which this study is based was gathered in several ways: notes from participant

observation during attendance at classes, seminars, conferences, and professional meetings; conversations with knowledgeable colleagues; review of the literature; and primarily, the tape-recorded interviews with selected teachers. The presentation of the interview data is interspersed with information gathered in the above mentioned ways. The literature review examines the theoretical and philosophical aspects of whole language and published descriptions of the reflections of some teachers who have undergone change.

The results of this study demonstrate that there is much collegiality and networking among teachers who believe in this approach to the teaching of reading. Teachers undergoing a philosophical change toward whole language need to receive support, but they also give support to others. Support groups and informal support have played a very important part in the grassroots nature of whole language. Many of these teachers have made a strong connection between reading and writing. Experience as a teacher and reflection upon that experience also contribute to teacher change, which usually occurs gradually. Other ways of fostering change include visiting other teachers' classrooms, taking courses and participating in workshops, reading professional literature, becoming knowledgeable about children's literature, and attending and presenting at professional conferences.

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION, PROBLEM STATEMENT, AND DESIGN OF STUDY

Introduction

> In this first-grade classroom . . . language skills develop as children write, read, listen to literature read aloud, and talk with each other. . . . The classroom is now child-centered, with a learning environment that responds to, and capitalizes on, the variety of learning styles and diversity of backgrounds of individual children (Avery, 1989, p. 37-38).

The above excerpt is from Carol Avery's story of how her classroom is different from the way it used to be when it was "curriculum-driven and teacher-centered" (p. 37), when she used a basal reader to teach reading. Avery's story is one of several included in a book titled _Stories to Grow On: Demonstrations of Language Learning in K-8 Classrooms_ (Jensen, 1989). This book reports on a 1987 invitational conference, which included representatives from the National Council of Teachers of English (NCTE) and the Modern Language Association (MLA), who met for the purpose of discussing goals for the teaching of English language arts for the 21st century. It is significant that telling stories of what teachers do in their classrooms was the method chosen for this report. In talking about the value and importance of these richly detailed, personal

stories as a way of informing practice, Julie Jensen, the editor of this collection, says,

> Stories are, at long last, coming into their own as a text--as a data base--for researchers [who are] . . . beginning to ask good teachers what they believe, understand, and know how to do that enables them to teach well (Jensen, 1989, p. xvi).

Statement of Problem

The purpose of this study was to gain insight into and knowledge about the perceptions and practices of teachers and teacher educators who have moved away from basal readers and toward a whole language, literature-based, process approach to the teaching of reading. We may be able to use the experiences of teachers who have already begun to make this change as a support for other teachers who, until now, may have been reluctant to use this approach.

The term basal readers refers to publishers' prepackaged reading materials, which will be discussed more thoroughly in Chapter II. Whole language refers to the idea of leaving language whole or natural, of treating language as something that you do not break apart into little pieces (Goodman,1986a). Children in whole language classrooms learn language by using language; they talk, listen, write, and read for many different authentic and functional purposes (Harste, 1989). In whole language

classrooms, children listen to and read children's literature, resulting in the use of the phrase literature-based reading (Norton, 1992). The goal in such a classroom is to establish a literate community in which the participants share what they read and write. Another term sometimes used synonymously with whole language and literature-based reading is process approach, which refers to learning to read and write by engaging in the processes of reading and writing instead of emphasizing only the end product of those processes (Sorensen, 1991). In this study, "whole language" (in quotes) will be used to refer to a whole language, literature-based, process approach to the teaching of reading. When reference is made to someone else's use of the term whole language, quotation marks will not be used.

As classroom teachers have begun to understand the theoretical aspects of how people learn to read, some of them have examined what they are doing in their classrooms and as a result have changed the ways in which they help children learn to read (Atwell, 1987; Hansen, 1987; Hansen, Newkirk, & Graves, 1985; Rhodes & Dudley-Marling, 1988; Routman, 1988 & 1991). Many teachers who are teaching today were not exposed to the process approach to teaching reading when they were undergraduates. Other teachers may have heard of this way of teaching reading, but for one reason or another have been reluctant to try it. Some of

the teachers who learned about this approach to teaching reading in preservice or inservice classes have been reluctant to teach this way because the schools where they are teaching and the colleagues with whom they are working are using more traditional ways of teaching reading.

Some teachers are now engaging in research and are reporting in the literature the results of the studies they have made of what goes on in their classrooms (Five, 1986; McClure, Harrison, & Reed, 1990; McConaghy, 1990; Mohr & MacLean, 1987). Many of these educators reflect on the way in which they did things previously and then go on to describe how and why they have changed their procedures. In When Writers Read, Jane Hansen (1987) describes what she learned from four years of research in classrooms in New Hampshire. Hansen and the teachers she worked with applied to the teaching of reading what they had learned from Donald Graves (1983) about the process approach to the teaching of writing. Hansen serves as a model for change because in this book she continually reflects on the way she did things as a classroom teacher in the mid-sixties and seventies and the way she now encourages teachers to do things differently as a result of her understanding of current knowledge about theory and her experience in classrooms where theory is put into practice.

Design and Procedures

This study investigates the stories of eight educators as they recall how they changed their approach to teaching reading and moved toward "whole language." They talked about their changed teaching and classroom procedures during informally structured interviews, and reflected on why they teach the way they do. The profiles presented in this study were based mostly on the words of the teachers taken from the interviews, but sometimes they include information from my observations in these teachers' classrooms.

How does one go about meeting teachers who would be willing to be interviewed for a study such as this? What made these teachers willing to change the way they were teaching reading and move toward whole language when basal readers seem to be so firmly entrenched in the United States? What do some teachers do when they aren't convinced that the way they are being asked to teach is compatible with their understanding of how children learn? Why are teachers engaged in "whole language" practices so willing to share what they are doing? What is the impact of children's literature on teachers and children? These are just a few of the questions which are answered by the data presented in this study.

The investigation includes a search of the literature for published descriptions of teachers who have changed the way in which they help children learn to read. The literature review examines the theoretical and philosophical aspects of "whole language" and compares it to the system now in place in most schools. Also included are descriptions of studies recommending and using teacher research as a way of helping teachers reflect upon their beliefs about how children learn and about how those beliefs inform their practice.

Mary Clare Courtland, in an article titled "Teacher Change in the Implementation of New Approaches to Literacy Instruction" (1992), reviews some recently published studies concerning teacher change. Courtland sees as one important sign of change the "paradigm shift to qualitative research designs and methods" (p. 33). Her explanation of why she considers this change positive includes the idea that qualitative research involves an attempt to understand what goes on in classrooms. Referring to the work of Nancie Atwell (1987) and Regie Routman (1988) and others in which they describe how they have changed the way they teach, Courtland says,

> These publications are a significant contribution to the field because they acknowledge the concerns that arise during implementation. One of their limitations is that they focus largely on the point at which the authors have arrived and offer fleeting glimpses of the authors' journeys (Courtland, 1992, p. 33).

The purpose of the interviews conducted for this study was to find out something about these teachers' individual journeys toward "whole language" and to discern what makes this approach feasible to these teachers. The interviews indicate that there are many paths to the practice of "whole language." It is hoped that these teachers' individual stories will help us understand how teachers come to some of the changed beliefs which underlie a shift from teaching reading with basal readers to using a "whole language" approach.

The interviews were conducted at different schools in various geographical locations. Quotation marks have been placed around the names of the people, schools, and places which were changed to protect the anonymity of those interviewed. The participants were advised of the purpose of the study, and they were told that they could elect to drop out of this study at any time. The interview procedure was informal and conversational with some variation according to the situation and the responses of the person being interviewed, a procedure recommended by both Michael Quinn Patton (1980) and I. E. Seidman (1991). All of the people interviewed had been classroom teachers, and four of them were still teaching in elementary schools. Two of the teachers were serving as language arts resource persons at the time I interviewed them, one was a curriculum coordinator, and one was a university professor.

Those educators who were working with teachers when interviewed also talked about how they have been able to help classroom teachers and preservice teachers understand how to help children learn to read.

The interviews were tape-recorded with the permission of the participants. My analysis began as I listened to and transcribed the tapes of the first four interviews I had conducted and began noting the similarities and commonalities I found in the different teachers' stories and related them to what I was reading in the literature about teacher change (Seidman, 1991). Looking for subjects, conducting the interviews, and transcribing and analyzing the data were all ongoing activities. During the course of this study I also attended professional conferences where I sought out sessions on the subject of change. In addition, I took advantage of opportunities to ask questions of knowledgeable colleagues and attended classes and support group meetings where "whole language" was being discussed. My written analysis is interspersed with the data presentation in these profiles, which are presented in Chapter IV.

Limitations of Study

This is a qualitative study. The people who agreed to be interviewed were selected from those teachers who came

to my attention, who were already engaged in helping children learn to read through a children's literature-based approach or who were in the process of changing to that approach. The way in which participants came to my attention was an important part of this study because of the use of networking among teachers who are engaged in "whole language." This will be demonstrated in Chapter III, when I describe how I became acquainted with these teachers.

Some information regarding number of years of teaching experience or approximate age of the person interviewed has been included at the beginning of each of the profiles. Their ages ranged from the mid-twenties to the mid-fifties, but all of these teachers had already had some experience teaching because I was looking for people who had begun to change their procedures based on their experience with teaching and their reflection on that experience. Five of the participants were female and three were male; all but one were Caucasian. None of the participants taught in large urban areas.

Organization of Study

Chapter II includes information about why publishers' basal reading programs are still predominantly used in the United States today. The advantages of "whole language"

are explained. Literature pertaining to the process of change which applies to the study of teachers who have changed the way in which they teach is reviewed. Reports written by educators advocating teacher research as a way of helping teachers reflect upon and improve their own teaching are reviewed, as well as reports of their own personal change written by individual educators.

Chapter III explains the methodology used in this study and how the study evolved. The information on which this study was based included participant observation during attendance at classes, seminars, and conferences; conversations with colleagues; and primarily, the tape-recorded interviews with teachers.

Chapter IV begins with an assessment of the views I held about the teaching of reading when this study began. The profiles of the eight teachers are presented next, interspersed with my analysis. Chapter V consists of my conclusions and recommendations. Information from the literature has been included throughout this study wherever it has seemed pertinent.

CHAPTER II

REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

Overview

Chapter II begins with a description of commercial reading materials, and an explanation of the shortcomings as well as the popularity of this commonly used method for teaching reading. Indications of the increased role of children's literature in reading instruction are noted. This is followed by a brief history of the whole language movement and its advantages as a way of helping children learn to read. What we have learned concerning the process approach to writing is explained with respect to how that knowledge has helped us understand how we can help children learn to read as well as to write. Studies supporting the use of children's literature in the teaching of reading and the developing body of research which supports whole language learning are also cited.

Theories about change in the culture of the school and the necessity for involving teachers in any change are discussed briefly as they relate to the whole language movement. The role of support groups and networking in transmitting information about whole language to teachers

is mentioned. The importance of what teachers believe, and how teachers' reflective practice and teacher research can sometimes influence and modify those beliefs, is also discussed. The change process as it applies to teachers who are examining their beliefs about teaching is discussed, and studies reporting on their own change by some individual teachers are cited.

Commercial Reading Materials

It is frequently reported that the most wide-spread method of teaching reading in use today is a system referred to as <u>basal readers</u> (Aaron, 1987; Goodman, Shannon, Freeman, & Murphy, 1988; Pearson, Roehler, Dole, & Duffy, 1992; Weaver, 1988). This term refers to publishers' prepackaged materials, written by reading consultants hired by publishers, which are planned to encompass every aspect of teaching children to read. These programs include grade-leveled books of reading selections sequenced so the vocabulary and skills are controlled. The book of readings is accompanied by a teacher's manual which is often "scripted," telling the teacher exactly what to do in each step of the lesson (Goodman et al., 1988). Other parts of these programs include workbooks and worksheets which provide additional activities and practice on skills, tests that may be used by the teacher and the school

district to determine whether the skills that were taught have been mastered, and management systems for keeping track of everything (Shannon, 1992). Most publishers offer systems that begin with readiness activities for children of kindergarten age and extend through the eighth grade.

Basal reading programs are sometimes described as skills-based (Pearson et al., 1992), meaning that they are based on the premise that mastering a hierarchical list of skills is an important part of learning to read; however, since consultants devising these lists do not agree on the hierarchy, the sequenced order of the lists of skills varies from publisher to publisher. In addition, the procedure used to develop vocabulary is based on the premise that children can read only those words that they have been "taught" or introduced to in the series, so each publisher's series has its own basic vocabulary, which also varies from one program to the next. This vocabulary concept requires that the stories in the readers be written using what is called a "controlled vocabulary," which sometimes results in language so stilted that it may seem more difficult to children, who may not recognize it as real language (Goodman, 1986b; Sorensen, 1991).

One disadvantage of using publishers' prepackaged materials which seems pertinent to this discussion has to do with the idea that only the teacher who knows his or her

students can plan appropriate instruction for them. William H. Teale, in an article titled "Language Arts for the 21st Century" (1989), cautions against the procedure of allowing textbooks and the tests which come with them to be used as curriculum. Teale writes,

> Following the directions in the teacher's manual of a basal reader or elementary English program is not compatible with the idea of a learner-centered curriculum. Commercial publishers can provide useful materials and suggestions for activities, but . . . a learner-centered language arts program must be created within particular communities of teachers and students (Teale, 1989, p. 12).

Predominance of Basal Readers

Much has been written about the predominance of basal readers in the United States. Early in the text of the book Report Card on Basal Readers, Goodman et al. (1988) state:

> Walk into any elementary classroom and there is a 90 percent chance that you will see students and teachers working with basal readers, workbooks, or teachers' manuals. Although not everyone supports this practice, it has been a fact of American education, and three generations have read from basals while attending school" (p. 3).

Later in the same chapter, Goodman et al. cite the statistics upon which this 90 percent figure is presumably based. Goodman et al. begin by saying that "the use of basal materials was almost universal in American schools by the 1960s" (p. 24), citing a study by Barton and Wilder (1964) which indicated basal reader use to be over 90

percent among the teachers surveyed in 300 schools. In the same paragraph, Goodman et al. also refer to a 1977 study which they attribute to the Educational Products Information Exchange, reporting the use of basal readers at 94 percent in a survey "of 10,000 elementary teachers in the 1970s" (Goodman et al., p. 24).

By citing these statistics from the 1960s and 1970s, Goodman et al. were laying the groundwork for their evaluation of basal readers. The preface to Report Card on Basal Readers states:

> It is the absolute dominance of basal readers that led the Commission on Reading of the National Council of Teachers of English [NCTE] to initiate this study into basal reading programs. This is a report to the profession and the general public (Goodman et al., 1988, p. iv).

Recommendations based on this study were made available as a position statement from the Commission on Reading of the NCTE, and Goodman also wrote a preliminary report for Language Arts titled "Basal Readers: A Call for Action" (1986b) which included this warning:

> The gap between the best knowledge in reading instruction and that represented in basal readers today is actually widening. Theory and research are moving in one direction and basals in another (Goodman, 1986b, p. 358).

The information provided in The Report Card on Basal Readers (Goodman et al., 1988), the Goodman (1986b) article reporting on that study, and the position statement were important contributions to the literature in 1988 (Routman, 1988; Weaver, 1990).

But one wonders how many of the recent citations referring to the predominant use of basal readers are actually based on statistics from the 1960s and 1970s. In an article titled "Children's Understandings of Basal Readers" (1989), David Bloome and Sonia Nieto refer to "an often cited statistic that basal readers are found in over 90 percent of United States elementary school classrooms" (p. 258). Bloome and Nieto then attribute this information to Goodman et al. (1988). Some authors refer to specific percentages of basal use but do not cite sources for their information; for example, "between 85 and 90 percent" (Aaron, 1987, p. 126), and "more than 90 percent" (Pearson et al., 1992, p. 146). In addition, some authors refer to the predominant use of basal readers but do not cite either specific figures or studies (Beck & Juel, 1992, p. 116; Shapiro, 1991, p. 325; Weaver, 1988, p. 272). It may not be possible to determine exactly how widespread the use of basal readers is in the early 1990s from these figures alone, but clearly the perception is that basal readers dominate reading instruction in the United States.

Why are basal readers perceived to be so popular? In an attempt to explain why basal readers are still used with frequency, in spite of their shortcomings, Goodman et al. (1988) point out that

> No one or two factors could impose such strict compliance on over 90 percent of any group who are spread across the country and are allowed to teach

> behind closed doors; that is, unless the group agreed with the practice in some way (Goodman et al., 1988, p. 40).

Patrick Shannon (1990b; 1992) and Kenneth Goodman (1992a; Goodman et al., 1988) have written about the history of basal readers and how they became so important in this country. Scientific management had come into vogue at the turn of the century as a way to increase the productivity of workers in factories, at a time when most teachers in the United States had a minimal professional education. It apparently seemed logical at the time to attempt to improve schools by providing teachers with manuals which would tell them exactly how to teach (Goodman et al., 1988). Because today's teachers have more years of schooling and preparation, there is no longer a need to provide them with explicit directions about how to teach, but publishers' basal reading programs have become so firmly entrenched that they are now difficult to replace (Pearson et al., 1992; Shannon, 1992).

In an article written by Patrick Shannon titled "Commercial Reading Materials, a Technological Ideology, and the Deskilling of Teachers" (1992), reprinted from Elementary School Journal (1987), Shannon summarizes research he conducted in 1982 to determine why teachers in this country rely so heavily on what he prefers to call "commercial reading materials" (1992, p. 183). Explaining that this term includes the "plethora of other workbooks,

worksheets, or kits that students are asked to complete daily" (p. 183), Shannon also refers to the "mystification" (p. 183) which surrounds these commercial reading materials. Shannon writes,

> The results of the investigation to identify subjective factors suggested that 445 teachers believed foremost that they were fulfilling administrative expectations when they used commercial materials" (1992, p. 187).

Shannon also found that there seemed to be a widely held opinion among teachers and administrators that commercial materials were an effective and efficient method for teaching reading. Shannon then makes the statement that

> To be sure, not all those concerned with reading instruction in the twentieth century have agreed that commercial reading materials are appropriate (Shannon, 1992, p. 185).

Indeed, as one reads about this subject, it becomes apparent that there are many differing viewpoints concerning the benefits to be gained by using basal reading programs. Goodman et al. (1988) discuss some of these varying positions and then write,

> What is most disturbing in all these examples of current reading experts' support for teachers' use of basals is the confusion caused by the contradiction between their criticism and their recommendations (Goodman et al., 1988, p. 32).

Although we are left with the fact that basal reading programs are still used in many schools, it is also clear that there has been an increase in the use of children's literature.

The Importance of Children's Literature

The authors of The Report Card on Basal Readers ask us "to consider the explosion of the whole field of literature for children and adolescents since basals made their appearance" (Goodman et al., 1988, p. 135). In a 1981 article in The Reading Teacher titled "25 Years Advocating Children's Literature in the Reading Program," Shirley Koeller points out that "until 1960, the volume of children's books published annually in the U.S. averaged about 1000 titles; after 1960, this number more than doubled" (p. 552). In CCBC Choices 1992, published by the Children's Cooperative Book Center in Madison, Wisconsin, Kathleen T. Horning, Ginny Moore Kruse, and Merri V. Lindgren (1993) "estimate that at least 4,500 new books were published in the United States for children and young adults during 1992" (p. 1). Horning et al. consider this a conservative estimate, not including reprints or paperback editions of previously published works. Given this increase in the number of books published for children, it is perhaps not surprising that many educators today recommend the inclusion of children's literature in reading programs, often as an enrichment where basal readers are still in use.

In a book edited by Bernice E. Cullinan, Children's Literature in the Reading Program (1987), Ira E. Aaron has

written an article titled "Enriching the Basal Reading Program with Literature." In it he makes the statement that "No basal series was ever intended to be a complete, self-contained reading program" (Aaron, 1987, p. 126). He then makes recommendations for adding literature to basal reading programs. In Exploring Literature in the Classroom: Content and Methods, edited by Karen D. Wood and Anita Moss (1992), one of the chapter titles poses the question, "Basal Readers and Literature: A Tight Fit or a Mismatch?" The chapter's authors, Diane Lapp, James Flood, and Nancy Farnan, advocate that teachers "use the basal and outside literary sources as complementary partners in a well-rounded reading program" (p. 42), and then they make recommendations to help teachers use both children's literature and a basal reading program. In the introduction to a text written for prospective K-8 teachers, Whole Language: Practice and Theory, Victor Froese considers it "rather ironic" (1991, p. 5) that textbooks, with such titles as Improving Basal Reading Instruction (Winograd, Wixzon & Lipson, 1989), are now being written which advocate the addition of literature to basal reading programs, presumably with the idea of bringing basal instruction "more in line with" (Froese, 1991, p. 6) whole language practice.

According to Cullinan, there are indications that literature-based reading programs are spreading "across the

country--not only through state departments of education but also in the classrooms of individual teachers as they gain power to make curriculum decisions" (1992b, p. 429). Cullinan first reported in School Library Journal (1989) the results of her December 1988 survey based on responses from 40 of the 50 Directors of Reading and Language Arts in the United States concerning how literature was being used in each state. Referring to this study again in a Language Arts article titled "Whole Language and Children's Literature" (1992b), Cullinan wrote,

> At that time [December 1988], 9 states had statewide initiatives centered on literature. Sixteen others had statewide initiatives focused on an integrated language arts program. . . . Further, 22 states that did not have statewide initiatives reported that at least 5 to 10 local districts used literature and whole language programs (p. 428-429).

Cullinan also reports that the American Association of Publishers (AAP) has hired a "full-time professional to coordinate efforts to get tradebooks into classrooms" (1992b, p. 429). According to Cullinan, an AAP survey of more than 5,000 elementary principals in 21 states indicates that

> More than 5 out of 10 elementary principals encourage their teachers to use children's books in conjunction with their reading textbooks. The survey shows that schools continue to move away from a skill-based reading philosophy, with 60% of principals describing their reading program as a literature-based, integrated language arts or whole language program (Cullinan, 1992b, p. 429).

Another reading textbook which reflects the current interest in "whole language" is the 3rd edition of Reading Strategies and Practices: A Compendium, by Robert J. Tierney, John E. Readance, and Ernest K. Dishner (1990). In it they state that whole language "represents a viewpoint rather than a set approach," . . . "a belief-driven approach that will and should vary" (p. 32). Tierney et al. explain that their decision to include information about whole language in this edition of their textbook for teachers and prospective teachers is based on "the attention that whole language received in the late eighties and the number of teachers who asked the question 'What is whole language?'" (p. 32).

There are also books appearing which suggest that it is possible to teach reading solely with children's literature, without relying on basal readers. Donna E. Norton has written The Impact of Literature-Based Reading (1992), stating in the preface that "the primary purpose of this book is to apply and integrate reading theory to literature-based practice" (p. vii). In a textbook titled Teaching Reading with Children's Literature, Carole Cox and James Zarillo (1993) write:

> Given their popularity, you might assume that skills-oriented, basal-dependent reading programs have proven themselves more effective than other ways of teaching children to read. Not so (p. 12).

Cox and Zarillo maintain that "ample evidence exists" (p. 12) that students can become competent readers by reading selections of children's literature.

Cox and Zarillo continue:

> We are presently in a time when an increasing number of teachers have rejected the basals and use literature-based instruction. This is an international phenomena. Under the label of whole language, teachers are letting children learn to read by reading in New Zealand, Australia, and Canada. In the United States, several states mandate literature-based instruction, and the number of teachers who believe that reading is acquired through use continues to grow" (1993, p. 12).

The Whole Language Movement

Kenneth S. and Yetta M. Goodman, in their introduction to the book Becoming a Whole Language School: The Fair Oaks Story (1989), reflect upon the origins of the whole language movement, which they refer to as "a recognized contemporary grassroots movement among teachers" (p. 3). The whole language movement in this country is remarkable because of the way it has spread from

> teacher to teacher in personal contacts, in teacher support groups, and in local conferences. Teachers are not only sharing their classroom innovations, they are collaborating with researchers and conducting their own research as they teach (Goodman, 1992a, p. 59).

The Goodmans (1989) suggest that they may have coined the term whole language and first used it in an occasional

paper they wrote in 1979. Finding it almost hard to believe that the idea could have spread so quickly and widely in such a short time, they point out the following:

> The concepts and essentials of whole language are rooted strongly in a view of learning and teaching that is centuries old. It treats children as effective learners, given meaningful and relevant experience. And it treats teaching as supportive of learning and not controlling (Goodman & Goodman, 1989, p. 3).

The Goodmans (1989) write that although "whole language as a movement is young, its roots are very old", sharing the humanistic principles of Francis Parker's "new education" and John Dewey's "progressive education" of the thirties and forties. They point out that it also "draws on the language experience movement" and takes "inspiration from open education" (p. 4). The Goodmans mention two major differences between the humanistic movements of the past and whole language: the first is that we are developing an understanding, based on research, of "how language works in human learning and thinking" (p. 5); and the other is that there is now a "growing multitude of informed professionals who are carrying whole language forward" (p. 6). The Goodmans add,

> All the other humanistic movements in education came down to the classroom from a few thinkers and movers in teacher education and administration. Often they were gone from the scene before these movements had been implemented broadly in classrooms (Goodman & Goodman, 1989, p.6).

The idea of using a children's literature approach to the teaching of reading, which is emphasized over basal readers in whole language classrooms, is not new (Duker, 1968, 1969; Miel, 1958; Rudman, 1976, 1984; Veatch, 1966, 1978, 1986). Jeanette Veatch promoted something she called individualized reading, involving self-selection of reading materials by students and the use of conferences between the teacher and individual students about what they were reading. Veatch's book, Reading in the Elementary School (1966, 1978) was for a long time the only textbook on the teaching of reading devoted entirely to this method (Cox & Zarillo, 1993). Cox and Zarillo (1993) discuss the historical roots of individualized reading, something they prefer to call self-selection. They write:

> Though there were always a few classrooms with thriving self-selection programs, by the mid-1970s this approach virtually died, but good ideas have a way of coming back. . . . The whole language philosophy has brought renewed interest in self-selection approaches to reading (Cox & Zarillo, 1993, p. 159).

Regie Routman, in her book Invitations: Changing as Teachers and Learners K-12 (1991), reminds us that "whole language is not just about giving up the basal" (p. 26). She argues that in whole language classrooms

> Teachers and students decide together what is worth knowing and how to come to know it. [Whole language] is about setting up a learning environment that is purposeful, authentic, and based on both the children's and teachers' needs and desires to know (Routman, 1991, p. 26).

The kind of learning environment to which Routman refers includes the teaching of writing and of reading as processes (Atwell, 1987; Feeley, 1991; Graves, 1983; Hansen, 1987).

Writing as a Process

In 1976 Donald Graves (1984) began a study for the Ford Foundation on the status of writing instruction being received by children in the U.S. based on concern that high school students were graduating without becoming proficient writers. Graves discovered that students were seldom being given the opportunity to write in school; instead they were being taught *about* writing. The elements of writing had been divided into separate subjects, such as grammar, penmanship, spelling, punctuation, speech, listening skills, and vocabulary development. The title Graves chose for his final report for the Ford Foundation was "Balance the Basics: Let Them Write" (1984). Then Graves and others began a study of children's writing in a school in New Hampshire which resulted in the publication in 1983 of the book *Writing: Teachers and Children at Work*. A simple explanation of Graves' findings would be to say that children learn to write by writing. Many educators now recommend and follow the suggestions contained in his book about teaching writing as a process. To perceive his

influence, one has only to look at the number of times Graves' name appears in the index of books about the teaching of writing and/or reading (Atwell, 1987; Cox & Zarillo, 1993; Feeley et al., 1991; Froese, 1991; Harste & Short, 1988; Rhodes & Dudley-Marling, 1988).

In a handbook written for the Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development, Planning and Assessing the Curriculum in English Language Arts, Stephen Tchudi (1991) refers to the study of writing as process as "the most successful recent development in English language arts teaching" (p. 13). According to Tchudi,

> The National Writing Project, under the leadership of James Gray at the University of California, Berkeley, . . . has developed inservice sites in every state in the union and in several other countries. In summer workshops, teachers exchange ideas and techniques for teaching writing, discuss the underlying theory and research supporting those ideas, and learn to conduct inservice programs for fellow teachers (p. 13).

Nancie Atwell describes what she gained from the summer program in which she enrolled in her book In the Middle: Writing, Reading, and Learning with Adolescents (1987):

> I chose Bread Loaf [School of English Program in Writing, Middlebury College, Middlebury, Vermont] because I thought its catalogue promised resources Boothbay Harbor couldn't offer, but when I got there, Dixie Goswami [Goswami & Stillman, 1987], my teacher, persisted in inviting me to become my own resource, to learn about writing firsthand by becoming a writer and researcher. All that summer I wrote, looked at how I wrote, and thought about what my discoveries meant for my kids as writers (Atwell, 1987, p. 9).

Atwell goes on to write about how she came to realize that the choices which she was encouraged to make "as a writer--deciding how, when, what, and for whom [she would] write--weren't options available to the writers" (p. 9) in her own classroom. Teachers who are encouraged to become writers themselves develop an appreciation for and an understanding of what they are asking their students to do. The advantages of similar writing workshop programs for teachers have been mentioned elsewhere (Atwell, 1990 & 1991; D'Arcy, 1989; Feeley et al., 1991; Goswami & Stillman, 1987; Graves, 1984). Graves has tried to help teachers learn to become writers through the activities he suggests in his book <u>The Reading/Writing Teacher's Companion: Discover Your Own Literacy</u> (1990).

Learning about Reading through Writing

When Jane Hansen (1987) accepted her first college-level teaching position at the University of New Hampshire in 1981, she joined Graves and other researchers in elementary school classrooms and "started to learn about reading through writing" (Hansen, 1987, p. 5). As reported above (see p. 4), Hansen's book, <u>When Writers Read</u>, explains how her beliefs about how children learn to read have changed since she was a classroom teacher in the mid-sixties and seventies. Hansen's reflections on why she now believes in doing things differently as a result of her new

understandings about how children and teachers learn are useful because of the connections she makes between practice and theory.

Some of Hansen's reflections help us understand the contrast between skills-based reading instruction and the meaning-based approach represented by whole language. Hansen points out how we frequently differentiate between reading for pleasure outside of school and reading instruction as it often takes place in schools. She asks us whether we remember, when we were children in school, encountering a list on the chalkboard of "work" to be completed during reading time. The assigned tasks frequently included workbook pages or duplicated sheets of skills drills. Often the last item on the list was something like "when you have finished your work, read a library book." Implied was the idea that reading children's literature was a luxury only afforded to those who had finished their "important" school work. Unfortunately, that usually meant that those children who did not finish their assignments early had limited opportunity to read for pleasure (Hansen, 1987). This distinction between the reading "work" of school and the pleasure of children's literature is one children learn to recognize in all too many classrooms (Sorensen, 1991).

Another of Hansen's anecdotes demonstrates that teachers, too, have to overcome their preconceptions of what is considered the work of school. Knowing that children get to be better at reading by reading, Hansen recommends dedicating time for reading daily. This practice encourages children to start long books because they know they will have time to continue reading the next day. Hansen tells of a fifth grade teacher who reported that she still felt "guilty," after a year and a half, when someone would visit her classroom during the time when her students were sitting all around the room "just reading" (Hansen, 1987).

Joan T. Feeley has written the introduction to "Part II: The Middle Elementary Years," for the book _Process Reading and Writing: A Literature-Based Approach_, edited by Feeley, Dorothy S. Strickland, and Shelley B. Wepner (1991). When Feeley makes recommendations about how classroom learning environments should be set up for children of the mid-elementary school years, she discusses a common feature of "whole language" classrooms: the teaching of writing and reading as processes. About the teachers who have written chapters for this part of the book, Feeley says,

> In general, they got caught up in the writing process movement of the 1980s and then moved naturally from developing writers through a process approach to developing readers in the same manner (p. 59).

Atwell (1987) first taught the process of writing through writing workshops, and then developed reading workshops as she realized that reading should be taught as a process, too. Sometimes teachers learn the process approach to reading first; for example, Routman (1988) relates how she began her move toward whole language with reading and then learned to teach writing as a process.

What Research Says about "Whole Language"

Recently there have been several reviews of research reporting on the advantages of literature-based approaches to the teaching of reading. In a study published in _The Reading Teacher_ in 1989, "Using 'Real' Books to Teach Reading: What Research Says about Literature-Based Reading Instruction," Michael O. Tunnell and James S. Jacobs review a number of studies which looked into various aspects of how reading children's literature influenced reading scores and children's opinions about reading. Tunnell and Jacobs conclude by writing, "at least, it is safe to say the basal reader is not the only way to successfully teach children to read" (1989, p. 477).

Another comprehensive review which also supports the use of children's literature in reading and writing programs was compiled by Lee Galda and Bernice Cullinan. Titled "Literature for Literacy: What Research Says About

the Benefits of Using Trade Books in the Classroom" (1991), it appears in the Handbook of Research on Teaching the English Language Arts (Flood, Jensen, Lapp, & Squire, 1991). Galda and Cullinan begin by citing studies which demonstrate the value of reading aloud to children at home and in school. They go on to describe studies which positively connect exposure to literature with language development, reading achievement, and becoming successful writers. Studies which describe literature-rich classrooms and teacher behaviors in helping children respond to books are also mentioned. The increased interest in research concerning the importance of children's literature is noted by the following observation:

> There are literally hundreds of articles by K-12 teachers that describe effective uses of trade books in their classrooms. . . . While these articles represent a different type of research, the sheer number of teachers saying the same thing, regardless of differences in demographics, student ability, grade level, and teacher styles, should at least be considered a strong indicator of the central place of literature in the development of literacy (Galda & Cullinan, 1992, p. 533).

Galda & Cullinan conclude by suggesting that "reading literature is a most effective way into literacy," and "being able to read literature is one basic reason for becoming literate and for making reading a lifelong habit" (p. 534).

In New Policy Guidelines for Reading: Connecting Research and Practice, a monograph jointly commissioned by

the National Council of Teachers of English (NCTE) and the Educational Resources Information Center (ERIC), Professor Jerome C. Harste (1989) makes recommendations for reading instruction based on two federally funded studies which thoroughly reviewed recent research on reading comprehension and instructional practice regarding the effective teaching of reading. Based on his review of the research, Harste lists twenty guidelines for improving the ways in which we help children learn to read. These guidelines and the theoretical rationale accompanying each of them are synonymous with many descriptions of "whole language" classroom practice. For example, Harste begins by recommending that teachers

> plan a reading curriculum which is broad enough to accomodate every student's growth, flexible enough to adapt to individual and cultural characteristics of pupils, specific enough to assure growth in language and thinking, and supportive enough to guarantee student success (p. 49).

In his explanation of how and why this guideline could or should be implemented, Harste talks about "open-ended" activities which allow "each student to participate regardless of previous experience or school level" (p. 49). Then Harste mentions "individual or group research projects, learner-centered literature study groups, and pen-pal letter exchange programs" (p. 49) as three examples of the kinds of open-ended activities which "allow students to take risks, to test their language hypotheses, and to proceed at their own rate" (p. 49).

Harste reminds us that although reading and writing are important, students should also be encouraged "to use speech, art, music, drama, and dance in their attempts to communicate and grow" (p. 50). Some of Harste's other recommendations include the provision of "a wide variety of materials and reading experiences" (p. 52) and the opportunity for children to make choices about what they will read and how they will respond to their reading. Children should be provided with "functional reading and writing environments", since "children learn to read by reading and and learn to write by writing" (p. 50). Children should also be invited to write about topics which interest them. Harste also recommends that "teachers should understand that how they teach is just as important as what they teach" (p. 52), and "effective administrators and school board members recognize teachers as learners and support their professional right to try to improve the status of literacy instruction" (p. 53).

For her book Research on Whole Language: Support for a New Curriculum, Diane Stephens (1991) located and examined research reports involving whole language practice. Stephens then annotated studies which "represented scholarly reflection rather than an anecdotal recollection of events," and "classroom descriptions or instructional programs [which] were consistent with whole language as philosophy" (p. 14). The characteristics which met

Stephens' definition of whole language included instances where children and teachers were engaged as learners, "learning was a social process," and "texts in use were whole" (p. 15). The studies Stephens included fell "into two categories: case studies of individual children, and descriptive and comparative classroom studies" (p. 15). Stephens explains that the length of each annotation depended on the length of the study; she tried to provide enough information to help a reader decide whether a particular study might be of sufficient interest to read in its original form. Stephens expresses the hope that descriptions of what goes on in actual classrooms will make it possible to compare classroom practice, enabling us to overcome misunderstandings which may have resulted from our use of different labels for the same practices. "Thirty-one of the thirty-eight studies cited . . . have been conducted since 1985; only one was published before 1980" (p. vii).

The second edition of What Research Has to Say about Reading Instruction, edited by S. Jay Samuels and Alan E. Farstrup (1992), includes an article by Ken Goodman (1992a) titled "Whole Language Research: Foundations and Development," reprinted from The Elementary School Journal (1989). Goodman makes connections between research and "what whole language is about, where it comes from, and what teachers and pupils in whole language classrooms do"

(Goodman, 1992a, p. 48). In an effort to demonstrate the importance of relating research and practice, Goodman uses as an example Charles Read's interest in young children's sense of phonology (Read, 1971). Goodman explains how Read "discovered, incidental to his intent, that children begin representing, in invented spellings, the sounds they hear in oral language" (Goodman, 1992a, p. 54). Goodman then describes the application of Read's work to practice:

> Teachers and researchers closer to the classroom recognized that this was an important developmental insight: children invent the spelling system just as they do other language systems. The concept fit well with the holistic view that language control develops in the context of its use. Furthermore, it supported the intuition of many teachers that pupils learn spelling without direct instruction if they read and write (Goodman, 1992a, p. 54).

Goodman provides other examples which help make his point that whole language is "solidly based on fundamental research on language, learning, literacy development, and the relationship of teaching to learning" (p. 62). Goodman calls our attention to the idea that "there are no teachers today who were themselves learners in whole language classrooms" (p. 66). For this reason it seems particularly important to Goodman that whole language teachers have the support of research as they build a philosophy on which they will make "instructional decisions and planned innovations" (p. 67). Goodman also calls upon more teachers to become involved in classroom research by documenting what they do in their own classrooms.

The first two reviews of literature mentioned here (Tunnell & Jacobs, 1989; Galda & Cullinan, 1991) document the benefits of using children's literature in the classroom to help children learn to read. The studies by Stephens (1991) and Goodman (1992a) examine whole language practices, and Harste's (1989) recommendations for improving the teaching of reading comprehension are consistent with whole language practices. All five of these studies concern ways of teaching which represent a change from the procedures by which most teachers were themselves taught when they were students in school. In the following paragraphs I examine some of the difficulties of implementing change in schools.

Difficulty of Implementing Change in Schools

Experts in the field of education have been writing about the difficulty of improving schools for a long time. In his book, The Culture of the School and the Problem of Change (1971, 1982), Seymour Sarason discusses the difficulty of implementing change in the complex social organization schools have become. Change is, of course, possible, but it has always been difficult to effect because a change in one area has implications for other aspects of the school. Sarason makes the point that for change to be effected in schools, teachers will have to be involved (Sarason, 1982). In a more recent book, The

Predictable Failure of Educational Reform: Can We Change Course Before It's Too Late? (1990), Sarason takes issue with two conditions which he feels are problematic in our public schools. The first is that we have for too long considered as a given the idea that schools exist for children, ignoring the fact that they should also exist for the teachers who share classrooms with children. Sarason feels that teachers want to be involved in improving themselves professionally, and that schools would be more conducive to learning if we accepted the axiom that schools exist for teachers as well as for children. Sarason's second point is that many students have learned from experience to perceive school as a separate, different place from the real world. According to Sarason, children find school to be a boring place because teachers in general do not capitalize on the innate curiosity of children; any interest youngsters have in learning is often destroyed when they enter the world of school (Sarason, 1990).

I raise these issues here because the whole language movement addresses some of Sarason's concerns. Children in whole language classrooms enjoy school and are encouraged to explore their environment (Harste, 1989). Teachers in whole language classrooms are also engaged in learning and discovery for themselves as they observe and grow with their students (Harste, 1989). In an epilogue to the book

they edited, Feeley et al. (1991) point out that the teachers and administrators who speak through the pages of their book

> are concerned about children's developmental needs, interests, and choices, and they want them to learn to read through authentic experiences with the world of print, especially through exposure to fine literature (p. 251).

Feeley et al. go on to explain that although many of the teachers who contributed to their book are now "informed by a wealth of research-based information on how children learn," many "started in small ways" (p. 253) and then shared that information with other teachers. Among teachers who have begun to move toward "whole language," there seems to be a camaraderie exemplified by a willingness to share ideas and procedures openly (Goodman & Goodman, 1989; Routman, 1988).

Networking and Support Groups

The idea of people networking to share ideas about a topic in which they have a common interest is not a recent phenomenon. F. Wilfrid Lancaster, writing in 1979 for students in the field of information storage and retrieval, described sociometric studies demonstrating the informal transfer of information within communities of scientists and researchers (Lancaster, 1979). "The informal communication network existing in a professional field is frequently referred to as an 'invisible college'"

(Lancaster, 1979, p. 302). Calling these networks "a very effective form of information transfer," Lancaster goes on to explain that in many fields "information on the results of current research spreads through the invisible college network long before the research is reported in the more formal channels of communication," such as professional journals (1979, p. 305).

One way in which teachers learning about whole language have been involved in networking has been in subscribing to newsletters which disseminate information about this grassroots movement. For example, Teachers Networking, a whole language newsletter, has been published quarterly by Richard C. Owen Publishers since 1988. Founded by Debra Jacobson, this newsletter has become a forum for teachers to ask questions and have them answered; it serves as a place for proponents of the whole language movement to look for inspiration as well as practical ideas for use in the classroom. Each issue includes a "Whole Language Calendar" concerning upcoming events. Educators can also read in Teachers Networking about joining The Whole Language Umbrella (WLU). This organization has grown so that it now consists of almost 500 local support groups, often having some version of Teachers Applying Whole Language (TAWL) as part of their names. According to Goodman (1992b), "the first two annual conferences of the WLU had a capacity crowd of 2300 in St. Louis and Phoenix

in 1990 and 1991" (p. 354). "The Whole Language Umbrella" also puts out its own newsletter.

Another form of networking takes place at local, state and national meetings of such groups as the International Reading Association (IRA) and the National Council of Teachers of English (NCTE). In the book Becoming a Whole Language School: The Fair Oaks Story, Lois Bridges Bird (1989) writes about the staff at Fair Oaks, "We attend local, state, and national conferences to update our knowledge and teach others through our own presentations" (p. 136). Thus, these national conventions serve as a place for information about whole language classroom practices to be shared. One has only to look at recent programs from conventions of either IRA or NCTE to see how many presentations are being given on this subject. Opportunities are also provided at these meetings for educators to meet with each other as members of interest groups within the larger organization and as members of such umbrella groups as TAWL.

The individual support groups, many of which have joined together in the Whole Language Umbrella, are one of the most important ways in which teachers spread information to each other about whole language. In Constance Weaver's book, Reading Process and Practice (1988), Dorothy Watson and Paul Crowley have written a

chapter titled, "How Can We Implement a Whole-Language Approach?" Watson and Crowley report that "throughout Canada and the United Sates, whole-language teachers are meeting together for the purpose of encouraging and informing each other" (Watson & Crowley, 1988, p. 276). The book Supporting Whole Language, edited by Constance Weaver and Linda Henke (1992), includes a chapter by Nancy Mack and Ella Moore titled "Whole Language Support Groups: A Grassroots Movement." Mack & Moore feel that the goal of small support groups is not to increase their membership, but "to foster the personal growth of group members. These groups want to stay small in order to encourage sharing and group solidarity" (Mack & Moore, 1992, p. 115).

In a book edited by Gay Su Pinnell and Myna L. Matlin, Teachers and Research: Language Learning in the Classroom (1989), Dorothy Watson and Margaret T. Stevenson have more to say about the purpose of support groups:

> Educators in change need support and encouragement. . . . In other words, even in the most professional settings, teachers need one another to stay informed and to remain on the cutting edge of knowledge and practice (Watson & Stevenson, 1989, p. 121).

Teachers' Changing Beliefs

There are a number of teachers and authors of books about whole language who have shown a willingness to share much of what they have learned about process teaching with

others, including ideas for classroom activities, and some of this sharing occurs in support groups. However, it is common for these educators to suggest to other teachers that most of the ideas will have to be "modified in accordance with teachers' individual styles and the unique needs of each of their students" (Rhodes & Dudley-Marling, 1988, p. xii). In the beginning of her book Transitions: From Literature to Literacy (1988), Regie Routman explains her purpose in describing and sharing with others "an existing program that has worked well for teachers and children" (1988, p. 14) in her district. Routman writes,

> My suggestions are not prescriptions. Ultimately, it is up to the teacher to decide what can be implemented, and how it can be utilized and modified to fit a personal teaching style and philosophy (Routman, 1988, p. 14).

In his foreword to Judith M. Newman's book, Finding Our Own Way: Teachers Exploring their Assumptions, John S. Mayher (1990a) says of the teachers who have written for that book, "They want us to learn with and from them." But then Mayher cautions us against thinking "that the experience of one teacher can be transferred unchanged to the classroom of another" (Mayher, 1990a, p. xv).

Newman, in her introduction to the same book (1990), explains that engaging in whole language activities does not ensure "an open, learner-directed classroom" (p. 2). She writes,

> Creating a whole language learning environment demands more. It requires that we engage in an ongoing reexamination of our beliefs and assumptions about learning and teaching. . . . The fact is, all too often our instructional practices contradict the beliefs we espouse (Newman, 1990, p. 2).

According to Routman, our philosophy of education is reflected in "what we say to children, what we expect from them, and how we teach and conduct ourselves" (1988, p. 25). Our philosophy, in part, is based on our experiences and will be "different for each of us" (Routman, 1988, p. 25). Routman adds,

> If we are able to articulate our philosophy and beliefs, then we have the capacity to examine, reflect, refine, and change, and we can listen to new ideas with some frame of reference to evaluate them (Routman, 1988, p. 25).

The book Bridges to Literacy: Learning from Reading Recovery, edited by Diane E. DeFord, Carol A. Lyons, and Gay Su Pinnell (1991), explains how the Reading Recovery program originated by Marie Clay in New Zealand was brought to Ohio and implemented successfully there. The introduction to this book provides the following explanation, which includes a quote from Marie Clay:

> The Reading Recovery program is described by Marie Clay as a "prevention strategy designed to reduce dramatically the number of children with reading and writing difficulties in an education system" (Clay, 1987, p. 36). To accomplish this goal, the program operates on several levels within a given educational system (DeFord et al., 1991, p. 2).

DeFord et al. then list the kinds of change encouraged by Reading Recovery, beginning with "change on the part of

teachers . . . [and] children" (DeFord et al., 1991, p. 2). The authors also suggest that "organizational changes in schools [must be] achieved by teachers, parents, and administrators" (p. 2). This book includes useful information on change, but I will mention only some of its findings here.

In an article titled "Teachers and Children Learning," Gay Su Pinnell (1991) describes a study of the theoretical shifts teachers went through during the year they spent learning to become Reading Recovery teachers. Pinnell discusses the kinds of things teachers paid attention to as they went through this staff training. Pinnell found that during various periods of this program, teachers focused on different aspects of their learning. At the beginning of the training, participants were interested in the "logistics of implementing a new program" (p. 179), and regardless of what topic was scheduled for discussion, the teachers returned to procedural concerns. This "surface-level focus continued for several months" (p. 180). Pinnell explains that when the "teachers became comfortable with their teaching, they began to focus on their discoveries and insights" (p. 180). They did this by relating anecdotes about individual children to illustrate how they, as teachers, were understanding the children's learning. Eventually, near the end of the training year, they reached a stage when they "began to generalize and to

make theoretical statements and hypotheses" (p. 180). When Janet Hickman (1991) spoke about these same issues in a research colloquium at the International Reading Association convention, she talked about how shortening the length of the Reading Recovery training program to two weeks (from its usual year in length) didn't work because teachers were left at the procedural level without having made a shift in theory.

In another article appearing in the book, Bridges to Literacy (DeFord et al., 1991), Daniel P. Woolsey discusses "Changing Contexts for Literacy Learning: The Impact of Reading Recovery on One Teacher." He reports on one teacher's "dramatic changes in theory and in practice" (Woolsey, 1991, p. 190). Describing the teacher, Sue Anderson, as having been skills-based at the beginning of his two year study, Woolsey documents her "dilemma" as her beliefs about teaching "were being challenged by her work with Reading Recovery and her other university classes" (p. 197). Woolsey's description of Sue's eventual change away from using basal readers demonstrates that her progress was not even; she went back and forth between her old approach to teaching reading and her new understandings of literacy. Woolsey points out that many forces were at work in the change he documented by observing this one teacher, but he feels that he gained insights in understanding change from the work of George Kelly, A Theory of Personality: The

Psychology of Personal Constructs (1955). Woolsey explains:

> Like other theorists (e.g., Piaget, Britton, F. Smith, J. Bruner) Kelly posited that to be human is constantly to seek to make sense of our experience of the world. He argued that personal constructs are the templates with which we shape and organize our representations of that experience (Woolsey, 1991, p. 201).

Woolsey concludes that "change is seldom painless or quick" and that people in a position to support teachers who are undergoing change need to be "sensitive to other forces and pressures that affect literacy instruction" (p.203).

In their book Learning Change: One School District Meets Language Across the Curriculum, Nancy B. Lester and Cynthia S. Onore (1990) also refer to "the role of personal constructs" in effecting change:

> Substantial change is exceedingly complex. It is individual as well as social, personal as well as collective, historical as well as experimental. We believe that teachers' personal construct systems can be both a support for change and an inhibitor for change (p. 205).

Lester and Onore go on to explain that because a teacher's core construct is difficult to make contact with, it is even harder to alter, although they are aware that "teachers' personal construct systems reveal who they are now and what they might become" (Lester & Onore, 1990, p. 205).

Carol M. Santa, in a chapter titled "Teaching as Research" (1990), in the book Opening the Door to Classroom

Research (Olson, 1990), has written about the process of helping teachers change the way in which they teach reading and writing. Santa's experience is from the perspective of serving as a curriculum coordinator in Kalispell, Montana. She begins her chapter by saying, "Change is always difficult," and she then goes on to point out that "breaking instructional tradition creates discomfort in societies that generally prefer the status quo" (Santa, 1990, p. 64). She makes the following points:

> The first step in creating an environment for change is to involve teachers in the process. . . . The next step in creating change is to have the proper attitude at higher administrative levels (Santa, 1990, p. 64-65).

Teachers Learning from Classroom Research

An important source of information concerning teachers who are aware of how their beliefs about teaching and learning are changing lies in the teacher/researcher movement. Several recent publications combine the words teacher or teachers and research or researcher in the title (Daiker & Morenberg, 1990; Goswami & Stillman, 1987; Mohr & MacLean, 1987; Newkirk, 1992; Patterson, Stansell, & Lee, 1990; Pinnell & Matlin, 1989). I have examined these books for information concerning the ways in which teacher research contributes to a changed way of teaching.

"The Teacher as Researcher: Democracy, Dialogue, and Power" by James A. Berlin appears first in a collection of

essays edited by Donald A. Daiker and Max Morenberg, The Writing Teacher as Researcher: Essays in the Theory and Practice of Class-Based Research (1990). Berlin praises another collection of essays, one edited by Dixie Goswami and Peter R. Stillman, Reclaiming the Classroom: Teacher Research as an Agency for Change (1987). Berlin points out the possibilities for "a new conception of the classroom teacher, defined in terms of a particular notion of research, as an agent for effecting change." Berlin suggests that teacher research might be a way for teachers to gain "the power to control their pedagogical activities" (Berlin, 1990, p. 3).

After discussing some of the criticisms being leveled at schools for the job they are currently perceived as doing with regard to educating students, Berlin suggests that the "potential" for

> bringing about worthwhile change resides in regarding all teachers as researchers. In other words, each and every teacher is to be considered responsible for researching her [sic] students, and doing so in order to improve the quality of student learning . . . by using research methods that will identify their characteristics as learners (Berlin, 1990, p. 9).

Berlin explains that the research methods he thinks are appropriate for this task are the "methods of ethnographic studies in anthropology, especially as demonstrated in Shirley Brice Heath's work" (1983) as well as the "experimental studies" of such people as Donald

Graves, Lucy Calkins, Nancie Atwell, and Dixie Goswami (Berlin, p. 9).

In a section of the Goswami & Stillman work titled "Classroom Inquiry: What Is It?", Nancy Martin (1987) writes about the implications of classroom research for teachers.

> Teachers need not wait for inquiries to be initiated by others. They can ask the questions that arise from their own classrooms, . . . and modify their teaching in accordance with what they find (Martin, 1987, p. 23).

The works I have mentioned so far are interesting and applicable to teacher change, but the researchers who have written the essays in those books (Daiker & Morenberg, 1990; Goswami & Stillman, 1987) are mostly teachers of writing who teach on the secondary or college level. However, other educators have also written on this subject. Marian M. Mohr and Marion S. MacLean have written Working Together: A Guide for Teacher-Researchers (1987), and Leslie Patterson, John C. Stansell, and Sharon Lee have written Teacher Research: From Promise to Power (1990). Both of these books provide recommendations for teachers who wish to get started in the process of classroom research, and they both also include some examples of research done by individual teachers. Mohr and MacLean describe the benefits to be gained from classroom research:

> As they begin to think of themselves as researchers, teachers are moved to redefine their roles as

> teachers. As their research becomes integrated into their teaching, their definition of teacher-researcher becomes teacher--a teacher who observes, questions, assists, analyzes, writes, and repeats these actions in a recursive process that includes sharing their results with their students and with other teachers (Mohr & MacLean, 1987, p. 4.).

In a book she edited, Opening the Door to Classroom Research (1990a), Mary W. Olson has written a chapter titled "The Teacher as Researcher: A Historical Perspective" (1990b). Here Olson recounts the history of the teacher as researcher movement, pointing out that "the idea has appeared with some regularity throughout this century" (1990b, p. 16). Addressing the "lack of scientific rigor" criticism which has sometimes been leveled at teacher-conducted studies, Olson points out that "critics are usually arguing from an experimental paradigm" perspective (1990b, p. 16). Olson goes on to explain that when teachers "conduct qualitative or quasiexperimental studies . . . they do not assume that their findings are generalizable" (1990b, p. 16-17).

Then Olson makes an important point:

> When teachers investigate questions, their purpose is to gain a deeper understanding of the teaching/learning process in their [emphasis added] classrooms, not necessarily to gain answers that can be generalized to other classrooms (Olson, 1990b, p. 17).

Jerome C. Harste, in his foreword to the same book writes that

> Learning is the premise underlying the teacher as researcher movement, and inquiry is the invitation. The movement begins with curiosity and is fueled by learning (Harste, 1990, p. vii).

Suggesting that "too frequently, education seems better at silencing children and teachers than it is at listening to them," Harste proclaims that

> this is why the whole language movement and the teacher as researcher movement have joined hands. . . . The teacher as researcher movement is an attempt to hear from teachers and to support them in the development of their own voices (Harste, 1990, p. vii-viii).

In his summary of the book Olson edited, "Commentary: Teachers Are Researchers," Patrick Shannon (1990a) talks about the learning about teaching that takes place as a result of teacher research, as evidenced by the reports written by individual teachers which have been included in that volume. Suggesting that "practice should lead theory," Shannon explains:

> Since theory arises from the work of teachers and students in classrooms, teacher/researchers' contributions to . . . theories about appropriate teacher action and about how students learn to read at school [should] come from the classroom and not from publishers or universities (Shannon, 1990a, p. 148).

The chapter Carol S. Avery (1990) has written for the Olson book is titled "Learning to Research/Researching to Learn." Avery credits Janet Emig, Donald Graves, Glenda Bissex, Lucy Calkins, and Nancie Atwell with being her models for teacher research--people who were also mentioned by Berlin (1990) when he discussed the same thing. Avery

(1990) has written about the changes in her teaching which resulted from her classroom research:

> My process of questioning, observing, documenting, and learning in my classroom began the year I abandoned the basal reader and began teaching language skills through daily reading and writing workshops. I was excited, nervous, and anxious. How would these children learn to read without going through all the workbooks, worksheets, and prescribed lessons of a sequenced program? What if they didn't learn to read? (Avery, 1990, p. 34).

Explaining that her "concerns produced a need to examine everything that was happening in the classroom" (p. 34), Avery added that

> During that first year of teaching without the basal, I watched closely. Because the children were not all completing the same workbook pages or reading the same story, I discovered individual learning processes emerging. . . .
>
> Teaching was more exciting than it had ever been. I was no longer implementing someone else's instructional program, instead, I was developing a response mode of teaching based on the needs of learners (Avery, 1990, p. 34).

Another conclusion Shannon (1990a) draws from Avery's writing is that she "suggests that learning, rather than teaching is the process being observed" (Shannon, 1990a, p. 147). Avery has "read extensively and applied the theories and concepts" she has read about to her teaching. As a result she knows

> that a lot of learning is going on in my classroom, and I have documentation to prove it. What's more, that documentation is far more complete than any test scores (Avery, 1990, p. 43).

> . . . As a classroom teacher, I am a practitioner. As a teacher/researcher, I realize that I am also a theorist. . . . Theory informs my practice. There is not only the educational research theory of noted experts in the field, but there is also my own theory that grows out of observing and reflecting on what occurs in my classroom. (Avery, 1990, p. 43-44).

> . . . Now theory informs my practice in the classroom, and classroom practice informs my theory making. I continue to research, rethink, and revise. I develop patterns of learning for myself that influence my teaching. . . . I have learned to be a learner (Avery, 1990, p. 44).

Teachers Learning from Reflecting on Practice

Avery's reflections on how her classroom practice has been informed and transformed by what she has learned provide a marvelous example of what we can learn from our own experiences. In his book The Meaning Makers: Children Learning Language and Using Language to Learn, Gordon Wells (1986) discusses how important it is for each of us to make our own meaning because "the only valid answers are the ones that individual teachers construct in the light of their knowledge of themselves, their students, and the setting--colleagues, school systems, and community--in which they work" (p. 220).

The connection between teaching and learning has frequently been mentioned in the literature. Judith Wells Lindfors asked a question about learning vs. teaching in the title of an article she wrote for Language Arts nearly

a decade ago: "How Children Learn or How Teachers Teach? A Profound Confusion" (1984). Lindfors relates four personal encounters which helped her realize that when a teacher has taught or "covered" something, that does not necessarily mean that the recipient of the "teaching" learned something. Lindfors called for us to begin "distinguishing between the time-honored instructional activities of teachers, and the timeless sense-making processes of children" (Lindfors, 1984, p. 605).

In a recent issue of Teachers Networking: The Whole Language Newsletter, Pat Cordeiro (1992) reflects on "Becoming a Learner Who Teaches." She recalls that her perception in the late 1960s was that "the children were supposed to be the learners and I was supposed to be the teacher" (p. 4). Cordeiro thinks she was not alone in having those beliefs when she started teaching, but then she came "to the full realization that the person who had the most to learn in my classroom was me" (p. 4). Referring to the term "reflective practitioner" as one currently used in education, Cordeiro writes the following:

> To practice reflectively is not necessarily to see myself as a learner. I can practice reflectively without making any change at all or learning anything from the reflection (Cordeiro, 1992, p. 4).

Cordeiro then discusses the importance of "defining ourselves as lifelong learners who teach," recognizing "the

need to start where the learner is by starting where we are ourselves" (Cordeiro, 1992, p. 4).

The benefits to be derived by teachers reflecting on their teaching have been suggested before. Vito Perrone, in his book _A Letter to Teachers_ (1991), credits Bussis, Chittenden, and Amarel (1976) with elaborating on John Dewey's ideas of teacher empowerment. Recommending reflection on teaching as a very important procedure for a teacher wishing to evaluate his/her own efforts, Perrone writes:

> Dewey, Bussis, Chittenden, and Amarel are essentially placing the power of _reflection_ before us, that process of stepping back, looking again, gaining added perspective and insight, greater understanding. Reflection of this kind can occur through individual or group thought (Perrone, 1991, p. 86).

Perrone feels that when teachers use journal writing to reflect on their own teaching, they begin to ask themselves questions about their practices. Explaining that his ideas are in part based on the work of Bussis, Chittenden, and Amarel (1976), Perrone establishes two assumptions:

> First, that the quality of teachers' understandings influences to a large degree what teachers do in the classroom.
>
> Second, that the best source for teachers to learn more about teaching and learning, growth and development of children, materials and methods, is through an examination of their own practices in their own classrooms (Perrone, 1991, p. 100).

In her book, Enquiring Teachers: Enquiring Learners, Catherine Twomey Fosnot (1989) lauds Eleanor Duckworth's "teacher as researcher" model of teacher education, in which Duckworth (The Having of Wonderful Ideas and other Essays on Teacher Education, 1987) explains her goal of developing empowered professionals by encouraging her students "to question and research children's understandings of concepts, then reflect on the logic used in reaching such understanding" (Fosnot, 1989, p. 13). Duckworth has her preservice teacher education students do this through reflective writing.

Georgea Mohlman Sparks-Langer and Amy Berstein Colton have written a "Synthesis of Research on Teachers' Reflective Thinking" which appeared in the March 1991 issue of Educational Leadership. They discuss three elements of teachers' reflective thinking, the first two of which are

> the cognitive element, which describes how teachers process information and make decisions . . ., [and]
>
> the critical element, [which] focuses on the substance that drives the thinking--experiences, goals, values, and social implication. . . . (Sparks-Langer & Colton, 1991, p. 37).

"The final element of reflection," which pertains to this literature review, involves "teachers' narratives [and] refers to teachers' own interpretations of the events that occur within their particular contexts" (Sparks-Langer & Colton, 1991, p. 37). These authors list as two major

benefits from these narratives the insights into the motivations for teachers' actions and "detailed cases of teaching dilemmas" (p. 42). But then Sparks-Langer and Colton conclude that "the third, and most valuable benefit is the insight gained by teachers themselves as a result of this self-inquiry" (1991, p. 43).

Mary Clare Courtland, in her article titled "Teacher Change in the Implementation of New Approaches to Literacy Instruction" (1992), reviews research in which insights were gained about how change could be promoted and supported as the result of examining how teachers taught writing differently after having enrolled in process writing workshops themselves. Courtland also reports on the research which she has done with others involving ethnographic studies of teachers undergoing a changed way of teaching writing.

Courtland (1992) mentions several factors influencing change which were uncovered by her research and that of others:

> Studies of implementation and teacher change suggest that a constellation of factors such as time, ongoing support at school and system levels, teacher ownership, and collaboration among institutions and individuals are essential to successful change (Courtland, 1992, p. 34).

Courtland goes on to say that

> Studies of teachers' experience with change illustrate the unique dimensions of their stories. Teachers bring to a change effort personal histories, talents,

> skills, and ways of learning. The classroom contexts and teachers' work environments also influence change (Courtland, 1992, p. 34).

Courtland also sees as "signs of change" the accounts written by and about teachers which depict the problems encountered during implementation of language programs and the strategies used to resolve them" (Courtland, 1992, p. 34). Courtland cites some of the same authors I have already mentioned, such as Nancie Atwell and Regie Routman. She also talks about the work of Judith Newman. In _Finding Our Way: Teachers Exploring Their Assumptions_ (1990), Newman has edited the stories of some of her graduate students' personal stories of change. In another book, _Interwoven Conversations: Learning and Teaching Through Critical Reflection_ (1992), Newman reflects on her own journey toward a changed way of teaching.

Categories of Research Cited on Teacher Change

Much of the information I have discussed relating to how teachers change the ways in which they teach reading as they move from using basal readers to using children's literature in their classrooms falls into three main categories. The first category includes recommendations on how to promote change in others, written by staff developers and other educators who have had experience observing or helping teachers with the change process

(Lester & Onore, 1990; Pinnell, 1991; Santa, 1990; and Woolsey, 1990). This category also includes comments from teacher educators who make recommendations on the value of reflecting on teacher research based on their experience working with teachers and preservice students (Fosnot, 1989; Harste, 1990; Perrone, 1991; and Shannon, 1990a).

The second category includes works which explain the teacher researcher movement and how to become involved in classroom inquiry and reflection on practice as a means for change (Berlin, 1990; Goswami & Stillman, 1987; Mohr & MacLean, 1987; Olson, 1990a; and Patterson et al., 1990).

The final category includes reflections made by individual educators who explain their own change (Avery, 1990; Cordeiro, 1992; Hansen, 1987; Routman, 1988).

The reflections engaged in by each of the teachers I interviewed, as they recalled how they had changed the way they taught reading, were an important part of this study. There is something to be learned about teacher change from the information imparted in all of the literature cited here, but it seems particularly relevant that so many educators value the importance of reflection as a way of promoting change.

CHAPTER III

METHODOLOGY AND EVOLUTION OF THE INVESTIGATION

Introduction

> I hope that by sharing the story of what happened and how my philosophy, methods, goals, and expectations have evolved and still continue to change, other teachers and administrators will make their own transitions toward more child-centered, literature-based reading and writing (Routman, 1988, p. 10).

This study examines several teachers', specialists', and college teachers' reflections on their changed thinking and teaching procedures as they moved toward "whole language." I refer to all of these people as teachers whether they work with children or other teachers. The study presents the stories told by these teachers of their personal journeys as they evolved toward an approach to helping children learn to read that included children's literature. These stories uncover some patterns which may also be found in the paths other teachers follow when making transitions in their teaching as they grow professionally.

According to Michael Quinn Patton, "researchers using qualitative methods strive to understand phenomena and

situations as a whole" (Patton, 1980, p. 40). John Lofland suggests that through qualitative research, the researcher is able to

> provide an orderly presentation of rich, descriptive detail. He [or she] can move close to a social setting and bring back an accurate picture of patterns and phenomenological reality as they are experienced by human beings in social capacities (Lofland, 1971, p. 59).

Along the same lines, Patton says,

> Qualitative data consist of detailed descriptions of situations, events, people, interactions, and observed behaviors; direct quotations from people about their experiences, attitudes, beliefs, and thoughts. . . . Qualitative data provide depth and detail [which] emerge through direct quotation and careful description. The extent of depth and detail will vary depending upon the nature and purpose of a particular study (Patton, 1980, p. 22).

The information on which this study is based was gathered in several ways: notes from participant observation during attendance at classes, seminars, conferences, and various meetings; conversations with knowledgeable colleagues; review of the literature; and primarily, tape-recorded interviews with selected teachers.

Background of the Researcher

My observations of teacher change began in 1986 when I started doctoral studies at the University of Massachusetts where I had enrolled because of my interest in the role of children's literature in education. Thirty years before

that I had taught elementary school for six years. During the time I stayed home to rear my own three children, I took them to the public library, read to them, and shared my love of children's literature with them, thereby increasing my familiarity with that literature. Then I worked in the library resource center of an open elementary school for twelve years and directed media services at a middle school for an additional year. During my years as a teacher/librarian I attended many children's literature conferences. Eventually I earned a Masters' degree in library science.

This personal background provided an important perspective which influenced the focus of the investigation as well as the selection of the methodology for this study. "Accidents of current biography may give you physical and/or psychological access to social settings" for qualitative research, and "such access becomes the starting point for meaningful naturalistic research . . . when it is accompanied by some degree of interest or concern" (Lofland & Lofland, 1984, p.7). Naturalistic research refers to starting where you are, or where you have a natural reason to be present (Lofland & Lofland, 1984).

My background, interest, and the setting in which I found myself contributed to my ability to do this qualitative study. For example, my previous experience in

education as a collaborator with teachers in a school library resource center made it possible to assess such things as the quality, developmental level, and curricular use of children's literature in a particular classroom. Beth Alberty describes this advantage by suggesting that "we come to new settings with prior knowledge, experience and ways of understanding, and our new perceptions build on these" (1980, p. 292).

The Researcher as Participant Observer

A course in psycholinguistics and reading which I took in the fall of 1986 probably started my thinking about teacher change. An important part of the course involved the reading and subsequent discussion of Frank Smith's Understanding Reading (1986). In addition, we read Ken Goodman's What's Whole in Whole Language (1986a) and many journal articles about whole language and the reading process. My background and previous experience helped me understand and accept the ideas which were being discussed, but I noticed that some people in the class were not so easily convinced. All of the participants were asked by the instructor to react in writing to what we read and then bring those written responses to class where we discussed the readings and our reactions to them.

It was then that I first began to consider myself a participant observer, and I made note of my own response to the ideas presented in that course. My recollections of the perceptions I held at the time are discussed more thoroughly at the beginning of Chapter IV. I also found myself particularly intrigued by the comments of a few teachers who seemed to question many of the ideas presented in that class. Later when I had the opportunity to interview one of those teachers, "Jean," it was helpful to me that I could recall how she had seemed to be wrestling with the ideas we were both being exposed to when I first met her, and we discussed those feelings during the interview.

Many researchers have written about participant observation in its various forms as a method of gathering data (Lofland & Lofland, 1984; Patton, 1980; Spradley, 1980). James P. Spradley points out that researchers probably experience "the highest level of involvement . . . when they study a situation in which they are already participants" (1980, p. 61). Patton describes the participant observer as being "fully engaged in experiencing the setting under study while at the same time trying to understand that setting through personal experience, observations, and talking with other participants about what is happening" (1980, p. 127).

During the semester I took the course in psycholinguistics and reading, I also participated in the teaching of an undergraduate course for prospective teachers which stressed a whole language approach to the teaching of reading and language arts. Planning for that class included discussions with my co-teacher colleagues about how we could help our undergraduate students understand the concepts of "whole language." During this same period I served as a resource person to students and their cooperating teachers, and in that capacity I regularly visited the elementary school classrooms where some of those students were doing their prepracticum teaching experiences. As an observer with an "official" reason to be in schools, I saw classrooms where this approach to helping children learn to read was being used as well as classrooms where more traditional methods were still in use. The fact that I was immersed in these concepts from so many perspectives was extremely influential in my personal acceptance of the advantages of "whole language." In addition, as this research continued I had the opportunity to be a participant observer in other groups. A description of the nature of those groups, how I became affiliated with them, and information about my participant role in each of them is included in this chapter.

Combining Observation and Interviewing

Participant observation "permits the evaluator to understand a program to an extent not entirely possible using only the insights of others obtained through interviews" (Patton, 1980, p. 30). Lofland and Lofland consider participant observation and unstructured interviewing used together to be "the central techniques of the naturalistic investigator" (1984, p. 13). I soon began to realize that it would be advantageous to combine the information I was beginning to obtain from participant observation with the insights of individuals who had already given some thought to how they might improve their teaching by changing their procedures.

In his book Interviewing as Qualitative Research (1991), Earl Seidman points out that if a researcher is trying to "understand the meaning people involved in education make of their experience, then interviewing provides a necessary, if not always completely sufficient, avenue of inquiry" (p. 4). Seidman explains that one of the strengths of interviewing

> is that through it we can come to understand the details of people's experience from their point of view. We can see how their individual experience interacts with powerful social and organizational forces that pervade the context in which they live and work, and we can discover the interconnections among people who live and work in a shared context (Seidman, 1991, p. 104).

Purpose of Interviews

I decided to look for opportunities to interview teachers who had already begun to change the ways in which they helped children learn to read. My purpose in interviewing such teachers was to gather a sampling of personal stories from several individuals as each of them reflected on his or her particular path toward a changed way of helping children learn to read. My goal was to allow the people being interviewed to tell their stories in their own voices. I wanted them to "express their own understandings in their own terms" (Patton, 1980, p. 205), or, to put it another way, I hoped to provide the opportunity for teachers to "reconstruct their experience and reflect on the meaning they [gave to] that experience" (Seidman, 1985, p. 15). William Foote Whyte recommends this approach "if we want to determine how particular individuals arrived at the attitudes they hold" (1984, p. 102).

Selection of People Interviewed

I was interested in interviewing people who had already begun to use "whole language." I particularly wanted to hear about these people's perceptions of whether they had undergone a change in their thinking and teaching procedures since they had first started helping children

learn to read. How interview subjects came to my attention and how they were selected for this study are an important part of my methodology. The following description demonstrates that sometimes finding one subject led to a group of people; sometimes being part of a group helped me find additional individual participants.

The first person I interviewed came to my attention because "Bev," one of my peers in a research methods course, was the library media center director at "Parkside School," a K-6 school where several teachers were using children's literature to teach reading. When "Bev" discovered that I was interested in interviewing teachers involved in a literature-based approach to reading, she invited me to her school and introduced me to "Lois," the language arts resource person. Four of my participants worked at that one school in Massachusetts.

During my April 1987 interview with her, "Lois" told me about a support group which some of the primary grade teachers were beginning. "Lois" introduced me to "Karen," a first grade teacher involved with starting that group, who then invited me to their first meeting on the following day. While I was attending the meeting I found myself in the role of participant observer and took notes on my observations. At the beginning of the meeting, all people present introduced themselves. Each person explained how he or she had become interested in "whole language."

In addition to "Lois," the language arts resource person, and "Karen," the first grade teacher, I also made arrangements to interview a person I met at that first support group meeting. He was "Bruce," who was then serving as an instructional aide in the early childhood resource room. I was interested in interviewing "Bruce" because it became clear at the support group meeting that he had been influential in helping other teachers understand this approach to helping children learn to read.

I also arranged to interview "Peter," a sixth grade teacher at "Parkside," because I had heard that he used novels to teach reading and I wanted to have the views of a teacher of an older grade represented in my study. "Peter" was not involved with the support group, but when he was contacted about being interviewed, he agreed and invited me to his classroom where my interview with him was conducted in late April 1987.

Some information gathered at the support group meeting at "Parkside School" is also included in this study. I had attended the first two meetings when the group was being formed. Then a year later I was able to attend another support group meeting during a brief return visit to Massachusetts. By then the group had enlarged to include interested teachers from other schools in the same area and had become affiliated with Teachers Applying Whole Language

(TAWL). At that meeting I had an opportunity to find out something about how the group had progressed, and I spoke briefly to "Bruce," one of the teachers I had interviewed the year before, who was by then teaching first grade at "Parkside."

In the summer of 1987 I returned to Illinois where I was also able to make contacts that led me to additional individuals and groups involved in the process of change. "Tom," a colleague who teaches at a university in Illinois, invited me to attend a meeting which had been arranged between members of the language arts faculty and a representative group of teachers and administrators from the small nearby community of "Clearwater." These educators wanted to know more about how to help their teachers learn about whole language and the process approach to teaching writing and reading. As a result of attending this meeting, I became a participant observer in a semester-long seminar on the process approach to writing which was held at a school in "Clearwater." This course was offered the following fall as a first step for elementary school teachers who wanted to learn more about whole language so they would be able to implement the process approach to writing and reading in their classrooms. Participation in this seminar was voluntary, but the thirty-two teachers who attended included most of that small district's elementary teachers. During the

seminar I kept a log of my observations on the reactions to change by some of the participating teachers as evidenced by the comments made during discussions. Some anecdotal information from the class which seemed pertinent to teacher change is included in this study.

In February of 1988, on a return trip to Massachusetts, I accompanied Professor Masha Rudman of the University of Massachusetts to "Madison School," a grade 3-5 elementary school in a nearby Massachusetts town. Professor Rudman had been asked to present a series of four inservice sessions at the request of the principal and the language arts resource person, both of whom wanted to encourage the teachers to move toward a literature-based approach to reading. The language arts resource person turned out to be "Jean," the teacher mentioned earlier whom I first met when we were in a class together in the fall of 1986. I interviewed "Jean" on a subsequent visit, and in November 1988 I was able to return with Professor Rudman when she again served as a consultant to "Madison School." This gave me an additional opportunity to observe "Jean" and her colleagues as they discussed the process of changing the way they help children learn to read.

Also in the fall of 1988 I interviewed "Joyce," an elementary school teacher, who had come from a neighboring New England state to study at the University of

Massachusetts during the same time I was there. After teaching third grade for twelve years, "Joyce" had accepted a position as the director of curriculum and staff development in "Fairfield," a school district with three K-8 elementary schools and one high school. At the time I interviewed her, "Joyce" had just begun this position which involved helping teachers, who taught at various grade levels, learn about a changed way of teaching.

While at a children's literature conference sponsored by Children's Reading Round Table in Chicago, in September, 1988, I picked up a leaflet advertising a TAWL Conference which was to be held in the northwest Chicago suburb of Deerfield in October 1988. This was the first time I had heard of a Chicago area TAWL group, but I decided to attend their first conference. There were more than 500 people in attendance, most of whom had heard about the conference by word of mouth or by somehow seeing a flier about it, the only means of advertising allowed by the group's modest budget. Dr. Linda Crafton (1991), who was then the President of TAWL in Chicago, introduced Professor Jerome Harste and expressed appreciation to him for agreeing to speak without receiving an honorarium. As Harste explained in his presentation, he had agreed to come partly because Crafton was his former student, but also because he was very impressed with the grass roots aspect of this movement (Harste, 1988, October; Harste & Burke, 1991). The group

now calls itself "TAWL in Chicago--Founding Chapter," and many additional support groups have been started and nurtured through the annual conferences which they continue to sponsor. As a result of my participation in five Chicago area TAWL conferences, I was able to make some additional observations about teacher change.

At the first TAWL conference, in 1988, I became engaged in conversation with a woman standing next to me in line as we waited for an opportunity to have Jerome Harste autograph our copies of his books. This woman, "Joan," served as a resource teacher in a school district in "Northtown," a northwest suburb of Chicago where the teachers were involved in changing to "whole language." In response to a question from "Joan" about my interest in "whole language," I told her that I was in the process of interviewing teachers who had begun to use children's literature to teach reading. "Joan" was so proud of "Northtown's" involvement with "whole language" that she insisted upon introducing me to one of the teachers with whom she worked, "Linda," a first grade teacher. When I subsequently visited "Linda" in her classroom and interviewed her, I was able to gather information that told me about "Linda's" changed way of teaching, but in addition I learned something about how "Northtown" was embracing "whole language."

In the spring and fall semesters of 1989 I taught two sections of an undergraduate children's literature course at the Illinois university referred to earlier. The College of Education there had started to require that their education majors take a course in children's literature. Primarily a survey of children's literature, the course also touched upon the use of children's literature in the classroom, so this became another opportunity for me to observe prospective teachers as they reacted to the concept of a literature-based approach to helping children learn. During both semesters of the 1992-93 school year, I again taught the same course, giving me an opportunity to reflect upon how my now stronger belief in literature-based reading affected the way I helped undergraduates learn.

During the 1989-90 school year I interviewed "Jack," a professor who was teaching sections of the same course I was, as well as a graduate level course in children's literature. "Jack" and two other professors with whom I became acquainted were also participating in teaching a second seminar which was offered during the spring 1989 semester at "Clearwater," the Illinois community mentioned previously. Since the spring seminar topic was the use of a literature-based approach to teaching reading, it was possible through my interview with "Jack" to get some insight from him on the reaction to change which he

observed in his teacher in-service students and in his undergraduate education majors, as well as his perceptions of his own personal change. In addition, I had opportunities to talk to the other professors involved with the seminars at "Clearwater." Through discussions with them I received some additional information about their perceptions of how the teachers in "Clearwater" had been affected by their participation in the seminars.

Conducting the Interviews

Before each interview was scheduled, I explained my interest in finding out how teachers had changed their teaching procedures with respect to helping children learn to read. In most cases I already knew that the teacher believed in "whole language." All of the people with whom I had arranged personal interviews were given a copy of a release form which explained the purpose of my research and assured them of anonymity. Each participant gave permission for me to tape record his or her interview. I usually asked the person interviewed whether I could get in touch with them again if I needed additional information.

The names of the persons interviewed have all been changed, as have the names of the schools, school districts, and cities and towns where the interviews took place. All of the names of people, schools, and places

which have been changed appear in quotation marks. If the person interviewed mentioned a colleague with whom he or she worked, then I usually also gave that person a pseudonym. The exception is that I used real names when a person who has published in the field was credited with having been influential in encouraging change on the part of the persons interviewed.

After explaining the release form and acquiring permission to tape record, I usually reminded the person I had come to interview of our previous discussion in which I had explained my purpose in setting up the interview. This reminder was often enough to encourage the person being interviewed to begin telling his or her story.

Steven J. Taylor and Robert Bogdan recommend that the researcher attempt to

> construct a situation that resembles those in which people naturally talk to each other about important things. The interview is relaxed and conversational, since this is how people normally interact. The interviewer relates to people on a personal level (Taylor & Bogdan, 1984, p. 93).

Cautioning against putting ideas in someone else's mind by using preconceived questions, Patton suggests that open-ended interviewing will give us "access [to] the perspective of the person being interviewed" (Patton, 1980, p. 196). Patton explains,

> We interview people to find out from them those things we cannot directly observe . . . . We cannot observe

> feelings, thoughts, and intentions. We cannot observe behaviors that took place at some previous point in time. We cannot observe situations that preclude the presence of an observer (Patton, 1980, p. 196).

Seidman suggests that the questions interviewers ask during an open-ended interview should "follow, as much as possible, from what the participant is saying" (1991, p. 59). He further explains:

> Although the interviewer comes to each interview with a basic question that establishes the purpose and focus of the interview, it is in response to what the participant says that the interviewer follows up, asks for clarification, seeks concrete details, and requests stories. Rather than preparing a preset interview guide, the interviewer's basic work in this approach to interviewing is to listen actively and to move the interview forward as much as possible by building on what the participant has begun to share (Seidman, 1991, p. 59).

In some cases, I had already learned something about a teacher's procedures because I had spoken to the teacher or had observed in his or her classroom before I came to the interview.

> In some interviewing research the interviewer has a good sense of what is on informants' minds prior to starting the interviews. For example, some researchers turn to interviewing after conducting participant observation; some also use their own experiences to guide their research (Taylor & Bogdan, 1984, p. 92).

As I continued to make contacts which eventually resulted in the selection of the remainder of my interview subjects, I began transcribing the first of my interviews. Searching the literature for published accounts of

teachers' and administrators' experiences with a changed way of teaching became an ongoing activity for me, as did discussions with knowledgeable colleagues about the issues raised by my research.

In addition to my participant observation in the groups already mentioned in this chapter, I also attended national conventions of the International Reading Association (IRA) and the National Conference of Teachers of English (NCTE). At these meetings, I sought out presentations given by educators who were reporting on some aspect of teacher change. The background information gained from my participation in meetings of all of the groups mentioned in this chapter was also extremely beneficial in my personal growth as an observer of teacher change.

Examining the Data for Presentation and Analysis

Seidman suggests that "what is of essential interest is embedded in each research topic and will arise from each transcript" (1991, p. 90). As I listened to the audio tapes and transcribed the interviews during which several teachers had related to me their personal experiences regarding how they had changed the ways in which they help children learn to read, I began to make mental note of the different kinds of information I was hearing and then seeing in print in my transcriptions.

Seidman (1991) describes how "categories arise out of the passages" (p. 100) he has already marked because he found them interesting:

> When working with excerpts from interview material, I find myself selecting passages that connect to other passages in the file. . . . I notice excerpts from a participant's experience that connect to each other as well as to passages from other participants. Sometimes excerpts connect to the literature on the subject. They stand out because I have read about the issue from a perspective independent of my interviewing (Seidman, 1991, p. 100-101).

Exercising my judgment about what information seemed meaningful, I began to mark those excerpts which I deemed important as I read the text of the transcripts. As I noticed similarities between the information found in different teachers' stories, I made lists of the recurring ideas and tried to categorize them. Some examples of the categories were: (1) learning from the experience of teaching, (2) further education, (3) visiting other schools and classrooms to observe other teachers, (4) learning about the teaching of writing as a process, and (5) giving and receiving support from others.

Sometimes I would find myself relating the words of one person to something similar which I had read in the literature or had heard at some group session in which I had participated. As I looked for a meaningful, cohesive way of including and presenting all of the information which seemed relevant to my topic, I considered presenting

the information from the interviews in categories. Ultimately, however, the examination of my notes and transcripts helped me decide that it would be more effective to present each teacher's story as an entity, as a separate story. Seidman makes the point that

> We interview in order to come to know the experience of the participants through their stories. We learn from hearing and studying what the participants say. Although the interviewer can never be absent from the process, by crafting a profile in the participants' own words the interviewer allows those words to reflect the person's consciousness (Seidman, 1991, p. 91).

I found myself agreeing with Seidman when he stated that "telling stories is a compelling way to make sense of interview data. The story is both the participant's and the interviewer's" (Seidman, 1991, p. 92).

It also became apparent to me that my own story of change was an important part of this study. Chapter IV begins with my recollection of the beliefs I held, as a beginning teacher, about how children learn to read and how those perceptions influenced me as I began this study. Then the stories of each of the eight teachers are presented, beginning with the four classroom teachers I interviewed. The profiles of the two people serving as language arts resource persons are next, followed by those of the curriculum coordinator and the university professor.

There are times when the information gathered from the interviews is augmented by observations made at other times

when I had interactions with these people. The presentation of the data is interspersed with my analysis and also includes information pertinent to teacher change selected from my reading of the literature as well as anecdotes based on my participant observation, attendance at professional meetings, and conversations with knowledgeable colleagues.

CHAPTER IV

PRESENTATION AND ANALYSIS OF DATA

The Researcher's Beliefs as This Study Began

As a new teacher in the mid-1950s, I taught from a basal reader (see p. 12) and continued to do so during the six years I taught third and fourth grade. I had been taught to believe, in my undergraduate education courses, that the writers of basal reading programs knew more about teaching reading than I did, and that there was good reason to follow the advice provided for teachers about how to teach reading.

At that time, I believed that if children were to learn to read, it was important for them to complete all of the suggested activities in the teacher's guide as well as all of the workbook pages designed to accompany the basal reader. I tried to follow the instructions in the teacher's guide, but I didn't feel very successful at teaching reading, mostly because of the difficulty I had organizing my reading groups so that the children would accomplish all of the work I felt they needed.

After many years of experience working in an elementary school library media center, I arrived at the

University of Massachusetts in 1986, where the elementary education program was recommending "whole language." Although this idea was new to me, it seemed to make sense, perhaps partly because of my years of experience with helping children choose library books for instructional purposes as well as for recreational reading. I was also influenced by the fact that I had never considered myself successful at teaching reading with a basal reading program, but by then I did know a lot about turning kids onto reading for pleasure. I found myself feeling open to and intrigued by the ideas in which I was suddenly immersed and I welcomed the opportunity to learn more about this approach.

During this time I noticed that some of the teachers who also were exposed to these new ideas in the same graduate classes as I were doubting and/or resisting the value of "whole language." In many cases the professors' ideas differed not only from the way in which these teachers had been teaching but also from what they had been "taught" in their teacher preparation programs and from what they had learned from their experiences when they themselves had been students. Judith Newman, in her book _Interwoven Conversations: Learning and Teaching Through Critical Reflection_, recalled, "My teaching was exactly like the teaching I'd experienced myself. Like most people, I taught as I had been taught" (1992, p. 10).

In an article in the May 1991 Phi Delta Kappan titled "Policy Issues in Teacher Education," Mary M. Kennedy writes about her concerns regarding what she refers to as the "improvement-of-practice problem" (p. 662). Kennedy discusses the challenge of helping teachers develop different teaching strategies than the ones they have "absorbed" from being students. Kennedy explains:

> We all learn about teaching throughout our lives. From kindergarten through 12th grade we observe our own teachers. Those of us who go on to college observe even more teachers, and these teachers are not necessarily any better or any different. By the time we complete our undergraduate education, we have observed teachers for up to 3,060 days. In contrast, teacher preparation programs usually require something in the neighborhood of 75 days of classroom experience. What could possibly happen during 75 days that would significantly alter the practices learned during the preceding 3,000? (Kennedy, 1991, p. 662).

As I sat in classes with classroom teachers who were being exposed to the ideas of Frank Smith, Ken and Yetta Goodman, Jerome Harste, Marie Clay, Donald Graves, Don Holdaway, and many others for the first time, I noticed that some teachers connected with the ideas being presented while others seemed to be unsure of the value of what they were hearing. I wondered whether some of my teacher classmates might have felt threatened by the possibility that they had not been teaching the "right way." For some of them, their whole career in teaching seemed to be "on the line."

Vida Louise Welsh (1989) addresses that issue in an article titled, "A Teacher's Experience with Change." Welsh recalled her feelings when she initially resisted the changed way of teaching reading which she and others in her school were being asked to consider:

> No longer would I use a published program, prepared by the experts. From this point on, my colleagues and I would create our own programs, design our own activities, and be totally responsible for the focus, scope, and sequence of the reading program. If this was a "better" way, it must mean that what I had done in the past was negated--that I hadn't really given my students the best possible program. This personal conflict engulfed me. I think other teachers who are asked to make significant changes struggle in similar ways (Welsh, 1989, p. 61).

Eventually Welsh came to realize that "this new approach that used literature as its core" had more potential than "supplementing the basal program with literature," which had been her approach (Welsh, 1989, p. 63). Welsh goes on to explain how important it was for her to have been given the opportunity to ask questions about the changed way of teaching reading which was being considered.

In November of 1986, I attended a one-day workshop at Smith College where Jane Hansen was the speaker. She spoke about teacher change, and she later wrote about it in her 1987 book, When Writers Read. At the time I heard her speak, I remember making a connection between what Hansen said about resistance to change and the reluctance of some

of my peers to accept the ideas being presented in that course on psycholinguistics and reading. Hansen wrote:

> Most of us know we are good teachers, but we are constantly searching for ways to grow, and we want a new horizon to explore, one where we and our students will move forward with even more energy. We realize the view of teaching described in this book is different. It's not to be taken lightly because it involves a decision to change (Hansen, 1987, p. 158).
>
> In many workshops, teachers come to me and say, "I can't do this because of . . . the curriculum . . . my principal . . . my supervisor . . . ." However, at each of those very same workshops, there is always someone who is determined to change and has already outlined the first steps (Hansen, 1987, p. 159).

These were some of my perceptions as I began conducting the interviews and analyzing the data from those interviews. The questions raised in my mind when I first started thinking about how teachers change still drive my observations of teachers thinking about change. Since then, whether I have been teaching a class of preservice teachers, participating in a workshop or seminar with other teachers, or attending a conference about whole language, I have looked for evidence of the process of change as I have listened to the questions teachers ask and the comments they make in discussions.

The profiles of the teachers I interviewed are presented next, beginning with the story of "Karen." This first interview is longer than the others, partly because it represents a more elaborate version of change than the other interviews.

"Karen," First Grade Teacher

When I interviewed "Karen," she had been teaching first grade for about four years at "Parkside School," a K-6 school in Massachusetts with approximately 500 students. "Karen" had started teaching some thirty years earlier, but she had taken some time off from teaching to rear a family. "Karen's" classroom was one of three in a large pod where she had been working closely with two other first grade teachers, and "Karen" was also in close contact with other primary grade teachers who were moving toward literature-based reading.

Earlier that school year, "Karen" had decided to discontinue her basal reading program and rely on children's trade books as she moved to literature-based reading to help children learn to read. Near the end of the same school year, she and two other teachers started a support group within the school to encourage other teachers who wanted to know more about teaching reading with children's literature.

As "Karen" described the path she had taken to get to the point where she was in her teaching when I interviewed her, she mentioned several different teaching positions she had held on a variety of grade levels, in different geographical locations. "Karen" willingly discussed her experiences and beliefs about how children learn.

When I asked her to elaborate on how she had gotten to the point where she was when I interviewed her, "Karen" began by saying,

> I was an American literature major at [a northeastern university] with no thought of going into teaching. So reading, and talking about what I was reading, and thinking about it, was sort of second nature to me--it was what I loved to do.
>
> And then I decided to go into teaching after I had done some student teaching in a small and terrible third grade, private school class. I couldn't stand most of what they were doing. And I can't even remember what reading instruction was like there.

"Karen" did remember how she taught reading in her first teaching job when she had been one of a team of five fourth grade teachers in an innovative school system in an affluent suburb west of Boston. "Karen" described the way they taught reading that year:

> It was a dynamic team, but they weren't doing anything in particular in reading that I thought was interesting, so I said, "Why don't we use multiple copy books--this was in 1965--and read and talk about what we're reading?" and they said, "Terrific, you get the ideas together and tell us what you have in mind and we'll do it."

"Karen" explained that during her senior year in college, she had done an independent thesis on early American children's literature from a literary point of view. One of the works she had studied had been Frank Baum's The Wizard of Oz (1900), so that became one of the books which she used during her first year of teaching, putting together some questions to elicit discussion. The

only other title "Karen" recalled including at that time was The Big Wave by Pearl Buck (1948).

"Karen" felt good about what she had encouraged her teacher colleagues to do during that school year, describing it as "a terrific way to teach reading," and "a normal extension of how I read." The importance of literature in her background becomes clear from "Karen's" description of how she had suggested using children's books and helping the children discuss what they had read. When "Karen" provided a model for incorporating literature into their reading program, the other teachers on that team followed "Karen's" example.

Reflecting on that first teaching job, "Karen" described the team with whom she had taught as being "very process-oriented." "Karen" felt that the way children had interacted with each other had been an important part of learning in that school. Her description of that first year of teaching indicates that "Karen" found the experience of working together with her colleagues beneficial.

"Karen" left Massachusetts after her first year of teaching and moved to California where she taught sixth grade for a year. She described her experience there:

> They had a basal series, and it was a very prescribed kind of program. . . . You were supposed to be on a certain page at a certain time in everything you

> taught, and I just sort of ignored that and just got a set of books from the library and did the same kind of thing [that I had been doing before].
>
> I never worried about anybody coming [into my classroom] because I had a class that had gone through three teachers the year before, and all the principal wanted me to do was close the door and somehow hold them all together. [That] left me a tremendous amount of freedom, after the first months of whipping them back into some kind of a shape as a class, to go ahead and do what I wanted, and he was so pleased . . . that they weren't breaking the school apart, and I wasn't quitting, and parents weren't on his doorstep.

This school's rigid curriculum might have deterred some novice teachers from disobeying what appeared to be a strict set of rules. "Karen," however, had enough confidence in herself and the literature-based approach which had worked for her the year before, to teach in a way she thought was better than the school's prescribed program.

I heard a similar story from a guest speaker, in a course in which I was enrolled at the University of Massachusetts, who had been invited to explain the literature program in which her 8th grade Chapter I students "just read books." When asked how the administration in her school felt about her literature program, she responded to the question by explaining that the principal was so relieved not to have her students being sent to the office for misbehaving, that he didn't care what was going on in her classroom.

In both of these situations there was the implication that classroom management was a more overriding issue for the principal than what curriculum was being used in the classroom. As long as each teacher was able to "control" the children's behavior, the principal didn't seem to notice how reading was being taught.

About her experience in California, "Karen" also said,

> That . . . year . . . I was so focused on the dynamics of the class that . . . it's very hard for me to remember what we did. Certain things stand out in my mind: going to the junk yard, at one point, which was spun out of something we read. We did a field trip and we went to the junk yard and we collected junk, and then we came back with it and in the next two days built 'found' sculptures in the classroom, and I remember that because they were wonderful. It was the first time some of the class had meshed, and the principal came and said, "These will have to be thrown out by the weekend!" But I carried through; I tried to carry through as much of what I had done in [the suburban town in Massachusetts] as I could.

When "Karen" reports on the way in which the school principal told her the sculptures would have to be discarded, she implies that she and her principal held different opinions about the value and importance of what her students had made. "Karen's" comments reveal her personal conviction that she believed the way she had taught the year before was preferable to the prescribed way in which she was expected to teach at this school.

After having taught for one year in Massachusetts and a second year in California, "Karen" left teaching for a while to rear a family. During that period of time off,

when she was deciding whether or not she would go back to teaching, she started reading a lot of "Herbert Kohl [1969], and . . . John Holt [1964], . . . and open classrooms." Because of the experience she had had with children, she felt that much of what she read made sense, and she decided that when she went back to teaching, she would like to try to apply some of the things she had been reading about. Concerning these ideas, "Karen" commented,

> I think it's all one "ball-of-wax." I don't care if you start reading that [the authors she mentioned], or you start with the writing process, or you start with reading and the way we're teaching whole language, or you start with science as a process. Wherever you start, if you really look at what it's about, and look at what it does with children, it leads you on in a circle to all these other things. They're all part of one whole. So I guess that reading was very formative in that that pushed me further in the direction that I had been moving before I stopped teaching for a while.

Later in our interview, "Karen" talked about some of her more recent professional reading:

> And then this year, I started reading the Frank Smith [1983; 1985; 1986] books and a number of other books, too, and I thought, "Ah! All right! This is what you do." So, it [i.e., my change] was mostly through reading. And then through some talking with colleagues and some support from them.

"Karen" credited professional reading with having further developed her understandings about teaching, and she wanted to share with her colleagues the titles of the works which she had found meaningful. At the first support group meeting the day before our interview, "Karen" had recommended <u>Reading without Nonsense</u> (Smith, 1985) to her

colleagues, explaining that the ideas in that book had helped her change the way she taught reading because she now had a new basis for understanding the reading process.

Although professional reading was beneficial to her, "Karen" acknowledged that other people might arrive at a better understanding of teaching by traveling different paths. "Karen's" eloquent comments indicate that she is aware that there are a variety of entry points to the process of reflecting upon teaching, and that no matter where you start you will discover the rest.

Jobs were scarce in the part of upstate New York where she was living when "Karen" felt her "kids were old enough" that she could go back to teaching. Unable to find a professional position, "Karen" accepted a job as an instructional aide running a library. The person who had been in charge of the library was going to be working with children who needed remedial reading help.

"Karen" described that experience as being "quite a year;" she was told, "anything you want to do, go ahead." "Karen" remembered it as

> . . . a wonderful little early elementary school--K, 1st, 2nd, and one 2nd/3rd--and each class was part of the spokes of a wheel, and the center of the wheel was the library. . . . Part of [each class] was opened up to the library, and they had always envisioned having the library being a library learning center and it had never really happened because the woman who was the librarian also . . . was . . . assistant principal, and she was just overworked.

"Karen's" description of how she turned that school library into a library learning center demonstrates that a professional can be influential even while serving in a non-professional position:

> I went ahead, with her approval, and set up learning centers in the library so that there was always an activity area for math and an activity area for . . . some social studies theme, and some science, and all these different things. They were . . . at multi-developmental levels, because it would have to be OK for kindergarten kids who wandered in or came in at scheduled times all the way up through second graders.
>
> I also took all the groups through the library. I'd have . . . a third of the class at a time in scheduled library times when I would read to them, and I'd always take them through if I had changed the center, and show them what to do there, and talk with them about how they could work here so that they could be working and talking to someone else when they were in the library but other people could be reading. And then I would always, after introducing some new set of activities, spend some time with them with a book. We would read and discuss and talk.

"Karen" mentions some specific activities which she incorporated into the school library media center, and she notes that she always included literature. Most of those activities are now frequently mentioned in descriptions of whole language classrooms (Fisher, 1991; Hansen, 1987; Routman, 1988 and 1991).

"Karen" also pointed out that talk had played an important part in her classroom.

> Talking was always, I guess, a natural part of the classroom. . . . I've lived in various places, so I did a kindergarten for six months, and then this first

> grade, and I just cannot imagine having a kindergarten or first grade where the kids weren't talking all the time.

Bobbi Fisher, in her book Joyful Learning: A Whole Language Kindergarten (1991), explains that she encourages the children in her classroom to talk about what they are doing because children learn to think as well as talk through social interaction. "Karen's" comments about talk demonstrate that she seems to have understood this concept.

During the time "Karen" worked in the school library in New York, she began to become aware of the process approach to writing. She described the way "she got further into it:"

> I knew somebody who had met someone at a party who was from Maine who was involved in all this writing process stuff. . . . She gave me an article that she had written, and then I wrote to the University of New Hampshire. . . . Graves hadn't published his book yet, but there was a series of mimeographed articles that he and Lucy Calkins and other people had written.

"Karen" took advantage of networking; when she met someone who knew something that interested her, she made use of that connection to get additional information for herself.

In answer to her written request, she had been sent a "pile" of articles, some of them "pretty rough." "Karen" held her hands apart to describe the size of the stack of articles that she had received. She felt that reading through those preprints and reprints had really gotten her involved in the writing process. She continued,

> So I read all those. I thought, "This is great; this is wonderful stuff!" . . . When Graves' [1983] book came out I read that, and Lucy Calkins' books [1983, 1986], and a number of those books about the writing process, and then as I was teaching here with the first grade, and working with [the writing], I felt, . . . "I want to move further in the direction of what I was doing with reading [when I had first started teaching], but I'm not exactly sure how to do it."

As "Karen" spoke of the kinds of things that had influenced her, she recalled another experience she had had after she had returned to teaching, the year after she had worked in the library as an instructional aide:

> I did six months for a kindergarten and then I got a job for six months in [another school district] teaching fifth grade. . . . I [met] a first grade teacher who was very interested in the writing process, and so I did talk my principal into sending a number of us up to Atkinson, New Hampshire, to visit the school where Graves initially did a lot of the research, and we did a day's observation there. [The school district wanted to get] teachers interested and so we came back and . . . reported. But I don't know what impact it had because it was just a six months job. It was at the point where people were being RIFed [reduction in force].

In relating this incident, "Karen" describes how she learned from other teachers, but she also reminds us that we don't always find out what impact we have had on others.

As part of her explanation of figuring out how to incorporate literature into her classroom when she moved to first grade after having taught older children, "Karen" explained that at first "it was harder to figure out how to do it because the kids were nonreaders to start with." She went on:

> Searching for books became a problem [in first grade] because when you were reading a novel [with older children] you'd find a book and then you'd have it for two or three weeks while you were working on it. And of course with some of the very simple books for first grade, as you know, it's a book a day kind of thing. And so I struggled with it for a few years.

At the same time "Karen" became "very involved in the writing process" because the procedure for that "was very self-evident." She explained,

> With writing, the kids are learning to write by doing what writing is all about. [They're] figuring out what you have to say, figuring out whether you've communicated it to your audience, figuring out how to tell them more, figuring out how to make it clearer, figuring out what doesn't belong.

Reflecting on making the transition to first grade, "Karen" explained,

> The reading took me a little longer to figure out. And so I used some of the basals, and some thematic approaches. . . . Last year we did a unit on bears. We got different kinds of books on bears, had discussions on different kinds of things, you know. But this year, I really feel like I've figured out how to do it . . . after a few years of trying to figure out how to do it, or how to get started on it.

"Karen" earlier credited her background in English literature with giving her ideas for using literature in her classroom during the first two years she taught. After she became interested in learning about process writing, "Karen" became so comfortable with writing and so good at it, that when she first moved to first grade, teaching writing was easier for her than reading.

At another point during our interview, "Karen" talked again about how various teachers might learn about literature-based reading in different ways.

> I think the most helpful thing is to see people do it. I know a lot of the changes I've gone through have come through reading that I've done. But, I think . . . that's a harder way to do it for a lot of people. You walk into a classroom where you see it happening--that's really helpful. Then beyond that, you need time to take the pieces apart of what you see happening, because it's also very easy I think for--I notice this with schoolteachers--it's very easy to be intimidated by something that you see working really well, where all the pieces are fitting, and it's happening as a whole.
>
> But if you see it as a whole first, then you get to understand why it's so exciting. When you see those first graders writing, and sitting and reading their stories with each other, and being stuck; or if you walk around the room where twenty kids are paired off and there are ten voices, or twenty voices sometimes, reading out loud with each other, and helping each other, you really say, "Oh, yeah, this could really happen."

"Karen" recommended that observing how whole language works in a classroom should be followed by an opportunity to ask questions about what one has witnessed. She continued,

> But then after you see that, then you need time to sort of think about the pieces and the parts and how to organize it. . . . I think people need to feel that they don't--that you don't--do these things all at once; that you take one step at a time, and feel free to do that. Go ahead and experiment with one little piece of the day or one little change in their program.

"Karen" does not say how she came to the realization that elements of whole language may be added to one's

classroom one step at a time, but that suggestion is made in the professional literature (Crafton, 1991; Routman, 1991; Sorensen, 1991).

"Karen" described how she had helped a visitor understand what was taking place in her classroom:

> I think being in a class is really important for people who haven't seen this at all. A woman came to visit last week. I don't know who she was--she was related to somebody who teaches in the school, or was doing her internship in this school, or something. I'm not even sure who she was, but [the principal] brought her in, and said, . . . "She'd like to do some observing in the classroom."
>
> She stayed for a while and talked, and she watched the kids, and then she also needed some time to just sit and talk afterwards to just ask, "Well, why are you doing this, or how come that." . . . That's really helpful, too, I think--to have time to look and watch and then time to talk with teachers who are doing these kinds of things, to find out something about it. And then time to practice it, you know, with support.

Since "Karen" earlier talked about having visited the school where Donald Graves did some of his early research on the writing process, it is possible that "Karen's" experience as a visitor to other teachers' classrooms helped her know what would be useful to visitors to her classroom. There is a cameraderie among teachers of whole language which is evidenced by such examples of being willing to share what goes on in their classrooms with those who want to learn more about the process (Crafton, 1991; Goodman & Goodman, 1989).

"Karen" spent a considerable amount of time during our interview describing things that were going on in her current first grade classroom, where she had taught for four years, and how she had put together the ideas on which these current practices were based:

> I've always read to the kids a lot, but this . . . year . . . we started a lot of the reading and chanting out loud. . . . I have the format of the friend to friend reading which works really really well, where the kids read with a friend that I've chosen; that happens for a while in the morning.
>
> And one of the things I suppose I'll be developing over the next few years are more different kinds of things I then do with some of the books that we read. . . . Right now we're doing choral reading, dramatics, reading two or three stories that all have to do with the same theme, or three or four versions of the same tale. That's what we're going to be doing today and tomorrow.

"Karen" described how she used the basal readers as anthologies:

> In one of the readers, . . . there's a Henny Penny story, and then from [another publisher], there's a play of Henny Penny, and then there's a version of Henny Penny I got out of the library, and then there's an African tale about a rabbit which is the same idea. Somebody's following him and he say's the earth is coming to an end, and he runs and tells people in the jungle, the animals and things, and it resolves itself, and so it's a very different setting, and yet it's the same tale. And so we'll be doing that for a few days.

"Karen" seemed excited about sharing with me how she found ideas to use in her classroom. She continued:

> There'll be more. I'll add more--I suppose different materials--to my repertoire for doing that kind of thing. I also probably will add and discover over the

> next couple of years more different kinds of activities and things to do with what we read. For instance, this year I was talking with "Elaine" [a teacher at another school]. She was doing a unit on China. . . . So they did a wall story which was posted on the corridor all the way down the wall. And they walked from part to part to read the story. So there's something new I haven't done. I thought, "Oh, that's good!"--add it to my list of something to do. And I think there'll probably be a lot of those things that I'll be developing over the next couple of years.

When I visited "Karen's" classroom, she was using many shared reading activities, but at no time during our interview did she mention having read anything by Don Holdaway (1979; 1980), who, according to Jerome Harste and Kathy Short, is "the person most closely associated with Big Books and Shared Reading" (1988, p. 350). As "Karen" talks about some of the activities she uses in her classroom, she mentions getting ideas from other teachers--for example, the wall story mentioned here. "Karen" may have learned about shared reading by observing the practice in another classroom. "Karen" said earlier that her change "was mostly through reading" (p. 93, this chapter). In that same quote she did go on to say that she also learned from "some talking with colleagues and some support from them." "Karen" may have gotten ideas for whole language practices by observing her colleagues, while the professional reading she did may have been influential in changing her philosophy.

The importance of literature in "Karen's" classroom is described as she explained the acquisition of literacy skills in first grade:

> You're spending all your time involved with print, whether it's hearing it, reading it, reading it with a friend, talking about it, acting it out, drawing pictures responding to it, whatever, and that's what reading is about . . . . So from the very beginning you're learning to read by doing what reading is all about.

In this quote, "Karen" talks about how children learn to read by reading in much the same way that she described how children learn to write by writing earlier in this chapter (p. 98). That children learn to read by reading and to write by writing has also been mentioned by Donald Graves (1983), Jane Hansen (1987), Jerome Harste (1989), and by Frank Smith (1983).

"Karen" attributed the current interest in whole language within her district to several individual teachers. When "Karen" had interviewed to come to this school from another school in the same district, she remembered saying that

> this was something I did in classrooms and wanted to do here. And so I started doing it, and ["Diane"] who was here in the kindergarten was already doing some of it. . . . She and I started talking, and . . . it was in this last year that a lot of people started getting involved in it in this particular school.

"Karen" went on to say that many teachers in this school district had been encouraged in this approach by

Susan Benedict (Benedict & Carlisle, 1992), who had a grant to come into classrooms and help teachers learn about the writing process. Although it had really been planned to be a compensatory program for children who were having difficulties, "Karen" said that Benedict had "reconstructed" the grant to enable her to work with a more diverse population.

Aware that Benedict was quite knowledgeable about this field, "Karen" had asked for advice about what professional books she might read that would further her understanding of the process approach to writing and reading. Benedict had recommended "a whole list of books," many of which had since been purchased for this district's schools with the grant money. "Karen" explained that she had also been given the opportunity to recommend for purchase the titles of some additional books which had been meaningful to her. This is another example of how colleagues working together share information and learn from each other.

"Karen" then talked about the positive influence of the addition this year of "Bruce," another teacher I interviewed, to the primary resource room team. "Karen" said about "Bruce,"

> He had been doing writing process up at [a private school in a neighboring community] and taken some workshops on it, so what's happening, is it's slowly coming together. People were doing it independently, and as more people are doing it, . . . the administration is, in general, . . . valuing it more.

> It tends to be something that they [the administration] look for more, in terms of people that they hire.

"Bruce" was hired as an instructional aide, as will be noted in my interview with him, but when "Karen" talks about him, she does not refer to that fact, mentioning only that his addition to the school staff has been beneficial.

When asked whether there were still things that she would like to change or that she felt she needed to know more about, "Karen" replied,

> There always are. It's what keeps teaching interesting. There always are, and what happens is that it grows out of whatever is happening in the classroom. At this moment in time, for instance I'm starting . . . to develop a set of reading things centering around poetry to support the poetry writing we've done and we're going to be doing.

"Karen's" comments emphasize her realization that as a teacher she expects to continue to grow and change, learning from her experience.

"Karen" then told how she and "Lois," the language arts resource person who I also interviewed, had written a grant proposal which had resulted in having a poet in residence spend time at this school during various parts of the school year. "Karen" told about how she had been influenced by Georgia Heard (1989):

> At the beginning of the year we . . . spent the time writing poetry very intensively when Georgia was here. She's the poet--she's from Columbia University; she's been a visiting poet here this year. [Georgia] is a brilliant woman, and if you're interested in the

> writing process, whether it's poetry or prose, she just is an exemplary model for how to work with children with anything, but particularly writing, and her specialty is poetry.
>
> Part of the arrangements that "Lois" and I made when we wrote the grant to have [Heard] come here, [were that] at the beginning of the year we did intensive poetry writing. I don't want to call it a unit--we just spent a lot of time writing poetry. . . . Then most of the kids were nonreaders; now everyone in the room is a reader, at some level.

"Karen" went on to explain how she planned to make the most of Heard's next visit:

> What I want to do is have the reading program shift off to sort of intensive reading of poetry, starting next week. . . . We'll be intensively reading poetry and then shift back to the writing of poetry. . . . It'll be very natural; you're reading poems, talking about them, and then going and writing some of your own.

Then "Karen" broadened the discussion of what she felt she was learning from observing Heard model the reading and writing of poetry:

> If you could see [Georgia], you would love her. It is so wonderful to watch her with kids. And that's what I mean about watching people; I mean, any time I watch someone who's a good teacher, I learn something. If someone is a weak teacher, I learn something, too. So, I can see her do the same thing with kids over and over again, and she's modeling it over and over again for me. That's the way kids learn, and we all learn.

Indicating that she learns from observing other teachers, "Karen" points out that children also learn from seeing something modeled. When I visited "Karen's" classroom while Heard was teaching poetry there, I saw children learning from watching each other as well as by

watching the modeling provided by "Karen" and Georgia. This concept of helping children learn from each other is also mentioned by Jane Hansen (1987). Heard also discusses this in For the Good of the Earth and Sun: Teaching Poetry (1989), the book she wrote about her experiences helping children and teachers learn in this and other school districts where she was a poet in residence.

"Karen" and two other teachers were interested in starting a support group because two of the three first grade teachers in their building had abandoned their basal reading program in their move toward a literature-based reading program. "Karen" related why they started that support group.

> A number of us were doing it, and (a), we wanted the stimulation and support of other colleagues, . . . but (b), also we were interested in furthering it, and supporting other people who might be interested in getting into it more.

"Karen" seemed to be thinking as she paused a moment. Then she went on, saying,

> You know what's interesting? . . . The first year I was here, [the principal] asked me at one of the staff meetings to . . . share with people what I was doing with writing, . . . which I did. . . . There was some interest, but . . . no one . . . changed what they were doing.
>
> There are some people who came to the reading support meeting--the whole language meeting which we sort of billed as reading--who had not been involved in the writing particularly, and who still don't seem that interested in the writing process. . . . For

> them, they may have more access eventually to thinking about writing this way, through the reading. And so different people come at it from different places. But I think as you get more and more involved, . . . you understand what it's really all about.

Here again "Karen" comments on the idea that different people come to whole language through different paths. It is particularly interesting that "Karen" realizes that some of the people in her building who did not change the way in which they taught writing as a result of hearing her talk about how she used the process approach to writing, may eventually come to understand the writing process after they have learned about the process approach to reading, which they may be able to do through this support group.

In a chapter titled "Whole Language Support Groups: A Grassroots Movement," Nancy Mack and Ella Moore (1992) say that small support groups are "formed primarily by people who want to attend support group meetings locally" for the purpose of encouraging "the personal growth of group members" (p. 114-115). At these meetings, teachers informally share with each other what they are doing in their classrooms, and often participants have questions about how to proceed because they may not all agree on whole language practices. Even though there will be diverse opinions represented in any such group, "teachers come to support group meetings in order to give and receive help rather than to control one another" (Mack & Moore, 1992, p. 111).

When "Karen" was talking about ways in which school administrators in general could be supportive of teachers looking at a changed way of teaching, she suggested that they could

> encourage teachers to set up the sort of support group we're trying to set up here; . . . that's something the administration could do, I think. When things like that begin to happen, to allow the time for it, not just to say that this is wonderful, and it's great, but after everything else that you have to do you're adding this on.

"Karen" then went on to talk about how she hoped that the administrators in her own school district might be more supportive the following year.

> It would be really nice, very supportive, for the administration to say . . . (and maybe this will happen next year--it may), "Well, we have staff meetings, and certain inservice meetings, and one of the things that you can do for your inservice meetings is you can meet in support group, without then setting down a task, an agenda, or an outcome."

Elaborating on these comments, "Karen" explained her feeling that although this district professed to believe in "trusting teachers to act as professionals," administrators still required that teachers find their own time to organize support group meetings. She continued,

> Time is very difficult to come by. We all have, you know, a thousand and one kinds of things that we want to move toward. You need time, and you need space to develop it, you know. It would be lovely to have some curriculum days, and to not have a task, but [for the administrators] to say, "People who are interested in doing this can set their own agenda, and you can have free curriculum days over the year." It would give us time to pick some readings, and to be able to come together and to talk about them.

"Karen" is aware of the importance of support, not only the support of one teacher helping another, but also support of the teachers by the administration.

"Bruce," Early Childhood Resource Teacher

I met "Bruce" when I attended the first support group meeting at "Parkside," the same K-6 elementary school where "Karen" taught first grade. As a member of the team in the early childhood resource room at this school, "Bruce" was able to help support "Karen" and some of their other colleagues as they began to implement the process approach to writing and then worked on applying some of those same principles to helping children learn to read. In his late twenties when I interviewed him, "Bruce" was probably the youngest of the participants in my study, and the person with the least teaching experience.

For three years prior to accepting a position as an instructional aide at the school in Massachusetts where I interviewed "Bruce," he had worked as a teacher at a private school in a neighboring community. "Bruce" recalled his experience there:

> It's a school where children are placed developmentally rather than chronologically, so that I had a mixed age group of children six to eight years for three years. The school has a very significant emphasis on writing, so I learned by doing about the writing process. [I] had been doing some of this through modeling and support from other people on the staff who were doing it already.

"Bruce" told me why he had decided to leave that school:

> The school I was working in was very intense to work in for very low pay. I finally said that I need to move someplace else, as much as I really liked that school and the philosophy of that school. But it gave me a good sound background in some alternative kinds of approaches [e.g., the process approach to writing].

"Bruce" then indicated why he had accepted a non-professional position in the school where I interviewed him:

> I was looking for a regular position, but there weren't that many teacher openings. And I also knew that I have some reservations about public school curriculum and techniques. And I come from an alternative school where there was a lot of innovative stuff going on. I learned about a lot of new things and found them much more effective; and I was concerned about being programmed into having to use a particular curriculum.

Because "Bruce" knew some of the teachers at this school in Massachusetts, he was able to determine that what they were doing was "somewhat innovative." He decided to accept the aide's position, knowing that in this school he would be able to continue the kind of teaching he had learned from experience, aided by the modeling and support of his former colleagues. At the time I interviewed him, "Bruce" was hoping to replace a first grade teacher in his new school who was leaving at the end of the school year, and I found out later that that is what he eventually did. Taking the aide's position turned out to be an alternate

path to getting a professional position in this same school.

"Bruce" had been hired as an instructional aide to assist a substitute teacher who had been hired temporarily to replace a member of the team in that early childhood resource room who was on a medical leave. "Bruce" explained how he had suggested the use of whole language procedures to the person under whom he was working:

> She [the substitute teacher] was familiar with whole language stuff. I said that I would like to do such and such with these kids and she really went along with it also. I started with the writing process with the kids, to kind of free them up to put their ideas down on paper and to reinforce some of the basics and simple consonant relationships.

During our interview, "Bruce" spent a lot of time describing some of the specific strategies he used with his students. One of his goals was to encourage these special needs students to become "more comfortable with putting their ideas down on paper." Then he wanted to use their writing "from a reading standpoint, having them read back their stories, having them follow with their fingers," allowing "Bruce" to see whether these children were "just remembering the story," or really reading what they had written.

"Bruce" continued,

> The first graders that I was working with were in a team teaching setup where both of the teachers use the writing process already, so I was reinforcing what the

> children were missing when they had to come down to the resource room. And I also knew what they were doing in reading.

"Bruce" said that the activities he had planned for his special needs children "seemed to be consistent with what was happening in the classroom." The first grade teachers "were in the process of considering making a change to a more whole language approach and they were already doing some of it in the classroom." He continued,

> I also did some things with the children with folk tales and doing a little play, getting them to think about meaning and not worrying about every single word, which is kind of consistent with whole language. Trying to get your meaning across in what makes sense to you is the same as trying to make sense of what you're reading rather than trying to get every single word.

"Bruce" continued to describe some of the activities he used as he helped his students learn:

> I also decided to do 15-minute conferences with each of those 5 first graders once a week. And so in the reading conference I could do this kind of whole language approach to reading with them. It might be getting them to use meaning, it might be getting them to predict what was going to come up, it might be retelling the story, remembering what was in the story, answering more--rather than fact questions--inferential kinds of questions.
>
> Then I can report back to the teacher, "This is what I saw so and so doing in the conference; this is something I saw them having difficulty with." And then she could follow up on that or reinforce it, or pick out a particular skill. She might have done a mini-lesson that related to several children having the same problem. It would all depend on how she wanted to use that information.

> It was a real sharing of insight into the kids and seeing growth take place in terms of a child's ability to self-correct. [For example], allow them to have time when they miss a word; don't jump in right away and correct them, don't jump in right away and make them use some strategy that you think is going to reinforce a particular skill, because as they read on in that kind of gap, that quiet opening, very often I see them self-correct.

"Bruce's" description of the activities he uses indicates that he understands the philosophy behind "whole language." Throughout "Bruce's" description of his work with the children, the substitute teacher, and the teachers on the first grade team, there is evidence of his pride in being able to work cooperatively with his colleagues as they figure out how to implement the writing process and extend the same principles to helping children develop strategies for learning to read. From "Bruce's" description of what he looks for when working with the children, and how he reports that information to the children's regular teacher, it is also clear that there is a philosophical match betwen his beliefs and those of the teachers with whom he is working.

As noted earlier, "Karen," the first grade teacher I interviewed, made specific reference to the positive benefits of the addition of "Bruce" to the staff at this school (p. 104-105, this chapter), without ever mentioning that he had been hired as an aide rather than as a teacher. "Bruce" described what happened when the regular teacher, "Natalie," returned from her medical leave:

> We saw significant improvement with the kids, and that person [the substitute teacher] was particularly supportive of my using that technique. Then when the person who was on leave came back, [the writing process] was already in place, and it was decided that I could continue to do that even though it was not so familiar to her, and she has gotten more interested in doing this because she has seen some of the changes in the kids. It fit in very nicely with the classroom.

"Bruce" first got the permission of the substitute teacher under whom he was working to use process writing, and then when "Natalie" returned he was able to point to the results he was getting to enlist her permission to continue with what he had been doing. "Bruce" brought "Natalie" to the first support group meeting, at which time she indicated that she was eager to learn more about "whole language." This story demonstrates that a professional educator does not have to be limited or defined by the position he/she holds.

Because "Bruce" seemed so successful and effective in his work in the early childhood resource room, I asked him why he wanted to go back to a classroom. He explained that he did not have special needs certification, and "classroom teaching is what I was trained to do, and I really like classroom teaching."

During the interview, I asked "Bruce" about the role of children's literature in his teaching. "Bruce" began his answer by saying,

I use folk tales with kids, where I may tell them or read them a folk tale, and then I may give them something to read afterwards, like with one group of third graders I worked with daily for language arts, once a week I read them a folk tale.

I then gave them strips of paper that had anywhere from one to three sentences that described an event from the story. They read it silently; then they came up and read it aloud, after rehearsal. We all decided what is the sequence of these events in the story. So that was a kind of children's literature.

"Bruce" then talked about why he decided to put more emphasis on literature and folk tales:

I made a change. I was using a [basal] series. . . . It was a supplemental part of [a publisher's] program, but I was using it with the special needs third graders. And I finally decided that some of the same issues were happening there [as were happening with writing], putting the focus in the wrong place. Although we were using guided silent reading which I think is a much more whole language approach kind of strategy [than following the suggestions in the basal].

"Bruce" then told me how he used the school library to find literature for his students:

What I do is I pick out library books around a theme. I ask the kids for areas that they are interested in. I also take what I see are important issues for them to deal with like friendships. Some of these kids have difficulty with peer relationships. So I might take a theme like friendship, and I go through the card catalog, and I pick out books that have materials that are appropriate to their reading level but have a story theme and the story characterization that might engage them more than controlled vocabulary.

And then when I bring new books [to class], I sort of briefly talk about the books: the theme of the book; I might read them the jacket of the book that tells about the theme of the story; I might show them

the illustrations to sort of get them caught up in the interest of the book from the illustrative point of view; and then they read silently.

> I may go up and ask them to read for me and have a mini-conference with them to give them new vocabulary, [or] talk to them about "Does that make sense?" [or] get them to use a particular strategy when they've gotten stuck on a word. If they have gotten the meaning but they miscue on a particular word, then I just let it go. Then I might ask them to pick a part of the story to share with the other kids, to read out loud, so that they can get the other child interested in the same book.

At this point I asked "Bruce" whether he had ever taken a course in children's literature. "Bruce" explained that he had been a participant in the Summer Institute on Stories and the Child, held at the University of Massachusetts in 1984, sponsored by the National Endowment for the Humanities, and directed by professors Masha K. Rudman and William Moebius (1985). About that experience, "Bruce" recalled,

> That's where I got my real interest in folk tales. . . . From that course I know certain authors. I know [that] when I look at a book, I have an idea of what I'm looking for.

"Bruce" also explained that through the Summer Institute on Stories and the Child he had become aware of Masha Rudman's book, <u>Children's Literature: An Issues Approach</u> (1984).

> I have used Masha's bibliography . . . to pick out stories that reinforce a particular theme I want to do with the children. Like I've done something with alternative families. I've read books about adopted

children, and I've read books about children from single parent situations, traditional family settings, foster children.

Sharing such books with the children enabled "Bruce" to ask them such questions as, "How do you think that child felt?;" "Why do you think they behaved that way?;" "Do you know anyone who's in that situation?" These are all examples of open-ended questions, another characteristic of whole language classrooms (Rudman, 1989).

"Bruce" said that he wishes he knew more, but his descriptions of how he finds literature for his students demonstrate that he is able to begin with what he does know and go from there. He described how he finds and evaluates books in the school library:

> Basically, when I go through the card catalog I look for a theme. Then I write down all of the books with as much information about what the length of the story is, if I am familiar with the author, whether it's illustrated, and then I actually go to the shelves. . . . I go through, and I look at the books, and I decide, "No, I think that's beyond their level;" "No, I don't think that's going to engage them;" "Oh, yes, I know this author from other books, I think this will be an appropriate one."
>
> And then I just pick a sample and bring them and share with them. And some of them like the books and some of them don't, and I learn a little bit more from that. In some ways I would like to have a more systematic system to have some kind of annotation of my own, but I just don't have the time to do that. I think if I were doing this in a classroom, as I picked out books to have in a library section, I would do some kind of annotation of my own to try to keep track of what books I think are appropriate or I feel are good quality literature or address a particular theme.

> I might even have some kind of indication of what kind of illustrations were used. You know, if I wanted to do something in the classroom and have the kids using watercolors, I might pick some books that had a lot of different kinds of watercolor illustrations and use that as [a starting point].

"Bruce" also explained that in the summer of 1985, the year after he had participated in the children's literature institute, he had taken a three week intensive writing workshop at the University of New Hampshire where Jane Hansen (1987) had been one of the instructors.

By the time "Bruce" took the workshop in writing, he had already been using the writing process for two years in the alternate school he had worked in. "Bruce" explained what he had learned:

> I finally took the course and it was very helpful in terms of learning about the developmental process children go through in writing and the ways to calm these children. If you look at their writing it tells you something about their sound symbol relationships in terms of phonics.
>
> . . . You can see where the kids are having the most difficulty, and . . . when you relate that to what they have to read you can understand why reading is such a difficult process and you start to see who are the successful readers in some ways by the way they can use language in their writing. What the writing process does is to take them at the level they're at, reinforce the skills that they clearly have, and using their writing you can then teach them specific skills.

In the above excerpts from our interview, "Bruce" makes a connection between reading and writing and how the learning of one process supports the other. The connection

between reading and writing is something "Karen" talked about, too.

"Bruce" went on to explain how the course he took in writing had helped him understand how children feel when they are asked to write:

> One of the best things about the course, I felt, was in the process of doing my own writing, to see just what it was like. You're faced with a blank page--what we ask kids to do. [We] assume that they should be able to just sit down and do it. And it was very hard. . . . The process we go through ourselves--how if we go back and proofread what we've written, we'll see that we have lots of mistakes, that we just go with the flow--things I've learned in doing the reading about whole language stuff.
>
> I've learned some of my own issues with reading, some of my own poor strategies, and some of the things that slow me down as a slow reader and affect my meaning. [For example], taking meaning from text, and how I can appreciate how that would be difficult for a child . . . , what could be more helpful, what could have helped me when I was going through the process. So, the self-education, plus taking the courses, has really been helpful.

"Bruce" also makes a connection between the process of doing his own writing and understanding how children must feel when they are asked to write. In an essay titled "Effective Teacher-Child Conferences: The Importance of Writing Yourself," Ruth Nathan (1991) says that "it is essential that you write if you are going to be a good writing teacher" so that you will understand "how a writer feels when a piece is shared" (p. 19). "Bruce" goes on to explain how he extended what he learned about his own

writing to his own problems with reading. When "Bruce" mentions self-education he is probably referring to how he builds on what he has learned.

Much of "Bruce's" explanation of how he had changed the way he helped children learn to read and write centered on the activities and procedures he used with the small groups of children who came to the early childhood resource room for help. I think this was partly because his understanding of these processes and of how children learn was relatively new to him and he was eager to share with me what he had learned. I also think he was influenced by the fact that the procedures he was talking about were new enough to me so that I was fascinated by his explanation. At no time did I indicate to him that hearing about his classroom procedures was anything but interesting to me.

"Peter," Sixth Grade Teacher

"Peter" is one of three sixth grade teachers at "Parkside," the same K-6 elementary school where "Lois," "Karen," and "Bruce" were interviewed. "Peter" had been teaching in this school for thirteen years and had been using literature in his reading program for most of that time. "Peter" was in his late thirties. Although he may have served as a model for other teachers in the building, "Peter" did not participate in the support group, and his

work with other teachers had been mainly as a consultant in other school districts.

During our interview, "Peter" told me that he had used a basal reader for a short period when he first started teaching. "Peter" recalled,

> I hated it! I read basals for six weeks, and it [nearly] killed me. I tried every way [short] of making myself mad to be creative, to allow kids to interpret, to allow kids to feel, but most of the stories did not empower students to do that. And I was going mad. Perhaps I was a frustrated English professor, I have no idea.

"Peter's" comments concerning his dissatisfaction with the basal imply that he wanted his students to be able to deal with literature in a meaningful way. When I asked "Peter" to elaborate on how his reading program had evolved from using basals to the way he was now using novels, he explained that at the time he decided to make a change, he had been earning extra money by tutoring.

> I took all my tutoring checks for that six weeks, and I went and bought novels. I went down to a bookstore in [a nearby town], and I begged the man to give me 30% off, . . . because I could end up buying three more titles if he did. He did; I bought; I proved that the kids were turned on to reading. They never bought their own books; I didn't believe in that--not in the public school.

"Peter" then told how he had encouraged his students to tell their parents about the books they were reading.

> I said go talk about what we talk [about] here at your dinner table, and then have your parents get excited and have them tell me something nice at parent

conferences. Yes, I set it up. Well, they [the parents] would tell me things, and I went back to the principal, and I got $50 to buy books. And, I made my choices very carefully, and I took that $50 and really stretched it out and made it work, and I've been doing it ever since.

"Peter" explained that the first year he had taught at "Parkside," after he started using literature,

> I was the only teacher who exclusively used novels. Now take a walk around the building and ask people how many people are doing it that way. I wasn't doing it so people could follow me; I did it because I believed [that this was a better way to teach reading].

Although "Peter" claims that he had not intended to serve as a model to other teachers, he is clearly pleased that so many other teachers in the school are now using children's literature. "Peter" also feels good about the parents' attitude toward their children's interest in reading.

> The biggest thing that I feel good about: when a parent comes in, [and says,] "You know what my kid does after dinner, when the seven o'clock news comes on, and they've finished their homework? They go upstairs to their room and read." There are kids in this room who didn't take reading as a real serious endeavor, whose parents say they [now] have to sometimes wrench them from the room [to get them] to go out with them shopping because they want to read.
>
> That's the highest compliment. And after they've learned their math facts, after they know all of the fifty states, because you can look them up in an almanac, reading is a lifelong skill. Reading is a lifelong entertainment, you know--let all the power go out and give me a candle; [if] I can get enough [candles] lined up, I can read, and that's the joy of it.

When I asked "Peter" to tell me about whether his way of using literature had fallen into place quickly for him, he explained that he felt that it had worked from the beginning "because of the turn-on kids had for reading," and consequently because their parents felt good about his program. He described how he felt about it:

> I believed in it, and I told the kids here why I was doing it. I was doing it because I told them what I got out of books, how I enjoyed sitting in my chair by myself, in my rocking chair in my baseball uniform and crying because something happened to a character, and I liked to cry, or be really happy, or cheer when the character wins, or whatever.

"Peter" continued talking about how much pleasure he felt he got out of reading:

> I told them that that's what I thought reading was about: to enjoy; to live the life of the character; or just to observe and say, "I would never do that;" and to read just to feel. TV programs are only thirty minutes and all the problems are solved. Sometimes books don't leave you with that feeling. You can [go back and] read again. And I believed in it.

One of the reasons "Peter" thought that his reading program worked was that his students realized that they were special because reading from novels instead of basal readers "made them different."

> Most people in the building weren't doing that. Kids at ages 11 and 12 are not rebellious, they're not your adolescents. But they do like to be different. And because I believed that, [it worked].

"Peter" said more than once that he believed in his reading program and credited that belief with helping make

it work. He also described how he was using his own approach to writing at the same time he was beginning to use literature in his reading program:

> I was also running a writing program with a book that I had written at the same time, a creative writing program that was vanguard, that was new. And so they were both writing things that were fresh and new and they were also doing reading that was different [from] anybody else in the building, thirteen or fourteen years ago.

It is not clear from this quote whether "Peter's" decision to use novels in his classroom was influenced by his ideas about how to help children learn to write.

In answer to a question, "Peter" revealed what he had learned about the importance of literature in his course work at the University of Massachusetts.

> I did my Masters' work in Multicultural Education, and what that allowed me to do was to bring in a lot of books with social and historic reality. You know, you read the junior version of <u>Wounded Knee</u> [Brown, 1974] and then challenge your students to find one negative thing from the library written about Kit Carson and they can't and they go, "Well, is this book true?" And then you take them up and maybe read some actual native American accounts at the UMass library, and they go, "Wow, there is some truth in reading. Look at what I can investigate if I choose to ask the questions, and etc., etc., etc." Oh, it's selling it, but kids are usually easy targets when they know that the product that you're selling is one you believe in in your heart.

"Peter" tries to impress upon his students that they can investigate history by reading books and asking questions. Once again, "Peter" refers to the importance of believing in what a powerful force reading can be for children.

"Peter" indicated how excited his students sometimes got about reading novels by exclaiming,

> Oh, and they're off the wall! You know, I'm one of the few teachers who allow their kids to bring blankets in and go outside in the spring and read. And just read, and not go out and check on them. I would have 12 or 13 kids left in here and 17 out there, and I would never go out to check to see if they were reading.

When "Peter" talked about how he uses children's literature in his sixth-grade classroom, I had to do very little prodding. It was as though he had decided that there were certain things I would need to know if I were interested in hearing his story of how he encourages children to care about reading.

> One of the first things that I believe in, in terms of teaching children's literature, as opposed to basals, is that first of all, it gives an opportunity for students to make a choice about what they're going to read. Automatic choices, they come up to the book rack and they choose a book.

"Peter" asserted that the reading level of a book did not have to be a consideration when students were choosing what to read:

> It doesn't matter what their Gates score is, that makes no difference, but instead it's what they choose to read, what their interest level is. One of the things also is that they can try anything [i.e., any book they wanted to read].

"Peter" told me how he had taught his students to figure out whether they were capable of reading a particular book:

> I ask them to open up to the direct middle of the book, which gets a little math in there, and read two pages. And if they can understand what's going on there, [they can probably handle the book].

"Peter" then talked about what they did with the books after they had read them:

> Some of them just want to read the whole book and have discussions, about character or style, or author intent. That's one modality.
>
> Another way we handle it is to read a book and they run discussions. I teach them ordering of questions, a little bit of Bloom's taxonomy, and I have them ask the questions, they run the discussions, which is a lot of fun, and I become a class member. And they usually are in small groups of six or seven, and I've read the book and I raise my hand. It empowers them to have a belief that they can understand and interpret literature and bring people around them to ask questions.

By mentioning Bloom's taxonomy (Bloom, 1956), "Peter" is noting that he has taught his students the difference between literal, or lower order questions, and open-ended questions which are more likely to require critical thinking skills.

"Peter" continued his explanation of the various possibilities for responding to the literature they had read:

> We also have "read and do nothing". Just read it and enjoy it, and if they're so turned on to talk, they can hold what I call a reading summit meeting, where they just say, "Hey, anybody want to hear about my book?" And if people have read it, they come to hear, if people haven't read it, they come to hear. And so we do nothing with those books. That's the funnest time, because I get to do it, too. And sometimes I will read a lesser known title and try to generate some interest in it. And sometimes it works and sometimes it doesn't. [Someone might say,] "I wouldn't read that if you paid me."

"Peter" then related how he used literature as part of his curriculum for studying social issues:

> And then we do what I think may be even a little bit more important than that, and that is to read for social and historic reality. It's a blending and an integration; I might be doing something on the Depression, and there might be several different books that have to do with the Depression--not just in this country, but sometimes a depression in European countries--and I enjoy doing that with kids. It's a real historical or sociological study. That also is fun. They know you're reading specifically for that. Or to have fifteen students at the same time to read Dr. Martin Luther King's biography, and do something special with it. Not necessarily around his birthday, but just to do something very special with it. So we have topical reading as well.
>
> So those are the four styles, but within that style, sometimes they'll say, "Do you have a question booklet around this book; I just want to review it and see what kinds of questions you asked." Because I have a whole folder up there for almost every novel, questions, so we do that as well.

In these quotes, "Peter" mentions several principles in which he believes, such as allowing students to choose what they read and how they respond to it, and encouraging open-ended response when discussing books. These are characteristic of classrooms where whole language, literature-based programs are in place.

When I asked to interview "Peter," he had suggested that I come to his classroom while school was in session. During the interview, "Peter's" student teacher and his instructional aide were helping the class of sixth graders select the novels they would read next. As he looked over my shoulder, "Peter" said about the process:

> See I like that--I don't have to be involved in book selection. They can choose books. I had nothing to do with that. They chose to read what they wanted to read, and a lot of them opened up . . . in the direct middle of the book and looked on both sides, [and said] "Yeah, I can handle it," and there's almost a "whew, I can do it!"

Even though the students could ask the student teacher or "Peter's" instructional aide for help if they needed it, "Peter" seemed confident that his students had learned how to make choices concerning which book they wanted to read next.

In answer to a question I asked about how many groups he was trying to get, "Peter" explained that this time they were aiming for six groups, each one reading a different novel. That way, he, his student teacher, and his instructional aide would each be working with two different groups. Although "Peter" allows his students some choice in what they read, it is not really an individual choice, because "Peter" wants groups of children reading and discussing the same book.

"Peter" continued his explanation by saying,

> We have basically five or six copies of every book, so if we don't [have enough copies] we can go in the library and grab one, or I may have one at home, or someone else may have one at home.

I asked "Peter" how much instruction he gives his students at the beginning of the year about choosing books:

> The first book takes thirty minutes to do. They're hemming, and they're hawing, and they [think], . . .

"Ooh, maybe I'll read with Joanie, 'cause she's my friend; maybe I'll read with Sue, but I had an argument with her; and I don't want to read the same book as Harry; and can girls read with guys," all of those issues.

And you have to sort of understand that on the first day of school I explain to the kids that there are six r's: reading, writing, 'rithmetic, respect, responsibility, and responsiveness to the above five. So picking friends, reading with friends is important, but also reading because I enjoy the book, that's responsiveness to your own personal self and respect for yourself. Choosing to be different is OK, because that's respecting yourself. Choosing to read something with your friends because you promised is also responsibility.

So at first, it takes a long time. That basically took about 12 minutes [referring to the book selection on this day, late in the school year--April 30, 1987]. And I've had classes who could do it nonverbally in five minutes. Just simply because of the kinds of readers they were.

These kids are a little bit more social. They're into friends--very, very important. There's that balance between friends, and that's OK. I mean, I can go with the tide, because that doesn't really matter, because they're still going to be reading. They're sold on the idea that novels are good to read.

"Peter" believes in his reading program and is aware that his students enjoy reading.

"Peter" provided some additional information about how he uses literature:

I read every novel every time, over again, front to back. I don't like to rely on my memory, [because] then I [would not be] allowing myself the freshness of the experience, reading the books. We basically allow two-and-a-half weeks for the children to finish a novel--thirteen school days. And sometimes that falls over a weekend, and sometimes it doesn't. And

> sometimes the kids finish the books faster, sometimes they say, "We need more time, we want more time," and that's totally allowable.
>
> We adjust, and we may do, oh, several poetry readings, or I may read an article to them about reading, or I may tell them a set of stories that have the same topical theme as the book that they're reading. We may talk about how they are connected, to see how oral tradition can connect with the written tradition. A lot of different things that we do.

"Peter" seems proud of his involvement with his students' reading, pleased that he rereads each book before his students read it, and that he uses a variety of responses with the novels he uses in his classroom.

Throughout my interview with him, "Peter" offered additional information that he thought might interest me, sometimes asking a question, and then proceeding to answer it himself.

> How do you get new titles? You ask the kids. "Hey, what book that [we] haven't read, maybe something you've read in the library, that's really, really . . . good, . . . would [you] recommend?" . . . They'll bring it to me, I'll read it, we'll review it together, we'll talk about the pluses and minuses.

"Peter" then described how he sometimes involves one of his students in an evaluation of the vocabulary of the book he/she is recommending for class use.

> "How about the vocabulary, what do you think of it?" [I] ask the kid what he thinks of the vocabulary. [If he] found it pretty easy, . . . then [knowing] pretty much what that child's vocabulary level is, [I] make some assessments.

"Peter" recalled the time a student had recommended the book The Noonday Friends (Stolz, 1965).

> She said, "It's sort of a dull book; there's not a lot of action, but," she said, [it's about] "the struggle with friends, and I know that for me in sixth grade, it was hard, struggling with friends, and I think this would be a good book to read." A little bibliotherapy, suggested not by me, but by the kids.
>
> I went and bought that book and have used it since, and sometimes I will impose that book. I'll say, "You five girls need to read this book. It was recommended by . . . ." "Oh, you mean Sally's big sister!" "Yeah, yeah, yeah, yeah, yeah!" And they'll read it, and it'll . . . invariably start touching upon [their problems], and they'll go, "You had us read this because we're having trouble with friends." "Yes, that's the truth." And so, sometimes there is some cajoling, sometimes there's some bibliotherapy, I don't think there's anything wrong with that, I'm up front about it, "You all need to read this book." And that to me is OK.

"Peter" gives several examples of how he involves his students in making his classroom a literate community. This is reminiscent of Nancie Atwell's suggestion, in her book In the Middle: Writing, Reading, and Learning with Adolescents (1987), where she tells that her goal for her classroom is that it resemble the discussions that take place when she and her husband and their friends gather around her dining room table to discuss what they are reading.

Then "Peter" told me how he uses his summers to read additional books which he might eventually use in his classroom:

> My goal is to read twenty adult books for me . . . and twenty books for kids every summer, and not necessarily critique them, but just read them for the feel, maybe read an author. Like I try to read everything by Irene Hunt because I just like the way she writes. I try to read everything by Madeleine L'Engle. I try to read several other [authors] . . . and some of the classics are also important. You know, . . . I think one of the finest books ever written, by John Knowles, _A Separate Peace_ [1960], should definitely be read by kids a little bit older than these.

"Peter" makes us aware of how much he personally enjoys reading when he says that he tries to read some adult books for himself during the summer, as well as additional children's books.

When I asked "Peter" whether he had any recommendations of how other teachers can be encouraged to use literature in their classrooms, he responded by discussing how his reading program was perceived by others. He also gave examples of the kinds of things he might say to teachers and to students to encourage them to care about reading.

> Plant seeds. Plant seeds. And the way I planted seeds, I didn't ask anybody to do it, I just did it. Then the librarians would talk about how ["Peter's"] kids would come into the library for an hour and lay in the well and read, and how they'd almost have to scoop them up like with spatulas when a group came in to use that well, and they would displace them, and the kids would continue to read, and then they'd tell that to such and such a teacher, and then they'd talk about the quality of the things that they'd read, and then I'd make a good point of displaying some of the essays the kids do write about their reading, because we still do that.

"Peter" clearly feels good about the times in the past when the librarians might have "bragged" about how his children loved to read when they came to the comfortable, carpeted library.

"Peter" also talked about some of the kinds of things he sometimes said to his students about what they were reading:

> I want the kids to be sometimes accountable, because it gives me a chance to really see where they're thinking. . . . I can build upon that, in terms of, "Hey, you know, I notice that you're really doing something very special in looking at the author's style."
>
> "The story line may not make that much difference, but you really like the way the author uses images. Keep that up, that's really good." So I do do that, talking, sharing, loaning, and having people watch what [I] do.

"Peter" told how sometimes he felt he could influence other teachers just by asking them about what books they like:

> Just [to say], "Oh, I'm so excited about novels, I don't even know where to go with this" or asking people about what some of their favorite kids' novels are. "Why do you want to know that?" "Well, because I . . . got twenty dollars from [the school principal]; I'm looking for some good titles. What's a good read-aloud book?" I just think you plant the seeds. You don't do anything formal because you've got to believe in here [pointing to his heart], I think first, that reading is just that important, and then [it's] how you go about it.
>
> I think your librarian can be key. Particularly, you know, [the librarian in his school]. Because she's . . . so full of knowledge, it's incredible. So, I don't know, you plant seeds, you get people to

believe, you get kids talking, you get parents talking, you get parents of older kids, who have someone who does novels talking about it with younger people.

"Peter's" comments indicate how much respect he has for the expertise of the librarian in his school, who was the person I called "Bev" (Chapter III, p. 69) who introduced me to "Lois," the language arts resource person who was the first person I interviewed in this school.

"Peter" also told me that he goes to other school districts as a consultant, sharing information about how he teaches the oral tradition, creative writing, and reading.

> I've actually been to [a town in a nearby state] and presented a workshop in letting 'em read, [that] I call, "Let 'em Read." That's it, I say, "This is a presentation in letting them read. How many of you are reading a novel right now that you enjoy, that you're reading because you want to?" And I don't know, I guess there were twenty people there; fourteen raised their hand. I said, "Well, please give me the title so that I can find you questions, comprehension and recall questions, so that . . . ." All of them said they wouldn't read the book if they had to do that. So I said think of what your kids are going through.

"Peter" used this anecdote about comprehension and recall questions to make the point that most adults would not stand for what children have often been expected to do in school when they are asked to respond to books they have read in many traditional basal reading programs.

"Linda," First Grade Teacher

"Linda" teaches first grade in one of fifteen K-6 elementary schools which, along with three 7-8 junior high schools, make up a K-8 elementary school district in "Northtown," a growing suburb northwest of Chicago. "Linda" was one of four first grade teachers in that school, three of whom worked closely together using a whole language approach. According to "Linda," the fourth first grade in that building was a bilingual classroom, where the teacher was "moving toward whole language" although she was still using a basal reading program at the time I interviewed "Linda".

"Linda" was in her early thirties when I interviewed her. She had worked in business right after college and had started work on a Masters' degree in business administration. Then she married, had children, and stayed home with them. As they got older she worked in a preschool for about six years. That worked well, she explained, because it fit in with her family. When her children were young, and while she worked at the preschool, she made many trips to the public library, learning a lot about children's literature.

According to "Linda," she started substitute teaching in the district where she now teaches, because her job working in a preschool did not bring in as much income as a

growing family required. Then she applied for a teaching job, at a time when she was certified to teach sixth through twelfth grade and still working on the course work that would certify her for elementary school. "Linda" was hired to teach sixth grade in the building in which she was still employed when I interviewed her.

"Linda" explained that one day during the year that she was teaching sixth grade, she and the principal had walked past a first grade classroom which "Linda" described as a place "in which there were some very interesting things going on." The principal had asked whether she would ever consider teaching first grade, and "Linda" indicated that she just might. When I interviewed her, "Linda" looked back on that conversation as a time when her principal may have been planting the seed for "Linda" to consider changing grade levels.

Because of shrinking enrollments at that time, junior high teachers were being pushed down into the elementary schools, and "Linda's" slot as an untenured sixth grade teacher was taken over by one of those tenured teachers. The principal then asked "Linda" if she would be willing to teach first grade. She accepted because "it was a job."

"Linda" had by then completed the course work required for primary grade certification, although she felt that she

wanted to know more about teaching first grade. "Linda" said, "I had the summer," and added:

> I knew that I really wasn't as prepared as I wanted to be to [teach first grade], so I had talked to somebody in the district--our curriculum superintendent. I asked her for an idea on where I could get a brush-up course for first grade reading in particular. She suggested a course taught by Darrell Morris.

"Linda" followed that person's recommendation and took a course which she described as follows:

> It was a two week very intense kind of thing but it was specifically first grade and . . . exposure to big books, to whole language, to philosophy, where it was, where we are now, the whole bit."

That was four years before I interviewed "Linda," and taking that course before she moved to first grade had changed the way she taught. "Linda" indicated that she had almost completed her Masters' degree because of a program set up by her school district as part of its staff development program. Although the teachers paid for the courses in which they enrolled, the district arranged for classes to be taught at district schools by professors from a consortium of area colleges. "Linda" explained:

> I think it's a five year program and then it will phase out. So there really was a big push to encourage people to go ahead and get extra training. Because of the location of [this northwest suburb], it would have involved traveling quite a distance to attend either of the two closest universities. I needed something close to home; I didn't want to spend hours traveling; I didn't particularly want to go into the city, and for now it fits the bill. I'm sure later on there'll be [other] things--in the next phase of my life. We really do have a strong program in staff development, and this is just one segment of it.

I asked "Linda" whether she felt the courses she had taken had been helpful. She thought for a moment and then explained,

> I've enjoyed them. There were a couple of reading courses in there: I wouldn't say they were as helpful specifically to what I do in the classroom [with respect to] whole language . . . ; in fact, I felt at that point that many of the courses I could almost have taught [myself].

When I asked "Linda" whether she would change the way she taught reading if she were to go back to teaching sixth grade, she replied that she "would absolutely teach differently" if she were to do that. She felt that the way she had taught sixth grade had been very "traditional." She went on:

> From what I've learned from course work that I've taken, from what I've learned from the district inservice kind of thing, from what I've learned as just hands-on kind of things, I definitely would do things much differently.

"Linda" described what happened when she served on a committee of teachers charged with selecting a new reading program for the "Northtown" K-8 district:

> The whole district was adopting a new reading program and there was a lot of difficulty developing a consensus upon which program to adopt K-8. That made it very difficult. . . . What they came up with was, at the upper level they felt that [a particular publisher's program] was what they wanted to go with; but the first grade teachers who were on that committee said, "No way." It just wasn't acceptable.

"Linda" went on to explain that a decision was made to set up a subcommittee to study further an alternative for

the first grade. This committee, which consisted of one first grade teacher from each of the elementary schools, put together a curriculum guide to help all of the first grade teachers move toward literature-based reading instead of adopting a basal reader for that grade level. "Linda" was her school's representative on the committee.

"Linda" showed me the large notebook containing the curriculum guide, explaining that the publisher had printed it for the school district, partly because they had adopted the publisher's reading program for grades 2-8. "Linda" told me that at the time the guide was put together, some of the same publisher's materials were being used in first grade, "toward the end of the year to prepare for second grade."

As "Linda" showed me the table of contents, she pointed out that this guide was not just a "sequential kind of thing that you follow." Instead, it consisted of a variety of background information chosen to provide help for teachers interested in learning about "whole language." "Linda" pointed out with pride that the guide included many journal articles which she had recommended for inclusion, having become aware of them in the courses she had been taking. I interviewed "Linda" during the second year this guide was being used by the whole district.

"Linda" indicated that although the guide had been useful,

> We in our building had really been doing this [before the guide was published]. . . . We had permission from our principal to proceed in a whole language manner even before this was adopted district wide.

"Linda" also explained that when she moved to first grade, her principal had wanted to see "Linda's" lesson plans each week, but that was not required for very long.

Originally it had been the goal of the committee to get all of the first grades in the district to use this process approach to the teaching of reading and writing. According to "Linda," the idea of extending it to the second grade had come near the end of the previous year

> from the reading teachers in the district, [who must have said], "Here, we've got this bunch of kids who have gone through first grade. We really see and . . . feel the strengths of whole language, and really, the articles that have been coming out lately--it's just proliferating."

"Linda" continued,

> So . . . at the end of the year in our building--in fact in every building in the district--release time was given to the second grade teachers. . . . They all came in and visited our first grade classes, and we modeled what we were doing in whole language kinds of things.
>
> Then this fall I know they had a half day of release time and then our reading consultant here in the building met with them. [The teachers in this building] were a little bit further along . . . [than the teachers in] other buildings are. . . . It just kind of happened. . . . They were a little bit further along, so they were able to get together to brainstorm some units, and they could do some work as a team. . . . I can see things starting to happen--things that I never have seen--on somebody's wall.

"Linda" talked about the number of visitors interested in coming to her classroom at the time of our interview. The year before, it had seemed to "Linda" that she and the other two first grade teachers with whom she worked had gone

> through a phase where a lot of people who hadn't done this as much as we had were still questioning what we were doing.

"Linda" then told of how one of the other first grade teachers got discouraged at one point and said to "Linda,"

> I really don't care! There's more than one way to teach reading. Just let them do it their own way! I don't need any more of this!

"Linda" implies that during the previous year, she and her colleagues found themselves in the position of feeling that they had to defend the way they were teaching to other teachers.

"But this year!" "Linda" exclaimed. She then told about a newly hired teacher from another school in this district who had substituted in this building the previous year and who was "feeling her way" about how to teach. This teacher's supervisor suggested that she observe in "Linda's" classroom. After the visit, the teacher had told "Linda" that she was still hesitant about trying whole language since no one in her building was teaching quite the way "Linda" was. Although she would love to move in the direction that the teachers in this building were

moving, she wasn't sure that her principal would understand. "Linda" added,

> So the next week the principal came! Tomorrow we've got someone coming from a parent/teacher district advisory committee who is just interested in whole language.

I reminded "Linda" that I had also asked to come, which seemed only to add to her delight over all the interest people were showing in what "Linda" and her colleagues were doing.

In response to a question about whether the teachers in the middle and upper grades in this building who were still using basal readers felt a little bit freed about how to use them, "Linda" answered:

> [There's] been a real push from the district to teachers: don't feel that you have to do everything. In the upper grades the district supervisors have given a lot of strategies to the teachers, reading in the content area kinds of strategies. . . . So people are really being encouraged, instead of following the teacher's guide exactly, to think, "OK, so this story is about puppets. What can you do? What can you pull in from the outside, what other strategies can you use? Let them read the story, enjoy the story, but, you know, go at it from a different angle. Rather than putting the vocabulary words up on the board--that's what I was doing in sixth grade!

When asked what part children's literature had played in her own background, "Linda" said,

> I think I learned [about children's literature] from reading to my own children. It was going to the library with my children and picking up books, [with both her own children and the preschool children with whom she worked]. . . . My favorites are still the authors that I can remember reading to my [children].

"Linda" had not taken a children's literature course as an undergraduate because her work had not been in the field of education. "Linda" indicated that she no longer felt the need for such a course, because she has taken "the time to search out" trade books to use in her teaching, and because she has become convinced of the value of children's literature. "Linda" added, "You do have to convey that love to the children."

Comparing children's literature to what children are asked to read in basal readers, "Linda" asked,

> How many times have you had to read a basal story and you have to reread it because you don't understand what the plot is? Has that ever happened to you? That happens to me all the time.

"Linda" then added,

> It's a sin to ask children who are capable of so much more [with respect to] connections, higher level thinking, insights, their speaking language, their listening vocabulary, [to read basal readers].

"Linda's" remarks about basal readers reminded me of similar comments in an article titled "Reading for Meaning: Trying to Get Past First Basal," in which Mary Schulman (1987) reports on her own classroom research involving the interaction of her first graders to the writing found in a basal reading text. Schulman writes:

> I began to wonder how many other classroom teachers felt similar frustrations and pressures when it came to teaching reading through the basal text program. Were they aware, as I was, of the shortcomings of the basal texts? How was I going to support my belief that children need a literature-rich environment (Schulman, 1987, p. 113)?

> These [children] were capable of writing more meaningful text and using more complex sentence patterns than the basal text. Asking them to read the same words repeatedly seemed to be an insult to their intelligence. When the children began to read the basal text, I did not want them to assume that any failure on their part to understand or make sense of the text meant something was wrong with them (Schulman, 1987, p. 113-114).

"Linda" went on to talk about how she valued children's literature:

> I really do enjoy children's literature. I think there's something about the simplicity of it. I think there's something that can be meaningful in children's literature--not just to children but to adults; and I could take many of the same books that I teach in first grade and use them in a different way with junior high kids. I really do think that if a book is well done and has a meaningful theme [it can be used with any age].

"Linda" is not the only one to suggest that children's literature appropriate for first graders can be used with older students. Susan Benedict and Lenore Carlisle have edited a collection of essays titled Beyond Words: Picture Books for Older Readers and Writers (1992). In this book, teachers who work with children of all ages, from first grade through high school, write of their experiences with using children's literature in the classroom. In a chapter on picture books in the fourth edition of her book A Critical Handbook of Children's Literature, Rebecca Lukens (1990) makes the point that "artistic excellence is increasingly apparent" (p. 211) in children's literature. Lukens then points out that many complex books "may be appropriate for any age" (p. 212).

Although she had not learned it from a course in children's literature, "Linda" felt that she really does know a lot about children's literature. When I asked "Linda" how she learns more about children's literature, she said,

> Well, you like to keep up with the new ones--that's exciting. The reading teacher will publish reviews of new children's books. I'll review [those], but the trouble is--it doesn't do much good to read a review if you can't get your hands on [the book]. You know it doesn't do any good if it's not in your public library or if it's too expensive. You know, you just can't buy everything you want to. So, . . . I go to the library monthly and will get fifty books, or something like that, at a time. And I have a real good rapport with the librarian at the public library. She will [say], "Have you seen this?" [or] "This is new;"--that kind of rapport.

When I asked about whether she and the other first grade teachers share books and information about books with each other, "Linda" said that they do and told about an incident that had happened the night before.

> In fact we were out--all three of us went out--for dinner last night, and we bought a shower present for somebody else on the staff. One of the presents was a book. So we went into a bookstore, and we looked at all the new ones: . . . "Have you seen this one?" "Look, here's one by this author!" "I remember this one!" We don't get a chance to do that very often. Then we share amongst ourselves. You go into somebody's room and say, "Oh, I saw you using that, can I borrow that?" or "I'd like to try that." . . .

"Linda" continued by saying,

> I've heard people say that to be a strong literature-based teacher, you have to have that love of literature yourself. I may be in a weaker line of the continuum than other people are.

Expanding on what she meant here, "Linda" pointed out that the other two teachers with whom she is working are probably more avid adult readers than she is, and on one occasion "Linda" almost felt guilty because she knows that she has not read for pleasure as much as these other teachers have. "Linda" explained that then she had stopped to think about it, and she had decided that she was not going to apologize for the fact that during the last five years she had devoted her reading time to reading professional literature. "Linda" said that sometimes her husband would ask her whether she didn't want to read a novel, and she would say, "No, this is so much more interesting!" "Linda" seems satisfied with the ways in which she learns more about children's literature, and with the fact that she chooses to spend time reading professional literature.

During my interview with her, "Linda" showed me some examples of writing by some of her first grade students which illustrated their progress over the six weeks school had been in session. She also talked about the simple journal writing the children were beginning to do. "Linda" explained,

> The kids write in what we call their red writing books. So we send home the books at the end of the month, and I ask [the parents] to send them back. . . . Then I ask them to respond--you know, encouraging words, and what their favorite word was, and that sort of thing.

> One parent wrote back, "I'm not sure I like him practicing words the wrong way." But she's my room mother, and I've talked to her on the phone. I'll talk to her a bit more. She'll come around, when she sees that he makes progress. Then they become convinced; all it takes is a little bit of progress.

"Linda" explained that two years before I interviewed her, the school district had stopped requiring teachers to administer end of chapter basal reading tests. "Linda" explained to me how she felt about such tests:

> What I personally found was, the high readers passed the test anyway. The low readers don't pass it at all, but they weren't going to pass anyway. The middle of the road kids pass it, but they maybe aren't as strong as they would be if they had been trained in the format of the test-taking.

"Linda" then told me that the only formal evaluation used in the first grades of her school district at the time of our interview was the Read developmental spelling assessment, the use of which is explained by Darrell Morris and Jan Perney (1984) in an article titled "Developmental Spelling as a Predictor of First-Grade Reading Achievement." According to Morris and Perney, research shows that "early reading (word recognition) and spelling ability share a common knowledge base" (p. 444), making it possible to analyze children's invented spellings as "a good predictor of later reading achievement" (p. 445).

"Linda" talked about how she uses this eighteen word spelling test, which she administers three times during the school year.

> When [I] ask young children to attempt to spell a word back, I can look at how they spell those words and assess them at different levels. A child who just writes down random letters, I would assess as a "0." Some children just write down "B" [because they] just hear the initial consonant. Then they can hear the beginning and ending, and [next] they'll do what we call the phonetic level.

"Linda" went on to tell me that "there are some substitutions that linguists have explained. There are special reasons why [children] do this--there are a lot of patterns there." Pointing to a chart in the Morris & Perney article (1984, p. 447), "Linda" indicated where her "strongest readers" and where her "weak readers" had been when she had given this assessment at the beginning of school. She continued talking about her confidence in the information she derived from the Read test:

> This is wonderful. What we do is, we give this assessment three times: [at] the beginning of the year, the end of January, and then at the end of the year; and almost to the letter, every single child will move up a notch. It is so visual, you can just see them. You can see their spelling development, and you know that their reading is going right along with it. And the ones who don't move, those are the ones where your informal observations are telling you this [same thing]; it's like a little confirmation thing.

When asked how this was translated for parents, "Linda" showed me a larger copy of the chart for use when the parents come to open house. She and her teacher colleagues explain this spelling assessment to parents the same way she had explained it to me. She went on:

> It's so graphic. Parents can understand. I mean, they see their kids writing these funny little things.

> And when you start to explain it like this [pointing to chart], moving across, and making progress, they can understand that. It really makes a lot of sense. So I just speak right from this [chart].

"Linda" has figured out how to help parents understand what she is doing in her classroom by showing them samples of their children's written work and by explaining how to interpret how their children are doing on the Read developmental spelling assessment.

"Linda" told me that after the first grade teachers had presented their parents' night information at a fall open house just before I interviewed "Linda," the reading coordinator who serves half time in her building had encouraged "Linda" and her two first grade teacher colleagues to make a presentation at the state reading council meeting on how they explain their reading program to the parents of their students. As "Linda" put it,

> After we presented this [on] parents night, [the reading coordinator] went in to the principal and said, "You know, those guys have done that two years in a row and they do such a wonderful job. Can we encourage them to go down to Springfield to the state reading conference; is there money for subs, and all that sort of thing?" They put in a proposal.

I suggested that they might want to write an article, but "Linda" said, "There are plenty of articles out there."

I discovered later that "Linda" was listed as the director, and two other teachers from her school were listed as resource persons, for a microworkshop they

offered at the 1991 annual convention of the International Reading Association, titled "A Team Approach: Bonding Literature and Learning." And even more recently, I received a brochure from a California-based group offering a day-long seminar in a Chicago suburb in May, 1993, entitled "Integrating Literature-Based Strategies Thoughout Your Primary Curriculum." "Linda," and the same two colleagues with whom she presented the program at IRA, were listed as presenters for a segment of the conference titled "Authentic Assessment Across the Curriculum." On that brochure, "Linda" is listed as both an adjunct professor at one of the universities which were part of the consortium providing the courses in her district which led to a Masters' degree, and as building assistant for the school in which she was teaching when I interviewed her.

Clearly the teachers in this school district have been encouraged by the administrators to support each other and to grow professionally, and teachers' competence has been acknowledged. Examples include the principal telling "Linda" that she no longer needed to submit weekly lesson plans, empowering a committee of teachers to decide what components would be included in the first grade reading curriculum guide, and encouraging teachers to support each other as they expanded the whole language approach to the second grade. These administrators also demonstrated that they valued further education by setting up the plan

through which teachers could take courses which would result in their earning Masters' degrees. And finally, as related above, the teachers were encouraged to make presentations about their work at various professional meetings.

"Lois," Language Arts Resource Person

"Lois" was the first person I interviewed at "Parkside," a K-6 elementary school in Massachusetts where many of the teachers were using a literature-based approach to the teaching of reading. She had been involved in the teaching profession for twenty years. "Lois" served as the language arts resource person; in this position, she was responsible for overseeing all of the reading and language arts programs for all of the children in the school. Part of her job was to give direct service to children, working with them on a remedial level, in developmental groups, and with the gifted. "Lois" also was available to test individual children at the request of a teacher. In addition, "Lois" coordinated the English as a second language (ESL) program in her school.

In her capacity as resource person, "Lois" was responsible for maintaining a collection of materials, including multiple copies of trade books, which could be borrowed and used in any of the school's classrooms.

"Lois" also served as a resource to teachers when they requested her presence in their classrooms during specific times, for example, during reading time when they might have a particular difficulty because of the number of groups with which they were working. She sometimes initiated some activities because of her own interests, such as the poetry writing that was going on in several classrooms when I interviewed her, and the school newspaper that she had done the year before.

When "Lois" began teaching first grade, in 1967, she was in a school system where she was "supposed to teach phonics first, and when the kids all learned the phonic elements, then they could be introduced to books." She went on to explain that she had taught that way "because those were the books I was given, I was a new teacher, and I just followed the teacher's manual. I didn't do that very long. I realized that that wasn't the way you learned to read."

"Lois" described the situation where she had taught in Hawaii for two years during the mid-seventies, in a Chapter I program in an inner city junior high school where there were many immigrant children.

> They didn't want to be there, and so I tried to just find materials that were a part of everyday life. I mean, I came up with mystery stories, we did a unit on communications, and tried to have all of the things that they read be things that I thought were

> interesting or relevant to them or things that they would be interested in reading. I tried to take it as far away from textbooks as possible. So that was one thing I did just because I knew that the kids wouldn't respond if I brought out textbooks because they'd already seen them.

"Lois" had an opportunity to hear Ken Goodman speak while she was in Hawaii in 1976, and what he said made sense to her in light of her experience. In describing what Goodman spoke about, "Lois" said,

> I listened to everything that he said. You know, it was miscue analysis, and all that sort of stuff, the labels of which I was hearing for the first time. But a lot of the things I had started to change already, and hearing that and beginning to read what he had written was another big influence, I think, on me.

The phenomenon of someone hearing or reading something which suddenly makes sense, perhaps because of prior experience, is mentioned by Lorri Nielsen in her department "The Reading Professional" in The Reading Teacher (1991). Recalling an address she heard by Janet Emig in 1979, Nielsen writes, "I mark that moment as a professional epiphany--what Brookfield (1988) calls a 'triggering event'" (Nielsen, 1991, p. 588).

"Lois" spent another six months in Hawaii, in the mid-eighties, teaching English part-time for six months in a high school alternative program for girls who were pregnant. That turned out to be another situation where she tailored a reading program to the particular students who were in her charge. This time "Lois" felt that she was

hired because of her personality. She perceived that the school sought someone they felt would work well with the girls and be understanding and get along with them. "They cared less about the credentials, I mean, I'm not certified to teach high school English. Of course, the girls weren't doing high school English." These students went to this separate program throughout their pregnancy.

When I asked whether she felt that she was able to influence them in getting them to read, "Lois" admitted that she did not feel very successful.

> The only thing that I did that I really felt good about, I had them keep journals, so they were writing every day. And I also did a unit on children's literature, because these were girls who had never read . . . Make Way for Ducklings [McCloskey, 1941], or Winnie-the-Pooh [Milne, 1926], or any of those things. Then I had them choose picture books, and we talked about qualities of those books, partly so they would read things that I thought might be interesting, and partly because they were going to be mothers.
>
> They all kept their babies, and I hoped that they would see that there was a reason why you would read to children, and how literature could be an influence in their lives. And they seemed to enjoy that. They had to read an x number of books and evaluate them and present them to the class, and that sort of stuff. That was very different from what the teacher before me had done. She had never done anything like that. She was not an elementary school teacher; she had been a social worker, so she was not oriented to children's literature. So how much that influenced them I don't know, whether they're going to read to their children or not.

"Lois" had taken a children's literature course while she was an undergraduate in the sixties, but since then she

had updated her knowledge about children's literature informally, sometimes by attending workshops, but mostly on her own.

"Lois" described a workshop she had recently attended, sponsored by a local reading council, which she mentioned as an example of how one might continue to learn about children's literature. The woman conducting the workshop had selected a group of books published within the last year, and had given "little book talks" on them. As "Lois" described it, the woman had told "something about the author, or she read excerpts;" she had also talked about books that were sequels to other books, and she had covered some historical fiction, some poetry, and several other genres.

It was "Lois'" feeling that through this workshop she had been exposed to some books that she had never heard about before, but instead of just taking notes on what she was hearing, she had gone to the library and looked up some of the authors she had learned of to see what other books they had written. "Lois" seemed to be impressed with the idea that

> that was accomplished in an hour. It isn't a course, and it isn't someone just passing on a list. But it's a way of getting . . . started. It's hard to get teachers to take initiative because there are so many areas to take initiative in. Having that kind of thing would be a shot in the arm.

"Lois" and I discussed the shortcomings of lists and agreed that one problem with them is that each person's list is different because each person values different specific titles for a variety of reasons. The ideal situation would be for each teacher to develop his or her own list after hearing suggestions or better yet, after searching for books in a library.

When "Lois" was asked whether she felt, either about herself or about the people with whom she works, a need for knowing more about children's literature, she responded that she felt that there was such a need. She then talked about "Matt," a fifth grade teacher in her building who at one point during the year had all of his students read Newbery Award winning books. "Lois" felt that "Matt's" unit emphasizing Newbery and Caldecott award-winning books had become a separate part of his program and thus amounted to a "one-shot deal" instead of an effort to incorporate literature into his entire curriculum. "Lois" felt that there were many more ways that Matt could have incorporated literature into his classroom if he had known more about children's literature.

It was "Lois" who first told me about the support group which was to have its first meeting the day after my interview with her. The idea for starting the support group had come from "Karen" and another first grade teacher

in this building who had started the year totally abandoning their basal reading program as they moved toward using a literature-based approach to helping children learn to read. According to "Lois," the meeting was to be "a discussion of pros and cons of whole language, and people sharing ideas." She then added,

> We're trying to get kindergarten teachers to do more of it [whole language], and so one of the things that we've decided to do toward that aim is to have a sort of a support group within the school of people who are doing it.

Eventually this support group, about which I have said more elsewhere, grew to include teachers from other schools, and to affiliate with TAWL.

"Lois" also mentioned the monthly meetings of all of the language arts resource people from the district. She was aware that not all of the resource persons were "at the same place," and in effect, this was "another kind of support group" because some of the people involved indicated by what they said that they would like to move toward literature-based reading. Describing one of those monthly meetings, "Lois" recalled,

> We were talking about some of these whole language things, and there were a couple of the people there . . . [about] whom you could tell, from the questions they asked and some of the input they were giving, that they don't do a lot of whole language things. But, one of them is interested in going in that direction; I think she feels pulled in that direction. And so she's beginning to ask more questions and get involved in things that will help her move in that direction.

"Lois" went on to explain that she felt that whole language was not a totally new idea for some of those people because they were familiar with the language experience idea, "but I think it wasn't heavily emphasized for them, it [i.e., language experience] was just one component of what you do when you teach reading, as opposed to a philosophy."

Discussing how some of her personal teaching experiences had influenced the way she taught, "Lois" made the following statement about helping other teachers come to "whole language:"

> I think the way I taught reading and the way I try to get other people to do it has been an evolving process over the years. And so, I think it was only this year, actually, that the realization hit that you could teach reading totally from literature and not use basal series at all. It actually came to me, I mean, I knew that was sort of true, but, I didn't work with 100% of my energy to get teachers out of doing that [i.e., using basals]. I was just dropping hints now and then, showing them other materials.
>
> I had a student intern from UMass, and she came in, gung ho, full of whole language stuff for kindergarten and first graders and showed us this big book material, . . . and [a whole language publisher's series], and it just sort of clicked for me and for some of the other teachers that we really had to make a big effort.

She then explained that this intern had questioned "Lois" about some of the things she said to teachers. The intern would say such things as, "But, do you really

believe that?" when "Lois" went along with some of the practices of certain teachers who were not yet using much whole language. According to "Lois," it was then that she realized that maybe she could make a difference if she tried a bit harder to be proactive by pushing her own viewpoint.

"Lois'" anecdote about her realization that you could teach reading totally from literature, her story about the intern questioning whether "Lois" believed what she was saying to teachers, and her comment that it "just sort of clicked" that she and her colleagues would have to make a bigger effort at helping others understand whole language, all seem to be indicate that "Lois" was "suddenly" ready to understand a concept after years of experience and personal development had laid the groundwork for that moment of understanding.

Then "Lois" talked about some of the difficulties she had experienced with teachers who were not quite ready to move ahead:

> I've had a lot of talks with the kindergarten teachers here about trying to do more whole language activities in their classrooms. And for a couple of the people, it's not been like, "Oh, whoa, what a great idea, that makes sense, let's do it." It's been my talking and examples and modeling and they're still not totally convinced that it's the right thing to do. They want their kids in kindergarten to have little workbooks and little workbook pages.

> I don't want you to go away thinking that everyone is doing it and that we all agree and we're really terrific. Because I think that for some people they're still evolving, for some people they're getting more information, some people are working toward it. You know, this kindergarten teacher . . . said to me, "Kids can not write in kindergarten." So I'm working! There's a longer way to go with her. So I don't want you to think that everybody is already very much ensconced in the program, philosophically disposed toward it, because it's not true.

"Lois" uses the term "still evolving" to describe some of the teachers in her building who aren't there yet. She also described the way she taught reading and the way she tries "to get other people to do it" as "an evolving process over the years."

"Lois" described several ways in which her school district encouraged teachers to help each other. She first told me about a writing support group made up of teachers in that school district which was started as a way for teachers themselves to experience process writing. "Lois" explained that although this was called a writing support group for the purpose of applying for and receiving a writing grant to be able to help teachers trying to implement process writing, it really served as a

> . . . writing support group for teachers who are interested in doing whole language reading and writing things. But reading and writing are so closely related that you really can't talk about one without the other. So part of it is, I think, to get groups of people together to be support groups for each other. You start small so people can feel comfortable and talk to each other. It's a formal way of sharing ideas.

"Lois" had come to understand that support groups work better when they are small enough so that people have an opportunity to talk, and she also realized, as "Karen" and "Bruce" did, that reading and writing are very closely related.

"Lois" provided information about other aspects of the inservice programs available to the teachers in that town. Each separate school planned their own inservice activities, many of which took place on once-a-week early dismissal days. In addition there was a teachers' center which planned programs available to all teachers. One of the teachers' center's services was called something like "professionals helping professionals," and was in effect a form of peer coaching where teachers were paid to share their expertise with other teachers.

"Lois" went on to tell how, the year before, she had "hired" another teacher, a first grade teacher,

> . . . to be sort of a mentor for me. I went to her because I was looking for somebody who would help me plan reading activities using higher level thinking skills. I really felt that I was asking, you know, "what color was the girl's dress" as opposed to "what do you think is going to happen next?" So the teachers' center paid her. After school, she and I met, and the teachers' center paid her, . . . I think it was $7 an hour, or something, to meet with me after school and help me prepare activities and help me think about things philosophically.

"Lois" added that she was not sure how many teachers took advantage of this program, but she knew of teachers

who had used other teachers as resources when they had been doing social studies units on specific subjects or integrating social studies into other areas of the curriculum. The teachers' center money would also pay for a substitute to go to the "hired" teacher's classroom, allowing the released teacher to come into the classroom of the teacher wanting to learn something new.

In summarizing possible ways for teachers to learn from other teachers, "Lois" said,

> These aren't my ideas, these are just things that are in place . . . already. It seems to me that [here] there are places to go if you want more information, I mean, if you want to do something in a different way.

When I asked "Lois" about whether people felt that the administration was supportive, she explained that it was her feeling that their principal was very supportive. The first grade teachers who started using whole language had gone to him and told him what they were doing, "not so much for his approval, but just so he would know what was going on. And he was very supportive of it."

"Lois" then described a conversation in which she had talked to the principal about trying to get the kindergarten teachers to use more whole language just to make their classrooms more literate places, and he had encouraged her to do that. "Lois" said that he had even

helped her come up with strategies for encouraging the kindergarten teachers, and he himself had thought of ways to give positive reinforcement to teachers whom he saw doing some of the things she had suggested.

To a question concerning what would happen if a teacher who did not have a whole language philosophy applied for a teaching position in this school district, "Lois" responded by saying,

> There are enough people in this system who feel like whole language and the reading-writing connection is so important that I think that in an interview that would definitely come out. I mean, they would be looking for somebody like that. It would not be the only criterion on which they would hire somebody, but I think that that's enough of a focus in the system that they're looking for that.

"Lois" went on to express her opinion that if someone were hired who lacked a whole language orientation, there would be opportunities for that person to learn about it within this district. "Lois" added that in many ways a teacher

> . . . can be very isolated. You can go into your classroom and shut the door. And you can do your own thing, and depending on how good an administrator the principal is, in helping you develop and grow, . . . you can stay isolated there, maybe for a long time. . . . I think they would tend to hire people who have the orientation toward whole language. If you got stuck here and you didn't have that orientation, would you develop it? . . . I would guess, yes, only because there are so many support people and so many resource people who would give you information and do modeling.

The day after my interview with "Lois," when I attended the first meeting of the support group at her school in Massachusetts, each teacher present told where he or she stood with respect to using literature to help children learn to read. At that time, "Lois" credited her interview with me the day before as having provided her with an opportunity to reflect upon how her beliefs about helping children learn to read had changed.

"Jean," Language Arts Resource Person

"Jean" serves as the language arts resource person at "Madison," a grade 3-5 school in a Massachusetts town where she and the school principal were helping the teachers move toward a literature-based approach to the teaching of reading. "Madison" is a large school of 1200, with approximately 400 students in each of the three grade levels. Having entered the teaching profession more than twenty years earlier, "Jean" had worked as a primary grade teacher, as a Peace Corps volunteer, and as a Chapter I teacher and coordinator of the Chapter I program. In addition to talking about how she was now helping other teachers, "Jean" reflected on her own change to "whole language" during our interview.

"Jean" and "Sandra," the principal, decided to hire a consultant as a way of supporting the teachers in that

school as they attempted to change the way they helped children learn to read. When "Sandra" had come to that grade 3-5 school, the children within each grade level were divided homogeneously into reading groups, and then at a different time in the day they were re-divided into a different set of homogeneous groups for math. These groups were then placed with the various teachers in such a way that each teacher had a mixture of high and low groups.

Professor Masha Rudman of the University of Massachusetts was hired as a consultant to meet periodically with the teachers at "Madison School." Before their first session, "Jean" had shown Rudman a handout which explained what the teachers were doing with writing, and it described the process approach to writing. According to "Jean," when Professor Rudman saw that, she had said, "It's right here. You're doing it in writing--you can learn to do it in reading, too!" So when Rudman first came to talk to the teachers at "Madison School," she purposely started using the term "process approach to teaching reading."

The teachers at "Madison School" seemed to want to stay with the basal reader and the homogeneous groupings. At first the teachers could not see how it would be better to have the children in heterogeneous groups. They started by changing back to heterogeneous groups one grade at a

time, beginning with the 3rd grade, with the 3rd grade teachers soon requesting that they go back to self-contained classrooms. When Rudman would come to consult, substitutes were hired to take the teachers' classes so the teachers of each grade level could meet with Professor Rudman and "Jean" for approximately an hour to discuss how things were going with changing to "whole language."

During one of the consulting sessions I attended, Professor Rudman started by saying, "Let's talk about what you feel is working well." After the teachers shared some of their successful practices, they were also given an opportunity to ask questions. Some of the issues discussed included what to cover in individual reading conferences, ways of evaluating children's progress, the advantages of helping children learn strategies rather than teaching them skills, and the use of journals as a way of making writing a part of reading. Several teachers were concerned about the management of a whole language classroom. Some specific ideas were mentioned, but Rudman suggested, "If you view each of these problems creatively and get help from your class, you can usually solve it."

As mentioned previously, I first met "Jean" when she had just started this job, in the fall of 1986, when we were both enrolled in a class in psycholinguistics and reading at the University of Massachusetts. I met "Jean"

again in February of 1988 while accompanying Professor Rudman when she visited that same school as a consultant, at which time I arranged to interview "Jean" on a subsequent visit.

When "Jean" told me about how she had first learned about the part children's literature could play in helping children learn to read, she began by saying,

> It goes back at least ten years, to when I was teaching in [a small community in Massachusetts] and "Ken" was the curriculum coordinator. He was very interested in individualizing reading and using children's literature to teach reading. I believe he was working with Masha Rudman and using her approach to teaching reading.
>
> I don't remember how we started talking about it, but I do remember that I wasn't happy with what I was doing. I wasn't able to organize the children into two groups. I was teaching 3rd grade. Anyway, "Ken" started talking about children's books.

At about that same time, at "Ken's" urging, "Jean" attended a conference where she "heard Bill Halloran talk about children's books." She went on:

> I had read a lot as a youngster and I knew about the "classics" from that time, but I had no idea what [children's literature] was being written today. Bill Halloran talked about books and presented a lot of them. I went to this conference with another teacher and I remember that we went right to a library and checked out tons and tons of books and put them in our classrooms and started sharing them with children. A lot of them were picture books.

Although "Jean" was influenced by what Bill Halloran (1988) had to say, the excitement he generated concerning

children's literature probably made sense to her because of her years of teaching experience and her feeling of dissatisfaction with her reading program.

"Jean" recalled,

> At that point I started reading aloud to the children in my class. I don't remember whether I had read aloud before that, I just don't remember that, but I do remember that I started reading aloud then and I had so many more choices. . . . I saw how excited the kids were about the books I was reading to them.

When "Jean" told "Ken" how excited she felt about using children's literature with her students, he encouraged her to go back to school to begin work on her Masters' degree. "Ken" introduced "Jean" to Professor Masha Rudman, and shortly after that "Jean" took Rudman's children's literature course. "Jean" described that period of her classroom teaching:

> Everything just started falling into place. I started using the basal in the morning with the kids. We had reading twice a day. We used children's books in the afternoon. I found it easier to have all the children reading choices and do conferencing rather than to have two basal groups operating at the same time. I think I individualized the basal with the top group.
>
> I have to say that I . . . never really did work out the small groups. That seemed very complicated to me. I had a hard time with that. I solved that by teaching a whole class lesson on something that I thought that most of the kids needed. We were doing a lot of writing.

At this point "Jean" stopped teaching for a while. Because of the passage of Proposition 2 1/2 in

Massachusetts, both "Jean's" job and her husband's job were eliminated, so they both joined the Peace Corps and served in Indonesia for a time. When "Jean" returned to Massachusetts after serving in the Peace Corps, she was hired as the coordinator of Chapter I programs at "Madison School." By then, according to "Jean," "the process approach to writing was pretty much in place and being used by everyone."

In this new position, "Jean" was responsible for overseeing the school reading program, as well as being a provider of Chapter I services. There was a gifted and talented program in place in the school in which children's literature played an important part. However, because most of the teachers in the school were still using basals, "Jean" pretty much "did" basals, too, as she put it. She did have silent sustained reading (SSR) with the Chapter I children who came to her, and "Jean" was getting help from "Ken," the curriculum coordinator, with the purchase of classroom sets of children's paperback trade books which could be used in conjunction with the basal reading program.

As "Jean" related her story to me, this was the point at which she told of enrolling in the same course in psycholinguistics and reading as I had. At the same time "Jean's" professional position had changed; she had just

begun a new position as the language arts coordinator at "Madison School." During my interview with "Jean," we discussed the fact that there were several teachers enrolled in that course whose comments in class seemed to indicate they were having a hard time accepting the ideas presented. I reminded "Jean" that when I had been at "Madison School" with Masha Rudman on my previous visit, I had asked "Jean" if she remembered our course together and how some of the people enrolled had had a hard time with the ideas being presented. On the earlier visit, "Jean" had remarked, "I was one of the worst ones." That, by the way, was her perception, definitely not mine.

The comment which "Jean" had made when I had last seen her had caused me to reflect on the course we had taken together and to talk to Professor Rudman about my feeling that some of the teachers enrolled in it had seemed to question and even to reject the ideas which were being presented concerning how children learn to read. I told Professor Rudman that "Jean" had told me she had considered herself to be "one of the worst ones." My recollections of "Jean's" comments during the course were that she asked thoughtful, reflective questions about whole language. Rudman's response to my telling her this was to say that she had known "Jean" for a long time as a graduate student in literature and language arts classes, and it was Rudman's feeling that these ideas were not new to "Jean."

The next time I saw "Jean," I related to her the above anecdote concerning my conversation with Professor Rudman. Then I told "Jean" my recollection from the course, which was that "Jean" had raised a lot of seriously thought-out questions about the issues we were discussing in class. "Jean" agreed that she had been hearing about these concepts for a long time, but as she looked back she realized that it had taken her a long time to reach the point where her beliefs had actually changed. She had gradually, over a period of time, adopted many whole language components.

Then "Jean" tried to put into words her feelings about how she had arrived at the place where she was--at the point in time when I was interviewing her--with respect to understanding and implementing the concepts of "whole language." She began this part of our interview by saying, "I accept it; I accept an awful lot of it." Then "Jean" recalled the period when she had first started serving as a Chapter I coordinator.

> I really did believe that individualized reading was the way to do it, but I was having problems with the the fact that as a Chapter I teacher, I was supposed to be working on skills, and [what I was doing was] kind of a supplement to what the children [were] doing in their regular classrooms, and you only had a certain amount of time.

"Jean" continued, explaining that as a Chapter I teacher, she used a combination of procedures--children's

literature, a basal, and phonics--and because she was doing lots of different things, she wasn't sure what had been effective when children showed improvement.

> So who was to say? I didn't know whether it was the phonics I gave them, whether it was the reading [from the basal] that I gave them, or whether it was the reading aloud [of children's literature] that I gave them, but I think I was doing lots of different things.

Continuing to talk about that same period, "Jean" paused a moment and then added,

> those phonics lessons were a plus--I must have thought that because I wasn't willing to give them up. So I still continued with that. . . . And oh, I spent a lot of time with Jeanette Veatch [meaning her book on individualized reading, 1978].

"Jean" then related how she had first started to change the way she did things as a Chapter I teacher:

> Actually what I did was to put the [teacher's] manual in a drawer, and then I used the basal reader without it. That forced me to read the story and think of all the possibilities of how I would use it. Actually, that was a good first step.

Still reflecting, "Jean" added, "I even used the Sullivan series."

When she commented that she "even used the Sullivan series," "Jean" was referring to a skills-based program, often used with children who had difficulty learning to read, which prescribed exactly how reading was to be taught. This comment indicated a self-analysis on "Jean's" part, referring to how different her beliefs had been at

the time. "Jean" was more positive about her earlier way of thinking when she described putting the teacher's manual in a drawer as "a good first step." "Jean's" comment during our interview, "I accept it; I accept an awful lot of it," indicates that at the time of our interview, she was still working on changing her beliefs.

Reflecting on the process of change at the grade 3-5 elementary school where she served as the language arts resource person when I interviewed her, "Jean" said, "There are still a lot of teachers teaching the old way." Then she went on to explain that all of the teachers were at least using trade books at some level. Because there were not enough books which were of interest to children who were reading at the lower grade levels, "Jean" worked on building a collection of trade books including many easy picture books for use in the room where she worked with children who came in to her for reading help. As "Jean" reflected on her own change from using only basal readers in her own classroom to becoming proactive in encouraging teachers to use literature in their own classrooms, she admitted that if she were to go back into a classroom now, she would probably not use a basal reader.

"Joyce," Director of Curriculum and Staff Development

At the time I interviewed "Joyce," she was serving as the director of curriculum, staff development, and teacher supervision for a small New England school district in "Fairview," which consisted of three K-8 elementary schools and one high school. "Joyce" had previously taught elementary school and she had also conducted workshops and taught education classes on the writing process and on children's literature at a four-year college. In the position "Joyce" held when I interviewed her, she had the opportunity to encourage teachers to make a shift toward a literature-based reading program.

"Joyce" is a member of the state writing committee of her state which is investigating ways to evaluate children's progress in learning to write through the development of portfolios of students' work as an alternative to testing. "Joyce" studied those same issues in her doctoral research at the University of Massachusetts.

Before "Joyce" went into teaching she had earned a Masters' degree in the field of public health. She then earned another Masters' degree in education and taught third grade for twelve years in a small rural New England state. She was in her late thirties when I interviewed her.

"Joyce" discussed how she had used a basal reading program when she first started teaching:

> I started as a teacher, when I was first teaching years ago, using the basal. And right away I started doing what Masha [Rudman] calls "individualizing the basal," in the sense of, if we came to tall tales, or certain kinds of literature [such as] myths, then I would use the basal story as a starter and then I'd get library books that the kids could read as groups or could read individually.

"Joyce" then told how she located audio tapes of books so that listening to books on tape became another option for her students. She also did a lot of activities around "themes."

> But then, the last few years that I was teaching, I decided I wanted a whole different combination of ingredients in my reading and writing program. And so what I did is every day during what was referred to as reading time--which sometimes became all morning--[the students] read. Sometimes they read in small groups, . . . different chapter books, and we would have group discussions.
>
> Other kids would be doing things at their seat--art activities, writing activities--and that worked fine. But then I decided to put the whole group of kids into one chapter book: a range of special ed children, to the middle reader, to the more gifted reader, all in the same chapter book. And we did a lot of activities. I did a lot of modeling of strategies that they worked with.

"Joyce" then described some of the kinds of activities she had made available to her students, partly to deal with the range of ability levels in her class. Sometimes they read books aloud, with students taking turns reading different parts. Sometimes she "taped chapters so the kids

who were having a little more trouble with the book could listen and silently read" before they discussed the book. "Joyce" continued:

> We worked together as a group; but at the same time, part of the reading time was given to them to read a book of their choice. So they were also reading a book totally of their selection. . . . They had to keep a record of what they were reading and what they would be doing with that book after they finished it, or as they were reading it--what activities, what art activities, what writing activities they wanted to choose.

Reading aloud played an important part in "Joyce's" classroom:

> Every reading time I would just read more of whatever book was the readaloud for the week or month, and oftentimes we did a whole class project around the readaloud. . . . There were . . . three things going on at once every day, so it made it very varied; and every one lent itself to reading books and doing activities.

"Joyce" was enrolled in the doctoral program at the same time I was, and we had taken some of our courses together. During the interview she did not specifically mention how the classes she had taken had influenced her. She was also one of the colleagues with whom I taught the undergraduate language arts and reading methods course during our year of residency. Until she took a sabbatical leave from teaching to begin her studies at the University of Massachusetts, all of her teaching experience had taken place in the same small community, and her classes had generally been small.

"Joyce" did talk about the influence of having worked with Masha Rudman:

> But then when I came to UMass and got involved more with Masha, I started looking at how you can integrate social studies and values clarification in your reading program, so that you're looking more at themes and concepts that have a more social studies orientation, and looking at war, death, divorce, special needs, those kinds of issues in children's literature.
>
> Those are the two components that I added to the program, and then I started teaching a course on how to look at issues through children's literature. . . . Now what I'm trying to put together is . . . seeing what kinds of social studies literature support systems I can put together for the people in my district.

"Joyce" ended her description of the procedures she used in her classroom by saying, "So that's how I've changed." She did not mention any shift in her philosophy or talk about what she believed about teaching. It is possible that she did not mention this because she knew that I was already aware of her belief in "whole language." It is also possible that she didn't think I cared to hear about her reflections, thinking that what I was interested in hearing about was how she had changed her procedures.

At the time of our interview, "Joyce" had recently started the new position mentioned above, where she had the opportunity to help teachers make a shift toward a literature-based reading program. She told me about the situation:

In my district there are three elementary schools, and one of them just spent this lengthy process . . . all last spring, reviewing whole language basals. None of [the teachers] seemed ready to talk about strict literature-based programs without the use of a basal. So the past curriculum director, before me, guided them through this search of basal programs that had a whole language bent.

The reading consultant who worked with them, said to me, to the side, "I really wished they had chosen [a different series] if they were going to choose a basal at all, but they chose [this one]". It's interesting, just to let you know, [this publisher] puts out a basal series that's got two parts to it. It's got the traditional text, that's more structured, that's traditional. And then they've got a whole language text [with the] same stories, but they show it structured and they show it whole language. And most of the teachers went for the more structured basal.

"Joyce" reported that although it was possible to buy just one of these basal systems, this school chose to buy the more structured as well as the whole language version.

They bought both. You could buy workbooks, and you could buy a book on comprehension strategies, and a book on challenge activities, that all dealt with . . . . components of the basal itself. And within the whole language basal of [this series], they had a whole section on comprehension strategies for each of the stories they read, and they had a writing process activity for each of the stories, too.

But we found that most of the teachers, of the ten, were not really going to the whole language one, probably because they needed some more support, you know, in how to use it. So, I hired a reading consultant. . . . The reason I hired her rather than my doing it, is because I didn't have all that much time to devote to working with the teachers, as well as, she was the one who guided them through the selection of the series to begin with.

"Joyce" talked about a session which she and the reading consultant had held the week before our interview. They came up with a way to help the teachers "make the transition . . . to using the more whole language basal." "Joyce" recounted what they had done:

> We went in and observed their classrooms first. Then we saw what they were doing well; we looked for the positives. And then we wrote them each a letter and it said, "We saw you do, this, this, and this in the classroom. It looks really exciting; the kids seem to be really interested. Would you please share that at our . . . curriculum meeting?"
>
> So all of the teachers came--there were 7 teachers in K-6--and they shared something they had done that we had identified as having kind of a whole language flavor to it. . . . So they shared and [from] their sharing some neat ideas came out.

Emphasizing the strengths of what the teachers were already doing in their classrooms was a good strategy on the part of "Joyce" and the reading consultant. "Joyce" reported how one teacher was already making a transition:

> She decided she doesn't even want to use the [whole language] basal. She wants to go to a literature-based program, and with my prompting, she's ready to use Bridge to Terabithia [Paterson, 1977] with her twenty fourth graders. And she's shared some nice ideas with this group.

Then "Joyce" talked about how she and the reading consultant had worked with some teachers who had had reservations

> about how workbook pages, in the more traditional [version of this publisher's basal reader], were

> confusing, and the kids weren't happy with them. The kids didn't understand them, so we started talking with the teachers as to, "Why do you suppose that's happening?"

"Joyce" revealed that from the discussion which ensued,

> The whole idea came out that these workbooks are not within any kind of expanded context, as you would have in a whole language classroom, and therefore kids didn't have a chance to bring any prior knowledge to them, and often times the directions were really complicated. It was an isolated skill they were dealing with; whether it was a comprehension skill or a phonetic skill, it was isolated. It had nothing to do with the main story they were reading.

According to "Joyce," this discussion was particularly useful,

> because the first and second grade teachers are really not wanting to deal with whole language. They're more skills oriented. They want to make sure the skills get in.

"Joyce's" description of how she got the teachers to start thinking about why some of the workbook pages were presenting a problem indicates that she was trying to help these teachers discover the answer for themselves. "Joyce" had encouraged the teachers to discuss how they could use

> phonetic structures within the context of chants and poems and charts, and you know, big books, and such. So that came out as part of the sharing. And it was all done in a real positive way through their own examples of what they had been doing in their classes that we as consultants identified as having certain whole language components. So that was nice.

> And then what we did is modeled--the reading consultant and [I]--some strategies that they could try in their reading and language arts block, because they have reading and language arts blocks in their system. So we're meeting with them again in December, and before they meet with us again they're to try some of these comprehension strategies; it could be the one we modeled or it could be others that we gave them to read about. And then they'll share those, and then we'll give them more strategies.

"Joyce" demonstrates her familiarity with the value of modeling as a way of helping others learn. Hoping that "some of them might bypass the whole language basal," "Joyce"

> took a lot of information from the whole language basals and put it in little packets for them, so that they could see what the whole language basal has to offer without reading this huge manual. And so that's how we're kind of getting them to take a look at more whole language information.

"Joyce" then described a situation in another elementary school in her district which she referred to as "the other extreme:"

> There's another elementary school,--. . . I think it's 200 students and about 20 teachers,--and they were using the [same publisher's] basal as well. But many of the teachers were not happy with it, and then what happened is a number of them started using trade books, and charts and big books, and more whole language involvement, but they found that they were not happy with accountability systems for whole language.
>
> They were groping. They didn't know what kind of tools they could use to assess whole language, so they started using the end of the book tests for the [same publisher's] basal. You know, they do all their whole language things, and then they give this end of the book test to make sure things are going OK. And they

> were unhappy with that, too, of course, after trying it out, you know, because they really weren't teaching in the same context as the basal approach would deal with. So that made them unhappy.

When "Joyce" started working in this position, she had become aware that these teachers

> were already asking their administrator--their principal--"Can we find somebody who can talk to us about whole language assessment? What kinds of evaluation tools can you use that will allow you to better talk to your students, to be a better diagnostician in the classroom as a teacher, to be able to better communicate with your parents, as well as the principal about . . . whole language [so that] we can be accountable for what we're doing in our classrooms?"

"Joyce's" approach to helping the teachers deal with assessment was to begin attending workshops on it herself. She described what she did with some of the information she obtained in this way:

> I'd been putting together a package on whole language assessment by going to different workshops. Then I went back to the elementary school in my district and presented a quick overview at their staff meeting. And I was limited in time because their staff meeting is short, so I put together a whole lot of packets on whole language assessment for each of the teacher teams.

"Joyce" revealed how she encouraged the teachers to examine the material she provided for them:

> in that school they work in teams, so that there are three first and second grade teachers or four, maybe, that work as a team, and they get to meet and do team planning, which is really nice if you're dealing with . . . whole language and not isolated teaching. I had what we call team packets put together on whole language assessment, and what their task is, is to read through these materials.

The big thing that I asked the teachers to do, too, was to list criteria from which they would assess their students at their grade level or age level--first grade, in the different subject areas, particularly reading and writing. We'll keep portfolios of students' work, but we'll also develop lists of criteria for how we're going to look at that work in progress. . . . For writing one suggestion I gave the teachers was that they keep a sample of each child's writing in the child's folder for [each] month, so you'd have ten samples at the end of the year rather than keeping everything they wrote.

"Joyce" envisioned how portfolio assessment might work:

For the purposes of assessment, you [would] take the one that you and the child perhaps choose together and you eventually have ten of them in what they call a writing scrapbook. And then, right next to the writing sample, the teacher and the child together list the "I can do's," and they're right there, evidenced in the writing that they've done, and if you've got ten of those, the "I can do" list really increases. And of course, the teacher's always matching that "I can do" list with her criteria, developed for her first grade, and accepted by . . . the administration and myself as a consultant as viable criteria. So that's what they're doing, what we hope they might end up doing with writing.

"Joyce" was able to make portfolio assessment work in her district, and her dissertation was based on writing samples she had gathered with the help of the teachers in her district. "Joyce" was good at collecting information which might help the teachers take a next step in learning how to help children learn to write and to read. She talked more about how she helped her teachers with reading:

I suggested that they tape each child at the beginning of the year, the middle, and the end, so they have a

> record of the child's . . . oral reading . . . so that they can then look at miscues in a very limited way. . . . They don't have to do a long miscue analysis, but at least fill out a sheet that looks at omissions, and . . . the grapho-phonic, syntactic, and semantic systems that the child seems to be using or not using, so you have that kind of a record.
>
> And then tape a reading conference at the beginning and the end of the year that focuses on certain questions that you'll ask to find out where children are in their reading comprehension in reference to character development, to plot structures, to theme, and setting.

When I asked her whether she was encouraging the teachers in her school system to use conferences only for purposes of assessment, "Joyce" indicated that she felt the teachers were not familiar with the use of conferences as part of a reading program. She continued:

> No, I'm encouraging them to do reading conferences more than three times a year, but the tricky part is to get teachers to realize that reading conferences are just for support and diagnostic purposes, they aren't for teaching.
>
> That's where I fell down as a teacher; I always ended up doing a lot of teaching in the reading conference and realized I can't do that. I could get away with it more than some teachers because I might only have 12 or 15 students, but if you have 20 or more, I mean, there's no way you can teach in a reading conference. So, it's really more the system that Masha [Rudman] talked about, which is what are your strengths, needs, and next steps, and that's what the conference is about.

This was the first comment "Joyce" made to me during this interview in which she seemed to be reflective about how she herself had taught. She continued:

> One thing I suggested to these teachers, is that they make sure that their conferences [have] a predictable format so that students know generally [what] kinds of questions they are going to be asked. . . . Within that predictable format there might be some more specific lists of questions that you'll deal with, depending on what you want to find out as a teacher from the child, and those will flow into the conference, too, but the predictability of the format will be such that you ask students what they're doing now.
>
> In other words, "What are you reading, or what are you writing?" . . . "How did you make a decision to choose this book or to choose that topic?" . . . What brought you to this point?" . . . "What problems are you having?" or "How can I help you?" . . . "Would you choose a part of the book to read to me?" or "Would you choose a part of your writing to read to me?" . . . "What came before this part that you read or wrote? "Where are you going with it?" and . . . "What are you going to do next?"

"Joyce" indicated that the teacher, with the help of the child, would then be ready to come up with a specific next step for the student. I asked "Joyce" whether the teachers with whom she worked were ready for the idea that children could learn to help each other. She went on:

> Some of the teachers are already doing that in writing, you know, they have group writing conferences. And I've only observed a few classes of the upper level, fourth, fifth, and sixth, that would be doing more of that, because the kids are more independent, but . . . I have found that the teachers need more strategies on how to help students help each other.

"Joyce" told about walking into one classroom where four students were "conferring with each other with a teacher aide present." "Joyce" described what she had observed:

> They have no conception of how to be a good listener, and that maybe you should be thinking as the student is reading his or her writing, "What is it you really like about it so you can comment on that first? Is there anything that's not clear to you?"

"Joyce" suggested that students could learn to

> have a structure in their mind of the kinds of questions they can ask an author, and that that can be continually reinforced, almost like a predictable conference with a child. It's a predictable format for a group to work under. They didn't have--this group that I observed--didn't have that.

"Joyce" and I talked about situations we had both observed where children have learned how to listen and respond to a writer sharing his or her work. This led "Joyce" to comment,

> They get to model what the teacher models for them. It's true, they become little teachers. . . . That all comes with climate-setting. That's one of the most difficult concepts to get across to teachers, that what you model and what you do with the students and the groundwork you lay has to be real specific so they understand . . . your expectations, and they understand all the ins and outs of how they can be independent.

"Joyce" gave some examples of the kinds of classroom management details which have to be worked out:

> Everything from the nitty-gritty of "Do I need to ask you to go to the bathroom?" to knowing where papers and pencils are all the way up to knowing that they can get out of their seats and ask so-and-so for help on quotations, and that's OK. . . . Sometimes it takes a good half of the year just to get to the point where you don't have to look at the class when you're having a conference with another child. Or maybe even a whole year, so the teacher the next year is going to benefit.

Linda Crafton, in her book <u>Whole Language: Getting Started . . . Moving Forward</u> (1991) writes about some of the same issues "Joyce" talks about. In a chapter on "The Management Question," Crafton describes the classroom of teacher Kathleen Visavotti:

> Her students know what to expect. . . . Predictability gives her students the independence they need. Functioning apart from the teacher is no problem (even if you are only seven or eight years old) if you have a clear idea of where you are going from one moment to the next, and what is expected of you (Crafton, 1991, p. 80).

"Joyce" realizes that issues of classroom management are important considerations if you are going to be in the position of helping teachers implement a whole language, literature-based, process approach to the teaching of reading and writing.

"Jack," University Professor of Children's Literature

"Jack" started his career in education by teaching in an elementary school for two years in a western state. After earning his Masters' degree in library science, he worked in a school library media center for five years before he decided to take additional course work. He taught fifth grade for one year after completing his doctoral course work. "Jack" was in his late thirties and in his fifth year of teaching on the college level when I interviewed him. By then he was teaching children's literature at a large midwestern university.

In addition to the courses required of undergraduates who are in their first professional semester of the elementary education program there, "Jack" also taught a very popular graduate course each semester on evaluating children's literature. He also conducted seminars and workshops for school districts on the whole language, literature-based, process approach to the teaching of reading. "Jack" has published many articles on that subject and on many other aspects of children's literature. He has served as an appointed member of the Newbery committee, and he has collaborated on planning conference programs which often have included authors of children's books.

"Jack" did his undergraduate work in the early seventies in elementary education. As "Jack" talked about his teaching career during our interview, he said that his educational background gave him a "whole different viewpoint on things" because his undergraduate background had emphasized the use of basal readers. As "Jack" put it, what he was "trained to do" differs from what he now believes about how children learn to read. At the time I interviewed "Jack," I was also teaching children's literature at the same university. Because of conversations we had had, we were both aware that we shared a belief in "whole language." For that reason, I

understood and was able to put in perspective some of "Jack's" descriptions of how different his beliefs had been when he entered the teaching profession. "Jack" pointed out that one thing he considers important about his early teaching was that he "was very oriented toward children's literature from early on."

The school where "Jack" did his student teaching in 1973 was using a publisher's program for reading which included boxes of trade books that were "grade leveled." "Jack" remembers that there were "these little cheat cards," so that even if the teachers had not read the books, they could quiz the children individually about the books. "Jack" thought that was "wonderful" when he first saw it, so one of his early experiences in the field was not with basal readers but was with, in his words, "something that began to approximate literature-based reading."

"Jack's" use of the term "cheat card" when talking about a way to help teachers question the children about the books they have read indicates that he now has reservations about such use of literature. The program "Jack" briefly described sounds more like what we now refer to as "basalization" of children's literature. It may be that at the time he considered that any involvement with children's books could be labeled "literature-based reading."

Although he didn't explain why, "Jack" did say that the same school was "back in basal readers" the following year when he began his first teaching position there. "Jack" described how he taught reading when he started teaching:

> I was quite an advocate of the basal readers. The thing that I can see only in retrospect is that I still tied a lot of literature into my basal program. The other people around me typically were not doing that. They were doing a very lockstep basal program with all the worksheets and everything. Although I was doing a lot of that [using children's literature] because of my love of children's literature, . . . I see [that] now as being sort of accidental. It wasn't necessarily planned; it's just that I loved it so much that I shared it with the kids.

"Jack" then recalled that when he was an elementary school student himself, he had been an avid reader, but that was followed by "many years" when he had not been "attuned" to children's literature. Shortly before "Jack" started teaching, he met "Jim," a teacher from Canada who was spending the summer working on his Masters' degree in the same department at the university where "Jack" was studying. "Jack" recalled that they

> met and became good friends. ["Jim"] was an avid lover of children's literature and used it in his classroom a lot more than other teachers I had seen. He sort of inspired me over that summer we [took classes] together.
>
> In fact he took me to my first children's literature conference. What it did was immediately open up a world for me that had been closed for a while because I was an avid, avid reader when I was in elementary school. It sort of unlocked a door that

> had been closed, and immediately all of that [reading of children's literature] came flooding back, and I really had a fairly good background from those years . . . on which to build. And that's how that interest was reawakened in me, and that was shortly before I went out into the field.

In recalling the effect of the first children's literature conference he attended, "Jack" echoes the experience of "Jean," the language arts resource person I interviewed, who was affected by hearing Bill Halloran speak about the place of literature in the classroom. After describing how he had renewed his appreciation for literature, "Jack" went on to talk about his early years of teaching:

> But still, we taught with the basal; we used homogeneous groups. We were in a teaming situation in an open pod school, so we would divide up by ability levels in a fourth and fifth grade pod. . . . We would have several groups [of children]--among the five teachers--of different levels, supposedly on different ability levels. I [required that my students complete] a lot of the workbooks and worksheets, in fact, I believed in homogeneous grouping.

"Jack" reflected on how he and his teacher colleagues had handled writing when he first started teaching:

> We did nothing that approximated process writing, although we did writing things--a lot of writing things--because I was attuned to that, too. We called it creative writing for the most part at that point.

"Jack" related that they had not done "a lot of writing in conjunction with the subject areas--writing across the curriculum." But then, as he reflected further, he added,

> Even as I say that, that's not true because I can remember all sorts of really creative writing . . . that we encouraged in social studies, so I guess we were doing some of that. But you see there was no organized thought about reading across the curriculum or writing across the curriculum.

He paused for a moment, and then added,

> I think teachers have always done--at least fairly good teachers have always done--those sorts of things anyway, because it felt right.

"Jack" realizes that good teaching also occurred in the past even though the labels may have been different.

After his first two years of teaching, "Jack" went back to school and started taking classes in instructional media, which left him "attuned for a long time, at that point, to librarianship." "Jack" said, "that's where I really began to sink my roots into children's literature." "Jack" then worked as a library/media coordinator for a number of years, teaching only a class or two in reading each semester at the junior high school and middle school levels. Describing how they taught reading, he said, "Here again we were lockstepped into homogeneous grouping."

"Jack" then explained how the five or six 7th grade teachers would divide their students into homogeneous groups, basing their decisions primarily on their students' scores on standardized achievement tests. He added,

> You know, I shudder to think of . . . doing that back then. . . . The reason I bring that up, is that here again, I was still using literature when I taught reading [even though] I wasn't teaching a full day at that point.

> Nevertheless, the counselor wanted us to stop using homogeneous groups; he was certain that kids could learn better in heterogeneous grouping situations. I fought him tooth and toenail on that. I mean, I led the charge, and I finally won that battle, and his plan never went anywhere. It was real easy to rally teachers around homogeneous grouping anyway, because it seemed so logical on the surface.

As "Jack" was telling me about how he had fought against the elimination of homogeneous grouping, I sensed that by recalling how determined he had been in defending a now questionable practice, he was letting me know that he has changed his beliefs about grouping and is now aware of the disadvantages of what has come to be called tracking. According to John I. Goodlad, in A Place Called School (1984),

> Tracking became widely practiced by educators as a device endeavoring to reduce the range of differences in a class and therefore the difficulty and complexity of the teaching task. . . . For many people, tracking appears to be such a rational, commonsense solution to a vexing problem that arguments against it are often ridiculed. . . . The research findings raise some serious questions about the educational benefits claimed for tracking and suggest some negative side effects (p. 151).

Having "won" that battle, "Jack" went back to graduate school, continuing to teach as a library/media coordinator during the first year of his doctoral studies in education. He then "decided to quit teaching and go to law school." For a moment "Jack" reflected about whether this sidestep of his was important for my interview, but then he added,

> maybe it is; that's part of change, too. . . . I laugh about it and say I was suffering from midlife

> crisis even though I was barely over thirty at the time. But, I don't know, maybe I just was tired of the lack of respect I felt one got teaching in the public schools. So I took the law school admissions test and did relatively well and got accepted at [a university in a western state]. . . .
>
> Well, I had my foot in the door. I [wanted to] resign my [teaching] position, [but] my wife talked me into taking a leave instead of resigning. And as I got closer to the beginning of that semester--law school started two weeks earlier than the regular semester at [that university]--I really just started getting cold feet about the whole thing. So I ended up going those two weeks just to check it out and then as the other semester started I dropped out [of law school], took that year of leave, and then finished all the rest of my class work in my doctoral program.
>
> So what happened really was--is--I guess I sort of found myself. I needed to know that I could make it, that I could--you know, people always say people who can't do anything else teach, and so on. Maybe I had to prove to myself that I could qualify to do all these other things, too, and I did. But then I decided that I liked what I was doing. And of course, I'm really oriented to children's literature more than I am the language arts over all, even though there's no way you can separate those two, if you're looking at it as an educator.

"Jack" has made some astute observations about the importance of liking the career path you have chosen and feeling that you are good at what you do. "Jack's" reference to language arts refers to the fact that his position when I interviewed him was in the language arts section of an elementary education program where he was sometimes expected to teach language arts methods courses, although he felt that he was more knowledgeable about teaching children's literature and therefore preferred teaching that.

"Jack" continued talking about his doctoral program:

> I took the rest of that year of leave and finished my classwork, so it worked out very well. Then I went back to the classroom at the end of that year of leave. And by that time I had in essence made a big change. During that year of leave is when most of this change really started taking place because I was on campus full time. That's when I became acquainted with Lloyd Eldredge [and] his study where he compared the different reading methods [Eldredge & Butterfield, 1986], and where I first became acquainted with Donald Graves and read his big brown book on writing.

Lloyd Eldredge taught at the university where "Jack" was enrolled, so "Jack" became acquainted with him and his study before Eldredge had published his results. But "Jack's" reference to Donald Graves refers to becoming acquainted with Graves' work rather than to meeting him. I find it interesting to think that at the time "Jack" refers to Graves' book, Writing: Teachers and Children at Work (1983), it was newly published. That this book made an impact on the widespread use of the process approach in the teaching of writing soon after its publication can be seen by looking at its publishing history. My copy indicates that it was published by Heinemann in 1983 and reprinted three times that same year. Graves included a chapter titled "Surround the Children with Literature," but some of the well-known publications on a whole language, literature-based, process approach to both reading and writing had not yet been published, because they came out more recently (Atwell, 1987; Hansen, 1987; Routman, 1988 & 1991).

"Jack" pinpoints the year he took a leave from teaching as the time when most of his change occurred, but he does not specifically talk about any benefits derived from his course work. "Jack" continued,

> And so that year away was very pivotal for me because it gave me a chance to not be quite so harried--you know, running from school to class and so on--and I guess that's where the change really began, or at least the thinking began.

This year for "Jack" seemed to be very influential in shaping his beliefs.

> When that year was [over] and my class work was in essence completed, then I went back to the district I had been teaching in. . . . Instead of going back to my former position as a media coordinator at the middle school level, I had to take any position that was available in the district.
>
> And it just so happened that it was a fifth grade position in an elementary school, under a principal that I hadn't worked for before. And of course it turned out to be the best thing that ever happened to me, because it gave me a chance [to try out what I had learned], now that I had gone through this year of thinking and beginning to organize this philosophy in my head about language and literacy education.
>
> Having this fifth grade classroom gave me a chance to make my first real, though fledgling, attempts at putting [what I had learned into] practice, because I was convinced . . . at that point, that I believed what Graves, what Eldredge, what the others were telling me. And so that's when I began right away with my literature-based reading program, and I modeled it after similar sorts of things Eldredge did with second graders. I had to work writing in also, even though I [had not used] Graves' process writing program [before]. And that gave me a chance to--I guess--prove to myself, that [this would work].

The major change "Jack" made in his reading program was that he eliminated the basal reader in favor of allowing students to choose their own reading materials. At the beginning of the year he sent a letter to parents which explained his program and encouraged them to help their children cut back on how much time they spent viewing television. At the same time, these students were to start keeping logs of how much time they spent reading. Students were asked to fill out an anonymous questionnaire concerning their attitudes toward reading both at the beginning and the end of the school year. "Jack" began reading aloud to the class for at least thirty minutes a day, instituted daily silent sustained reading, and began to use literature in all aspects of his program. "Jack" was particularly interested in helping his students learn to enjoy reading, something which he felt that he was able to accomplish. "Jack" summarized what happened that year by saying,

> And so I didn't use homogeneous groupings that year, and I didn't use the basal reader, and I didn't do a lot of things that I . . . only a year or so before that had felt so strongly about.

When I asked "Jack" whether anyone else in this school was doing this, he replied, "No one was doing this." He continued by describing the school where he taught:

> It was a very large elementary school and it was very traditional. And really no teaming at all was going on; it was unlike the school that I began my teaching career in. It was not an open pod school, so everyone

had a door they could close--an individual classroom. And I don't think anybody that I know of in the school [was departmentalized].

We just really had self-contained classrooms, so what I did is simply to not tell everyone what I was doing; I just shut the door. The principal was the sort who just never came to observe what you were doing. If he came to your classroom it was generally because he had some kind of message for you or a question to ask you.

When I asked whether "Jack" was concerned about any tests the kids had to take, "Jack" answered, "Yes, I guess I was concerned," he argued.

> I was convinced enough that they were going to do well, just because I had convinced myself that this was going to work. And yet--never having really tested it myself, there was some concern. But no, I don't think I lost any sleep over it.

"Jack" talked about the standardized achievement tests which had been required in the state where he did his doctoral studies. Although he had been away from that state for a few years at the time of our interview, he said "the state was not quite as test driven then as I think it is now." He continued:

> We didn't feel quite the pressure that [I saw] when I was in [another state], for instance, for those two years [before I came here], . . . [with] not only standardized tests but minimum competency tests that we gave. Teachers' jobs were put on the line for the most part. And they seem to be very pivotal here, . . . too.
>
> So there was concern there, but there wasn't as much pressure on me for evaluation. I mean, I wasn't being evaluated, at least I didn't see it that way.

> And maybe I was a little ignorant, too. But I was tenured in that district--that's another thing, too. And here I was, having completed my doctoral class work; [I] had a fairly good reputation in the district, and so maybe I had lots of cause to feel like nobody was going to call me on the carpet for this; or at least if they did, I had a firmer position in the district. So, about all the principal knew was that I asked him at the very beginning of the year for 200 or 250 dollars to buy books to begin a classroom library.

I asked "Jack" whether the principal had given him the money. "Jack" answered,

> Reluctantly, he gave it to me, and then our relationship deteriorated after that for, say, the next six months. And then I think he really began to . . . find out what I was doing and see [that good] things were happening. Then he just flip-flopped, and we had a fine relationship toward the end of my [year]; what I was doing began to permeate throughout the rest of the faculty.

It is unclear what "Jack" means when he says that his relationship with his principal deteriorated after he gave "Jack" the money for children's books. But it does seem as though the principal felt good about "Jack's" reading program when it spread to the rest of the school.

Since I knew that "Jack" eventually published more than one article about the literature-based program he had used in his fifth grade classroom that year, I asked him about that. He explained that that school district

> had initiated a career ladder program to reward teachers for doing more things or better things, and every district designed it in a different way. But there were career ladder monies available that year and you had to make application for them by saying

> what you were going to do and then having some kind of followup, so that became my first experience with classroom research.

"Jack" submitted the results of that classroom research to the career ladder committee. When "Jack" left that school at the end of the year to take his first college teaching position, he took the data which he had gathered and synthesized it into an article which was later published.

After "Jack" had talked about how he had changed the way he had taught reading, I asked him to reflect on what kind of influence he thought he might have had on the teachers and preservice teachers who have taken his courses, especially with respect to exposing them to the advantages of a literature-based, process approach to the teaching of reading. As an example, I related to "Jack" that during one session of the writing process seminar held in "Clearwater," a teacher named "Norma" had described for her colleagues how she had put aside the basal readers in her sixth grade classroom in favor of having her students read trade books. Explaining that she had tried this after she had taken "Jack's" graduate level class in evaluating children's literature the previous semester, "Norma" said that everything "Jack" had suggested had worked, just as he had said it would.

"Jack" replied that the amount of information about literature-based reading he includes in his courses does vary some from class to class, depending on the particular group of people comprising each class. "Jack" continued,

> It always seems to be . . . fairly well received, but it's so hard to know what really is happening. I think somebody like ["Norma"] is probably an exception . . . unless the people are coming already armed with that philosophy. And I get a lot of those. I mean, a lot of [teachers] come over from [a neighboring community] who are already leaning strongly that way or doing something similar already, so it becomes reinforcement for them. And they get a chance to look at the research that backs up the whole idea of whole language and particularly literature-based reading. That just strengthens their position and allows them to defend what they're doing a little more rigorously.

"Jack" acknowledges that some people benefit from reading research which validates whole language and literature-based reading, usually after they have already become familiar with the idea.

> However, I think it would be safe to say that there are a number of people who have made a real paradigm shift or at least . . . have begun to make a paradigm shift. Let's put it this way. If a person walks into either [the graduate language arts or the graduate children's literature course] with little or no orientation to whole language, literature-based reading, process writing--then those students, I would say--I don't expect them to leave that class saying, "I've seen the light, I'm going to change the entire way I approach teaching reading and writing and English and all of that." But, I feel pretty safe in saying that a larger percentage of those students adjust their thinking somewhat, maybe do small things differently. I think almost--I may even go so far as to say almost--everyone has the seed planted.

I asked "Jack" whether he feels that he makes any impact on the undergraduate students he teaches.

> No, I just think it's an overwhelming task with those undergraduates. I think we would really need to look at changing . . . our whole structure of coursework or something. You know, I think about, for instance, the juniors that I've had in the children's literature course. They are so overwhelmed that semester with [all of their other course work]. . . . They're just scrambling . . . , and they're also awfully young.
>
> Sometimes I just don't know if they can see the vision. It's generally the more mature students, the women who are raising families or have raised families, who are the ones who see the light. The ones who ask further questions, the ones who say, "I want to know more about this." Or the ones who come to me later on asking for further guidance with it.

"Jack" has discovered that students who are returning to school after having begun to rear a family are more likely to understand the advantages of "whole language." I have had similar experiences when teaching the undergraduate children's literature course. Some students whose children have been in whole language classrooms really seem to understand how children learn. The experience of watching their children begin to read and write, sometimes in a school setting, also seems to influence some older students' beliefs about how children learn.

"Jack" also talked about how difficult it was to include information about literature-based reading in his undergraduate children's literature course because

> it's designed to be a survey course; they need to learn the books, learn the literature, and it just doesn't seem like there's time to make an impact in

> the philosophy and strategy of whole language education as I'd like to. It seems to me that [it would be better] if somehow we could organize things so that . . . reading, language arts, and children's literature courses could be designed to fit into one another better than they do. But you know we've got people of differing philosophies teaching these courses.

"Jack" is aware that a professor's beliefs about teaching influence how that person teaches adults. "Jack's" comments also indicate that because of time constraints, the content of this survey course in children's literature sometimes takes precedence over his philosophy.

"Jack" spoke a bit about how "he had sometimes been really dismayed to hear" reports that came back from some student teaching supervisors to the effect that when some cooperating teachers have asked their student teachers about their knowledge of whole language, some students "just act like they've never heard about" those ideas. "Jack" described his reaction to hearing such reports:

> And I always say, gee, well, I hope it's not a kid who's been through my class, and I hope they didn't tune all of that out [that I talked about].
>
> I don't want to sell the undergraduates short, but they have such a need . . . to grasp onto a set of directions to follow for everything they do--well, like teachers' manuals. And you get a few that I think when they graduate are maybe at a point where they could go beyond that, and whole language teaching requires teachers to be far more empowered than that [using teachers' manuals].

After a year or two, I think if the seeds have been planted, even in the ones who aren't ready or willing to take it all in, they'll come back for graduate work or seek some sort of further training or inservicing; then they'll be ready to make that step.

I tell them . . . that research has shown that we teach like we've been taught or like the modeling we generally see, [which] happens to be a lot like the way we were taught anyway. Usually they aren't, in most cases too much different.

"Jack" talks about planting seeds, a metaphor which was also used by "Peter," and "Jack" also recognizes the importance of modeling. "Jack" went on to say that he just hopes that somewhere in the back of their minds "they're just aware" of what he hopes he has taught them:

"I have to enrich beyond this basal; if I'm going to have to use this basal reader, I've got to work literature into it. I've got to make time so the kids can make their own selections about what things they want to read."

[I] just keep trying to work that in whenever possible, so that [the students] can work toward making this shift, and I really think that our undergraduate program would really have to be structured for that kind of training, to have them leave us and be able to do that wholeheartedly when they get out in the field. But, you know, . . . I do all that I can to influence them. I share with my undergraduates as much research as I can about literature-based reading.

When "Jack" shared his feelings with me about what he hoped to achieve with respect to influencing the students in his classes, he knew that I was aware of the sequence of courses in the program in which we both taught. Before

students were admitted to this elementary education program, they were expected to have taken required core courses in freshman writing and literature which were offered by the English department. The students "Jack" and I taught took their first course in the teaching of reading at the same time they were enrolled in children's literature. A separate course in the teaching of language arts was scheduled for the following semester. This language arts course usually stresses the process approach in the teaching of writing, but whether it does really depends on the philosophy of the instructor teaching the course. "Jack's" reference to a program "structured for that kind of training" implies that to help these undergraduates make a shift toward accepting "whole language" a greater effort would be required to coordinate how these courses are taught.

"Jack" continued to talk about his role as an educator:

> I see my major task as changing the attitudes of those kids towards children's books, _and_ for a good percentage of them, their attitudes, _their_ attitudes about reading. [Emphasis by "Jack."] There are a lot of kids in there who don't like reading, and never have. And I'm just convinced that see, none of this will ever work unless you've got teachers that can model the process, and you have to--it has to be _you_ before you can model it, otherwise it's a sham.

"Jack" told me that he sometimes wished that there were a "test that would show whether they appreciated

books, and if they flunked that, then I would wash them out of the program." He explained what he meant:

> Because I think that elementary school teachers' major job is to build literacy in young kids, and if these people don't value it in their own lives--can't, you know mirror excitement and so on--then they hadn't ought to be there. But unfortunately that's the way it is, and so I see my major job as exciting them about the books, and . . . I don't know, I feel like I've been pulled away from some of that in trying to get too many other things done along the way, and I think I need to reevaluate.

"Jack" summarized the way he teaches children's literature:

> So I go through the genre, and that's why I have them buy [trade] books rather than a textbook, and I've always done that. And we read and discuss the books and try to get excited about them; and I need to do more sharing, we need to have more time to share the books, and talk about them and get excited about them--I've found myself not doing that as much these days as I used to. If I can do that, and to do that I've got to guide their reading. And the way I guide their reading is by showing them titles. I show them hundreds of books. Otherwise they're going out and reading these Disney books, and junk like that to fill in their cards [an assignment for the course].

"Jack" told me that he does distribute lists of the Newbery and Caldecott Award books and honor books, "just as a resource," and because he has not yet found a better method, students are required to keep and turn in file card records of the children's books they have read for his course.

> I'm hoping when I get those cards, and it generally happens, that those cards are titles we've talked about or I've shown in class. . . . I try to assure that the books they read are ones I want them to read

> by showing them a lot of titles and talking them up and getting them excited about it rather than saying "you must read within the parameters of the list."
>
> We're not trying to teach them to be literate; we're trying to give them the background so that they can help other kids, so I think we have a little bit more of a leg to stand on in guiding their reading. Of course, you're guiding elementary kids' readings too, hopefully, not forcing them, but you're encouraging them by exciting them about the different genre and different books.

"Jack" reveals how important he thinks modeling is when he explains that he does not tell his students what they must read; instead, he hopes that they will choose to read some of the many children's books he has introduced them to in class. "Jack's" comment that "we're not trying to teach them to be literate" implies that "Jack" felt that there was a limit to how much he could accomplish in the situation in which he was teaching.

Routman, in her 1991 book Invitations: Changing as Teachers and Learners K-12, calls upon teacher educators "to employ the whole language model in their undergraduate and graduate classes" (p. 489). Routman recounts,

> When Jerry Harste of Indiana University visited our district in May 1990, I was impressed with the commitment he told us he has made to changing his own teaching. He gives teachers a choice of professional texts to read, has them keep a journal of their reactions, and devotes class time to discussion of issues raised. He puts his students through the literature discussion process by having them read adult literature and then break into small groups for discussion. In that way, teachers come to understand the process they want to facilitate with their students (Routman, 1991, p. 490).

Routman's description of Harste's approach suggests that he is working on teaching his students to be literate by modeling "whole language."

"Jack" does recognize that it is an important goal to give his students the necessary background "so that they can help other kids." In using this terminology, "Jack" is acknowledging that some of his students are "awfully young," as he referred to them on p. 203. He is aware of the far-reaching possibilities if he is successful at exciting his students about the joy of reading because of the influence they may have on their students.

CHAPTER V

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Limitations of Profiles Based on Interviews

> The narratives we shape of the participants we have interviewed are necessarily limited. Their lives go on; our narratives of them are framed and reified. . . . Moreover, the narratives that we present are a function of our interaction with the participants and their words (Seidman, 1991, p. 104).

It is important to note that at the time of the interviews people were captured where they were at a certain period of their development as teachers. They have all gone on with their lives, and are, no doubt, in stages beyond those in which my profiles represent them. When I have come across information about where their professional careers have taken them, I have included it; but, as interesting as it might be to do so, I have not gone back and purposely sought these people out.

A Variety of Paths to "Whole Language"

In the introduction to her book Finding Our Own Way: Teachers Exploring Their Assumptions, Judith Newman (1990) makes a comment which is appropriate here. Referring to the published reflections of inservice teachers on their

changed beliefs about teaching, Newman writes, "People started at different places, took different paths, and had different experiences along the way" (pp. 4-5). In an article titled "Roots of the Whole-Language Movement" which appeared in The Elementary School Journal, Yetta Goodman (1989) also acknowledges that "those of us who consider ourselves active participants in the development of whole language have come to our decisions along different paths" (p. 123). Goodman then goes on to point out that

> . . . we have our own personal histories of ideas, beliefs, and knowledge about teaching and learning and about language that inform what we know, what we believe, and what we do as whole-language practitioners. The different paths we took and the similar conclusions we came to are important to understanding the whole-language movement (p. 123).

The teachers interviewed for this study also followed different paths as they refined their personal beliefs and changed their teaching procedures, but there are some patterns which emerge from their individual stories. The words networking, collegiality, modeling, and support all come to mind in connection with this study. Except where otherwise noted, the page numbers which follow (in parentheses) refer to the location of the data as presented in Chapter IV of this study.

Informal Communication Networks, or Networking

This study demonstrates the role informal communication networks play in making whole language a

grassroots movement. Among teachers who have begun to move toward a whole language, literature-based, process approach to the teaching of reading (herein referred to as "whole language," as explained in Chap. I, p. 3), there seems to be a camaraderie exemplified by a willingness to share ideas and procedures openly. This study includes many examples of colleagues who helped each other by sharing information about this approach to helping children learn to read.

Informal communication networks, now commonly referred to as networking (see Chap. II, p. 39), played an important role in the selection of the people who were interviewed for this study. As demonstrated by my explanation in Chapter III (pp. 68-76), the people who agreed to participate initially came to my attention because once I knew that I wanted to look at how teachers move toward "whole language," I was introduced to appropriate subjects and groups through such communication networks. The invitation to visit "Parkside School" extended to me by "Bev," who was the library media center director there, resulted in my meeting several people, four of whom I interviewed. Later, my casual conversation with "Joan," the resource teacher from "Northtown," resulted in an introduction to "Linda," who then invited me to come to her school to interview her. The fact that I did not really know either "Joan" or "Linda" before my chance encounter

with "Joan" provides another example of how willing people in this movement are to share what they have learned with others.

I was also provided access to groups through networking. My invitation to attend the first meeting of the support group which was being formed at "Parkside School" is one example of this. Another instance of networking involves the invitation extended to me by "Tom" to attend a meeting between members of his university's language arts faculty and a representative group of teachers and administrators from the small community of "Clearwater," educators who were interested in exploring possible ways in which to begin learning about "whole language." As a result of this meeting, I was also invited to participate in the semester-long seminar on the process approach to writing which was held at a school in "Clearwater."

Networking was also used by the people I interviewed. "Karen," for example, "knew somebody who had met someone at a party" (p. 96) who gave her the information necessary to get preprints from Donald Graves and Lucy Calkins before they had published the results of their research. "Karen's" interest in what she read in those preprints encouraged her to make arrangements to visit the school where Graves and Calkins had conducted their research (p.

97). "Bruce" wanted to work at "Parkside School" because he already knew from talking to someone who taught there that the school was "somewhat innovative" (p. 111). "Jack" attended his first children's literature conference because a friend told him about it (p. 191).

Visiting Other Teachers' Classrooms

This study includes many other examples of teachers learning from each other. One of the important ways in which teachers shared information was to invite their colleagues and interested visitors into their classrooms. "Linda" and "Karen" both seemed to be very proud of the number of visitors who were coming to their classrooms. Although "Karen" attributed her changed way of teaching largely to the professional reading she had done, she felt that for a lot of people, a more effective way to learn about "whole language" is to "walk into a classroom where you see it happening--that's really helpful" (p. 99). When she talked about helping a visitor understand what was going on in her classroom, "Karen" emphasized the importance of allowing that person to "just sit and talk afterwards" (p. 100) about what he or she had observed. It is possible that her earlier trip to visit the school where Graves and Calkins did their research (p. 97) influenced "Karen's" willingness to invite others into her classroom. "Karen" may have felt that since she had benefited from the

observations she had made in other teachers' classrooms, others might learn from visiting her classroom. "Linda" also welcomed visitors to her classroom and rather proudly told me about the number of people who had visited her during the same week I had come to interview her (pp. 142-143).

Collegiality

It also becomes evident from these teachers' stories that many of them worked closely with their colleagues, sharing and developing classroom procedures. For example, "Bruce's" description of how he worked with the first grade teachers (pp. 112-114) indicates that there was a philosophical match between his beliefs and those of the classroom teachers. When children came to the resource room for help, he was able to do things that were "consistent with what was happening in the classroom" (p. 113) because of his familiarity with the teachers' procedures and philosophies. "Linda" and her colleagues had also developed a close working relationship (pp. 139-142) and were then able to share their successful program with the other first grade teachers in "Northtown." Eventually they helped expand "whole language" to the second grades in the system (p. 141).

"Karen" made some specific references to what she had learned through "talking with colleagues" (p. 93),

mentioning the "format of the friend to friend reading" (p. 101), and her use of basal readers as anthologies. One example she gave concerned "a wall story which was posted on the corridor all the way down the hall" (p. 102), an idea she had gotten from a teacher whose class was studying China. "Karen" added that to her "list of something to do" (p. 102), and indicated that she expected to increase the number of ideas in her "repertoire" (p. 101) of "different kinds of activities and things to do with what we read" (p. 102).

During her first year of teaching, "Karen" incorporated children's literature into the reading program by providing a model for her team of fourth grade teachers to follow, based on what she had learned about discussing literature as an undergraduate literature major (pp. 89-90). Later, "Karen" described the way she was able to learn from watching Georgia Heard teach poetry by saying "I can see her do the same thing with kids over and over again, and she's modeling it over and over again for me" (p. 106). "Bruce" had learned the writing process by doing it "through modeling and support from other people on the staff who were doing it already" (p. 110). "Lois" told about a district program called "professionals helping professionals" (p. 162) through which teachers were able to share the expertise of other teachers. In one specific

instance "Lois" told of being able to "hire" (p. 162) another teacher who helped "Lois" by demonstrating reading activities which used higher level thinking skills.

As mentioned previously (pp. 42-43), there are references in the literature to the idea that teachers are quite willing to share their classroom procedures (Mayher, 1990a; Rhodes & Dudley-Marling, 1988; Routman, 1988) as long as other teachers realize that such ideas will usually need to be "modified in accordance with teachers' individual styles and the unique needs of each of their students" (Rhodes & Dudley-Marling, 1988, p. xii).

Support Groups and Informal Support

Support groups provide another opportunity for teachers to exchange and share ideas. In their move toward "whole language," "Karen" and another teacher at "Parkside" had abandoned basal readers at the beginning of the school year during which I interviewed them (p. 107). According to "Karen," they decided to start a support group because they "wanted the stimulation and support of other colleagues" (p. 107), and they also hoped to encourage other teachers "who might be interested in getting into it more" (p. 107). "Lois" expressed the goal that the support group would foster "a discussion of pros and cons of whole language, and people sharing ideas" (p. 158). "Lois" also

admitted they they were "trying to get kindergarten teachers to do more of it" (p. 107).

The reasons given by "Karen" and "Lois" for starting a support group at "Parkside School" are similar to those cited in the literature (Mack & Moore, 1992; Routman, 1991; Watson, 1991; Watson & Crowley, 1988). Dorothy Watson and Margaret T. Stevenson (1989), in their article "Teacher Support Groups: Why and How," make the following observation as to why support groups are "flourishing:"

> In varying degrees, those involved in professional change need to receive encouragement, approval, advice, and sound information about their new professional adventure. Later in the change process, it seems just as important to give encouragement, approval, advice, and sound information about professional adventures (Watson & Stevenson, 1989, p. 121).

The reasons "Karen" and "Lois" gave for wanting to start a support group include both giving and receiving support. These and other comments made by them indicate that although "Karen" and "Lois" still needed to receive some support, they were at a stage of change in which they wanted to help other educators who were undergoing change by giving the kind of support to which Watson and Stevenson refer. Some of the other interviews also reveal instances of receiving as well as giving support, both within support groups and on a more informal basis. Some of the examples which follow use the term "modeling," and some involve

support given by people who were in administrative as well as other helping positions.

As mentioned above, "Bruce" told of learning about the process of writing at the school where he had previously taught, referring to the "modeling and support from other people on the staff who were doing it already" (p. 110). In addition to the way in which "Bruce" and the first grade teachers at "Parkside" supported each other as they implemented "whole language" (pp. 104-105; pp. 112-114), "Bruce" described the substitute resource teacher under whom he was working as being "particularly supportive" of his "technique" (p. 115). When "Natalie," the regular resource teacher, came back from medical leave, she was impressed enough with what "Bruce" was doing to decide that he "could continue" using the writing process "even though it was not so familiar to her" (p. 115). "Bruce" commented that "Natalie" "has gotten more interested in doing this because she has seen some of the changes in the kids" (p. 115). One indication that "Bruce" may have been giving "Natalie" support as she learned more about the program he had in place when she returned is that he brought her to the first support group meeting, and she seemed eager to learn more about "whole language" (p. 115).

"Lois" used the word "support" several times during my interview with her, often demonstrating by what she said

that she was aware of how people may be helped by support during change. She described the meetings of language arts resource persons from her district as "another kind of support group," acknowledging that not all of the people attending those monthly meetings were "at the same place" (p. 158). "Lois" said of one person in particular, "She's beginning to ask more questions and get involved in things that will help her move" in the direction of "whole language" (p. 158). "Lois" also talked about a district-wide writing support group which, in addition to helping its members implement process writing, also served as a support group for "whole language reading and writing things" (p. 161). "Lois" demonstrated her understanding of how support groups work when she elaborated on her perception of the writing support group's purpose:

> . . . Part of it is, I think, to get groups of people together to be support groups for each other. You start small so people can feel comfortable and talk to each other. It's a formal way of sharing ideas ("Lois," p. 161).

The idea of starting small so people have an opportunity to talk to each other is also found in the literature (Mack & Moore, 1992).

In another part of my interview with her, "Lois" spoke of her experience with helping the kindergarten teachers, who seemed reluctant to accept "whole language:"

> It's been my talking and examples and modeling and they're still not totally convinced that it's the right thing to do ("Lois," p. 160).

Having commented that some people were "still evolving," "getting more information," and "working toward it," "Lois" added about one teacher, "There's a longer way to go with her" (p. 161). Later in the interview, "Lois" spoke of her school principal's efforts to lend support to these same kindergarten teachers. He had done this by helping her come up with strategies for encouraging the kindergarten teachers, and by thinking of ways to give them positive reinforcement when he observed them doing some of the activities "Lois" had recommended to them, "whole language" activities which would make their classrooms more literate places (pp. 163-164). "Lois" expressed her belief that the school system in which she worked would prefer to hire someone with an orientation to "whole language," adding that a person without that background would probably "develop it" because "there are so many support people and so many resource people who would give you information and do modeling" (p. 164).

"Lois" also revealed that when the first grade teachers at "Parkside" had first started using "whole language," they had gone to their school principal and told him what they were doing, "not so much for his approval, but just so he would know what was going on. And he was very supportive of it" (p. 163). When I went to that same principal to let him know that I was interested in interviewing some of his teachers for this study, he let me

know that he trusted his teachers as professionals and that he was proud as well as supportive of what they were doing.

"Karen" also talked about both receiving and giving support to others in my interview with her. After attributing most of her change to the professional reading she had done, "Karen" revealed that she had also been influenced by "some talking with colleagues and some support from them" (p. 93). Later "Karen" pointed out the benefits of giving a teacher unfamiliar with "whole language" an opportunity to observe in a classroom where this system was in place. "Karen" recommended that after being able "to find out something about it" by talking to the teacher, the visitor would then need "time to practice it, you know, with support" (p. 100).

"Karen" suggested that school administrators in general could "encourage teachers to set up the sort of support group we're trying to set up here" (p. 109). Acknowledging that "time is very difficult to come by" (p. 109), "Karen" also expressed the idea that "it would be really nice, very supportive, for the administration" in her own school district to allow the teachers to have their support group meetings during curriculum days, without "setting down a task, an agenda, or an outcome" (p. 109), instead of requiring that they meet after school or in the evening.

This study includes other examples of ways in which school administrators and people who were in other helping positions lent support to teachers involved in change. At "Madison School" the language arts resource person and the principal together decided to hire a consultant as a way of supporting the teachers in that school as they attempted to change the way they helped children learn to read (pp. 165-166). In the small school district of "Fairview," where she served as the director of curriculum, staff development, and teacher supervision, "Joyce" came up with a very supportive way of encouraging and helping teachers with their change. Realizing that the teachers "needed some more support" (p. 179), "Joyce" and a reading consultant visited their classrooms and looked for "what they were doing well;" they "looked for the positives" (p. 180). Then the teachers received a letter from "Joyce" specifying what they had been doing that looked "really exciting," asking them to please share that with the other teachers at the next curriculum meeting (p. 180).

"Linda's" story of her change revealed several ways in which the teachers in the "Northtown" school district were supported in their professional growth. The administrators there empowered a committee of teachers to decide what components would be included in the first grade reading curriculum guide (pp. 139-140), and they then encouraged the teachers to support each other as they expanded the

whole language approach used by "Linda" and her colleagues at their school, first to all the first grades in the district and then to the second grades (p. 141). "Northtown" also had in place a system whereby it was possible for teachers to earn a Masters' degree by taking courses on site instead of having to spend time traveling (pp. 138-139). The teachers in that district were also encouraged to make presentations about their work at various professional meetings (pp. 150-151).

The Connection between Writing and Reading

The relationship between writing and reading is frequently referred to in the literature. As reported earlier (Chap. II, p. 30), Joan T. Feeley edited one section of the book Process Reading and Writing: A Literature-Based Approach (Feeley et al., 1991). In her introduction, Feeley describes how the teachers who wrote articles concerning their work with children in the middle elementary grades became involved with the processes of reading and writing:

> In general, they got caught up in the writing process movement of the 1980s and then moved naturally from developing writers through a process approach to developing readers in the same manner" (Feeley, 1991, p. 59).

Some of the people interviewed for this study also learned about writing as a process first and then transferred that

information to reading, but other connections between reading and writing were brought out as well.

Because the school he had previously taught in had a "very significant emphasis on writing" (p. 110), "Bruce" learned about the writing process first by using it with his students (pp. 112-113), and then by taking a writing workshop (p. 119-120). "Bruce" felt that what he had learned in the process of doing his own writing could be applied to his own problems with reading (p. 120). He then talked about how that experience helped him understand what "would be difficult for a child" (p. 120), and as a result he realized how he could be more helpful to his students with both writing and reading. At "Parkside" he had his special needs students write stories, and then read their own writing (p. 112). The connection "Bruce" made between reading and writing concerning how the learning of one process supports the other is demonstrated by the comment "you start to see who are the successful readers in some ways by the way they can use language in their writing" (p. 119).

From the writing workshop "Bruce" also learned "about the developmental process children go through" (p. 119). He then made a connection between children's writing and "their sound symbol relationships in terms of phonics" (p. 119). When "Linda" talked about the Read developmental

spelling assessment (Morris & Perney, 1984) and how it relates children's beginning attempts at spelling to how they are learning to read (p. 149), she was also making a connection between children's writing and reading. As mentioned earlier (Chap. II, p. 36), Kenneth S. Goodman (1992a) also discusses Charles Read's (1971) research on children's beginning spelling and explains how knowledge of Read's research can be used by whole language teachers.

Professor Masha Rudman served as a consultant to the teachers at "Madison School," where "Jean," the language arts resource person, was helping teachers move toward a literature-based reading program. When Rudman was shown a description of the process approach to writing which was already in place at that school, she commented, "You're doing it in writing--you can learn to do it in reading, too" (p. 166). When Rudman began working with the teachers at that school, she purposely used the term "process approach to teaching reading" (p. 166).

Nancie Atwell also learned about the writing process first, as described earlier (Chap. II, pp. 27-28). In her book <u>In the Middle: Writing, Reading, and Learning with Adolescents</u>, Atwell explains that she saw her school's three sections of eighth graders twice a day, once for writing workshop and again for reading class. She taught the two courses differently, and at one point she describes

her realization that something was lacking in the way she taught reading:

> Writing was something students did, and literature was something I did to my students. . . . I made all the choices, took all the responsibility, and found all the meanings (Atwell, 1987, p. 19).

Atwell found it difficult to admit that she had problems with her reading curriculum because she had "become an English teacher in order to teach literature" (Atwell, 1987, p. 19). However, she did discover a way to transform her reading classroom into a literate environment. In discussing her goals for changing the way she taught reading, Atwell uses as an analogy the dining room table in her home, where she and her husband and their friends discuss books:

> Around it, people talk in all the ways literate people discourse. We don't need assignments, lesson plans, lists, teacher's manuals, or handbooks. We need only another literate person. . . . Somehow, I had to get that table into my classroom and invite my eighth graders to pull up their chairs (Atwell, 1987, pp. 19-20).

"Karen" also talked about the connection between reading and writing. At one point in the interview, she made an interesting observation regarding the different paths by which people come to "whole language." She noted that some of the teachers in her building had not changed the way in which they taught writing as a result of hearing her talk about how she used the process approach to writing (p. 107). Then "Karen" reflected,

> There are some people who came to the reading support meeting--the whole language meeting which we sort of billed as reading--who had not been involved in the writing particularly, and who still don't seem that interested in the writing process. . . . For them, they may have more access eventually to thinking about writing this way, through the reading ("Karen," pp. 107-108).

Regie Routman started with literature-based reading and then realized that writing could also be taught as a process. In her book Transitions (1988), Routman describes a program titled First Grade Book Flood which was implemented in her school in the fall of 1983. Routman explains that she and her principal, Delores Groves,

> . . . were aware that many children were learning to read children's books much more easily and successfully than the basal text. . . . Typically, by the fall of second grade, up to 50% of the students would be receiving supportive reading services. It was not only their reading abilities that were deficient. In failing to learn to read successfully, their self-esteem and pride in success were also sorely lacking (Routman, 1987, p. 11).

In her explanation of why she did not include writing in the original component, Routman admits, "Truthfully, I hadn't given much thought to the teaching of writing" (Routman, 1988, p. 12). Then she points out that the research on writing by Graves and others was just gaining national attention at that time. Routman and her colleagues soon included writing "as an integral part" of their language arts program (Routman, 1988, p. 12).

As explained earlier (Chap. II, p. 28), Jane Hansen "started to learn about reading through writing" (Hansen,

1987, p. 5) when she joined Graves and other researchers in elementary classrooms. In the beginning of her book When Writers Read, Hansen declares, "I'll show how what I learned about writing changed what I know about reading" (1987, p. 5). Hansen's story is interesting because her expertise was in the field of reading education, but until she became a colleague of Graves at the University of New Hampshire, she had not thought about a process approach to the teaching of either writing or reading. Her book is filled with her reflections on why she changed her beliefs about how children and teachers learn.

When "Lois" was describing a "writing support group for teachers who are interested in doing whole language reading and writing things," she added, "but reading and writing are so closely related that you really can't talk about one without the other" (p. 161). "Karen" also made an astute comment on the connection between reading and writing, and good teaching, in general. She happened to say this at a point when she was indicating how the professional reading she had done had started her thinking about change, but it seems quite appropriate here:

> I think it's all one "ball-of-wax." I don't care if you start reading [i.e., professional reading], or you start with the writing process, or you start with reading and the way we're teaching whole language, or you start with science as a process. Wherever you start, if you really look at what it's about, and look at what it does with children, it leads you on in a circle to all these other things. They're all part of one whole ("Karen," p. 93).

The Experience of Teaching

Experience gained through teaching has influenced the people interviewed in this study. In some cases teachers capitalized on their previous positive experiences. "Bruce" was proud of what he had learned from "alternative kinds of approaches" (p. 111). When he looked for another position he took a job as an aide in a school where he could continue the kind of teaching which exemplified his changing beliefs about how children learn.

> I [had] come from an alternative school where there was a lot of innovative stuff going on. I learned about a lot of new things and found them much more effective; and I was concerned about being programmed into having to use a particular curriculum ("Bruce," p. 111).

"Linda" and her colleagues started using whole language, and their positive experience with this approach encouraged them to help spread it to the rest of the district (pp. 139-141). "Joyce" had successfully taught elementary school for twelve years; she relied on her experience when she became a director of curriculum and staff development (pp. 175-177).

During "Karen's" first year of teaching she figured out a way to use trade books for reading (pp. 89-90). The following year she moved to a school where a more rigid curriculum was being used. "Karen" said of the situation,

> You were supposed to be on a certain page at a certain time in everything you taught, and I just sort of ignored that ("Karen," pp. 90-91).

That year "Karen" was also challenged by a class "that had gone through three teachers the year before" (p. 91), but because she had confidence in herself and her literature-based approach, she continued to teach as she had taught the year before, (pp. 90-91).

"Lois" told of changing her procedures when she felt a need to try something else. She described what she did when she served as a Chapter I teacher in an inner city junior high school in Hawaii in the mid-seventies:

> They didn't want to be there, and so I tried to just find materials that were a part of everyday life. I . . . tried to have all of the things that they read be things that were interesting or relevant to them or things that they would be interested in reading. I tried to take it as far away from textbooks as possible. . . . I knew that the kids wouldn't respond if I brought out textbooks because they'd already seen them ("Lois," pp. 153-154).

A decade later "Lois" spent another six months in Hawaii, teaching English part-time in a high school alternative program for girls who were pregnant (pp. 154-155). Again, this turned out to be another situation where she tailored a reading program to the particular students who were in her charge. Although "Lois" did not feel very successful in that situation, she told about one thing that she "really felt good about:"

> I had them keep journals, so they were writing every day. And I also did a unit on children's literature. . . . Then I had them choose picture books, and we talked about qualities of those books, partly so they would read things that I thought might be interesting, and partly because they were going to be mothers ("Lois," p. 155).

In his book _New Policy Guidelines for Reading: Connecting Research and Practice_ (1989) (mentioned in Chap. II, pp. 32-34), Harste suggests that we should encourage teachers to take risks, "to test their best hypotheses as to how to create a conducive environment for classroom reading instruction" (Harste, 1989, p. 22). Harste and his colleagues' field study of reading classrooms revealed that "over and over again teacher intuition was on the right track" (Harste, 1989, p. 23). Harste's recommendation is that we "legitimize" teacher insight by showing support when teachers come up with innovations. The stories related by "Karen" and "Lois" of their experiences in unusual teaching situations demonstrate that they were willing to take risks, perhaps because they were confident about the approaches they chose to use.

Further Education

The teachers interviewed for this study mentioned other experiences which contributed to their changed beliefs about teaching. Some things which seemed to enhance change were taking courses and participating in workshops, reading professional literature, becoming knowledgeable about children's literature, and involving themselves in professional development activities. In some instances teachers credited certain activities as being

responsible for their change, but in other cases teachers told of having been involved in something without specifically mentioning how much the activity influenced them.

"Bruce" credited the summer workshops on children's literature (p. 117) and on the writing process (p. 119) and "self-education" (p. 120) with his change. Before "Linda" started teaching first grade (p. 138) she took a course with Darrell Morris which changed the way she taught (p. 138). By the time I interviewed her, she had almost completed a Masters' degree. "Linda" indicated that some of the classes she had taken weren't "as helpful specifically to what I do in the classroom" (p. 139), but she did admit that as a result of having taken them, she "would absolutely teach differently" (p. 139) if she went back to teaching sixth grade. "Peter" credited his work in multicultural education as a source for learning about books dealing with "social and historic reality" (p. 125).

When "Jean" went back to school to work on her Masters' degree, she started by taking Masha Rudman's children's literature course, and then incorporated what she was learning into her reading program. "Jean" described that period of her classroom teaching by saying that "everything just started falling into place" (p. 169). "Jack" credited the year of leave he took from teaching as

being "very pivotal," a time "where the change really began, or at least the thinking began" (p. 197). "Jack" did not specifically credit the classes he took, but he did talk about being influenced by the ideas he had learned from meeting J. Lloyd Eldredge and reading the work of Donald Graves (p. 197).

Reading Professional Literature

When "Linda" showed me the curriculum guide which had been developed by a committee of which she had been a member, she pointed out that several of the journal articles were there because she had recommended them for inclusion (p. 140). "Linda" also indicated that during the five years prior to my interview with her, she had devoted her reading time to professional literature, finding it "much more interesting" (p. 147) than reading a novel.

"Jack" found that some of his graduate students benefited from reading research which validates whole language and literature-based reading, but usually only after they have already become familiar with the idea (p. 202). By distributing copies of some journal articles, "Jack" provided his inservice teacher students with

> a chance to look at the research that backs up the whole idea of whole language and particularly literature-based reading. That just strengthens their position and allows them to defend what they're doing a little more rigorously ("Jack," p. 202).

"Jack" felt that the task is a bit more difficult with his undergraduates, who sometimes come to him without having heard much about a literature-based approach to the teaching of reading. But he added, "I share with my undergraduates as much research as I can about literature-based reading" (p. 205).

> After a year or two, I think if the seeds have been planted, even in the ones who aren't ready or willing to take it all in, they'll come back for graduate work or seek some sort of further training or inservicing ("Jack," p. 205).

Yvonne Freeman (1988; Goodman et al., 1988) is one of the authors who was invited to contribute to a chapter titled "Implementing Whole Language: Voices of Experience" for Constance Weaver's book _Understanding Whole Language: From Principles to Practice_ (1990). Freeman writes,

> The more professional reading that teachers do, the more change is usually observed--_if_ it is combined by support and observations (Freeman, 1990, p. 281).

In her book _Invitations: Changing as Teachers and Learners K-12_, Routman refers to herself as being "largely self-educated in whole language," and then discusses the role of professional reading in her development. Routman points out that although "professional workshops and interactions from colleagues have been extremely valuable" (Routman, 1991, p. 8),

> It is, most of all, the reading that has caused me to reflect insightfully about my teaching. Professional reading has led me to confirm directions I am heading toward, question present practices, and continue to make changes in my teaching (Routman, 1991, p. 8).

Routman observes that the books she reads are "all a combination of theory and practice," and then she makes the following statement:

> Those are the books that have enabled me to make the vital connections between the how and the why of teaching-learning and to think, "Aha, so that's why that works" (Routman, 1991, p. 8).

When "Karen" told me about the books she had been reading by Frank Smith (1983; 1985; 1986) and others at the time I interviewed her, she had a very similar response to that of Routman. "Karen" said, "I thought, "Ah! All right! This is what you do" (p. 93). She was impressed enough with something she had just read by Frank Smith (1985) to bring a copy to show her colleagues at the first support group meeting at her school (pp. 93-94).

Earlier "Karen" had talked about reading works by Herbert Kohl and John Holt, and about open classrooms during the time she stayed home to rear her family (p. 93). She credited the professional reading she had done with pushing her "further in the direction" she had been moving before she temporarily stopped teaching (p. 93). Later in our interview she talked about the professional books Susan Benedict had purchased for the school district with grant money (p. 104). "Karen" had been able to recommend additional titles for Benedict to include in the collection being established, and she had also gotten advice from Benedict about what to read.

Knowledge of Children's Literature

The teachers interviewed for this study had learned about children's literature in a variety of ways. "Jean" had "read a lot as a youngster," and had known about the classics" of that time, but until someone urged her to attend a children's literature conference, "Jean" "had no idea what was being written today" (p. 168). "Jack" had been an "avid reader" as a youngster, but that period in his life had been followed by "many years" when he had not been "attuned" to children's literature (p. 191). Both "Jean" and "Jack" had been reintroduced to the field by attending children's literature conferences (p. 168; p. 191). "Jean" later took a course in children's literature as part of her Masters' degree program, and "Jack" was teaching children's literature on the college level when I interviewed him. "Joyce" had taught some extension courses in children's literature by the time I interviewed her.

"Karen" first became involved with literature as an undergraduate American literature major, at which time she had learned to read, talk, and think about what she was reading. She considered the way she had taught reading during her first year of teaching "a normal extension of how" she read (pp. 89-90). "Lois" had taken a children's literature course as an undergraduate in the sixties (p. 155). Since then she had updated her knowledge mostly on

her own, although during our interview she did talk about the usefulness of a workshop she had recently attended (p. 238). "Bruce" had learned about children's literature through the summer workshop he talked about (p. 117), and by figuring out on his own how to extend what he had learned (pp. 116-118). "Linda" had never taken a children's literature course; when I interviewed her she felt that she no longer needed one because she has taken "the time to search out" trade books to use in her teaching (p. 144). "Linda" also said about going to the library:

> I think I learned from reading to my own children. . . . My favorites are still the authors that I can remember reading to my [children] ("Linda," p. 143).

"Linda" was still making monthly trips to the library for books for her students; she reported that she had a "good rapport" with the public librarian who was recommending new books which might be of interest to her (p. 146).

Although "Peter" never actually said exactly how he came to value literature and reading, he did speak of his love for books frequently during my interview with him. "Peter" felt good when parents let him know that their children now enjoyed reading so much that they they would sometimes "go upstairs to their room and read" (p. 123). "Peter" refers to reading as "a lifelong entertainment" (p. 123); he attributed the success of his reading program to the fact that he "believed in it" (p. 124). He told his students why he was having them read novels:

> I told them what I got out of books, how I enjoyed sitting in my chair by myself, . . . and crying because something happened to a character, and I liked to cry, or be really happy, or cheer when the character wins, or whatever.
>
> I told them that that's what I thought reading was about: to enjoy; to live the life of the character; or just to observe and say, "I would never do that;" and to read just to feel ("Peter," p. 124).

Students who have a teacher who shares a love of reading with them are fortunate indeed. In The New Read-Aloud Handbook, Jim Trelease writes, "You become a reader because you saw and heard someone you admired enjoying the experience" (1989, p. 10).

Professional Development

The teachers interviewed for this study were involved in furthering their own professional growth as well as in encouraging the professional development of others. I have reported that "Peter" was not involved with the support group which was started at the school where he taught, but he had been hired as a consultant by other school districts in a nearby state to talk about his reading program (p. 135). "Karen" and "Lois" wrote a grant proposal which resulted in having Georgia Heard spend time at their school as a poet in residence (p. 105).

When "Linda" told me that she and her two first grade teacher colleagues were planning to make a presentation at

the state reading council meeting, I suggested that they might want to write an article about it. "Linda" responded by saying, "There are plenty of articles out there" (p. 150). But then I discovered later that these same teachers were on the International Reading Association (IRA) program in 1991 to give a microworkshop on the use of literature. They were also scheduled to present at a day-long seminar in a Chicago suburb in 1993 (p. 151).

"Joyce" serves on a state-wide writing committee which has been working on assessment and evaluations of student work through the use of portfolios. My profile of "Jack" reports on how he wrote his first professional article (pp. 200-201). Since then he has had many articles published, some of them on the advantages of literature-based reading programs, and others on a variety of aspects of children's literature. "Jack" has also been involved in many presentations at the national conventions of IRA and the National Council of Teachers of English (NCTE).

The people I interviewed are probably involved in other aspects of professional development which did not come to my attention. As reported earlier (Chap. II, p. 41), Lois Bridges Bird (1989) says about the staff at her school, "We attend local, state, and national conferences to update our knowledge and teach others through our own presentations" (Bird, 1989, p. 136).

Routman (1988) encourages teachers to attend professional meetings, and describes how she was influenced by the first IRA meeting she attended, in 1981, in New Orleans:

> It was the first reading conference I had ever attended, and it changed my professional life. Until that time, I had worked mostly isolated in my small room and had little opportunity to share, discuss, and interact with colleagues. . . . The conference helped me realize there were possibilities beyond my structured, pull-out, small group teaching (Routman, 1988, p. 222-223).

The Researcher's Reflections on Change

While I was reflecting upon and writing the narratives based on the teacher interviews I had conducted, I attended conferences, read about the process of change, and talked to colleagues about the issues being raised in my mind. I became aware that my own understanding of change was itself undergoing a change. In retrospect, this is not surprising. Some of my insights came to me gradually, but I was especially struck by one specific event in which I participated, and my reflections upon that occurrence. In September, 1989, I heard Carole Edelsky give the keynote address at the second annual Chicago area TAWL conference. My recollection of Edelsky's talk was that she did an extremely good job of explaining that the whole language movement is "a perspective, a set of beliefs that governs everything you do" (Edelsky, 1989, September). For

example, my notes from her talk indicate that some of the characteristics of language acquisition which Edelsky discussed were that language is predictable, is learned through use, is purposeful, and is profoundly social. My feeling, as I heard her speak, was that she had pulled together many ideas about whole language in a way that would make sense to anyone who heard her.

The afternoon session of the same conference began with Kittye Copeland, then a first grade teacher, giving her first talk at a professional meeting about how she had started doing things differently after ten years of teaching with "worksheets, workbooks, basals, and other texts" (Watson, 1988, p. 413). (Dorothy Watson has also written about Copeland's changed way of teaching.) Copeland's presentation focused on what actually happens in her multi-age, whole language classroom and why she engages in some of the practices she uses. Edelsky's talk had given more emphasis to the theoretical aspects of whole language.

During the closing session there was an opportunity for conference participants to submit written questions which could be addressed to and/or answered by either speaker. I still remember my surprise when a question was read in which someone had asked, "I can understand how

whole language might be a better way to teach for most children, but what about those children who need skills?" I do not recall the speaker's answer, because my reaction was to concentrate on wondering where the person asking the question had been during the two marvelous talks I had heard earlier that day. It was my impression at the time that the idea that teaching skills in isolation serves no useful purpose had been addressed earlier in the day.

I soon had an opportunity to relate the above anecdote to my colleague, "Tom," who also taught at the university where I was teaching undergraduate children's literature. His response was to tell me that although he had not attended this conference, he had recommended it to some of his graduate students. Their reports to him had been that they had not enjoyed the conference; they did not think Carole Edelsky had been a good speaker, and they had not understood what she had been talking about. As I pondered the possibility that someone else could have a different opinion than I about Carole Edelsky's presentation, I began to realize that I might have been ready to understand her message and perhaps "Tom's" graduate students had not been. My "sudden" understanding that change takes time and may be developmental stands out as one of those "professional epiphanies" to which Nielsen (1991, p. 588) refers (see my description of this, p. 154).

Precipitating Change and Planting Seeds

Another example of being influenced by a specific event comes from the book Process Reading and Writing: A Literature-Based Approach (Feeley et al., 1991). In an article which includes a section she calls "A Change in Perspective," Jane Beaty refers to the 1986 IRA national convention in Philadelphia as the "precipitating event that changed my teaching philosophy" (Beaty, 1991, p. 181-182). There she learned about "incorporating good literature" (Beaty, 1991, p. 182) into her language arts program, an approach she was ready to try because she had become dissatisfied with the progress of her students the way she had been teaching.

When "Lois" heard Ken Goodman speak in Hawaii in 1976, she realized that he was giving labels to concepts with which she was already familiar (p. 154). "Lois" indicated that she had already started to change some of her teaching practices before she heard Goodman speak. "Lois" claimed that hearing Goodman, and "beginning to read what he had written was another big influence" (p. 154) on her. "Lois" was able to make sense of what Goodman was talking and writing about, perhaps because of her teaching experience and her growing understanding of how children learn.

A similar story was related by "Jack" when he told of his reaction to attending his first children's literature

conference just before he started teaching. "Jack" described himself as "an avid, avid reader" (p. 191) when he was in elementary school. He felt that attending that conference had "unlocked a door that had been closed," and immediately all of his childhood experience with literature "came flooding back" (pp. 191-192). Here again, "Jack's" previous experience had provided the groundwork which helped make this event meaningful for him.

In my reflections about hearing Edelsky speak and in the anecdotes I have related about Beaty, "Lois," and "Jack," a "sudden" understanding of an idea or event seemed to have occurred. It is more likely that an underlying factor behind what appeared to be a change in perspective was in reality the result of a philosophical shift which had been developing gradually over a period of time. In the introduction to her book _Finding Our Own Way: Teachers Exploring Their Assumptions_, Judith Newman writes about the process of changing to "an open, learner-directed environment:"

> A profound philosophical shift is necessary--a shift supported by constantly updating our theoretical understanding (Newman, 1990, p. 2).

In a monograph titled _Taking Charge of Change_, Shirley M. Hord, William L. Rutherford, Leslie Huling-Austin, and Gene E. Hall (1987) share their conclusions about what they have learned from facilitating change. Some of their

findings which are related to the change of individual teachers are that

> change is a process, not an event, . . . change is accomplished by individuals, . . . it is a highly personal experience, . . . and it involves developmental growth (Hord et al., 1987, p. 5-6).

In a section of a book mentioned earlier (see p. 235), Weaver (1990) presents excerpts of comments written about teacher change by Lynn Rhodes and Nancy Shanklin, from an article which originally appeared in the March 1989 issue of Educational Leadership titled "Transforming Literacy Instruction" (Rhodes & Shanklin, 1989):

> We learned to be patient and to persevere when teacher change was very slow. We have come to understand that the change process and what causes transformations are different for each teacher. . . and that change comes from teachers' own initiatives, some of which we spark, some of which other persons or events ignite (Rhodes & Shanklin, 1990, p. 275).

Both "Peter" and "Jack" used the analogy of planting seeds; "Peter," when he talked about how to get teachers and children to love literature, and "Jack," when he talked about encouraging teachers to understand a "whole language" approach to the teaching of reading. The idea of planting seeds seems somewhat appropriate in the context of this discussion because of the implication that one does not always know whether or when the planted seeds will grow. "Jack's" thoughts about what influence he had on his students (see pp. 234-235) offer one example of this. During my interview with "Jack," I was able to tell him

about his former student, "Norma," who described for her teacher colleagues at the seminar in "Clearwater" how she had put aside the basal readers in her sixth grade classroom in favor of having her students read trade books. "Norma" had tried this after she had taken "Jack's" graduate level class in evaluating children's literature the previous semester (p. 201). Until I told him about "Norma's" report that everything "Jack" had suggested had worked, just as he had said it would, he did not know that a sugesstion he had made in class had been followed. "Karen" told of organizing a day of observation at the school in Atkinson, New Hampshire, where Graves did his initial research. After the visit, she and the other teachers who had gone reported about what they had seen. "Karen" indicated that she didn't know "what impact it had because it was just a six months job" (p. 97).

The paths followed by the eight teachers whose profiles of how they moved toward whole language were presented in this study indicate that the factors influencing each individual were varied. In some cases, teachers pointed to specific influences, as has been discussed earlier in this chapter. But sometimes even the teacher being interviewed may not have been completely sure of the impact of all of the events included in his or her story.

There was an awareness expressed by some that change had come gradually. "Lois," for example, used the word "evolving" in her description of how some of the teachers in her building were moving toward whole language:

> I don't want you to go away thinking that everyone is doing it and that we all agree and we're really terrific. Because I think that for some people they're still evolving, for some people they're getting more information, some people are working toward it. . . . I don't want you to think that everybody is already very much ensconced in the program, philosophically disposed toward it, because it's not true ("Lois," p. 161).

"Lois" also described the way she herself taught reading and the way she tries "to get other people to do it" as "an evolving process over the years" ("Lois," p. 161).

"Jean" seemed to be reflective in her conversation with me, partly because I had reminded her of the course we had taken together, in psycholinguistics, where she had asked some seriously thought-out questions about the issues being raised. "Jean" revealed that she was still evolving when she said, "I accept it; I accept an awful lot of it" (p. 172). Then she was able to recall the conflicts she had had as a Chapter I teacher, who "was supposed to be working on skills" (p. 172). "Jean" talked about her change by describing the way she had taught.

Descriptions of Classroom Practice

One of the conclusions I draw from these interviews taken as a whole is that describing what goes on in whole

language classrooms is one way to recognize change and/or the absence of change. When I pondered the best way to present the data from my interviews, I considered omitting some of the descriptions of classroom practice which seemed so prevalent in these interviews. It seemed difficult to leave any of it out, although I did not include all of it. Each teacher's description of classroom practice was different; they were not really repetitive. It now seems to me that these teachers were telling me about how they changed by describing what they did in their classrooms.

How much they told me may also have been influenced by what they thought I needed to hear. For example, "Karen" and "Bruce" told me a lot about what they did in their classrooms. This may have been partly because "Bruce's" understanding of these processes and of how children learn were relatively new to him and he was eager to share with me what he had learned, as explained in my analysis of my interview with "Bruce" (see p. 121). My interviews with both "Karen" and "Bruce" took place early in this study when I was still learning about whole language and was quite willing to learn more by listening to everything they had to say.

"Peter's" classroom practices were of interest to me because he was not involved with the support group at "Parkside School" and from what I knew about whole language

and literature-based reading at the time, it seemed to me that he had "invented" his own practices. He also seemed to have an agenda of information he thought I would be interested in hearing.

By the time I interviewed "Linda," I knew a lot more about literature-based reading. She didn't give me as many details about her classroom procedures, perhaps because she sensed how much I already knew. It was as though "Linda" and I assumed that we both knew what "whole language" was, an assumption "Karen" and "Bruce" did not make, perhaps because of my response to what they were saying. "Linda" did tell me a lot about the Read developmental spelling assessment, but I was particularly interested in hearing about that since it was new to me (pp. 148-150). I recall that I asked "Linda" for the name of the article by Morris & Perney which explained the research on which the Read assessment was based, a question which may have demonstrated to Linda that I wanted to hear more about it.

Description of classroom practice can also reveal that you are (or were) <u>not</u> a whole language teacher, as some of these teachers demonstrated when they talked about how they used to teach or how much they had progressed. "Jean," for example, described putting the teacher's manual in a drawer as a good first step toward changing; she referred to her reluctance to "let go" of phonics; and she commented that

she had "even" used the Sullivan series (p. 173). When she made these comments, she assumed that I would know what she meant. When "Jack" referred to the practices he had used in his classroom when he started teaching, he expected that I would understand the references he made to his earlier "belief" in basal readers, workbooks and worksheets, and homogeneous groups. When "Jack" summarized the year in which he used only literature in his reading program, he measured his success by reciting all the things that he no longer was doing, that he "only a year or so before that had felt so strongly about" (p. 198). When "Linda" discussed the progress of the second grade teachers in her building toward "whole language," she said that she realized that things were "starting to happen" because of the things that she was now seeing "on somebody's wall" (p. 141).

"Lois" revealed that when she attended the monthly meetings of all of the language arts resource people from her school distirct, she could tell about a couple of her colleagues "from the questions they asked and some of the input they were giving, that they don't do a lot of whole language things" (p. 158). The questions teachers ask are revealing because they are often an extension of what is going on in their classrooms, or they may indicate what they are thinking their next steps might be. "Lois" also characterized the views of one of the kindergarten teachers

in her school by quoting her: "Kids can not write in kindergarten" (p. 161) "Lois" had then said about that same teacher, "So I'm working. There's a longer way to go with her." I now realize that my anecdote about someone asking about the teaching of skills after Carole Edelsky spoke at the Chicago TAWL meeting (see pp. 241-243) also illustrates the idea that one can often determine how far someone has (or hasn't) moved toward understanding whole language by listening to their questions. "Linda" and "Jean" both described themselves by saying that if they were to go back to a classroom, they wouldn't use a basal, which is another instance of indicating their beliefs by referring to practice.

The phenomenon I have described here seems to be similar to my earlier description (see Chap. II, pp. 45-46) of the research by Pinnell (1991) and Hickman (1991, May) concerning Reading Recovery teachers. After they got beyond the "procedural stage," when they were "comfortable with their teaching," they began to share stories about what was happening in their classrooms and how their students were making sense of literacy (Pinnell, 1991, p. 180).

Summary of Conclusions

The teachers in this study followed different paths as they moved toward whole language, but some patterns emerged

from their individual stories of change and from pertinent information cited from the literature. Networking, collegiality, modeling, and support all figure prominently in promoting professional change and in making whole language a grassroots movement. Teachers undergoing a philosophical change toward whole language need to receive support, but they also give support to others, sometimes informally but also through support groups.

Change takes time and usually involves making a philosophical shift. Change can be encouraged by visiting other teachers' classrooms, taking courses, participating in workshops, reading professional literature, becoming knowledgeable about children's literature, and attending and presenting at professional conferences. Although change is usually gradual, it may be influenced by an event which makes sense in light of the person's current understanding.

The teachers in this study are aware that writing and reading are closely connected, and teachers who begin their move toward whole language by using a process approach to writing often decide to use a similar approach to reading. Other teachers begin with literature-based reading and then adopt a process approach to the way they teach writing. Teachers undergoing a change toward whole language often learn from sharing stories with others about what is

happening in their classrooms and how their students are making sense of literacy.

Recommendations for Further Research

As often happens with studies of this kind, many additional questions have been raised. Here are some suggestions for further research:

1. If teachers were interviewed about perceptions of their own change over a longer period of time, how would the opportunity for reflection influence their change?

2. Interview teachers who have reared children, inviting them to reflect upon how that might have influenced their perceptions of how children learn.

3. Does moving from one part of the country to another, and thus teaching in several different school districts affect change more than teaching in the same school for a number of years?

4. Can preservice teachers be influenced to begin reflecting on how they will teach by being told that research shows teachers tend to teach the way they have been taught themselves during the years they were students?

5. Does the way in which a teacher learns about children's literature make a difference in acceptance of a

whole language, literature-based, process approach to the teaching of reading?

6. Why do some teachers returning to school to take course work seem to resist the idea of "whole language?"

7. What are the factors that make younger preservice teachers resist the idea of "whole language?"

8. How does the kind of writing instruction preservice teachers receive as undergraduates and during their early schooling influence how they will teach writing?

9. Are teachers who are engaged in the writing process themselves influenced with respect to the way in which they help children learn to write?

10. What is the connection, if any, between "whole language" and open space, integrated day, and progressive education?

11. Is there a difference between open and closed classrooms with respect to whether teachers would be more willing to try a "whole language" approach if other teachers are watching them?

12. Investigate the classroom practices of teachers who say they are using whole language in an effort to

determine whether there is a difference between the reporting and the instruction.

13. How does Reading Recovery interface with whole language?

14. What is the significance of the frequently cited statistics which imply that basal readers dominate reading instruction in the United States when compared to the frequently expressed idea that "whole language" is a better way to teach reading?

15. How much does personality have to do with change?

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