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I. Howard Seiler

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SOCIAL RELATIONS AND INTERACTIONS AS
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COMPARISONS OF HIGH AND LOW ABILITY
READING GROUPS IN ONE
FIRST GRADE CLASSROOM

By

J. Samuel Reilly

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By

I. Howard Seiler

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ABSTRACT

SOCIAL RELATIONS AND INTERACTIONS AS
THEY AFFECT THE OPPORTUNITY TO LEARN:
COMPARISONS OF HIGH AND LOW ABILITY
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FIRST GRADE CLASSROOM

By

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The aim of this study was to describe and analyze
the social relations and/or interactions between a teacher
and students in both high and low ability reading groups
in one first grade classroom for evidences of this inter-
active effect as it affects the opportunity to learn and
to look at the groups and the larger social context
within which they occur.

Using ethnographic techniques including participant
observation, interview, photographic and videotape docu-
mentation, and analysis of talk and movement, the re-
searcher compared and contrasted instruction and differ-
ential treatment between the high and low ability reading
groups in a first grade classroom.

The unit of analysis of this study is an event or a
cluster of recurring events and/or patterns. To isolate
those events, videotapes of reading lessons for both
groups were analyzed to determine and identify what kinds

of events occurred, at what juncture during the lesson they occurred, what ability group was at the reading table when the event occurred, and if there were a commonality of events across lessons.

The findings revealed four distinct communicative behaviors as having impact on the opportunity to learn and practice reading. These were identified as (a) the interplay of the physical _positioning_ of all participants at the reading table, (b) the oral _feedback mechanisms_ used by the teacher to convey information to the students, (c) the allocation of _taking turns_ to read and answer teacher directed questions, and (d) the types and frequencies of _interruptions_ that occurred at the reading table or from other members of the classroom as a whole.

By analyzing these four features, as they operate individually or in interaction with one another during the time allocated for reading instruction, it was concluded that the low ability reading group has quanitatively and qualitatively less opportunity to learn and practice reading as opposed to the high ability reading group.

DEDICATION

This study is dedicated to my two families:

    The first family are those that I
    share my everyday life with.

    The second--Ms. Lingo, Ms. Help,
    the high and low reading groups,
    and the classroom as a whole.

Thank you for letting me come into your lives.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This dissertation represents the results of the combined efforts of many people, and without the contributions of these people it would have never been written.

My chairperson, Dr. Gerald Duffy, who supported my earlier efforts and expertly provided me with the sometimes painful but helpful format of "Tell what you're going to tell them, tell them, and tell them what you just got through telling them!"

As contributing to the inception and completion of this dissertation, I wholeheartedly wish to thank my director, Dr. Susan Florio. She was with me throughout the entire process, applauding my successes and skillfully guiding me through my defeats. She became both my mentor and friend.

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Dr. George Sherman who showed me the humanistic side of reading instruction and allowing me all those impromptu meetings.

A special thanks to Dr. Frederick Erickson who, although not a member of my "official" committee, gave his time and expertise in helping me understand the process of ethnography.

To my editor, Marian Aldred, grateful thanks for making my words make sense.

My artist, Cindi Hager, whose drawings brought to life the words and action that took place in the classroom.

Finally, but certainly not least, Barbara Reeves, my typist, whose magic fingers put this dissertation together many times.

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I hope that I can show the
reader that behind the apparent
mystery, confusion, and disorganization
of life, there is order.

from The Silent Language

Edward T. Hall

CHAPTER I

PURPOSE AND STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

Introduction

Learning and practicing reading are tasks performed in this society's schools and classrooms on a regular basis. This learning generally takes place within some sort of a group arrangement, usually small ability groups. However, the individual reading groups operate within a larger social context, the total classroom.

Schools and classrooms in particular are considered to be highly structured social environments and, because of this, there is a definable social order with rules for social behavior within them. One could then postulate that those rules, either implied or stated, would carry the same interpretations across the high and low ability reading groups in a typical classroom setting. It could also be assumed that the social relations and/or interactions* that take place in a classroom would be consistent regardless of what group was at the reading table for instructional purposes. And that the opportunity to learn would be

_____

*Social relations and/or interactions, as interpreted by this researcher, define and include interactions between and among people in any setting--in this case, a classroom.

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consistent for all children be they in the high or low abil-
ity reading groups and that that expectation may or may not
occur.

This study will look at a classroom as a social en-
vironment, implementing an ethnographic approach, to inves-
tigate how the rules for social behavior are, in fact, con-
veyed among the high and low ability groups in one first
grade classroom. The social relations and/or interactions
will be identified and analyzed to see whether or not those
interactions and the rules governing those interactions (a)
are consistent between the high and low ability reading
groups, and (b) have more of an effect on the opportunity to
learn and practice reading for one group as opposed to
another.

What follows in this chapter is a review of the metho-
dology and literature pertaining to the social organization
of a typical classroom and the reading instruction within
it, the statement of the problem and questions this study
will attempt to answer, and the implications for further re-
search.

Background of the Problem

Schools and individual school rooms are social environ-
ments containing a social order and rules for social beha-
vior. Social intimacy in schools is unmatched anywhere else
in our society (Jackson, 1968). Jackson states,

> Only in schools do thirty or more people spend
> several hours each day literally side by side.
> Once we leave the classroom, we seldom again are
> required to have contact with so many people for
> so long a time (p. 8).

A classroom can also be considered a working group; hence,
it has certain characteristics. All groups have a goal to
achieve; they have participants who are joined together to
achieve that goal. The activities of the group are founded
in some type of control or leadership, and the group has ex-
plicit or implicit relations and/or interactions with other
group(s) (Getzels and Thelen, 1960). The class members come
together to learn specific skills. In a classroom setting,
learning occurs as a planned occasion. Schools, then, are
highly structured social settings with tasks that can be
counted on to recur every day during a specific time with a
great deal of reliability (Mehan, 1978).

Students and their teacher(s) can be described as a
mini-society of people who, because of their mandatory, da-
ily proximity with each other, develop a close relationship
with most or all of the members in the classroom (Jackson,
1968). Classrooms are often organized such that multiple
activities occur simultaneously in the same physical space.
Teachers and students attend to varied learning activities
at different places and different times during a typical
school day (Mehan, 1978). The range of activities is com-
plex, including "seat" or "board" work, small group or to-
tal classroom instruction with either the teacher or aide,
and independent work at a learning center.

How does this complex organization come about? How do the participants know what to do next as they move from activity to activity? They are brought together to reside in the same environment and perform similar tasks and duties; and because of this togetherness, there are rules, stated or implied, that define the social order of the classroom. Researchers such as Jackson (1968), Bremme and Erickson (1977), and Mehan (1978, 1979) have suggested that inherent in a classroom setting are complex rules that define what social relations and/or interactions are "acceptable" behaviors in that setting. Bremme and Erickson (1977) found that all the participants in a social occasion,

> ...share some rules for doing it, for "making sense," for identifying situational contexts, social meanings, and appropriate behaviors (p. 154).

These rules are expressed in two modes of communication: language and kinesic behavior. Both of these forms of communication operate simultaneously to convey the message, to help the participant(s) make sense of the social situation, and to allow them to act accordingly (Hall, 1969; Bremme and Erickson, 1977). Hall coined the word proxemics to refer to peoples' meaningful use of social and personal space. He noted that both language and use of space are major channels of communication in and of a social organization.

Recent research suggests that social relations and/or interactions in a classroom setting have a direct bearing

on the learning process and its educational outcomes.
In a study to find out the implications of a teacher's ver-
bal exchanges with students and their effect on cognition,
Mishler (1972) reported that "the classroom is a socializ-
ing context" (p. 290) where students are expected to learn
not only how to read, write, and do math, but also to learn
the rules for appropriate social behaviors in the context
of a structured social system. McDermott (1974, 1976,
1977) found that students, within the context of a reading
group, spend a considerable amount of time away from the
task of learning how to read. Time is taken up with inter-
actions with their teacher and peers and attempts to get
organized within the reading group structure rather than
working on the task. McDermott states:

> I suspect that many of our children spend
> most of their time in relational battles rather
> than on learning tasks (p. 208).

One of the tasks that occurs daily in elementary
schools with little variation is reading instruction.
School is the place where we are taught to read. Jackson
(1970) states that,

> ...this is where we first learn to See Dick,
> See Dick Run, not on the sidewalk outside the
> window, but in our mind's eye (p. 93).

Only in school is reading a required task. Reading instruc-
tion is generally facilitated by placing students into three
or four groups. Typically, this is done by testing, general
achievement, or the subjective evaluation of the individual
classroom teacher (Veatch, 1978; Harris and Sipay, 1979). A

typical classroom consists of "reading ability groups," high and low groups with one or two in between. Schubert and Torgenson (1969) define reading ability grouping as a

> ...method of providing for individual dif-
> ferences in learning by grouping students homo-
> geneously in intelligence, reading, or subjective
> achievement (p. 137).

Students are asked to read at specific times during the school day and, as mentioned previously, especially during reading instruction within the context of a small group setting. However, not only are these "reading ability groups," but they are also distinct work groups meeting together within a social context with specific rules. Reading groups in a school setting are analagous to labor groups in a work setting: each operates as a social unit within a larger social system with similar variables, goals, and outcomes. The size of the reading (work) group, the essentialness of the group's function within the classroom (organization), and the extent of the students' (workers') responsibility to complete tasks are variables that account for the differences in group cohesion, interdependence among members, and the propensity for group outcomes (Bossert, 1979). In their theoretical model of the classroom as a social system, Getzels and Thelen (1960) report that in school classrooms, personality needs, role expectations, and classroom climate interact to predict group behaviors which include student learning outcomes. Different members make up the group, and, as such, each group has a different set of

common or shared understandings about what is taking place
and the organizational structure underneath (Becker and
Geer, 1957).

Recent descriptive studies indicate that the top read-
ing group usually consists of children who have succeeded in
learning how to read and whose behavior is not disruptive
to that task. Conversely, the low group usually consists
of children who are having difficulty learning how to read
and whose behavior is disruptive to that task (McDermott,
1976). If non-disruptive behaviors are conducive to learn-
ing a task, it would seem that instructional strategies
would differ between a teacher's reactions and interactions
within the high and low reading ability groups. McDermott
found that "outsiders," viewing films taken of the high and
low ability groups during reading instruction, described
the two groups in different ways. The high group was per-
ceived as orderly and the low group as disorderly. His
conclusions were that,

>...not only do we experience the bottom
>group as disorderly, but on that basis we also
>treat them differently (p. 14).

It would also seem that poor readers receive reading in-
struction that differs from that provided good readers (Al-
lington, 1977). Allington further states that "poor readers
would perform in a manner generally consistent with descrip-
tions of poor readers (p. 2)."

In a study to find out if good readers are taught dif-
ferently than poor readers, Allington (1977, 1978) suggests
that the interaction between teachers and students vary
among the high and low reading ability groups. Results of
this study indicated that teachers are likely to interrupt
poor readers more often than good readers, allowing good
readers a greater amount of time to learn. It appears that
regardless of what interactional process these researchers
studied, both came up with the same conclusions: the learn-
ing process was impeded, and there was a direct bearing on
the learning process and the educational outcomes.

This study and those previously cited were conducted
in classrooms looking at particular learning groups and how
teacher and students function within that group setting. It
seems that to complete the picture of classroom social life
and its relation to learning, research must look not only at
this partially bounded social setting (Goffman, 1961), but
also at the manner in which the total classroom interacts
with the small group. While the reading group, for example, is
an entity in and of itself, it is still a part of the class-
room as a whole. Therefore, to study the reading group
ethnographically as a social unit, it is useful to study it
holistically, both as a unit on its own terms and as a
larger whole--the classroom. As Erickson (1977) states,

> It is in this sense that ethnographic work
> is "holistic," not because of the size of the
> social unit, but because units of analysis are
> considered analytically as wholes, whether that
> whole be a community, a school system and its

> political relations with its various "publics,"
> the relations among those in a school building,
> or the beginning of one lesson in a single class-
> room (p. 59).

Therefore, it seems reasonable to postulate that the social

relationships and/or interactions among those wholes affect

and are affected by events on the boundaries of a particu-

lar "closed" learning environment, such as the other class

members and outside interruptions from a variety of people

for a variety of reasons.

It appears, then, that high and low reading groups act

differently and are treated differently by teachers, and

this suggests that the social relations and/or interactions

within them are also different. The aforementioned studies

have focused on "closed" group settings. It is, therefore,

necessary to analyze the social relations and/or interac-

tions that take place in the total classroom during the

period of reading instruction in order to get a more com-

prehensive look at the social structure of a classroom as

it affects opportunity to learn during reading instruction.

It has been hypothesized by educational psychologists

that teacher expectations may be a potent variable rele-

vant to children's learning (Rosenthal and Jacobson,

1964, 1973; Rist, 1970). Teachers view low achievers

as lacking the ability to excel and, therefore, give

less praise to those students. That amount of praise and

support given by the teacher is attested to by Brophy and

Good (1970). They found that high achieving first grade

children received more praise than low achieving children.
Teachers not only demanded better performances from children
for whom they had higher expectations, but were also more
prone to accept poor performances from low expectation chil-
dren and less likely to praise good performances of these
children even though they occurred less frequently. The
authors interpreted their findings as evidence that teachers
transmit differentiated performance cues to children in ways
that encourage responses that will confirm these expecta-
tions.

This study will not address the issues of teacher ex-
pectations per se, however, but will consider those expecta-
tions in light of the shared understandings implied in the
rules for social behavior as they are conveyed by the teach-
er. These shared understandings will be looked at as they
are imbedded in the classroom rules limited primarily to the
formal and informal rules on how students are to function
within their reading groups.

One variable that has been considered in the study of
lessons is the amount of time spent during instruction.
Under the category of "time spent in learning," Carroll
(1963) identified the following aspects of time spent: (1)
"time allowed for learning ('opportunity')" and (2) "the
time the learner is willing to spend in learning ('perse-
verance')(p. 728). (These notations will be discussed later
in this chapter.) Briefly, however, the opportunity to
learn is the actual amount of instructional time provided

for learning, be it large and/or small group or individual
instruction. Perseverance is the time the learner is will-
ing to spend learning a task. Carroll states,

> One may desire to learn but be unable to
> endure frustrations caused by difficulties in
> the learning task or distractions from external
> circumstances (p. 729).

These "external circumstances" or the social relations and/
or interactions that are ever-present in a typical class-
room would seem to have an effect on learning a task.

The purpose of this study is to observe, describe, and
analyze the social relations and/or interactions between a
teacher and students across the low and high ability read-
ing groups in one first grade classroom for evidences of
this interactive effect as it influences the opportunity to
learn and to look at these groups as they operate within
the larger social context of the classroom within which
they occur.

Problem Statement

Mehan (1978) states,

> What is lacking in most discussions on the
> influence of schooling is a solid foundation of
> the evidence based on examinations of the actual
> process of education (p. 34).

In an extensive study, Shuy & Griffin (1976) found that the
events occurring during reading instruction are most often
not considered as part of the research. The report con-
cludes that the social system operating around reading in-
struction is available to the researcher to be observed,

analyzed, and formulated into theory. However, they note that, "We have so far failed to develop this important body of information" (p. 14).

This study will contribute to the development of that body of information. Using an ethnographic approach, this study will observe, analyze, and describe reading instruction in its social context to provide the following:

1. A description of the face-to-face interactions occurring within the reading ability group and outside of the group during reading instruction;

2. A consideration of whether the social order of the total classroom has an influence of the time spent in learning how to read; and

3. Clearer insights into the social rules governing one first grade classroom during instruction.

In the studies reviewed and reported on above, it was observed that they were conducted by looking at a particular group as a "closed unit" and not as a partially bounded unit operating within a larger context, the classroom. Two general questions will be examined in this thesis to provide clearer insights into the social relations and/or interactions that take place within a classroom in general and within high and low reading groups in particular:

1. Are there systematic differences in how the teacher interacts with the high and low

ability reading groups, and do those differ-
ences have an effect on the opportunity to
learn?

2. How does the classroom teacher convey infor-
    mation to children in different reading groups
    regarding reading skills and the rules for
    social conduct?

Due to the inherent qualities of an ethnographic re-
search design, these questions will be reshaped and altered
as the data are analyzed and described. One way to answer
(examine) these questions is to look at communication beha-
vior within the context of the whole classroom during the
time designated for reading instruction and within the read-
ing groups. Those behavioral indicators that have been sug-
gested by the previously reviewed research on classroom in-
teraction include interplay of physical posture, teacher
feedback mechanisms, teacher allocation of turn taking and
answering questions, and teacher generated and response to
interruptions. These behaviors in particular will be ex-
amined in Chapter IV in an attempt to answer the research
questions.

The information gathered in this study should benefit
the classroom teacher by describing those social relations
and/or interactions that affect the opportunity to learn
during reading instruction. Also, such knowledge should en-
rich teachers' ability to interpret the behavior of children
in their reading groups and increase their understanding

that those social behaviors can be thought about, discussed, and acted upon to make sense of that particular social setting: the classroom. Finally, the information gathered in this study should be a significant part of the curricula of teacher education programs.

Summary

Recent research has shown that indeed classrooms are mini-societies with specific social rules to govern behavior and thus enhance the order and opportunities for learning to take place.

It is within this order that this research seeks possible answers as to why some groups of students have a greater opportunity to learn than other groups of varying abilities. The aforementioned research suggests that the social rules, interactions, ability to maintain social boundaries, etc., all have impact on the opportunity to learn.

CHAPTER II

METHODS OF COLLECTING
AND ANALYZING DATA

Introduction

The two general questions addressed in this study are
(1) are there systematic differences in how teacher inter-
actions transpire between the high and low ability reading
groups, and do these differences have an effect on the oppor-
tunity to learn? and (2) how does the classroom teacher con-
vey information to children in different reading groups re-
garding reading skills and the rules for social conduct?
These questions can best be answered by directly observing
the on-going behaviors of the classroom participants as the
action is taking place. In order to gather information to
answer these general, more finite questions, a two-level
methodological technique was used. The first level is
ethnographic in nature, providing a broad view of the social
order that is observable and reportable (Garfinkel, 1967).
The second level, being microethnographic, focused on spe-
cific events and the detailed description and interpretation
of a smaller sample of behavior(s) within the context of
the larger social order (Erickson, 1977).

What follows is a discussion of the ethnographic and
microethnographic methods used in this study to frame

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questions and to record and analyze data. Also included in this chapter is this researcher's method of collecting and recording data, the process of selecting videotaped lessons, and the preliminary process of data analysis. This section will be followed with a description of <u>participation</u> and <u>academic task structures</u>. By implementing above methods of analysis, the researcher is able to segment individual lessons in to smaller, observable units, thus providing a greater opportunity for a more in-depth look into the on-going process of a lesson(s).

Theoretical Background

The underlying assumption in this study is that the social relations and/or interactions that take place in the classroom affect the opportunity to learn during reading instruction. In order to observe, collect data, analyze, discuss, reflect, and raise hypotheses, an ethnographic research design (Garfinkel, 1967; Bauman, 1972; and Wolcott, 1975), and more specifically a micro-ethnographic approach (Smith and Geoffry, 1968; Erickson, 1977) was used in this study. Ethnography is part of a research tradition that has been developed by anthropologists and community study sociologists (Whyte, 1955; Lutz and Iannaccone, 1966; Spradley and McCurdy, 1972). It is founded on the premise that through face-to-face interactions with others in a particular society, people transmit and acquire information that

helps them make sense of the world around them. Bauman
(1972) states that ethnography is:

> ...the process of constructing through direct
> personal observation of a social behavior, a the-
> ory of the working of a particular culture in
> terms as close as possible to the way members of
> that culture view the universe and organize their
> behavior within it (p. 157).

Micro-ethnographic analysis is the detailed description and
interpretation of smaller social units of behavior(s)
within the context of a larger social whole (Erickson, 1971).

Ethnographic research is primarily qualitative and
holistic in nature (Schatzman and Strauss, 1973). It lo-
cates activities within the various contexts that they occur
(McDermott, et al., 1976). Rather than studying the social
relations and/or interactions that take place in a classroom
"replete with statistical models and testing instruments"
(Palonsky, 1974, p. 34), ethnography affords the researcher
the opportunity directly to observe behavior in vivo and
holistically. A criterion for ethnographic research, ac-
cording to Wolcott (1975), is that,

> The ethnographer is committed to look at
> people and events in a total milieu rather than
> only in bits and pieces (p. 113).

The setting under study is considered analytically as a
whole, whether that whole is a classroom, an event in a
classroom, or an episode within a classroom event (Erickson,
1977; Carrasco, 1978). Erickson explains that,

> As a way of thinking about school as a
> "small community," we could apply it (ethnog-
> raphy) to the fundamental terms of discourse
> about social organization (p. 8).

In any social organization there is an order which can be directly observed. To discover that order, Schatzman and Strauss (1973) state that,

> The researcher must get close to the people whom (she/)he studies; (she/)he understands that their actions are best comprehended when observed on the spot--in the natural, on-going environment where they live and work (p. 5).

Direct observation is a basic, invaluable method for discovering the meaning of behavior(s) as they occur. Observation, as defined by Schatzman and Strauss, occurs when "the researcher is using all his(/her) senses simultaneously and also thinking (analyzing)" (p. 52). It involves watching and listening to what is going on, who is doing what to whom, where, when, and how.

A theory of interaction in social context in a classroom arises by observing such things as the movement among learning stations, the overall quietness of the room, how students are called on to answer questions, type and number of interruptions occurring during reading instruction, and so on. Mehan (1978, 1979) has labeled this method of educational research "constitutive ethnography," the method by which the researcher can best describe the routines of social organization in the classroom during lessons, reading groups, and the "living processes of education that occur within the classroom" (p. 8). He states that,

> A description of the interactional work of participants that assembles the structure of these events is the goal of this style of research (p. 8).

Rationale for the Use of
an Ethnographic Method

To gather and record the data using an ethnographic approach, field notes from direct observations, audiotaped interviews with the classroom teacher and aide, and video tapes of reading lessons as they occurred were used. Direct observation places the field researcher in the role of participant observer in a natural setting. Under the rubric of "participant observer" falls the role of the observer as a non-participant. In this role the observer, although physically present, makes every effort not to impinge upon the social system and shuns any attempt to be included in the system under observation. Lutz and Iannaccone (1969) suggest that when the researcher assumes this type of role, s/he detaches her/himself from the society under study for the sole purpose of analysis.

In participant observation, the most essential research instrument the researcher possesses is her/himself (Pelto, 1970; Wolcott, 1975; Florio, 1976). The researcher assumes the role of the "instrument of measurement" (Florio, 1976, p. 2) and, thus, must provide safeguards against subjectivity and a priori conclusions. The researcher watches and listens to the social relations and/or interactions as they occur. Schatzman and Strauss (1973) call this watching and recording from the outside. However, they are quick to point out the sensitivity the researcher brings to the setting. These sensitivities are to be considered in conjunction with the information gathered. The

question the researcher faces is, "Are my inferences valid
or not, due to my own past experiences?" As Schatzman and
Strauss explain,

> To entirely repress past experiences, and
> their associated observational consequences, is
> neither possible nor useful for the researcher
> (p. 53).

This places the researcher within boundaries. Yet, Wolcott
1975) counters that,

> Ethnography is enhanced when the researcher
> works within reasonable bounds, and those bounds
> have most often been dictated by the scope of
> what one fieldworker can accomplish (p. 114).

Therefore, the sensitivity and boundaries that the research-
er brings to the site and study prove advantageous when
analyzing and validating the data collected. Schatzman and
Struass state,

> This is why any outsider (researcher or other)
> has some advantage in the observation and analy-
> sis of events and structures; (she/)he can see
> properties "lost" to insiders, relate them to still
> other properties; and, thereby, discover something
> of value to theory or to his(/her) hosts (p. 53).

Simply put, the personal intuition and insights that the
ethnographer brings to the study (McDermott, et al, 1976)
are invaluable in collecting, analyzing, and validating the
data. But they must be continually checked by reported,
long-term observations and elicitation of the points of
view of participants in the setting of interest.

In order to gain deeper insights into observed behav-
iors and to check observed inferences in this study, the
teacher and aide were interviewed. These interviews were

recorded on audio tape cassettes which provided the re-
searcher a method of gaining and storing factual information
as well as a deeper understanding of the situaiton at hand
due to the verbal nuances recorded in the responses.

Video tape (audio-visual) was utilized to provide a
retrievable data source for the analysis of interactions
that occurred during reading instruction. Video tape acts
as an "external memory" (Mehan, 1978) which allows the re-
searcher the means to examine situations repeatedly, there-
by increasing the validity of a descriptive account (Erick-
son, 1978a).

These three modes for gathering information provide
the researcher with a picture of situational sequences as
they occur in a normal flow of activity in the classroom.
The data collected represent detailed records that illumi-
nate the changing social relations and/or interactions tak-
ing place in the classroom. The flow of that social life,
such as how students are called on to answer questions, is
broken down for analytic purposes into detailed, observa-
tional records that are referred to as "situational frames"
(Hall, 1969; Erickson, 1971). These frames are small sam-
ples of behavior in the context of larger social units,

> ...which makes it possible to identify the
> critical process points along the cycle at which
> point it would be most profitable to monitor so-
> cial behavior (Erickson, 1971, p. 2).

Erickson further states that the,

> ...situational frame cycle represents a model
> which permits the researcher to develop a process-

based rather than boundary-based definition for
a social unit of analysis (p. 3).

In conjunction with the above-mentioned sources, the re-
searcher also analyzes field notes taken on-site which record
in detail the social processes and events as they take place.
These field notes are also used to prepare narrative, des-
criptive accounts and provide evidence for the general fre-
quency of occurrences (Erickson, et al., 1978).

These methods of gathering information will be analyzed
in similar ways, looking for recurring events as each pro-
vides information and documentation of the social relation
and/or interactions as they occur. This type of analysis,
called "triangulation," is particularly useful because it
affords the researcher the opportunity to obtain information
using multiple methods rather than relying on just one meth-
od (Gorden, 1975; Wolcott, 1977). In Gorden's words:

> ...because the various methods give totally dif-
> ferent kinds of information that can supplement
> each other, because we do not know how to inter-
> pret some of the information unless we can couple
> it with other information, or because we need a
> cross-check or verify the validity of our observa-
> tions (p. 40).

The unit of analysis for this study is an event or a
cluster of re-occurring events and/or patterns. Events
documented on retrievable sources (audio- and videotapes)
allow the researcher to examine the interactions repeatedly
(McDermott, 1976; Erickson, et al., 1978) The videotapes
were also used during the viewing sessions (Erickson and
Schultz, 1977; Mehan, 1979) with the classroom teacher to

help obtain her perspective and analysis on events at the instructional level. The purpose of these viewing sessions (which were also audiotaped for further analysis) was to confirm hypotheses or provide new insights into the social relations and/or interactions observed by the researcher. Here, both the researcher and the classroom teacher became collaborators in a research project (Florio and Walsh, 1976). The teacher (key informant) and the researcher have the opportunity to stop the videotape at any point in order to elaborate on the behavior(s) observed. This collaboration allows for free discussion of the face-to-face interactions that take place during reading instruction. (See Appendix for sample viewing session transcript.)

Hence, "triangulation" provides the researcher with an optimum amount of information to pinpoint measurable, recurring behaviors.

Data Collection and Preliminary Analysis

In order to implement the aforementioned method approach of an ethnographic research design, eight months were spent in the classroom under study in order to gather and record the social relations and/or interactions as they occurred during the time allocated for reading instruction. During the first two months in the classroom, the researcher visited the classroom twice a week. Time was spent observing and recording, by the use of written field notes, the on-going events taking place in the classroom beginning

when the students first arrived in the classroom through and to the end of reading instruction. Numerous on-site field notes were taken to record events that occurred in and around the reading groups during the morning sessions of reading instruction. The morning sessions were chosen because, unlike the afternoon sessions, the reading instruction was consistent from day to day. This consistency was important due to the fact that this researcher was more concerned with what was occurring during reading instruction and not the content of the lessons. Also, the children knew what was going to take place during reading instruction, thus providing a more consisent overview of behaviors during a typical reading lesson in this classroom (see Appendix for sample on-site field notes).

Audio taped interviews with the classroom teacher and aide were also conducted during these initial months. Two interviews were held to gain specific information; e.g., total numbers of students in the reading groups, how was the membership to the groups determined, and more general information pertaining to the actual workings of this particular classroom (see Appendix for sample interview transcripts).

During the last six months of classroom observations, reading lessons of both the high and low ability reading groups were video taped once a week in order to capture the on-going interactions and events that occurred within the reading groups and the classroom within which they existed. The video camera was set up in a fixed position in a corner

of the classroom as to not interrupt the groups and to become as non-obtrusive as possible. The camera was started at the beginning of each lesson and ran continuously for the entire lesson. This also provided the researcher an opportunity to step away from the camera to observe what was occurring in the rest of the classroom during reading instruction. During this time the use of additional field notes and 35mm still photos were used to record and document those interactions. These videotapes and 35mm still photos also supplied the graphics which appear in this dissertation to provide a true picture of a specific behavioral incident when and where it occurred.

It was only after the on-site data collection was completed that the process of categorizing of those social relations took place. Numerous hours of watching and listening to videotapes were necessary to determine and identify what kinds of events occurred, at what juncture during the lesson they occurred, what ability group was at the reading table when the event took place, if there were a commonality of events, and so on.

This viewing process was divided into three stages. The first stage consisted of watching all of the taped lessons and selecting out those which were of high audio and visual quality. The second stage was to choose those tapes that consisted of complete reading lessons and had all or most of the group members in attendance. And third, videotapes were selected from different time intervals; i.e.,

different months and days. This was done in order to obtain
a more longitudinal look at the reading groups.

The final step in the preliminary stages of analysis
of the data was to hold two viewing sessions with the class-
room teacher in order to confirm hypotheses or provide new
insights into the social relations and/or interactions ob-
served by this researcher. The viewing session consisted of
watching a particular tape and waiting until one of the be-
haviors identified was exhibited by a participant in the
group or classroom. Both the researcher and the teacher had
the option to stop the tape at a particular juncture to in-
quire and/or clarify what behavior was exhibited, by whom,
for what possible purpose, who was involved, and what action
was taken, if any. These sessions were also audiotaped so
that the information collected could be easily and accurate-
ly retrieved for further analysis (see Appendix for sample
viewing session transcripts).

It was during these processes that four distinct beha-
viors kept reoccurring on the videotapes and in the field
notes. They were the interplay of the physical posture of
all participants at the reading table, the oral feedback me-
chanisms used by the teacher to convey information to the
students, the allocation of taking turns to read and answer
teacher-directed questions, and the types and frequencies of
interruptions that occurred at the reading table and from
the other members of the classroom as a whole. These

behavioral indicators thus became the units of analysis to answer the questions posed in Chapter I.

Participation and
Academic Task Structures

In order to examine the interactional aspects of reading instruction and decide whether they influence the opportunity to learn how to read, the researcher has systematically broken down selected lessons by identifying the various components of the lessons as participation structures (Philips, 1972; Erickson and Shultz, 1977; Erickson and Mohatt, 1979; Shultz, Florio, and Erickson, 1980). Participation structures or structural arrangements for social interaction identify the on-going process of a lesson. Phillips has argued that one function of varying participation structures in a lesson is to provide "variation in the presentation of the same material to hold children's interest" (Philips, p. 377). All of these segments, called participation structures, together constitute a whole lesson. Therefore, participation structures are, in fact, parts of the whole.

Florio and Shultz (1979) state that participation structures...

> ...occur with some degree of patterned regularity that is sensitive both to the part of the event in which they occur and to those participation structures which they succeed and follow (p. 8).

These researchers add that:

> Segmentation of the event into contexts which comprise it is a requisite first step in the

identification and study of participation structures (p. 8).

Shultz, Florio, and Erickson (1980) found that by using participation structures to investigate interactional contexts, they were able to identify "primary constituent units or 'chunks' of meaningful action within a whole social occasion" (p. 13). For the purposes of this study, those "chunks" of action are identified in terms of the postural positions of all members of the reading group, feedback mechanisms (e.g., praise) used by the teacher, interruptions of the interactional flow from outside and within the reading group, and the art of calling on a student to answer teacher directed questions. These aspects of social relations are not studied in isolation from one another, are examined within the context of the whole social occasion during which they occur. The reading lesson in its entirety comprises that "whole social occasion."

Participation structures can also be used to identify components of an activity; i.e., the beginning, middle, and end of a reading lesson. The following lessons were divided into participation structures showing the various instructional parts that constitute a whole lesson. The lesson of February 16 provides an example. In group 4, there were four participation structures consisting of silent reading, oral individual reading, spelling, and group oral reading. Table 3 provides a display of this and two other lessons for group 4 as well as three lessons for group 1.

Table 1. Sample Lessons Divided into Participation Structures.

Date of Lesson	PS[1]	PS[2]	PS[3]	PS[4]
GROUP 1				
2/16	silent reading 3:25	oral individual reading 5:35	spelling 3:05	oral group reading :30
4/30	oral individual reading 6:31	spelling 1:16	oral individual reading 9:37	
5/13	oral individual reading 10:53	oral individual reading 4:55		
GROUP 4				
2/12	silent reading 1:57	oral individual reading 5:31	silent reading 2:57	oral individual reading 5:35
5/13	silent reading 3:55	oral individual reading 6:48	silent reading 5:12	oral individual reading 4:00
6/5	spelling 7:40	oral individual reading 14:14		

As previously mentioned, participation structures
(hereafter referred to as PS) are a construct used in the
analysis of data to divide the lesson into meaningful parts.
However, this method in and of itself falls short of this
researcher's purposes. To facilitate a more in-depth look
at a lesson, the construct of <u>academic task structures</u> (here-
after referred to as ATS) has been postulated (personal com-
munication with Frederick Erickson, 5/28/80).

As previously mentioned, a PS is holistic in nature,
encompasses a single activity such as oral reading, and is
bounded by a beginning and an end. The topic and activity
undertaken remain the same. ATSes comprise PSes. As such,
ATSes may be sufficiently similar to one another to be con-
sidered part of the same PS. However, they are distin-
guished from one another by at least some minimal feature
such as the change of member(s) reading orally or the man-
ner of reviewing spelling words. The form of activity re-
mains the same, but the format of that activity changes.
ATSes are part(s) of a larger whole, PSes. For example,
round robin reading changes from a single reader to a group
of readers during a PS due to a time constrain. Consider
the lesson of 2/26/79 illustrated in Table 2.

There are five PSes in this lesson: silent reading,
answering questions, oral reading, spelling, and choral
reading. Within PS^3 the structure changed from one stu-
dent's reading orally, round robin fashion, to two students'
reading in unison: ATS^1 and ATS^2 (see Table 3). ATS^3 and

Table 2. PSes and ATSes in
February 26, 1979, Lesson.

PS^1	PS^2	PS^3		PS^4		PS^5
		ATS^1	ATS^2	ATS^3	ATS^4	
Silent reading	Answering questions	Oral reading	Choral reading	Spelling	One student reviews work	Choral reading

Table 3. ATSes 1 and 2.

ORAL READING: Reading Sentences

	Order	Student	Time
	1	Keyona	2:00
ATS 1	2	Sean	2:10
	3	Kendra	1:22
ATS 2		Denise Jenny	

ATS^4 occurred during PS^4 (see Table 4) when one student was asked to review all of the spelling words. When the original form of the PS is altered and an ATS occurs, the social structure of that particular group changes as the membership participating in the task changes.

Table 4. ATSes 3 and 4.

REVIEW: Spelling and Pronouncing Words

	Order	Student	Time
	1	Denise	:10
ATS 3	2	Kendra	:10
	3	Jenny	:04
	4	Sean	:08
ATS 4	5	Denise	:56 (reviewed whole list)

However, a typical reading lesson is much more complex than might appear at first glance. This dissertation will show that the dynamics of what occurs during the beginning, middle, and end of the reading lesson, as well as the transitions between those parts vary between the high and low reading groups, and that this variation relates to the respective opportunity to learn and practice reading skills in each of the two groups.

Thus, by examining a lesson(s) in terms of participation structures and academic structures as a useful analytic tool, the researcher gains the necessary entry to the "inside" of the whole lesson(s).

Summary

An ethnograpic, and more specifically a microethnographic, research design thus provides the researcher the means to become part of a society, in this case a classroom, and directly observe the on-going behaviors of the participants (teacher, aide, and students) as they socially relate and/or interact between and among one another. The methods of collecting data such as on-site field notes, interviews, video and audio taping, etc., provide the researcher the opportunity to gather an optimum amount of information to pinpoint measurable, recurring events.

It has also been shown that by employing the analytic tools of participation and academic task structures, the researcher gains the necessary entry to the "inside" of a whole lesson(s).

CHAPTER III

SETTING: THE SCHOOL,
THE CLASSROOM AND THE LESSON

Introduction

In order to gain a deeper understanding and apprecia-
tion of the social relations and/or interactions that take
place in this particular classroom, it is necessary to know
something about the participants and the internal process
that takes place in the classroom under study. Likewise, it
is also necessary to look "inside" a typical lesson(s) for
both the high and low ability reading groups and to consider
the variations of these lessons between the two groups in
regard to the social relations and/or interactions that oc-
cur within the group and the total classroom as a whole.

The following chapter will discuss three aspects of the
setting. First, the school and the population it serves
will be described. Second, an in-depth look at the class-
room under study and the inner workings and relationship
among the teacher, aide, and students will be offered. Fi-
nally, a typical lesson for the high and low ability read-
ing groups will be analyzed preliminary to a more detailed
analysis of the reading lessons in Chapter IV.

School and Classroom

The school selected for this study is situated in a low income area and is one of the oldest school buildings still in use in the school district. Approximately 290 students attend the school which is part of a city-wide cluster plan. This means that at least fifteen to twenty percent of the minority students are bussed in from surrounding neighborhoods, giving the school a racial make-up of approximately forty-five percent white, forty percent black, and fifteen percent Chicano. The entry process into the classroom selected for observation was relatively simple (see appendix). The researcher talked to Ms. Lingo,* the teacher selected for the study, previously about spending time in her room to observe the reading plan she was utilizing during the current school year. When the time arrived to set up an actual working agreement, she said she was happy to have me there. The researcher checked with the building supervisor and was told that it would be no problem to observe Ms. Lingo's classes. He did incate, however, that if the researcher were going to observe other classrooms in the building, he would have to clear it "downtown." In return, the researcher agreed to diagnose some of Ms. Lingo's students later in the year.

The entry in the fieldnotes indicates:

> Went to Peterson Elementary and talked to class-
> room teacher. She has no problems with me in the
> room. She and another teacher are dividing a

---

*Pseudonyms are used for all participants and the location of this study.

cluster reading plan, and she suggested that I
also talk to her. Teacher #1 has low-middle
group; teacher #2 high-middle.

#1 asked what I wanted to do and agreed to my
research. I told her that I planned to use both
35mm and VTR. She balked at VTR. Said I could
come whenever I wanted to.

Checked with principal, and he said no problems
being in school. If I wanted to do the whole school,
he would have to check "downtown."

Payoff: #1 wants me to test out and diagnose a
couple of her students and find out levels and dif-
ficulties (Fieldnotes, 10/5/78).

To assist her, Ms. Lingo also has a paid, half-time

aide who works in the mornings (within this study she will

be referred to as Ms. Help). Ms. Help teaches developmental

skills to students in small groups (see Figure 1). She

works with each reading group just before Ms. Lingo does.

When asked what her duties were, she replied:

Ms. Lingo is usually working with the actual
sounds of letters and putting those sounds togeth-
er. I basically work on developmental skills...
starting out with the Frostig Developmental Pro-
gram, visual-motor, relations and space, percep-
tual consistency (Interview, 11/21/78).

There are twenty-four children in Ms. Lingo's homeroom:

ten girls and fourteen boys. Economically, they are gener-

ally from low to middle income homes. During an interview

session, the researcher learned that the head of the family

is often a single parent, step-parent, foster parent(s),

aunt(s), uncle(s), or grandparent(s). Ms. Lingo explained

further:

In the beginning of the year, I took a little
survey of my own. I had twenty students in my room,
my homeroom I'm talking about. Of those twenty
students, there were only four living with real
mother and dad (biological parents), and only two

of those fathers were working. Some of the mothers were, but it probably changes day to day (Interview, 11/21/78).

Ms. Help added, "In the homeroom, sixteen of twenty-four are entitled to participate in a free lunch program." Of all the homeroom students, approximately half are bussed into school, and the remainder are neighborhood children who walk to school.

The classroom under observation is involved in an interclass grouping plan. Students from different classrooms are grouped during the reading period according to reading ability and receive instruction from a teacher designated to work with a particular reading level. This plan is known as the Joplin Plan (Schubert and Torgenson, 1969) and was used previously by Ms. Lingo when she taught at a different school. The reading groups which were observed consisted of the low-middle and low level readers from the two first grade classrooms and some low level second grade students.

Ms. Lingo uses a strong linguistic-based reading approach built around the Charles E. Merrill Linguistic Based Reading Program. During an interview, she was asked what theory or approach she was using and why she chose this particular approach. She replied:

> The theory is a linguistic-based program with
> a heavy phonics basis to give these kids, the re-
> medial readers, something to fall back on when
> their memory fails. And at the age level these
> kids are, they don't have the memory development
> that, let's say, an average first grader would
> have. What I do is take them at approximately
> beginning of second semester of kindergarten and
> teach the readiness skills that they've missed in

kindergarten because of immaturity or lack of de-
velopment. I start them there and, hopefully,
give them what they've missed so they can take
that (learn) and build from there (Interview
Transcript, 11/21/78).

This tendency to place low achievers in a more structured

environment is consistent with the research of Willis (1970)

who showed that teachers do this so that the teacher would

have more control over their behavior and learning. Ms.

Lingo then explained that the ultimate goal of her program

is to take the students through five books in the series.

The students were placed in individual groups according

to teacher judgment, test results, feedback from the kinder-

garten teachers, etc. They remained in their own homeroom

for the first two weeks of school where they were informally

tested in the reading readiness concepts which were taught

in kindergarten; i.e., the alphabet, verbal competency,

counting, etc. But, as Ms. Lingo points out, "When it came

right down to the bottom line, the thing we really relied on

was teacher judgment" (Interview Transcript, 11/21/78).

Ms. Lingo was then asked to elaborate on teacher judg-

ment and group placement:

R (Researcher): How do you get the teacher judg-
   ment part?

L (Ms. Lingo): We keep them for the first two weeks
   of school in my own homeroom, yes, and observe
   them and put them through things that they should
   have from kindergarten. Like, do they know
   their colors? How many letters of the alpha-
   bet; can they count; how ready are they to read?

R: Hmmm, ok, now you have four groups...

L: And _____ has four groups.

R: And _____'s got four groups.

L: At least four.

R: Ok, and you've got the low-middle?

L: Right. The bottom of the middle and the bottom (Interview Transcript, 11/21/78).

The total reading group of twenty-three children consists of fourteen males and nine females. Fourteen of these children come from Ms. Lingo's homeroom. Seven are from the other first grade classroom, and two children are from a second grade classroom. Table 5 shows the composition of the groups by sex and race.

Table 5. Ms. Lingo's Class by Sex, Race, and Reading Level (n=23).

		BLACK	CHICANO	WHITE	TOTAL
Group #1 (LOW)	M	2		2	4
	F	1			1
Group #2	M	2	2	2	6
	F				0
Group #3	M			2	2
	F	2	1	1	4
Group #4 (High)	M		1	1	2
	F	2		2	4

The room is arranged to facilitate the flow of the groups as they changed from one setting to another. As Edward T. Hall (1969) notes, "Fixed-feature space is one of the basic ways of organizing the activities of individuals and groups" (p. 103). There are four main learning areas in Ms. Lingo's room, and all of the groups pass through each area during reading instruction. (Figure 2 shows a diagram of the room.) The areas are (1) the round table where Ms. Lingo teaches reading skills, (2) the rug area (learning center) where the students listen to records and perform tasks related to "ditto" work, (3) a table where Ms. Help teaches developmental skills, and (4) the individual tables and chairs where the students do boardwork and assigned seatwork. Figure 3 shows the seat work area and aide's table. Ms. Help can be seen working with students at the table in the background.

Early in the study, the researcher observed that there seemed to be an orderly flow of students as the groups changed instructional settings and that they changed settings on cue without verbal prompting. It was hypothesized that the students had been shown the system for changing places several times and, thus, had grown accustomed to it. The teacher and her aide confirmed the hypothesis during an interview:

R: Ok, approximately how much time do you spend with each group?

L: Twenty minutes; they spend twenty minutes in each group.
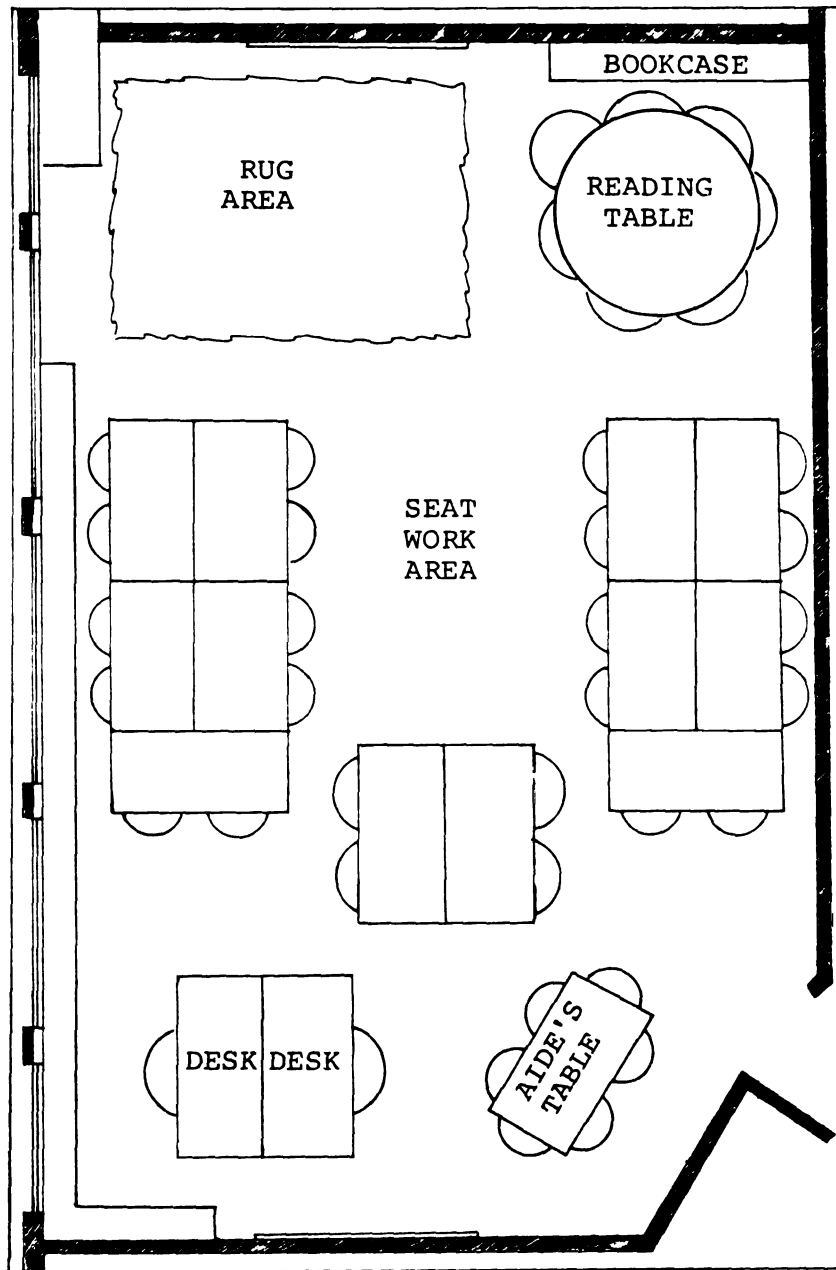
Figure 2. Map of room.

R: Ok, now, I want either one of you or both (to) explain that after you've given them directions on the (board work) at the front of the room, ok, then what happens?

L: They go there, where they start, so to speak. Group 1 starts with me, at the round table reading; group 2 starts with _____ here, working on whatever it is she's working on at the time.

R: Ok.

L: Group 3 does their seatwork first; group 4 which is the top group starts at the listening center first. So they just work around the room.

R: Ok, then every group goes through that sequence.

L: Right.

R: Ok, how long did it take you to get that to- gether so they knew exactly when to get up and move.

L: Two days.

A (Aide): Two days.

H: Ok, how did you go about doing that? How did you tell them that, ok, kids, here's the way it's going to work?

L: It wasn't that hard to do. Really. You just, you go to one group and you move them away from where they were, and then you move the group you had into (it); and then while I was moving the ones at the listening center over to their seatwork and then moving the ones I had at the reading over to the rug to the listening center, she was moving the ones she had up to my group and the ones that were doing seatwork back to her. It was just kind of flowing.

H: So, it took them two days to figure out how this was done?

L: Um, hum.

A: And all you have to do is tell them to remem- ber what group they are in. Who is group 1.

First of all, you start out by saying, "Listen to your name; this is group one," and give the names of...

L: And you put your finger up and that's your group.

A: And you go through that sequence with 2, 3, 4. And eventually you get so you can just stand in front of the room and not say anything and put one finger up and group 1 knows exactly what they're supposed to do first because they know where they go first.

L: It's a matter of consistency and repetition; you do the same thing every day. You know... never would I start and say, "Group 1, go do your seat work first." Group 1 always goes to that round table first.

R: Hmmmm...

L: We never change the sequence (Interview Transcript, 11/21/78).

Figure 4 shows the sequence and rotation of the groups. The movement in the room is counter-clockwise with all groups' changing places approximately every twenty minutes. The letters in Figure 4 indicate the time segment. The numbers indicate the groups. Hence, the symbol A-1 shown next to the reading table indicates that the time is 9:10 and group 1 is having reading instruction. Group 1's schedule for the morning is: 9:10 to 9:30, reading instruction; 9:30 to 9:50, rug area; 9:50 to 10:10, seatwork; and 10:10 to 10:30, work with aide.

During an interview session, the researcher asked Ms. Lingo and Ms. Help why there didn't seem to be any major discipline problems:
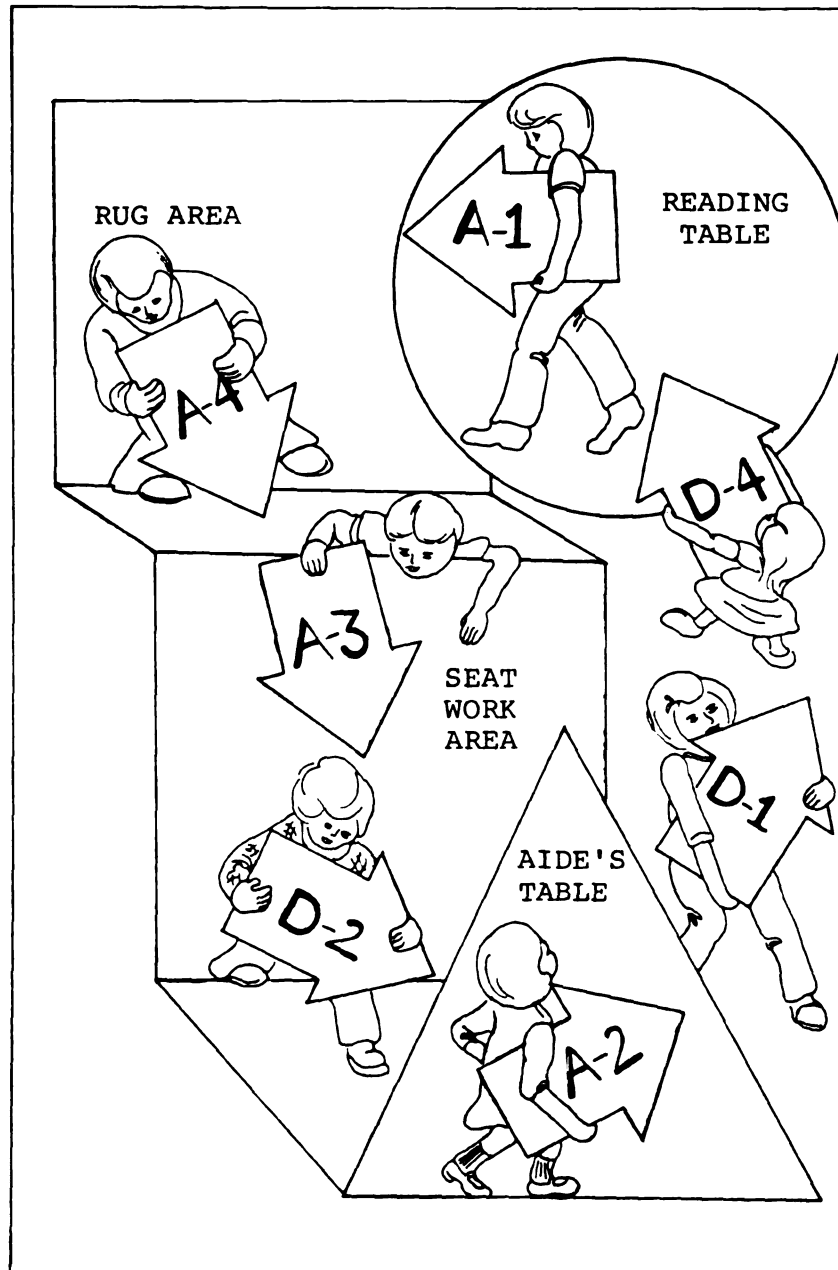
Figure 4. Sequence and rotation of groups.

R: Well, one of the things I noticed, so far, is
   ...what I did was, it looked like either one of
   you or both of you were like an orchestra leader.
   You were orchestrating this mass of people just
   moving from group to another group to another
   group with hardly any problems at all.

L: Notice that we didn't use music.

R: Ok, there's no...I haven't seen any discipline
   problems. Oh, I've seen kids that will mess
   around but, shoot, you know what that is. I
   would think they would really be weird if they
   didn't do something.

L: We're keeping them busy. They're doing work
   that they are capable of and that they're able
   to do and they feel successful at it; they're
   interested. How many times have you gotten a
   group of kids back here, and they said, "I
   don't want to do this"?

A: None.

L: Because they're always interested in what she's
   doing because a lot of times it's different
   every day.

R: Yeh.

L: And it's neat things like bingo and stuff like
   that.

R: So you do a lot of game-type stuff? Quite in-
   teresting.

A: Yes, and when I see, like if I think they need
   reinforcement on something...ah, we played one
   game for three days, and one child made the
   comment, "Do you know we've played this game
   for three days now?" I figured, "Oh, oh; it's
   time to change." You know, when they've no-
   ticed that so then the next day I gave them
   something else (Interview Transcript, 11/21/78).

When discipline problems occur, the researcher observed
that Ms. Lingo did very little talking and relied heavily on
eye contact with the student. She was asked what method she
uses and how she learned it:

I can remember distinctly when I was a child,
when you're doing something wrong, the first thing
you do is look at that teacher to see if she sees
you doing it wrong and how much longer you can get
away with it. Okay, and I guess my whole thing
is to keep all six eyes wide open all the time.
And you just got to be aware auditorily and visual-
ly of everything that's going on so that you can
stop it before it turns into the domino reaction.
Visual contact (Interview Transcript, 11/21/78).

The researcher observed a second grade boy named Shawn

who was larger than the rest of the children in the room.

He was very attentive and eager to participate in all the

learning activities. When asked about him, Ms. Lingo said:

the following:

L: Do you know that that one, Shawn, was such a
discipline problem in the second grade that his
teacher told me, you know, for two days before
I got him for reading, "You really got to watch
him; you really got to keep him busy." He's
no problem at all. He's doing material he can
handle. He feels comfortable with it; he feels
successful. He's interested because it's some-
thing he can handle.

R: He seems to get along well with the other kids.

L: Even though his sister, who is a year younger,
is in here.

R: I noticed that. Did you think about that at
all?

L: You bet we did! You bet we did!

R: Ok, why did you go with it, then?

L: Because to leave him in the second grade is
going to turn him off. Because he is going to
see his second grade friends doing stuff that
he can't do. He's already become a discipline
problem because he can't do the work. And so
he gets in trouble. Ok, the only other alter-
native she (second grade teacher) had was to
keep him in a reading group all by himself,
which is nothing but point a finger at him
again (Interview Session, 11/21/78).

Apparently when children in this particular room are doing things they enjoy and are capable of doing, the discipline problems are greatly minimized. The area where the most discipline problems seem to occur is the learning center (rug area). This area is next to the teacher and is equipped with earphones so the students can listen for more instruction and independent ditto work. Figure 5 shows students at the rug area.

As Ms. Lingo explained:

L: See, that's the thing about it. When we have the discipline problem, it's generally when they've got those silly headsets on and you can't scream at them. You know, because they can't hear you. You've got to have some other way whether it's pointing a finger or snapping your fingers; something to get their immediate attention.

R: Well, that's what it seems like to me, what I've looked at so far is, usually if there is any kind of messing around, it's generally when they're on their rugs.

L: 'Cause they're free there. Within certain confines...to the length of the cord of their headsets (Interview Transcript, 11/21/78).

Reading instruction is from 9:10 to 10:30 am and from 12:30 to 1:15 pm daily. When the reading period starts, the groups are in the following order:

Group 1 - round table with Ms. Lingo, reading
(low)   instruction

Group 2 - with Ms. Help - relationships, geometric
          shapes

Group 3 - board work at their seats

Group 4 - teaching machine (records, cassette tapes)
(high)   with accompanying dittoes. This takes
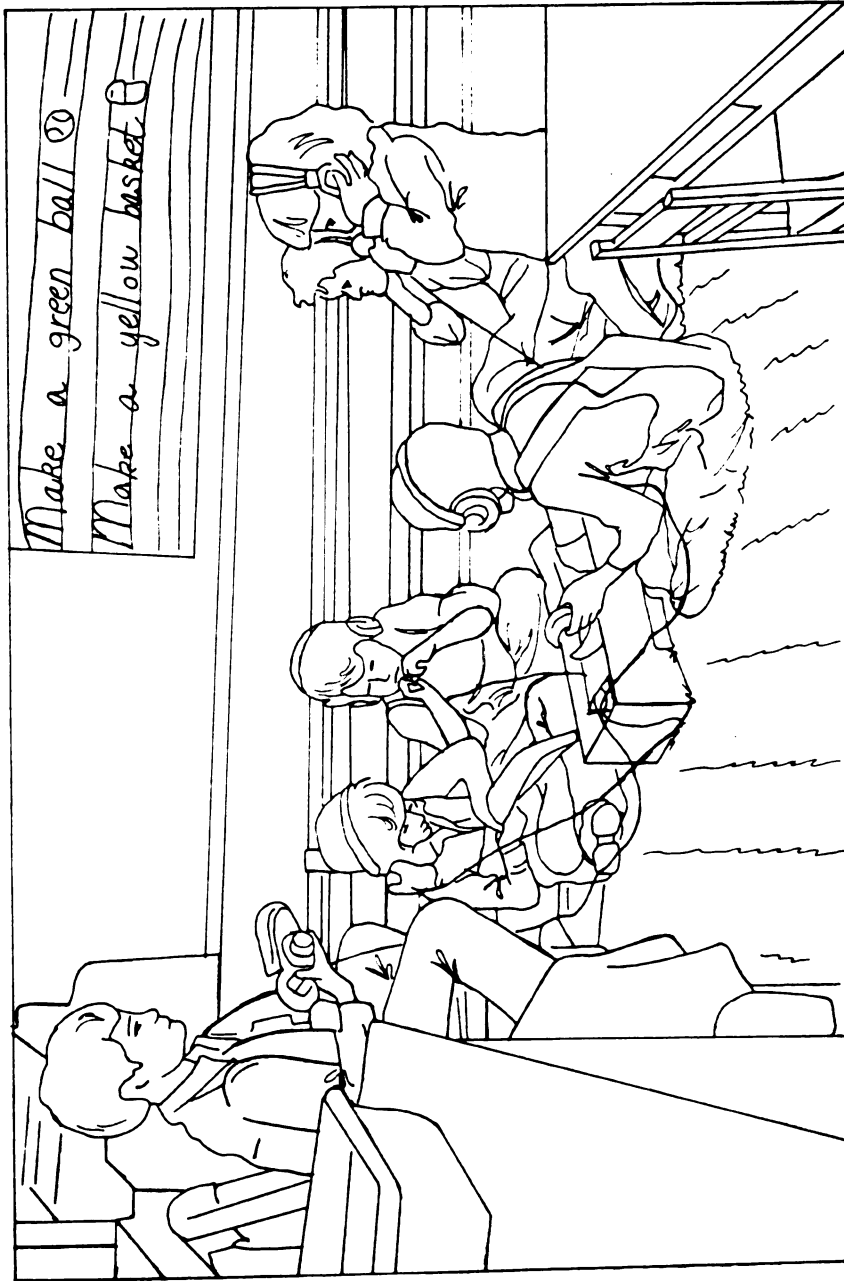
Figure 5. Students at listening center--"plugged in."

place on a rug, the same end of the room
as the reading table. It is called the
"learning center."

After approximately twenty minutes, the groups change in-
structional settings: group 1 goes to the learning center,
group 2 goes to Ms. Lingo, and so on, until the cycle is
completed. The instructional routine at the reading table
remains fairly constant from group to group:

1. review words from previous lesson;

2. read title of story--everyone does this in
    unison;

3. read one or two sentences to answer compre-
    hension questions asked by Ms. Lingo;

4. everyone, time permitting, reads a page
    orally.

Table 6 shows an individual student's morning schedule.
Each of the time segments includes the activities shown
(assume student to be in group 1--low group).

Table 6. Student's Morning Schedule

8:45 - 9:00	9:00 - 9:10	9:10 - 9:30	9:30 - 9:50
Oral language development	Instruction on a specific letter and explanation of board work	Reading instruction	Learning center ditto work

9:50 - 10:10	10:10 - 10:30
Board work	Work with aide on developmental skills

This movement among learning stations and the schedule for reading instruction comprise the typical daily routine in this classroom:

8:48. They (students) all start together. Has them sitting on a rug; she's in front of them. _____ claps out a rhythm, then the kids try to figure out what song it is. When they do, they all join in clapping and singing the song. _____ did about 2-3 songs, then the kids can come up and clap out a song. Other kids try to guess the song. When one of them gets the right answer, they all, in unison, clap and sing out the song.

9:00. Reading groups.
Kids leave room to go to other reading room. Kids come in to join _____'s groups.

Board work:

Make a red rose.

Make a green ring.

Make an orange rattle.

9:02. Plays a song about a specific letter. To-day the letter is r. The letter is on a poster in the front of the room.

9:06. Asked a kid to read the first line of board work. He read everything except rose. He didn't know how to read rose, but he knew it was a flower with "pickers." Seems to have a speech problem. Trouble with r sound.

9:07. All kids in unison read the board work, then they are asked what words start with r. They stand up in groups and are asked to say a word starting with r and the word is put on the board.

9:13. Splitting up into groups. They're just called group 1, group 2, etc. There are four groups.

    Group 1 - round table with _____, reading
    Group 2 - with aide doing shapes, geometric
    Group 3 - board work
    Group 4 - record machine, dittoes accompany
             the record

9:15. #1 review of words <u>at</u>, <u>cat</u>, <u>fat</u>, etc. Initial sounds. No order in who says words. Review of letters and sounds (sounds and symbol connection). New girl in group--little, quiet, Chicano. Sitting away from table. _____ just told me she doesn't speak English. The "regulars" almost pre-empt what _____ is going to do. Seem to enjoy what they're doing.

New kid getting into it. Doing some of the sounds. It may be because the sound values are the same in Spanish/English.

9:30. Group 1 matching upper to lower case letters.

9:31. Group 4 done; doing seat/board work.

9:32. All groups change:

     Group 1 - to machine
     Group 2 - to round table/_____
     Group 3 - to aide
     Group 4 - board work (Field Notes, 11/7/78)

As illustrated, each day remains fairly constant, thus providing all the participants in the classroom a sense of orderliness which seems to underscore the method of teaching reading in this first grade classroom.

"Inside" a Lesson

The following section offers an overview of a typical daily lesson. It then considers variations in lessons for each of the two reading groups under investigation.

As illustrated in Table 6, typical reading lesson for the high ability reading group averaged approximately seventeen minutes in length, while the average for the low ability reading group averaged twenty minutes. During the initial stages of the lessons for both groups, there appeared to be some confusion as students looked around, got

settled in their seats, and searched for the correct page number. The lessons usually began in one of two ways. Most often, Ms. Lingo began by calling the group together and announcing the page number. One student was then asked to read the title of the story. Ms. Lingo established the purpose for reading this particular story by posing a question, then the student who read the title began the oral reading. The lesson was underway. The following is an example:

> 10:10. Group change. Top group--group 4--page 40. _____ taking time to help out Philippine girl on colors.
>
> 10:12. _____ back. Same routine. Read title of story, then questions: where? who? what? when?
>
> 10:16. Round robin oral reading (sure doesn't seem like a lot of variety; all groups doing the same routine). Kids are more attentive in this group. (Just looked at group 3 at machine; kid's eating a crayon--finished it off--got another for marking paper.)
>
> 10:21. Page 41. Same routine--read title of story --then questions; only one student is asked a question at a time. Round robin reading. (I'm yawning; 78° in room.)
>
> 10:29. End of reading! (Field notes, 11/14/78)

Another example of how the daily reading lesson begins is taken from the following videotape:

> ...asks Jenny what the title of the story is. Jenny reads title and _____ sets purpose for reading the story. Question/answer time. Round robin oral reading, starting with Jenny. All students in group get a turn. Time for the participation structure: 6:31 (Video notes, 4/30/79).

An alternative method for beginning the lesson that Ms. Lingo sometimes uses is similar, except that instead of one student's reading orally, the entire group reads silently. This is then followed by a question and answer period.

> ...page 62, 62...we are going to read to find out if all pups are bad. What's the title, Kendra? The Pup. Well, why don't you read the whole story to yourselves and find out what pups do? (Video Transcript--Group 4--2/26/79).

Once this initial participation structure was concluded, the middle portion of the lesson(s) varied from lesson to lesson. Generally, when the lesson started with silent reading, it would be followed by oral reading and vice versa. However, occasionally, spelling became part of the lesson (see Table 7).

With few exceptions, the lessons for both groups (see group 1 lesson, 4/30/79) ended with some form of oral reading, either in round robin fashion with every member of the group's getting an opportunity to read, or as a total group in choral reading. The researcher hypothesized that time was a determining factor regarding the type of oral reading that would occur. Those students who read orally, round robin fashion, in the beginning of the lesson usually ended the lesson by reading chorally in groups of two or three

The lesson outlined in Table 8 shows that the second participation structure of the lesson was oral reading, round robin fashion, by Tony, Darlene, and Scott, with Princela, Martice, and Jeff's finishing the selection in unison. The fourth participation structure of the lesson shows that the

Table 7. Reading schedules

Group 4, 2/16/79   silent reading/oral reading/spelling/choral reading

Group 4, 4/30/79   oral reading/spelling/oral reading

Group 1, 2/12/79   silent reading/oral reading/silent reading/oral reading

Group 1, 5/13/79   silent reading/oral reading/silent reading/oral reading

Group 1, 4/30/79   silent reading/oral reading/spelling

Table 8. Oral Reading

Oral Reading, PS^2
Review of Silent Reading

Order	Student	Time
1	Tony	1:43
2	Darlene	1:30
3	Scott	1:07
4	Princela	1:00
	Martice	
	Jeff	

Oral Reading, PS^4
Review of Silent Reading

Order	Student	Time
1	Jeff	2:50
2	Martice	1:30
3	Princela	1:00
4	Scott	1:10
	Darlene	
	Tony	

order for oral reading was reversed. During a viewing session, I asked what factor(s) determined who was going to read orally at the end of a particular selection or lesson:

R: Checking the clock?

L: Yep, to see what's on the next page and if I'm going to have the time to get through it. Push them through two pages whether you have time or not.

R: Ok.

L: See, they're probably still on their first book.

R: They are at this time. Ok, now, you went to Princela, Martice, and Jeff.

L: Right.

R: For the purpose of time?

L: Yes.

R: You're getting low on time, and you have to hustle up.

L: I've got one more page I want to do.

R: Did you have a set amount of pages everyday that you wanted to cover, or is it just playing it by ear?

L: No, it was playing it by ear, a lot of it depending on the stories. One day, you might have two really short stories. That's probably what I had there and knew I could get through both of them in the twenty minutes if I pushed them like this. Other days I might have two long stories and know that I could only get through one. That would probably be the day when everybody got a turn to read individually that one story. Even on this day, all the children get a chance to read individually because as the tape goes on, these three kids that are reading as a group right now get a turn on the next page to read individually, and then the other three read as a group.

R: Was that planned or did it just happen?

L: It just happened; well, when I saw that I had enough time on the next page, I made sure those three who are reading as a group now got a chance to read individually; and that other three, I probably ran out of time then (Viewing Session, 8/27/78).

This interview confirmed the researcher's hypothesis that time was a factor in deciding who was going to read and whether they would read individually or chorally.

One difference that some researchers have said is educationally salient (e.g., Bloom, 1976; Good and Beckerman, 1978) that surfaced after reviewing three lessons for each of the two groups was the quantity of time spent in oral

reading. The high group had proportionally more time to read orally, while the low group had considerably more silent reading time (see Table 9).

Table 9. Oral and Silent Reading

	Oral	Silent
GROUP 4 (high) (lessons 2/16, 4/30, 5/13/79)	38:01	3:25
GROUP 1 (low) (lessons 2/12, 5/13, 6/5/79)	36:08	14:11

This study does not address the question of whether silent or oral reading is a determinant of reading achievement. However, Spache (1977) states that the...

> ...real purpose for this practice (oral reading) is to permit the teacher to observe the accuracy with which each pupil reads the words of the text (p. 66).

In a study conducted by the Ontario Institute for Studies in Education, James Heap (1978) observed that:

> Reading aloud is a device that makes an otherwise occult process observable and available to the correction required to produce a "correct reading" as a matter hearable to all parties to the activity (p. 6).

As previously mentioned, the students under observation were placed in the individual reading ability groups according to teacher judgment and test results. According to the teacher:

> We tried several different tests; and when it came right down to the bottom line, the

thing we relied on was teacher judgment (Ms. Lingo, Interview Transcript, 11/21/78).

Keeping in mind that these students represent the lowest ability readers from two first grade classrooms, it seems appropriate to hypothesize that oral reading would allow the classroom teacher the opportunity to hear the students read and make informal evaluations of reading skills such as visual discrimination, word attack, and sight word vocabulary as well as to reinforce the teacher's judgment regarding the placement of students in particular reading groups.

Of all the lessons observed, the lesson of Group 4 (2/26/79) appears to be more organized and offers a different set of qualities the other lessons lack (see Table 10).

Table 10. February 26, 1979, Lesson.

Calls out page; sets purpose	Silent reading to answer questions	Answer questions	Oral reading	Spelling	Group choral reading

This lesson varies more contextually and includes a wide variety of internal group relations as well. In other words, the lesson is socially more symmetrical. At the beginning of the lesson, nobody is talking; rather, all are reading for a common purpose: to answer the questions posed by Ms. Lingo. At the end, everyone reads together orally, providing the group with a closure that mirrors the sense of

commonality of the opening and providing an opportunity for group cohesiveness.

Alexander and Filler (1974) studied the role of cohesiveness in psychological groups and found that:

> Since heightened interaction leads to cohesiveness (which leads to improved performance), more attention should be given to facilitating group interaction in the reading group (p. 449).

Furthermore, they recommend that "The instructional session should be structured so that all children have a chance to interact" (p. 449).

The lesson is also notable in terms of the nature of the discourse within it. This was the only lesson that Ms. Lingo asked opinion questions, as well as factual questions answerable with who, what, where, when responses. For example, in the first participation structure, the following was posed, "We are going to read to find out if all pups are bad." After the students responded to the factual questions, Ms. Lingo asked the group inferential questions. Inferential questions require the student to probe beyond the written word, usually drawing from the individual's own experience to discover implications that were not read in the text. Duffy, Sherman, and Roehler (1977) state that:

> Inferential reasoning is an important comprehension skill since all information worth obtaining is not necessarily stated literally (p. 67).

Harris and Sipay (1979) found that...

> ...there is the danger that factual questions may be overemphasized to the point of making reading a dull question/answer period (p. 331).

Due to the change of questioning, it appeared that the ac-
tivity level heightened. During this inquiry process, the
students were nodding and responding with "yes" and "no" an-
swers, showing a great deal of involvement. Figure 6 illus-
trates the involvement of the total group.

> Pups tug at rugs, bat at bugs, tip jugs, and
> dig in pits, don't they? Are all pups bad? Why
> do they do those things? Are they mad? Why do
> puppies do those things? Do they do them on pur-
> pose, just to be bad? Do they know they are being
> bad when they do those things? 'Cause they are
> just puppies, sure! They are little (Transcript;
> Lesson, 2/26/79).

It appeared this mode of questioning, which involved
all of the students in the group, helped to foster cohesive-
ness not seen in the other lessons reviewed. It is also
possible that Ms. Lingo, herself, was more involved with
the lesson. For example, following a viewing session of
this particular videotape, Ms. Lingo reacted by stating,
"Praise the teacher; she got the concept across! Yes, I
remember that day!" (Viewing Session, 7/27/79).

By all appearances, this lesson offered the most com-
plete set of social and pedagogical qualities: all the ele-
ments from silent reading for a common purpose to group
choral reading for closure were included in this lesson,
along with a different quality of questions from the teacher
(e.g., inferential rather than factual).

As illustrated by the examples cited above, the typical
lessons for this first grade classroom begin in one of two
ways: individual oral reading or group silent reading, both

Figure 6. Involvement in inquiry-type questions.

to answer teacher-directed questions. With few exceptions, when the lesson begins with oral reading, the next participation structure is silent reading and vice versa. The format for the final participation structure of the lesson is quite often governed by the amount of time remaining for the reading instruction.

Summary

As shown and illustrated, the classroom under study is well organized and structured to compliment the method of teaching reading selected by Ms. Lingo. There also appears to be a helpful working relationship between Ms. Lingo and Ms. Help, and the children seem to benefit from their relationship. This has been shown by the lack of management and discipline problems in this particular classroom.

The organizational setting of the classroom and looking "inside" a lesson also begins to illustrate and locate where, when, and how the social relations and/or interactions occur among the members of the mini-society. Also, the framing of time, space, and activity in this classroom has been described, illustrating that the setting, per se, becomes an integral part of the analytical process. It is within this setting that four distinct behavioral indicators were identified in Chapter II (the interplay of _physical posture_ of all participants at the reading table, oral _feedback mechanisms_ used by the teacher to convey information to the students, the allocation of _taking turns_ to read and

answer teacher-directed questions, and the types and frequencies of <u>interruptions</u> that occurred at the reading table and from other members of the classroom as a whole), thus providing the data that will be analyzed in Chapter IV to answer the questions posed in this study:

1. Are there systematic differences in how teacher interactions transpire between the high and low ability reading groups, and do these differences have an effect on the opportunity to learn?

2. How does the classroom teacher convey information to children in different reading groups regarding reading skills and the rules for social conduct?

CHAPTER IV

A DESCRIPTIVE ANALYSIS OF
THE READING LESSONS

Introduction

The two questions posed in this study are:

1. Are there systematic differences in how the teacher interacts with the high and low ability reading groups, and do those differences have an effect on the opportunity to learn?

2. How does the teacher convey information to children in different reading groups regarding reading skills and the rules for social conduct?

In order to answer these questions, the researcher reviewed previous research pertaining to classroom interactions occurring during the time allocated for instruction. The literature suggested four categories of behavior that might yield insight into the dynamics of an instructional group setting. These categories of communicative behavior were positioning (Scheflen, 1974), turn taking (McDermott, 1976; Mehan, 1980), teacher feedback (Van DeRiet, 1963; Brophy and Good, 1970), and interruptions (McDermott, 1976; Allington, 1978, 1980). It was felt that an examination of these behaviors would shed light on the teacher interactions across the two reading groups, especially with respect

to how the teacher conveyed information both about reading and social skills.

It was during the preliminary stages of analysis that the researcher noticed that these particular behaviors showed up on the videotapes with a certain degree of regularity. In further analyzing the videotapes, it also came to light that these behaviors occurred at different locations during a typical reading lesson for both the high and low ability reading groups. Time lines were constructed for both groups to identify and count the frequency, time lapse and location during the reading lesson when these behaviors occurred (see Appendix for sample of time line).

As an example, in the beginning and ending segments of a lesson, there seemed to be more postural movement in the high group as opposed to the low group. In this group, interruptions were also more prone to occur in the beginning and end of the lesson rather than in the middle. In contrast, for the low group, there were fewer interruptions in the beginning of the lesson rather than in the middle and end of the lesson. The researcher then hypothesized that, in fact, the four communicative behaviors did seem to be used meaningfully by members of each group.

In light of the previous research and the preliminary data analysis, it then became necessary to describe and analyze the aforementioned four categories of behavior [(a) positioning, (b) teacher feedback, (c) taking turns,

and (4) <u>interrupting</u>] in order to begin to answer the questions posed in this study.

In reviewing the videotapes, it became apparent that in four separate types of situations, the postural positions of the groups' participants changed notably to effect the flow of the reading lesson. These situations will be discussed in greater detail in the section entitled <u>positioning</u>. Briefly, however, the situations were (a) when an academic task structure changed within <u>a reading lesson</u>, (b) <u>outside interruptions</u> of the reading lesson, (c) placement of <u>the bookcase</u> during a reading lesson, and (d) <u>changing questions</u> during reading lessons.

The three subsequent sections describe and analyze the three remaining behavioral incidents. They are <u>teacher feedback</u>, <u>turn taking</u>, and <u>interruptions</u>.

In the section labeled <u>teacher feedback</u>, it will be shown how this particular classroom teacher uses feedback as a transitional mechanism to allocate turns to students.

The section entitled <u>turn taking</u> will describe a lesson for both the high and low ability reading groups to show that there are systematic differences in answering teacher directed questions between the groups and how those differences are represented.

Finally, the section describing <u>interruptions</u> will analyze in detail the types and frequencies of interruptions and the relationship of those interruptions to the opportunity to learn and practice reading. During the

preliminary stages of analysis, it became clear that there were three general categories of interruptions. They were identified as (a) interruptions by students outside of the reading group, (b) teacher-initiated interruptions, and (c) interruptions from students within the reading group.

While watching eight hours of videotaped reading lessons, it became evident that the use of time was different for the teacher and students during an instructional episode. This notion of time will be discussed under the subheading of time. It seemed that because of this different use of time, interruptions were more likely to occur.

Also during the preliminary stages of analyzing the data, it was observed that when an interruption occurred, there was not only a quantitative difference between the two groups, such as the frequency and total amounts of interruptions, but also a qualitative difference between the two groups. This is to say that when an interruption occurred, it was observed that when and how the two groups reacted varied. Simply stated, there appeared to be a difference between the high and low ability reading groups in respect to whether or not the group members stayed on task during the time an interruption occurred. This reactive interaction will be described under the subheading interruptions from around the classroom.

The section describing and analyzing interruptions will be divided into three subheadings under the titles of

(a) <u>interruptions as they relate to this study</u>, (b) <u>time</u>,

(c) <u>interruptions from around the classroom</u>.

Positioning

Postural signals are referred to as <u>positions</u> by

Scheflen (1974). He defines a position as what a person

does with his/her body, eyes, head, etc., as s/he is en-

gaged in an interaction with another person(s). In a group

setting, the speaker positions him/herself before the group

as a whole or somewhere among the group members. Scheflen

states:

> While holding this orientation, he moves
> his head-eye address and his hand use from per-
> son to person as he completes a number of suc-
> cessive point-units (p. 29).

This suggests that in a small group setting such as a read-

ing group, the teacher would position him/herself so as to

see all the students at any given time by simply turning

his/her head one way or another. McDermott (1976) points

out that this positioning of a group "...is still subject

to the positioning activities for all its members" (p. 33).

The researcher interprets this to mean that if the teacher

positions him/herself in front of the whole reading group,

the members of the group will, in turn, hold their same

positions, presenting a social order that implies together-

ness in a joint venture. Conversely, if the teacher's pos-

ition is not directed toward the group, the group members'

positiions will not be directed toward the teacher, pre-

senting a social order that implies a singular venture.

The phenomenon of positioning as a means to provide and maintain a social order was more the exception than the rule for the groups under observation. Most often, the positions of both the high and low group members were disjointed and not in concert with each other.

Under the subheadings entitled reading lessons, outside interruptions, the bookcase, and changing questions, the researcher will describe the impact of positioning between Ms. Lingo and the high and low ability reading groups as they learn and practice reading.

Reading Lesson

To consider the impact of postural positioning during reading instruction, a lesson with the high group at the reading table, was analyzed (2/26/79, Table 8, page 31).

During the start of PS[3], the task was oral reading in a round robin fashion. As the segment starts, the participants seem to know that when a group member finishes reading, that task is passed on to the next member in line. The implication is that if one's turn to read were not until others finished a turn, there would be lapsed time to pull out of the lesson posturally. Such was the case during this particular lesson. Figure 7 shows group members looking around until their turns to read while the second student on Ms. Lingo's left reads. During the initial stages of this PS, while the first student is reading, the following two events took place within the group structure which led the

Figure 7. Waiting for a turn to read orally.

researcher to hypothesize that students not reading were,

in fact, posturally out of the lesson. Figures 8 and 9

show this sequence of events.

> Kendra looking at the rug area. Tying shoe.
> _____ looks at her, taps her on back and points
> to book to bring her back into the lesson (Video-
> taped Notes, 2/26/79).

> _____ looks at Denise typing shoe. _____ says,
> "Get your shoe tied and get your eyes on that book"
> (Videotaped Transcript, 2/26/79).

The other two students not reading also seemed to be pos-

turally out of the lesson. When Keyona finished reading,

the task was passed on to Sean. At this point, the rest of

the group exhibited the same behaviors they had when Keyona

was reading; they were posturally out of the lesson. After

Sean finished his turn, the ATS changed from round robin

oral reading to choral reading for the remaining three stu-

dents:

> _____: "Okay, Denise. Wait! How about if
> Jenny, Denise, and Kendra read it together?"
> (Videotaped Transcript, 2/26/79).

Almost immediately, the postural positions of the new oral

readers changed from out of the lesson to into the lesson.

It was their turn, an opportunity to learn, and they took

their reading positions of "in." Figure 10 shows Keyona

(pulling up sock) and Sean's getting comfortable as Denise,

Jenny, and Kendra start reading.

The membership and social structure of the task changed

when the ATS changed from round robin oral reading to choral

Figure 8. Kendra being tapped on back.

Figure 9. Denise being told to tie her shoe.

Figure 10. Denise, Jenny, and Kendra reading orally.

reading. Gumperz (1977) calls these changes "contextuali-
zation cues" (p. 12). That is, when the postural positions
among the group members shifted, these shifts co-occurred
with the change from one ATS to another. Members of a
group keep each other informed on what is going on by
speech and postural positions. For this group, the cueing
is manifested posturally and, therefore, changed the invol-
vement of the participants.

Outside Interruptions

In the lessons observed, it appeared that Ms. Lingo's
postural involvement with the reading groups changed from
moment to moment. Not only did she have to be involved
with the reading group, but she also had to attend to the
activities occurring in the rest of the classroom. There-
fore, this phenomenon generally manifested itself when a dis-
turbance outside the reading group occurred and Ms. Lingo's
attention was directed from the group.

During the lesson that occurred on 5/13/79, for example,
Brian is reading orally. Another student from outside the
reading group comes over to ask Ms. Lingo a question. At
this point all members of the group focus their attention
on the interruption. Figure 11 shows Ms. Lingo and the in-
truder talking and the other members getting out of their
reading positions. Brian, on Ms. Lingo's immediate right,
keeps on reading.

As illustrated, most of the members concern themselves with the interruption's taking place outside of the group even though a member of the group is in the act of reading orally.

Following the interruption, Ms. Lingo called on another student to continue reading. The student was unable to read because he didn't know where to begin (i.e., where Brian had left off). Ms. Lingo called on a second student with the same result. The third student she called on was seated next to Brian who quickly indicated by pointing to that student's text where he had left off reading. Figure 12 shows Brian's helping out Jenny who is sitting next to him.

_____: Okay, Sean...Erica...Jenny... (Videotape Transcript, 5/13/79).

From this sequence of co-occurring events, it can be hypothesized that when Ms. Lingo shifted her postural position from inside to outside the group, this signaled to the students that it was appropriate for them to do likewise. It is, after all, by virtue of the teacher's role to be the arbiter of classroom social conduct. Consequently, they lost their places in the text they were reading. This would seem to affect continuity and consensus in the group and, hence, affect their opportunity to read.

Furthermore, it was observed that the teacher's positioning had the same effect for the members of the high and low ability reading groups, and most of the time partici-

Figure 12. Brian showing Jenny where to start reading.

pants seemed to position themselves in ways that indicated inattentiveness to the task on hand. Figures 13 and 14, groups 1 and 4 respectively, show the group members' looking around during reading. In group 1, a student is lying down with back turned away from Ms. Lingo.

The Bookcase

To illustrate further the dynamics of positioning and its role in maintianing social order, it is helpful to study the physical structure of the room. The room is open so that all the groups have easy access to each other, whether they are located at the rug area, the reading table, the seat work area, or with Ms. Help. Figure 17 illustrates the room and its areas. There are no barriers between groups so that everyone in the room has the opportunity to make some type of verbal or visual contact with others (a subsequent section in this chapter discusses the interruptions that occur during reading instruction).

A portable bookcase stands behind the area where reading instruction takes place. At one point during the classroom observations, the researcher placed the bookcase between the reading table and the rug area, blocking the view from within and outside the reading group. The purpose of this action was to see if blocking the view of the rug area affected the groups at either the reading table or rug area (see Figure 18).
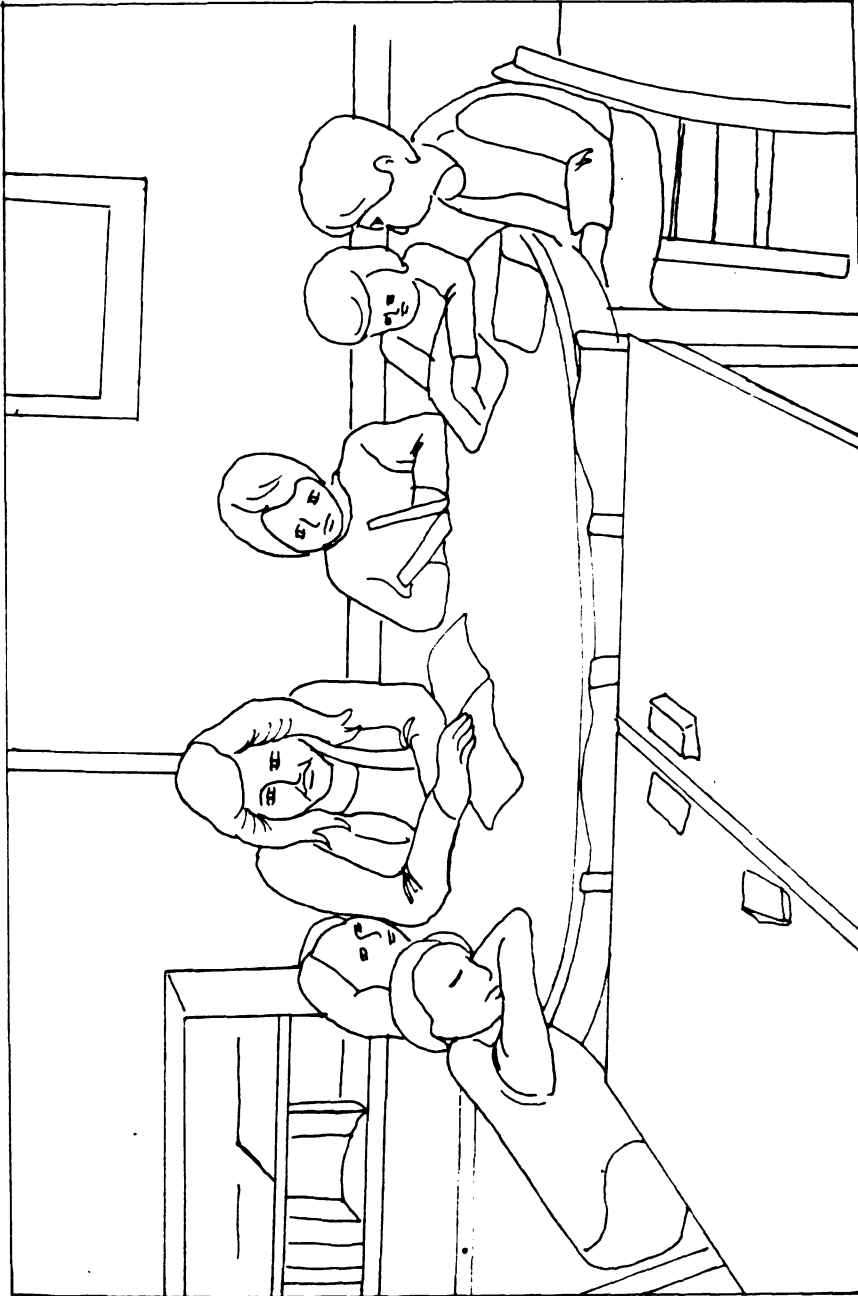
Figure 13. Ms. Lingo looking towards front of room.

Figure 14. Ms. Lingo visually monitoring the room.
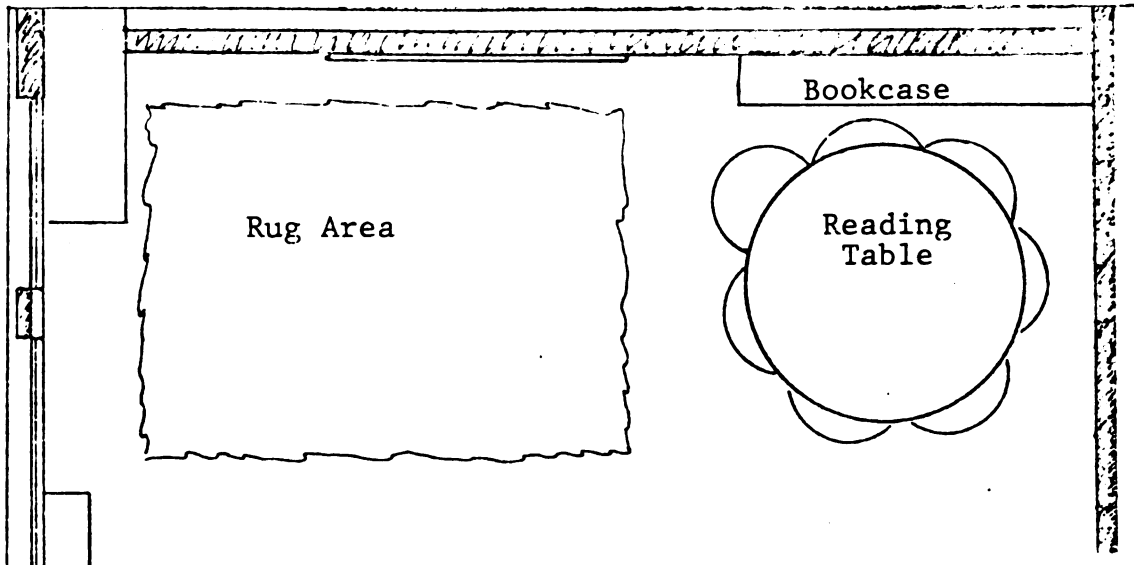
Figure 17. Before bookcase was moved.
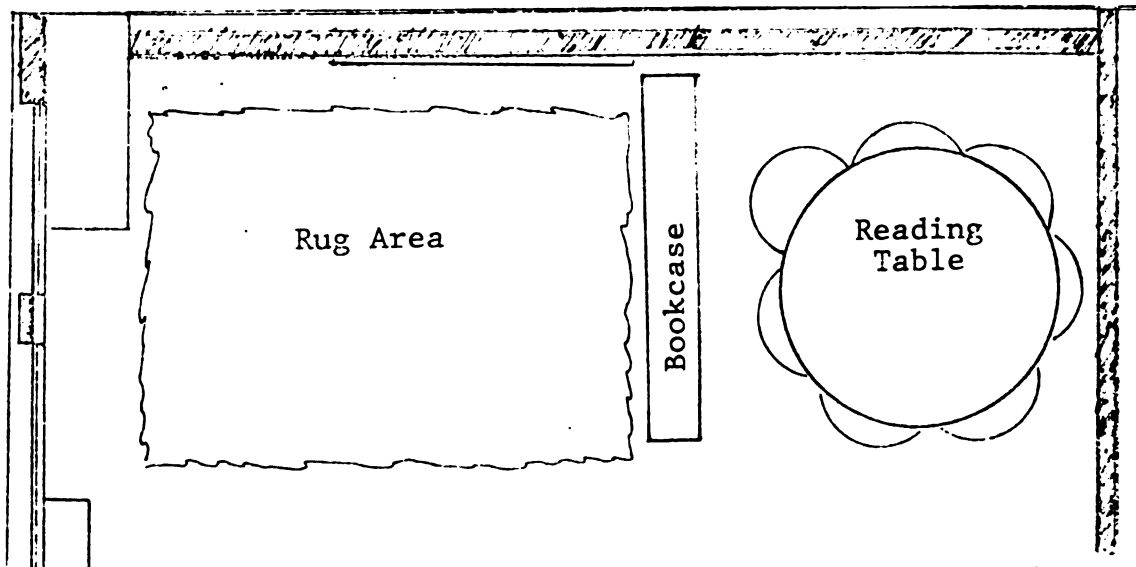
Figure 18. After bookcase was moved.

Besides the reading group, the rug area is the primary place in the room where most of Ms. Lingo's attention is directed. That fact is illustrated by this exchange:

L: Maybe, it'd be easier if you asked me questions.

R: Well, I can.

L: Then, I'd know what you want.

R: Well, any one of those things where you see something happening, like when you look over at the rug or...

L: Well, when I'm there in that reading group, though, I'm not only directing that one, I'm taking care of the ones on the rug and at their seats, too. I've got to have all of them in my line of vision.

R: Ok, and then...

L: Trying to discipline, well, trying to keep order, so to speak.

R: Yea, and then the aide; she takes care of just the table then?

L: Basically, unless she catches something that I miss.

R: But you're the...

L: Like when we moved the bookcase between me and the rug, and I couldn't always see what was going on at the rug (Viewing Session Transcript, 7/27/79).

During the lesson of February 12 (running time of 17:15), there were fifteen outside interruptions, and Ms. Lingo looked at the rug area ten times, twice answering questions that were directed specifically to her. Those times are indicated by an asterisk on Table 11 which shows the lesson and its interruptions.

Table 11. Lesson of February 12, 1979.

Juncture on Tape	Action Taken		Time Elapsed
1-6	L. looks at table where aide is working with group 2. Calls them to order.	# 1	:09
58-60	Looks at seat work and rug area.*	# 2	:04
67-69	Student comes over to ask L. question. L. shakes head "yes."	# 3	:03
102-103	Question asked from rug area.* L. looks away from group, shakes head "yes" and returns to reading group.	# 4	:02
176-177	Student comes in to ask L. a question. L. looks away from group; answers question.	# 5	:02
193-194	L. looks at rug area.*	# 6	:02
299-300	L. looks at rug area.*	# 7	:03
306-307	Student comes in to ask L. a question.	# 8	:03
308-310	L. looks at rug area.*	# 9	:05
311-312	L. looks at rug area,* makes gesture to be quiet.	#10	:04
325-326	L. looks at rug area.*	#11	:03
332-337	L. looks at rug area* then seat work area.	#12	:15
384-385	L. looks at rug area* and seat work area.	#13	:04
396-397	L. looks at rug area.*	#14	:04
414-415	Student comes in to show L. seat-work and leaves.	#15	:03

TOTAL TIME: 1:06

source: Videotape Notes, 2/12/79.

During the lesson of 2/26/79, Ms. Lingo turned away from the group while a student was reading orally, looked at the rug area, and verbally reprimanded a student. When asked about the circumstances which necessitated this action, she responded:

> Jerry must have been laying (sic) down on the rug and laying on somebody else's earphone cord or something. He was probably lying down so that his word was pulling the jack away from the others, and you what that instigates, don't you? A tug of war with my earphones (Viewing Session Transcript, 7/27).

Changing the location of the bookcase co-occurred with changes in the frequency of interruptions. Not only did the students in the reading group seem to focus more on the task at hand, but so did the teacher. During this lesson, which lasted 18:17, there were only three instances in which Ms. Lingo was engaged in activities outside of the reading group. This is illustrated in Table 12.

Table 12.   April 30, 1979, Lesson.

Juncture in Tape	Action Taken		Time Elapsed
64-65	L. looks over towards seat work area. Calls out "Mark" and turns back to reading group.	#1	:07
142-144	L. looks in direction of aide's table and says "boys."	#2	:11
152-154	L. looks around bookcase at seat work area.	#3	:09
	TOTAL TIME:		:27

source: Videotape Notes, 4/30/79.

The participants in the reading group were more posturally involved (see Figure 19) during the lesson; and where a student read orally, the others continued to follow along in their books. This behavior did not occur when the group was totally exposed to the rest of the classroom. It was also observed that when one of the members of the reading group got stuck on a word, another member raised his/her hand to be called on to identify the word. These behaviors were almost non-existent in other videotapes that were viewed.

A videotape showing two lessons, one without the bookcase as a barrier and the other with, were shown to two independent viewers. The only advanced information given to the viewers was that the tapes showed two different lessons. The viewers were then instructed to "look for differences between the two lessons." After watching the tapes, both viewers commented that the lesson with the bookcase as a barrier showed more involvement by the total group and considerably less interruption by outsiders. Phrases they used to describe what they saw included the following:

"more attentive to books"

"little distraction so far" (five minutes into lesson)

"quieter in the room"

"less classroom noise"

One viewer also noted that there were fewer internal group distractions such as students' turning around in their
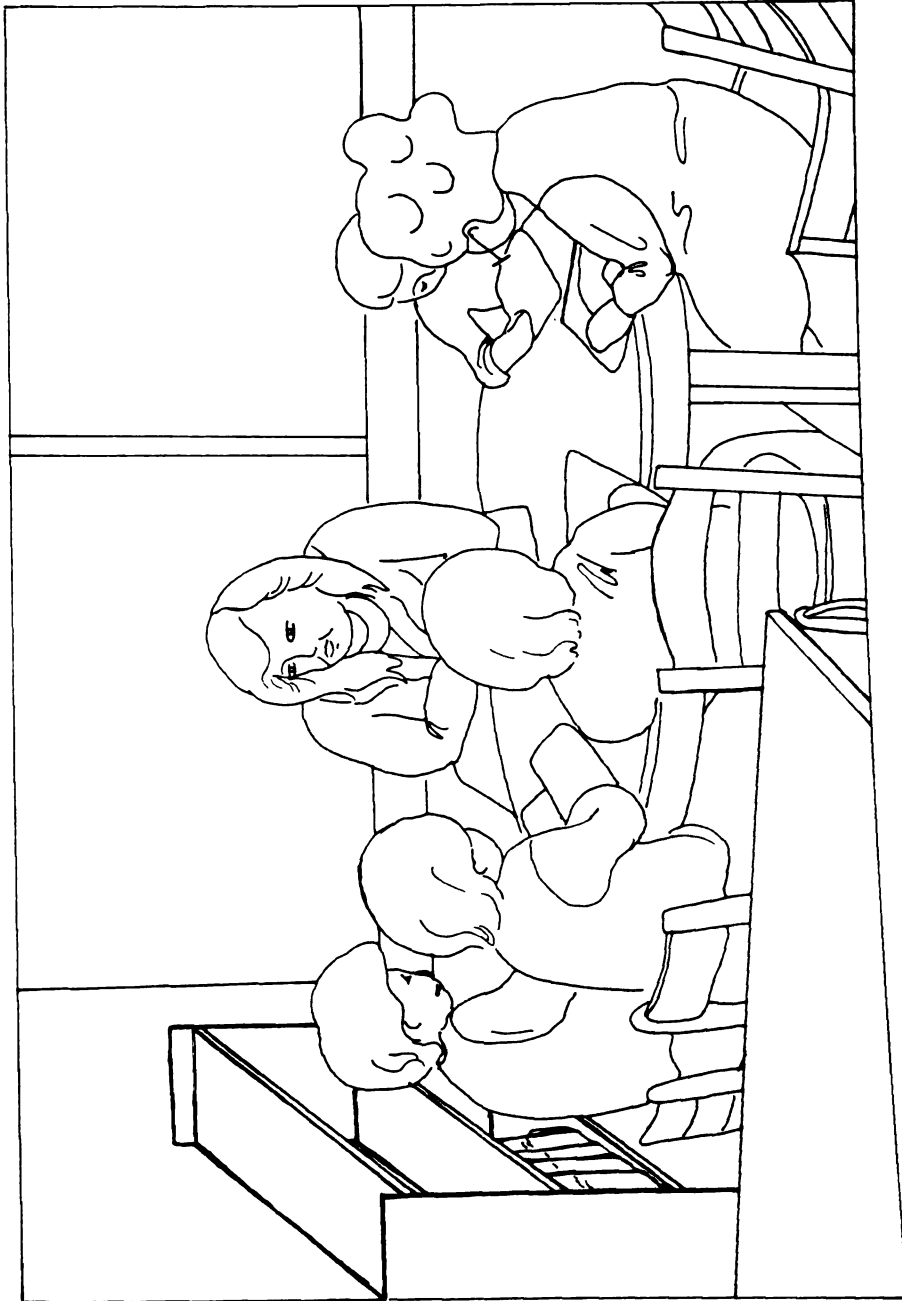
Figure 19. Ms. Lingo and students all being on task.

seats or laying their heads on the table..."less wiggling."
The viewers also observed that the teacher focused more on
the students in the reading group who seemed to hold her at-
tention more. They described this in the following ways:

"Teacher looks at student who is reading."

"Guided questions."

It may be that the teacher's increased involvement was
due to the lack of opportunity for distraction by activi-
ties occurring outside of the reading group in the rest of
the room and also that the group was shielded from an as-
sault on its borders by students due to the barrier of the
bookcase. These inferences are consistent with the litera-
ture (Hall, 1969; Scheflen, 1974; Erickson, 1976; McDermott,
1976) which indicates that participants in a group do col-
lectively create social frameworks that are manifest pos-
turally as they order each other's behavior.

Changing Questions

Recalling the lesson of February 26, 1979, it was pre-
viously noted that during this lesson, Ms. Lingo asked not
only factual questions, but inferential questions as well.
In Figure 15, Ms. Lingo is shown facing the group while the
students maintain the same position and face one another.
In this figure, all group members are involved in the ques-
tioning session, with students' raising their hands to be
called on.
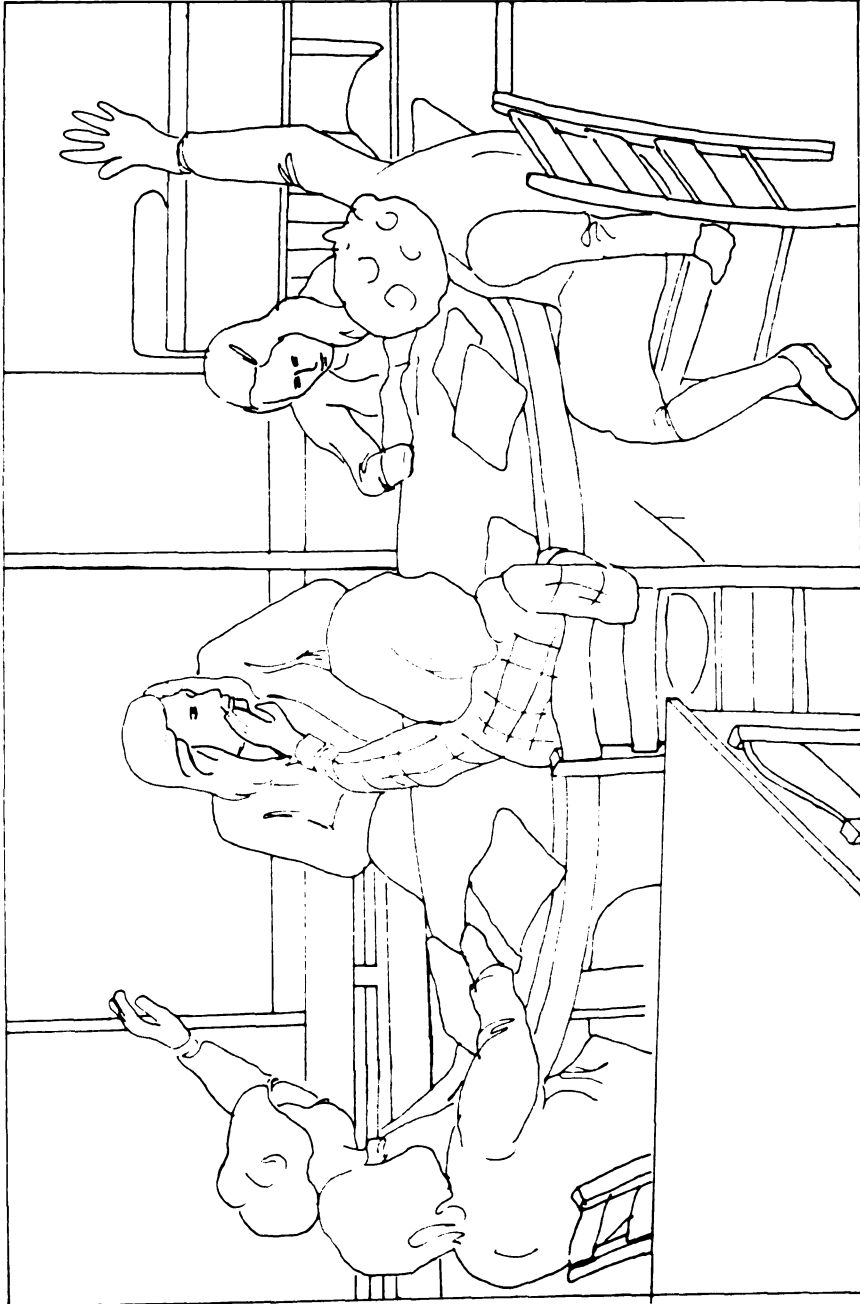
Figure 15. Group involvement to answer inferential questions.

By changing the mode of questioning, an exception to the rule was manifested when all the participants positioned themselves in concert with Ms. Lingo (see Figure 16 in which everyone was posturally directed toward the reading table and attentive to the task at hand). McDermott (1976) states, "They (the reading group) order each other's behavior" (p. 33).

Thus, the social order for the group during this particular segment is mutual and, in fact, the students are "ordering each other's behavior." It then appears that the predominant factors that facilitated the dynamics of this particular PS were the co-occurrence of the postural focus maintained by the teacher and the students and the order and continuity of the lesson due to the higher order of questions.

Summary

It has been described and shown that when an ATS changed from oral reading to choral reading, the members of the high ability reading group changed their reading positions from out of the lesson to into the lesson. Because choral reading is a joint venture, it thus appears that the group as a whole was drawn together when the ATS changed.

This same sort of phenomenon also occurred when the mode of questions shifted from factual to inferential

Figure 16. Everyone posturally involved in the task at hand.

questioning. The reading group appeared to all be involved in the joint venture of answering a question thus providing an opportunity of togetherness.

It was also shown that when an interruption occurred, and Ms. Lingo shifted her postural position from inside to outside the group(s), the reading group(s) picked up on her positioning and became fragmented and distracted from the task at hand. However, when the physical environment was altered, moving the bookcase to retard access from outsiders into the group and vice-versa, the reading group appeared to be able to maintain their boundaries more effectively, thus providing an atmosphere of togetherness in a joint learning venture, thereby enhancing their overall opportunity to learn and practice reading.

Teacher Feedback

Educational research interest in teacher feedback appears to be grounded in the premise that positive feedback or praise has an impact on school learning, especially for low-achieving students (Brophy and Good, 1970). Van De Riet (1963) conducted a study to determine the effects praise or reproof on the performance of underachieving students and found...

> ...that praise and reproof operate in a differential manner depending on the nature of the task employed and the type of subject used (p. 8).

The researcher interprets this to mean that there are too many variables in operation to make a conclusive statement

about the effect of feedback on learning without considera-
tion of the context in which it is given. In fact, Van De
Riet found that in some situations, praise actually had a
negative effect on the population under study and, converse-
ly, that reproof had a positive effect.

This dissertation does not attempt to investigate the
negative or positive effects of feedback but rather to con-
sider feedback as part of and in light of the social con-
text of the reading group. It was hoped that in analyzing
the data, such a hypothesis about the relative effects of
praise might have surfaced. But, in fact, the issue ad-
dressed in this thesis is more elementary and exploratory.
This study examines whether or not the type of feedback of-
fered by the teacher differed between the high and low
ability reading groups and considers the relation of those
differences to other interactional differences between the
groups.

Feedback and Ms. Lingo

In both groups the most common types of response from
Ms. Lingo across the lessons of the same type to a student
who finished reading orally or responded correctly to a
teacher-directed question was "okay." The researcher did
observe in both the high and low groups, however, that at
the end of the lesson(s), praise would usually be given to
the entire group for a job well done. The following are
examples from the videotape:

> Okay, very good. Close your books (Tran-
> script, 2/26/79, group 4).

Good! Okay, close your books (Transcript, 3/5/79, group1).

The researcher hypothesizes that praise is used by this classroom teacher for purposes of management of the transition from one question to another. However, more importantly, praise also appears to serve to acknowledge (1) a correct response to a question or (2) a good job reading, and then to pass on the task at hand to another student.

Mehan (1979) devised a scheme called "three-part-teacher-student sequence" (P. 52) in order to show how classroom lessons are structured and to describe the kinds of interactions that take place between teacher and student(s) within those lessons.

There are three categories that constitute Mehan's scheme: (1) initiation (this could be either an elicitation for some kind of a response or information or a directive); (2) reply (this could be either a response, acknowledgement, or reaction to the initiation), and (3) evaluation by the person asking the initiation. He and others (Bellack, 1966) have demonstrated that this three-part interaction often occurs inclassrooms. Mehan explains that all three acts must occur if the interaction is truly a "three-part-teacher-student sequence." As the following example shows, Ms. Lingo appears to use the evaluation part of the three part scheme as a bridge or transition between students as well as to

evaluate their performance. This can be seen in the lesson dated 2/26/79; PS[1], PS[2].

INITIATION	REPLY	EVALUATION
L: What's the title?	Kendra: The Pup	
L: Who has the pup?	Jenny: Pam	L: Pam does, OK.
L: We're going to read to find out if all pups are bad.		
L: OK, tell me one thing that a bad pup does?	Sean: Digs.	L: Where? Digs in...
	Jenny: Digs in pits.	L: (nods head to indicate a correct response)
L: What's another thing?	Kendra: Pups are not bad!	
L: We want to know the four things that puppies do.	Keyona: He tugs at rugs.	L: (nods head affirmatively) Digs in pits; tugs at rugs...
L: There are two more things. Find them.	Denise: Bats... (other students try to answer)	L: Wait a minute. It's D's turn.
L: Read that to me, Denise. Sound it out.	Denise: Tips jugs.	L: Tips jugs and...
	Kendra: Bats at bugs.	L: OK. He tugs at rugs, bats at bugs, tips jugs, and digs in pits. Don't they?
L: Are all puppies bad?	Many: No	

L: Why do they do those things?

Many: mad

L: Are they mad?

L: Why do they do those things?

L: They do those on purpose just to be bad?

L: Do they know they're being bad when they do those things?

Many: no!

L: How come?

Many: Because they're puppies.

L: Sure!

L: Keyona, read the whole story out loud.

Keyona (reads selection)

L: Okay, Sean.

Sean (read selection)

L: Okay, Denise.

L: How about if Denise, Jenny and Kendra read it together?

Denise, Jenny, Kendra (read selection)

L: Okay, let's look at page 63.

L: Kendra spell the top word for me.

Kendra: b u s, bus.

L: Next one, Jenny.

Jenny: G u s, Gus.

L: Next one, Sean.

Sean: u ...

L: What does u say?

Sean: us.

L: Keyona, do you know the circle word?

Keyona: h...

Keyona: her.

L: Her, all right.

L:	Denise, the first section of the fence at the bottom.	Denise (says word)	L:	Hmm, hmm.
L:	Next one, Kendra.	Kendra (says word)		
L:	Jenny.	Jenny (says word)		
L:	Sean.	Sean (says word)	L:	OK.
L:	Denise, can you read me the whole page, please?	Denise (reads page)	L:	OK.
L:	Let's all read the page together.	All (read page)	L:	OK, very good! Close your books.

(source: Videotape Transcript, 2/26/79)

As illustrated by Mehan's scheme, one function of praise as it is used throughout the lesson is as a transition mechanism from one student to the next. Usually, when Ms. Lingo says "OK," the evaluation is also part of the initiation of the next student's turn. For example, when Sean finishes his turn at reading, the response is, "OK, Denise," without a pause between the two words or variation in the tone of voice. This part of the lesson is completed when the praise is given to the whole group.

Summary

It has been described and illustrated that Ms. Lingo appears to utilize feedback mechanisms that are consistent with previous research conducted by Mehan (1979).

Ms. Lingo uses feedback mechanisms to convey four distinct kinds of verbal messages to the groups during reading instruction. They are (a) a transition or transference of task from one student to another to continue the flow of the instructional episode, (b) to signal the end of a PS, (c) to serve as a means to bring the group back together to a common juncture, and (d) to offer praise to the group as a whole for a job well done. There did not appear to be any difference in treatment between the high and low ability reading groups in the use of feedback mechanisms used by Ms. Lingo. This also suggests that if there is any differential treatment, it must be imbedded elsewhere.

Taking Turns

To investigate further the differences in interaction within the low and high ability reading groups and to consider these differences in terms of reading instruction, the system for oral reading and responding to teacher-directed questions was studied.

In his study of reading in a first grade classroom, McDermott (1976) found that the high reading group appeared better organized for turn-taking and showed an interactional symmetry that was absent in the low reading group. He explains that the high group presents fewer management problems than the low ability group. More importantly, these students are better readers, allowing the teacher to establish...

...a sequence in which they read and let the length of the reading assignments dictate the pacing of their sequencing (p. 36).

Conversely, he notes:

In the bottom group, each turn to read is negotiated with the children on the basis of who calls for a turn, who is able in the teacher's eyes to read the page in question and who has already had a turn to read (p. 38).

What follows is a description and illustration of turn-taking that compares the high and low ability reading groups.

Taking Turns During Reading Instruction

Regarding the classroom under study, the researcher hypothesizes that, first, Ms. Lingo makes sure that everyone has a turn to read orally, either alone or in a group; and, second, that the student who begins oral reading is randomly selected.

Such was the case for the lessons of 2/12/79 (group 1) and 2/26/79 (group 4). These particular lessons were chosen because they were typical of the reading lessons observed. Table 13 presents the data.

As illustrated in the Group 1 lesson of 2/12/79, during the first segment of the lesson, Tony begins reading, followed by Darlene and Scott. Then, due to a lack of time, this segment of oral reading is completed with Princella, Martice, and Jeff reading chorally. During the second segment, the order is reversed. When interviewed as she watched this replayed on tape, Ms. Lingo replied:

Table 13. Oral Reading, Group 1,
2/12/79; and Group 4, 2/26/79.

Group 1, 2/12/79

ORAL READING (first segment) Review of Silent Reading		ORAL READING (second segment) Review of Silent Reading	
Order	Student	Order	Student
1	Tony	1	Jeff
2	Darlene	2	Martice
3	Scott	3	Princela
4	Princela	4	Scott
	Martice		Darlene
	Jeff		Tony

GROUP 4, 2/26/79

ORAL READING (reading sentences		REVIEW (spelling and pronouncing words	
Order	Student	Order	Student
1	Keyona	1	Denise
2	Sean	2	Kendra
3	Kendra	3	Jenny
	Denise	4	Sean
	Jenny	5	Denise

L (on tape): "OK, Scott, Darlene, Tony, why don't you all read this together?"

L: There you go; time ran out.

R: You guaranteed all of them would have a turn to read by themselves.

L: Plus, it's also a thing, too, that those other three, Scott, Darlene, and Tony, are so wasted they could care less what's going on; they just want to move. It brings them back. It doesn't give them the full value, but it gets them back to the book, and I can hear whether they're having problems with the words or not or which ones (Viewing Session, 8/27/79).

The same system of turn taking also surfaces in the lesson of 2/26/79 (see Table 13). Everyone gets a turn to

read orally, but there is no apparent starting order.

During a viewing session, Ms. Lingo explained her system

as follows:

L (on tape): "OK...Sean."

R: Now, do you have any idea why Sean was next?

L: Probably 'cause he was on one side of Keyona
    ...I think I usually pick somebody and then
    go to either the right or left of 'em...it's
    random.

R: OK.

L: I suppose I have different reasons each time
    I do it...I don't know...I know we needed the
    practice...you know (Viewing Session Tran-
    script, 7/27/79).

The lessons of June 5, 1979 (shown in Figure 20), fur-

ther illustrates that everyone at the reading table has an

opportunity to read orally regardless of group membership

or the task to perform. The lesson for group 1 was a spel-

ling exercise and, therefore, accounts for a larger number

of turns as opposed to the lesson for group 4 where the task

was to read a story and answer specific questions.

Even though for these two lessons the number of chances

to get called on are greater for group 1 than group 4, the

researcher concludes that in this first grade classroom,

turn-taking between the high and low ability reading groups

is similar, with all members getting an equal opportunity

to read orally.

However, such is not the case in answering questions.

During this particular task, differences surfaced bwtween

the two groups. It may be that because the structure of the
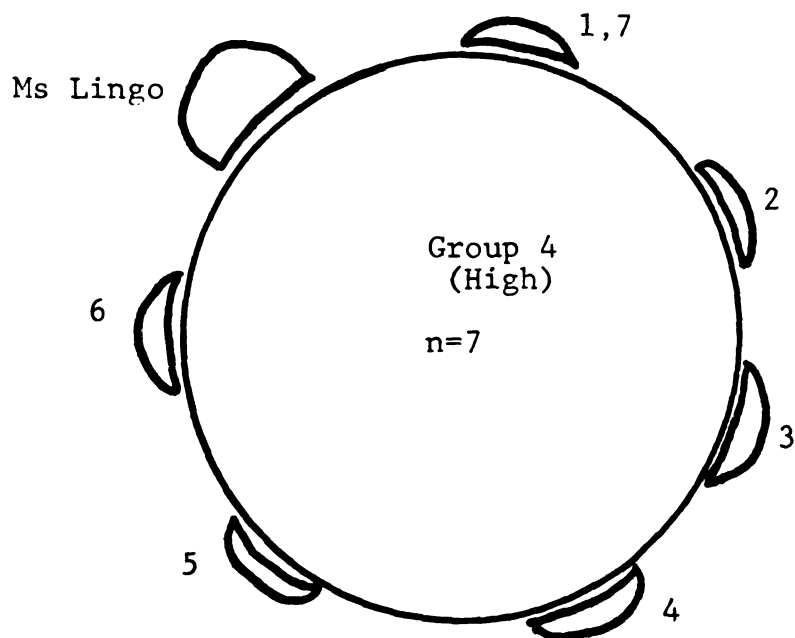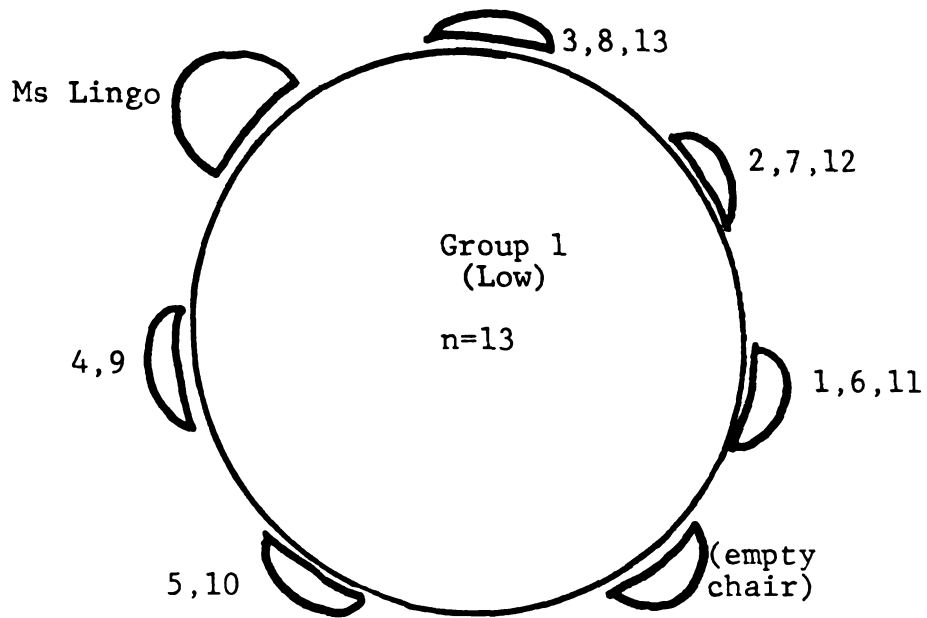
Figure 20. Order of turn taking to answer questions
(numbers indicate the order).

lessons for the high and low groups differ, the opportunity for learning is increased for the high group. This being the case, a lesson for the high group may, in fact, be structured so as to provide a greater opportunity to answer questions.

The hypothesis is that the high ability reading group is provided with a greater opportunity to answer questions than the low group. This, in fact, may relate to the type and amount of learning that takes place between the two groups.

Much has been written concerning the act of comprehension, its importance in the reading act, and the relationship to learning (Gibson and Levin, 1976; Spache and Spache, 1977; Veatch, 1978). Harris and Sipay (1979) state:

> There should be on-going assessment, the frequency of which will depend upon how well the child has mastered the skills; the weaker the skill or ability, the more frequent the need for assessment. Daily reading lessons provide an excellent opportunity to sample a child's ability to comprehend written language (p. 330).

It would seem, then, that the organization and symmetry of the lessons for the groups in question would look similar, thus providing both groups and individual students equal opportunities to answer teacher-directed questions. Also, given the fact that the low reading group under study represents the lowest ability readers from two first grade classrooms, there would be some credence in offering similar opportunities to answer teacher-directed questions for the sake of assessing their reading growth and abilities.

To investigate the form of symmetry for answering questions for both groups, two lessons, one for each group, were analyzed.

During a lesson for the high group that occurred on March 5, 1979, a total of eight questions asked were answered by five students. Three of the students answered two questions each, and the remaining students answered one question each. None of the students answered questions back-to-back, nor did one section of the reading table seem to be called on more than another section. By all appearances, there seemed to be a symmetrical flow around the reading table as all the students had an opportunity to answer questions. This flow is depicted in Figure 21.

Turning to the low group, one can see a different system in operation. During this lesson, dated February 12, 1979, a total of twelve questions asked were answered by six students. Two of the students answered three questions each, two answered two questions each, and the remaining two students answered one question each. The pattern is shown in Figure 22.

In this lesson there appeared to be very little symmetry as the teacher jumped from student to student. In fact, one student answered two questions in a row, and two students, Darlene and Princela, appear to be having a dialogue in answering questions three, four, five, ten, and eleven.

Taking turns in the high group to answer questions. Sean is asked to read the title of the story. Sequence of turn taking: c,e,b,a,d,c,b,e
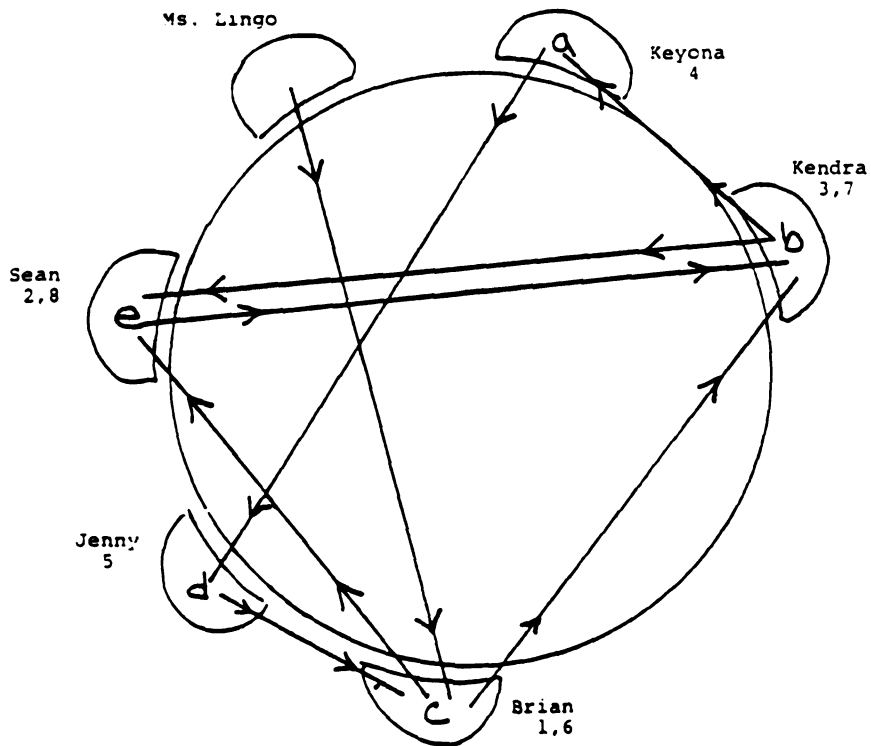
Figure 21.

During two different interview sessions, the research-

er asked Ms. Lingo if she could explain the system she uses

to call on students.

R: There is a turn system that you've got going.

L: I went from Scott to Martice to Jeff and back
to Princela because I missed her and then on
to Tony.

R: OK, I'm trying to get some order to this.

L: There is none (Viewing Session Transcript,
8/27/79).

L: Why did I pick Keyona? That's a good ques-
tion. Ummm...she'd answered one of the ques-
tions that I asked before...just random.

Taking turns in the low group to answer questions. Scott is asked to read the title of the story. Sequence of turn taking: d,e,b,f,b,a,c,d,d,b,f,e.
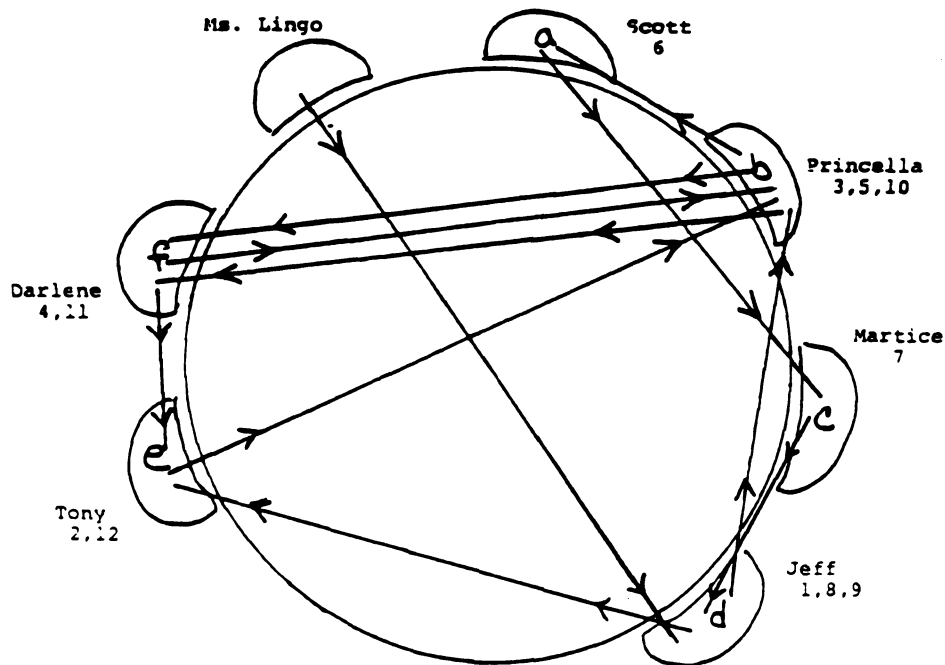
Figure 22.

        R: OK...there are no really right answers to
             this. So...

        L: Yeah...I think probably it was just a ran-
             dom thing (Viewing Session Transcript,
             7/27/79).

Ms. Lingo's reply is evidence that she believes that her method for calling on students is random. However, as one can see from the evidence cited (Figures 21 and 22), there is, in fact, an underlying order that differs between the high and low ability reading groups and those differences in treatment of the high and low ability students can be seen by referring to Figure 22 and the transcript of the viewing session with Ms. Lingo dated August 27, 1979.

Summary

It has been described and illustrated that everyone, regardless of group membership, has a turn to read orally either alone or in a group and that students are randomly selected to begin reading. Also, oral reading is sometimes used as a method to get the student(s) back on task.

However, such is not the case in answering teacher directed questions. When questions are directed to the high ability reading group, a distinct difference from that of the low group occurs. Members of the high group all seem to have equal opportunity to answer questions in a symmetrical fashion while members of the low group do not have an equal opportunity to answer questions and were called on without any apparent order.

This analysis then appears to support the research of McDermott (1976) in that turn calling for the high ability reading group is generally more orderly and symmetrical than for the low ability reading group.

Referring to the section changing questions, it was shown that the high group was more prone to be asked inferential questions as opposed to the factual questions that were asked of the low ability reading group. This seemed to provide a higher level of involvement for the members of the high ability reading group. Therefore, coupled with the overall difference in taking turns to answer teacher directed questions, the members of the high

ability reading group appear to have a more equal learning opportunity as opposed to the low ability reading group.

The overall difference in turn-taking then appears to be embedded in being called on to answer teacher directed questions and the quality of the questions posed.

Interruptions

During the process of data analysis, the question of interruptions from outside sources during reading instruction and the relation of those interruptions to the opportunity to learn and practice reading skills within the reading groups became focal. Interruptions seemed to be primary behavioral incidents that detracted from the opportunity to learn and practice reading.

The role of interruption in group reading instruction has been raised elsewhere. For example, Allington (1978) studied teacher-initiated interruptions during a reading lesson. Specifically, his study investigated teachers' verbal interruptions of oral reading to correct mistakes made by both high and low achieving students during group reading instruction. These interruptions were categorized as either graphemic (symbol identification), phonemic (sound identification), semantic (word meaning), syntactic (sentence structure), teacher pronounced, or other. Allington also measured the frequency of interruptions of those types when oral nuisances took place. He contrasted the data between the high and low ability reading groups in twenty classrooms.

Allington found that teachers were more inclined to
interrupt the poor readers than the good readers, regard-
less of whether or not the semantic errors were appro-
priate. This was interpreted to mean that, even though
there were more overall teacher interruptions for the poor
readers (low group), interruptions were not predictable
when studied within the categories that the interruptions
were grouped. Allington also found that teachers inter-
rupted the low group readers on "seventy-four percent of
their errors and good (high group) readers on only thirty-
one percent of their errors" (p. 10). He interpreted this
to mean that teachers were generally more apt to interrupt
students in low groups than in high groups when a reading
error occurred, and that poor readers are taught differ-
ently than good readers.

In Allington's research, interruptions of the reader by
the teacher were of focal interest and showed that reading
related interruptions have clear instructional value be-
cause the teacher clarifies and uses reading miscues for
instructional purposes. When, why, and how often they oc-
curred seem to have been related to the quality of reading
instruction. For this dissertation, interruptions and
their relation to instructional quality are also of focal
interest. However, interruptions examined in this study
are, for the most part, intrusions into the reading group
by students and adults from without or occasions when

the teacher's attention is distracted from the readers at the table.

Under the subheadings entitled <u>interruptions as they relate to this study</u>, <u>time</u>, and <u>interruptions from the classroom</u>, the researcher will describe and analyze the types and frequencies of interruptions that appear to intrude and take time away from learning and practicing reading for both the high and low ability reading groups in the classroom under study.

Interruptions as They Relate to This Study

The types of interruptions studied in this research were not as clearly or directly related to the process of reading instruction as those studied by Allington. But their frequency and the times they occurred appeared to erode the time available for reading. To that extent, they had an impact on the opportunity for students to learn how to read and to practice the activity of reading, both silently and orally.

This study extends and expands the question of interruptions precisely because the interruptions studied are not reading related. Rather, they are connected to such behaviors as <u>positioning</u>, <u>turn taking</u>, and <u>teacher verbal feedback</u> as they occur within the participation structures which comprise the entire reading lesson.

Time

The reading group is pedagogically structured to handle one activity at a time. That activity is reading. When this structure is interrupted, there may be an effect on the opportunity to learn and practice reading. The way the teacher and students perceive time appears to differ. The teacher divides her time between the reading group at hand and the events occurring in the rest of the classroom. On the other hand, the students in the reading group appear to structure their time within the context of that group; e.g., concerning themselves with learning and practicing reading and ignoring activities occurring in the rest of the classroom.

Hall (1959, 1969) uses the terms monochronic and polychronic to identify contrasting ways that people from diverse cultures handle them:

> Monochronic is characteristic of low-involvement peoples who compartmentalize time; they schedule one thing at a time and become disoriented if they have to deal with too many things at once. Polychronic people, possibly because they are so much involved with each other, tend to keep several operations going at once, like jugglers (1969, p. 173).

If the classroom is thought of as a cultural context and of different participants are thought of as playing different social roles within it, the concepts of polychronicity and monochronicity become instructive.

Referring to Hall's description of a juggler, a teacher (more specifically, Ms. Lingo) is like a juggler. Charged

with the responsibility of 24 children, she tries to keep
the noise level down in the classroom, to teach a small
group of students to read, and to facilitate the movement
of four groups of first graders through four learning sta-
tions, in the time space of an hour and twenty minutes.
In Hall's words, the teacher "tends to keep several opera-
tions going at once, like jugglers."

During two different interviewing sessions, Ms. Lingo
was asked if, because of the outside events' occurring dur-
ing reading instruction, it was necessary to be able to
split her attention between the reading gorup and the rest
of the room. She replied by explaining:

> L: Here goes Kendra....she's starting to tie her
> shoes or something there...and Jenny's probab-
> ly redressing herself or something...with her
> sweater...Somebody on the rug wants something;
> Kendra, Jenny, and Sean are all paying atten-
> tion to the rug (Viewing Session, 7/27/79).

> L: OK. I can remember distinctly from when I was
> a child. When you're doing something wrong,
> the first thing you do is look at that teacher
> to see if she sees you doing it wrong and how
> much longer you can get away with doing it.
> OK, and I guess my whole thing is to keep all
> six eyes wide open all the time, and you just
> got to be aware of auditorially and visually
> of everything that's going on. So that you
> can stop it before it turns into something
> that is going to backfire on you. Or a domi-
> no reaction (Interview Transcript, 11/14/78).

It is expected that students in this classroom will
follow along in their texts when they are not reading aloud.
When asked if this were the case, Ms. Lingo repsonded:

> R: Now, while Tony's reading, what are the rest
> supposed to be doing?

L: Following along while he reads (Interview
     Session, 8/27/79).

During a lesson, Ms. Lingo was having the students
read a selection to answer questions concerning its content.
One of the students (Keyona) did not seem to be reading or
paying attention, even though she was holding the book in
front of her face (see Figure 23). While reviewing the
videotape of this lesson, Ms. Lingo was asked why she called
on Keyona to answer a question:

L (on tape):   "Keyona, do you have it all read
     once? Keyona, you all done? OK, tell me
     one thing that a bad pup does?"

     (Keyona shakes her head in a manner indicat-
     ing a negative response.)

L: She wasn't paying attention; that's why I
     picked her (Viewing Session, 7/27/79).

By all indications, it does appear that, in fact, Ms.
Lingo operates in a polychronic time structure while expect-
ing the children to be monochronic.

Much has been written on the apparent impact of time
as an important variable in the learning process (Carroll,
1963; Bloom, 1976; Rosenshine, 1976; Good and Beckerman,
1978). It would seem that spending "time on task" and ex-
hibiting the quality of "perseverance" (Carroll, 1963)
would describe someone who is effectively involved in a
kind of singular action or task, such as learning how to
read. It would then seem reasonable to say that when the
monochronic time structure is interrupted by a variety of
of people for whatever reason(s), it also follows that the

Figure 23. Keyona holding book up, giving the impression she is reading.

disorientation created by these interruptions (social re-
lations and/or interactions) would, indeed, have an effect
on the opportunity to learn.

Because Ms. Lingo, by the very nature of her role in a
classroom setting, operates polychronically, she inadver-
tently opens the physical boundaries of the reading group
to outside interruptions. And, as mentioned previously,
poor readers tend to have difficulty holding their social
boundaries against outside intrusions. Therefore, this
notion of the different uses of time between teacher and
student(s) appears to be an underlying influence and, in
fact, operates during the different types of interruptions
that occur during reading instruction for both the high and
low ability reading groups. Subsequently, it will be
shown that when an interruption occurs, it does, in fact,
affect both the high and low ability reading groups during
the time allocated for learning and practicing reading.

Interruptions from Around
the Classroom

Due to the social organization of reading in low
ability reading groups, research suggests that interrup-
tions, a variety of sorts, would be more frequent in such
a group than in the high ability reading group (McDermott,
1976; Allington, 1978). Therefore, those social interac-
tions that take place in this first grade classroom may
well have a greater impact on the low ability reading

time and opportunity to learn and practice reading than on
the high ability reading group.

In order to obtain a clear picture of the nature and
impact of several kinds of interruptions (i.e., outside the
group, teacher originated and within the group) during
reading instruction, outside interruptions were documented
and considered in terms of their location within the
stream of reading activity. In addition, the total number
of interruptions in both the high and low ability reading
groups was calculated. The point of these efforts was to
see if there were differences between the two groups in
the nature and number of interruptions of the reading pro-
cess.

Interruptions seem to be the bane of a teacher's exis-
tence in attempting to order small group instruction. These
interruptions come from many external sources such as visi-
tors to the classroom, students in other parts of the room,
sirens screaming through the windows, medical problems,
fire drills, etc. The classroom under investigation experi-
enced its share of these and other types of interruptions.
The following is an example of an unexpected interruption
as described from the field notes:

> Group 1 reading. Commotion at the door. The
> entire kindergarten comes in dressed in costume.
> Everything stops and all eyes are on the kids as
> they march around the room. So much for reading
> (Field Notes, 10/29/78).

This interruption was built on the premise of sharing
the excitement of a group of kindergarteners dressed as

witches and goblins. But the effect on the reading group
was devastating. Even though the march through the room
lasted only a few minutes, it seemed to break the mood and
structure that was created by Ms. Lingo in the reading
group. As previously discussed, a typical lesson began by
setting the purpose for reading a particular selection fol-
lowed by a question/answer period, thereby involving the
students on some level in the task at hand. During an in-
terview, this particular example of an interruption was
discussed:

> R: There's also one that shows where the kinder-
> garten came in with their Halloween costumes
> on.

> L: Bad day (Interview Transcript, 8/27/79).

Thus, a disturbance of this sort ended, for all practical
purposes, reading instruction for this group.

On another occasion the other first grade classroom
in the school had a popcorn party and brought over the re-
maining popcorn and punch to share. As mentioned earlier,
the reading groups are comprised of these two first grade
classrooms, so there was a feeling of sharing between the
two rooms. Perhaps the popcorn was brought over so that
the children who are normally in that classroom could also
enjoy the treats, thereby avoiding hurt feelings about
being "left out."

At one point during the lesson, Ms. Lingo changed her
positioning and motioned for a student to approach the

reading table and asked if the student wanted some "treats" (see Figure 24):

> After you put your books away, you can have a glass of punch and some popcorn if your work is done (Videotape Transcript, 5/12/79).

On several occasions during this lesson, students approached the reading table and asked if they could have some of the "treats."

This also illustrates that, in this particular instance, Ms. Lingo was functioning polychronically which enabled her to handle co-occurring events (e.g., students approaching the reading table, students at the reading table needing assistance in reading) to insure that those students who were finished with their work could enjoy the "treats." The difficulty which arises is that even though Ms. Lingo and the students coming to the reading table were operating polychronically, students in the group were still expected to function monochronically. When these two types of time interact with each other, conflicts can be expected to arise (Hall, 1969). In this instance the difficulty manifested itself as low involvement by the members of the reading group who wanted very much to enjoy some of the popcorn and punch. The result was an interruption that lasted through the scheduled time for reading instruction for this group.

Florio (1978) found in her study that the classroom teacher is aware of the kinds of interruptions and communicative demands placed upon her during instructional times.
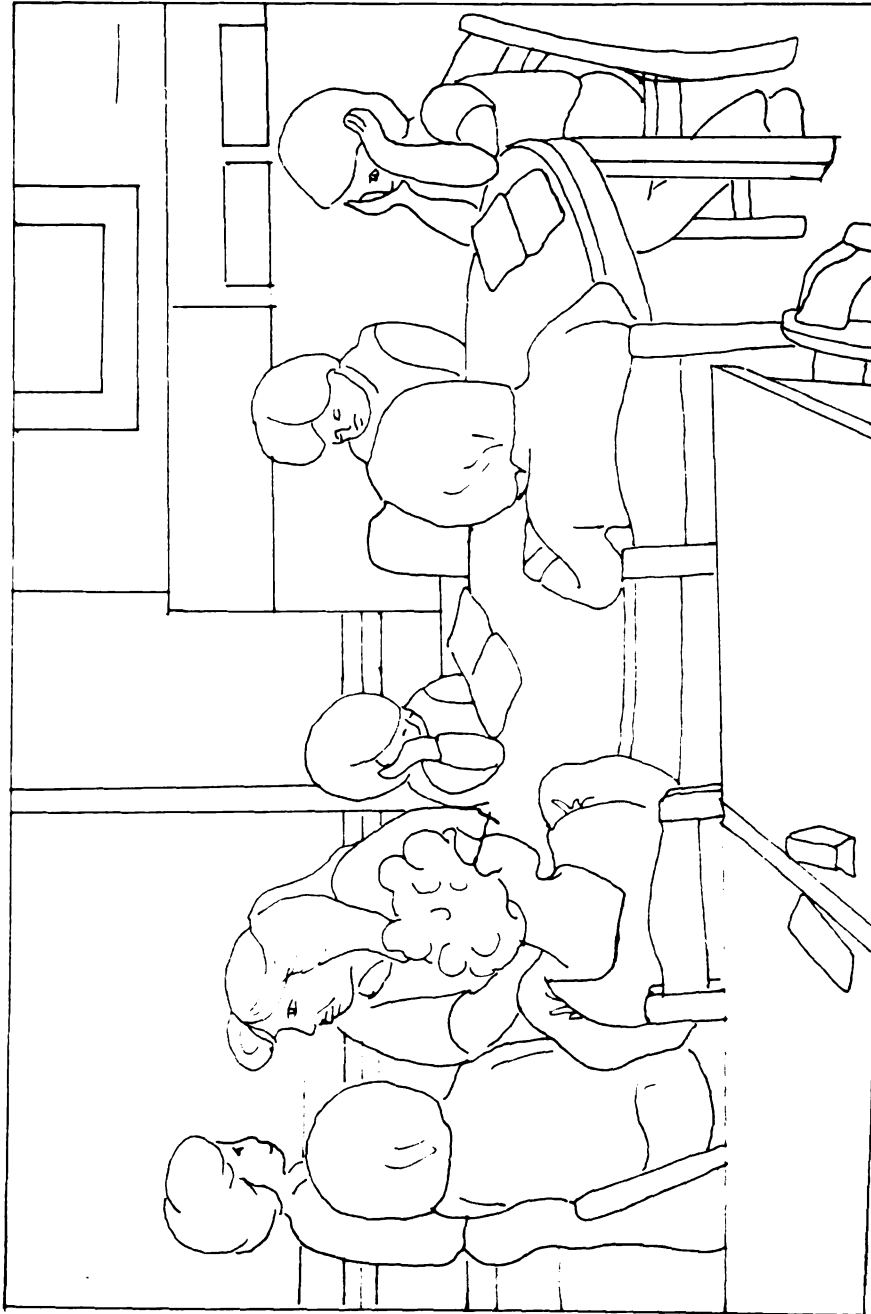
Figure 24. Ms. Lingo asking students if they want some popcorn and punch.

Florio reports that the teacher she studied made a conscious effort to refrain from interacting with students outside of the group she was working with and, in fact, felt that once eye contact was made, that signaled an invitation to intrude. Florio reports that

> She deliberately refrains from looking up and around the room, hoping that by avoiding eye contact with children she will discourage their attempts at conversation with her (pp. 112-113).

She continues:

> ...she monitors activity around the room in two ways--auditorally and by means of peripheral vision... (pp. 112-113).

Thus, the teacher, while monitoring multiple activities, posturally conveys the message that she is operating within the same monochronic time frame as the students she is working with and posturally declares boundaries that discourage interruptions (Florio, 1978).

In the study described in this thesis, because she is constantly monitoring the events occurring in the rest of the room and marks this activity with postural shifts, Ms. Lingo operates visibly within a time frame that differs from that of the students in the reading group. During an interview, Ms. Lingo talked about her method of monitoring.

> R: Well, any one of those things where you see something happening, like when you look over at the rug...

> L: Well, when I'm there in that reading group though, I'm not only directing that one; I'm taking care of the ones on the rug and at their seats, too. I've got to have all of them in my line of vision.

R: OK, and then...

L: Trying to discipline; well, trying to keep
     order, so to speak.

R: And then, the aide, she takes care of just
     the table then?

L: Basically, unless she catches something that
     I miss (Interview Transcript, 8/27/79).

The researcher concludes that this method of monitor-
ing the rest of the class that has been shown by postural
cues as well as verbal cues does, in fact, sanction inter-
ruptions on the reading groups.

During this researcher's classroom observations, over
a period of eight months, interruptions from outside the
classroom occurred often, but they were attributed to the
normal social interactions that take place in a typical
elementary school. These interruptions do have an affect
on the quantity of time spent at reading. However, the
teacher can have little control over them. For that rea-
son, the research was more interested in the types of in-
terruptions that take place within the classroom. These
presumably can be controlled or altered to provide both
more time and more stable situations in which to learn how
to read.

In order to understand whether Ms. Lingo feels that
external interruptions present pedagogical problems, this
researcher asked her for clarification as to what consti-
tutes an interruption and whether they cause problems.

(The interview notation on the previous page explains her
looking or going across the room.)

R: OK, what about Sean?

L: He moves in and out of my reading group
quite frequently.

R: As an interrupter?

L: He doesn't really interrupt, though.

R: What's he do?

L: He comes over so that I'm aware of his pre-
sence; I don't have to give him my full at-
tention by moving away from the group or,
well, he's so quiet, you know; he comes up
and whispers. All I have to do is nod.

R: OK, but it's still an interruption.

L: Yes.

R: OK, why does he have that liberty?

L: Because he's so quiet about it.

R: Some kids can do that and not have any prob-
lems about it. Other kids can't do that.

L: I saw him moving toward me, and I knew what
he wanted. A lot of times the movement would
attract my attention to begin with. He was
always a quiet mover; he didn't run, scream,
and hollar on his way over like Chris or fall
over fourteen of the chairs, you know. Even
before he got to me I could do it; all I'd
have to do is look at him and shake my head,
you know, visual eye contact. He turned
right there and headed for the bathroom. I
knew what he wanted.

R: So you trusted that he wasn't giving you a
big line.

L: Um, hum (Viewing Session, 8/27/79).

As illustrated in Figure 25, when Sean approached the read-
ing table, the two sitting to the right of Ms. Lingo cued

in on her postural change and also directed their attention
to the interruption, thus diverting their attention away
from the task at hand which is reading.

These types of interruptions are examples of Ms. Lingo's operating in a polychronic time frame in order to keep
the total classroom running as smoothly as possible Doyle
(1979) further points out that:

> Teachers can, for example, keep an activity
> moving while watching students who are likely to
> originate misbehavior that spreads easily to other
> students in the room. This analysis suggests that
> teacher behavior is shaped by demands of activity
> management rather than information about the learn-
> ing states of individaul pupils (p. 30).

As a case in point on how the polychronic time frame
can be altered and to address the situations that Doyle
identifies as "activity management" and "learning states of
individuals," the reader's attention is referred to the les-
son during which a bookcase was placed between the reading
group and the rug area. Due to the fact that the reading
group had physical boundaries placed on them which isolated
them from the rest of the classroom, Ms. Lingo's time
frame was substantially altered from a polychronic to a
monochronic time frame, thus allowing her more time to tend
to the reading group and the "learning states of individual
students," thereby enhancing their opportunity to learn.

These behaviors (internal interruptions and distrac-
tions of the teacher's attention by activities outside the
group) are interpreted as interruptions in the broadest
sense of the term. These behaviors interrupt the flow of

the operating social system set up for reading instruction because they exert a profound effect on the positioning of group members and, therefore, alter the social structure of the group in question.

As an example of a within group interruption, and its effect on the opportunity to learn, refer to the lesson dated February 26, 1979. During that lesson, two similar interruptions occurred within a minute and forty-five seconds of one another, but were handled differently by Ms. Lingo. However, before these interruptions occurred, Ms. Lingo changed her position to monitor the rug area. Her action triggered a domino reaction that affected the remaining members of the reading group. Initially, this interruption involved two students who were sitting across from one another, both pulling out of the group posturally and diverting their attention away from reading instruction.

Before the first interruption began, Ms. Lingo altered her position, turning away from the reading group, facing the rug area (see Figure 26). Following her change of positioning, students in the group also began to change their positions, and the student on Ms. Lingo's immediate right began tying her shoe. In an attempt to bring everyone back into the reading position, Ms. Lingo tapped Kendra on the back and pointed to the book in front of her (see Figure 27). Meanwhile, across the table, Denise (on Ms. Lingo's immediate left) had also been typing her shoe

Figure 27. Ms. Lingo tapping Kendra on back.

(see Figure 28). Ms. Lingo looked at her and brought her back into the group, using a different type of feedback:

> Get your shoe tied and get your eyes on that
> book (Videotape Transcript, 2/26/79).

Through the duration of this interruption, Keyona (the student on Denise's left, Figure 28) continues to focus on the reading material despite the fact that everyone else in the group is momentarily distracted.

During a veiwing session, Ms. Lingo was asked to comment on what was occurring during this scene:

L: Here goes Kendra...she's starting to tie her shoes or something there...and Jenny's probably redressing herself or something...with her sweater. Somebody on the rug wants something. Kendra, Jenny, and Sean are all paying attention to the rug.

R: OK, so now you...

L: Tapped her (Kendra) on the back.

R: To get her back around.

L: Uh huh...and Jenny's watching me do it, too ...see...see...I don't know what Jenny does here. And Denise is starting to go off here ...she's not paying attention either.

R: So, she's looking the other way.

L: Yeah...I think she just picked her foot up or something...they love to tie their shoes.

R: Why? Did they just learn how?

L: I don't know...anything to get away from reading class, I guess...OK, that brought Kendra back and Jenny...someplace in here I tell Denise to keep her eyes on the book or something...what's she doing? I can't tell what she is doing...oh, she's trying to tie her shoes. That was it, "Get your shoe tied and get your eyes on the book." Oh, that was somebody else in the back of the room I was looking at.

Figure 28. Denise being told to stop tying her shoe.

R: Yes.

L: I got Denise back, but Jenny's still going
bananas there...redressing herself...some-
thing about that sweater...maybe it was a
new sweater that day or something.

This example of a within group interruption illus-
trates that when Ms. Lingo's position changed direction
from inside to outside the group, students at the reading
table picked up on her cues and four of the five also
changed their positioning to be in concert with her.

After viewing approximately eight hours of taped read-
ing lessons that identified those interruptions that
seemed part of the social interactions that took place in
the classroom under study and those that reoccurred across
several lessons, the interruptions were categorized in the
following manner:

1. Interruptions by students outside of reading

   group.

   a. Excused from room

   b. Asking a question

   c. Showing teacher seatwork

   d. Going to bookcase in back of reading

      group

   e. Creating a "heard" disturbance

2. Teacher-initiated interruptions amounting

   to "checks" on the classroom

   a. Rug area

   b. Seatwork area

    c. Aide's area

    d. "Sweeping" the room

3. Students inside the group interrupting the

    task at hand to gain teacher's attention

Three lessons for each group have been selected for analysis of these types of interruptions as they relate to reading instruction. They are the following:

Group 4 (high):   2/26, 3/5, 5/13

Group 1 (low):   2/12, 5/13, 6/5

Table 14 shows the types of interruptions and the frequency with which they occurred.

As can be seen, there are some differences in both the types of interruptions and their frequency of occurrance. In order to gain clearer insight regarding the reasons for these differences, Table 14 is divided into two separate tables: (1) interruptions from students outside the reading group and (2) teacher interruptions.

In order to further investigate the interruptions from students outside the group, those interruptions were categorized according to when they occurred during the lesson (e.g., beginning, middle, and end). Table 15 shows the juncture and frequency of occurrence.

As noted there is a higher frequency of interruption for the high group during the beginning of the lesson and a higher frequency of interruptions for the low group during the middle of the lesson. The end of the lesson has

Table 14. Types and Frequency
of Interruptions over Three Lessons.

Group	Interruptions from Students Outside					Teacher Interruptions				Student Inside Gaining Attention	TOTALS
	A	B	C	D	E	A	B	C	D		
4 (high)	0	4	2	1	10	17	6	3	3	4	50
1 (low)	1	4	1	1	6	15	10	3	10	7	58

KEY

Student Interruptions

A. Excused from room
B. Asking a question
C. Showing teacher seatwork
D. Going to bookcase in
   back of reading group
E. Creating a "heard" dis-
   turbance

Teacher Interruptions

A. Rug area
B. Seatwork area
C. Aide's area
D. "Sweeping" the room

Table 15. Junction and Frequency of
Interruptions over Three Lessons
from Outside Sources

Group	Beginning	Middle	End	TOTALS
4 (High)	9	2	6	17
1 (Low)	3	5	5	13

almost an equal number of outside interruptions for both groups. These differences are explained in the following analysis.

Based on the analysis of the tapes, fieldnotes, and Ms. Lingo's self-report, it can be inferred that the high group are better readers and also more task-oriented, especially at the beginning of the lesson. Because of this, Ms. Lingo allows more outside interruptions to occur and feels more comfortable taking time to maintain activities in the rest of the classroom during this part of the lesson. During a viewing session, it appeared that there were more interruptions for the high group than the low group. The researcher inquired as to why that might be the case and if Ms. Lingo felt comfortable with the interruptive behaviors.

> R: In what I've seen so far...there are more interruptions with the high group than with the low group.
>
> L: Right.
>
> R: So, kids feel freer to interrupt that higher group, and I'm also seeing that you even feel freer to kind of disengage yourself while they're reading in that high group...They keep going and you look around and stuff like that; that's what I mean by disengage.
>
> L: That's funny, too, because with that top group, I can remember times when I was called out of the room and with a minimum amount of distraction I could say, starting with whoever, for instance Kendra, "Kendra, you start reading this page. The rest pay attention; and if she has trouble with a word, help her. If she finishes before I get back, Sean, you start reading the next page. Then go right on around the table until everybody has had a chnce." They do it (Viewing Session Transcript, 8/27/79).

Teachers generally do not want to disrupt the learning
tasks in small group settings; however, they also feel that
it is important to attend to other students' needs during
that time (Merritt, 1979).

Note, also, that while group 4 is at the reading table,
groups 2 and 3 are engaged in independent work at the rug
and seatwork area, respectively. The question of discipline
in respect to the rug area was brought up during an inter-
view session. Ms. Lingo was asked to elaborate.

> R: Do you feel you have to watch one group real
> close or anything? As far as...

> L: As far as discipline goes? Yes, definitely.
> Group 2. All boy group.

> R: Yeh, boys...

> L: They're the neatest group as far as motivated,
> enthused, so easy to stimulate. But they're
> pistols, everyone of them. And that's why
> when they're on the rug listening, I have to
> keep one eye on them constantly. And they
> have to know that I'm keeping one eye on
> them.

> R: Well, I've noticed that, too.

> L: Ha, ha...I don't trust them (Interview Tran-
> script, 11/14/78).

It then follows that this is the best time, the begin-
ning of the lesson, to get group 4 started on the reading
lesson and also to monitor groups 2 and 3, helping them
settle into their tasks. Remember that reading lessons
typically begin with students' reading a selection silently
to answer pre-posed questions. This infers that for a per-
iod of time they can be self-sufficient enough to complete

the required reading and think about the answers to the
questions that have been raised.

It makes sense, then, to assume that Ms. Lingo pays
more attention to the low group students at the beginning
of the lesson to help them begin the task. Once they have
started their work, she can relax a little and give more
attention to the rest of the classroom. Hence, it appears
that she tolerates more outside interruptions during the
middle rather than the beginning of the lesson for the low
group. Finally, it has been documented that Ms. Lingo
does, in fact, allow more outside interruptions for the
high group than for the low group. It is assumed that
this is because she feels they are better readers and are
more able to manage themselves and tasks independently.

The picture is quite different, however, when teacher
initiated interruptions are examined. Table 16 shows the
types and frequencies of teacher-initiated interruptions
amounting to "checks" on the classroom.

As shown in Table 16, there appears to be a greater
number of teacher-iniated interruptions when the low group
is at the reading table than when the high group is at the
reading table. The data suggest that Ms. Lingo feels
freer to initiate an interruption while the low group is
at the reading table, especially in monitoring the seat-
work area and in "sweeping" the room. Because the students
in the low group are slower readers, there is more time
between readers, allowing Ms. Lingo to monitor events in

the rest of the classroom. In addition Ms. Lingo reports
that since she covers the same material several times in
the low group her involvement level is lowered enough so
that she can effectively operate polychronically--keeping
the reading group on task and monitoring the rest of the
room at the same time, "like a juggler."

Table 16.   Teacher Interruptions.

Group	A	B	C	D	TOTALS
4 (High)	17	6	3	3	29
1 (Low)	15	10	3	10	38

KEY:

A.   Rug area
B.   Seatwork area
C.   Aide's area
D.   "Sweeping" the room

While viewing the videotape of the low group at the
reading table, Ms. Lingo elaborated on the fact that she
could monitor the room and still listen to the students
during their lessons:

L: They had read it once supposedly; they
     weren't the center of attention or it
     wasn't their turn so, you know, I'm sure
     it's monotonous for them.

R: Oh, yeah.

L: It's got to be, can you imagine how monot-
     onous it is for me? Do you know how many
     years I've taught this?

R: You know them by heart. It looks like you can watch around and yet pick up on what's happening.

L: Good auditory memory (Viewing Session Transcript, 8/27/79).

In order to determine whether the distribution of interruptions differed significantly from chance, a chi-square (X^2) test of independence was computed to determine whether there was a statistically significant difference existing in the frequency of teacher-initiated interruptions during the time when the low and high groups were at the reading table.

The X^2 findings are summarized in Table 17.

Table 17.   Observed Frequencies of
Teacher-Initiated Interruptions.

Group	A	B	C	D	TOTALS
4 (High)	17	6	3	3	29
1 (Low)	15	10	3	10	38
Totals:	32	16	6	13	67

NOTE: X^2 = 8.077

The results of the X^2 test of independence rejected the null hypothesis that the distribution of teacher-initiated interruptions during reading instruction, for the high and low groups over three lessons, is not random. The high

level of significance (.05) strongly suggests that the interruptions were, indeed, purposeful and something is going on.

The strongest possibility for this researcher is that the first instructional event of the day opens with the low group at the reading table. Therefore, it makes sense that this is the initial opportunity for Ms. Lingo to set the tone for the whole classroom once all the children are placed at their respective learning areas. It follows then that this is also the point where she can prevent disruptive behavior patterns by attempting to create an instructional setting to frame the next hour and forty-five minutes. As previously mentioned, there appeared to be very few discipline problems and the noise level seemed lower than that of a typical first grade classroom. This very well may be one of the reasons for that calm.

As illustrated and described in Table 14, 15, and 16, there appear to be differences between the high and low ability reading groups with respect to types and frequencies of interruptions that take place. These differences can, at first glance, be seen quantitatively in the frequency of occurrence and total number of interruptions. However, it is how and when the high and low ability reading groups react to those interruptions that seem to have an effect on the overall opportunity to learn and practice reading.

In order to look at the qualitative effect of an interruption, it is necessary to know to know two things. First, how did the high and low reading groups react when an interruption occured; i.e., did they or did they not continue the task of learning or practicing reading. And, second, when did the interruption occur during the lesson and what was the likelihood that the high and low reading groups would discontinue the task of learning and practicing reading when an interruption occurred.

Table 18 shows (a) total amount of interruptions for both the high and low ability reading groups across three lessons, (b) total number of times that the students were taken away from the task at hand during those interruptions, (c) the place during the lesson where the interruptions occurred, and (d) the ratio of teacher initiated interruptions to outside interruptions for both the high and low reading groups.

During the beginning segment of the reading lessons for both the high and low groups, there is an equal number of interruptions for both groups. Also the number of times that the low reading group becomes distracted and take themselves off task is three times as opposed to two times for the high group, indicating that in the beginning PS of the reading lesson both group have a similar number of interruptions and react in a similar fashion.

Table 18. Total Interruptions and Interruptions Taking Students Off Task for Groups 1 and 4 at Three Points Across Three Lessons.

Group	Tape Number	Beginning[@]		Middle[@]		End[@]		Total[3]
		Total[1]	Off Task[2]	Total[1]	Off Task[2]	Total[1]	Off Task[2]	
4 (high)	1	2	0	5	2	3	1	
	2	9	2	5	1	8	0	
	3	6/17	1/3	7/17	1/4	5/16	0/1	8/50
		(8-9)		(15-2)		(10-6)		
1 (low)	1	4	0	7	1	10	5	
	2	7	0	7	6	8	3	
	3	6/17	2/2	3/17	1/8	6/24	3/11	21/58
		(14-3)		(12-5)		(19-5)		

[@]Parts of lesson
[1]Total interruptions for this part of lesson
[2]Interruptions that take students off task
[3]Total interruptions that take students off task/Total interruptions for that group

NOTE: Referring to Table 15, it was shown that the junction and frequency of interruptions over three lessons from outside sources varied between the high and low groups. When Table 15 and Table 18 are matched with one another, of the 17 total interruptions for the low group during the beginning segment of the lesson, three of those interruptions were from outside sources, leaving 14 that were teacher-initiated.

One interpretation of this pattern is that the low ability reading group is fresh and eager to start reading, hence accounting for the low number of times they become distracted from reading instruction. During an interview session, Ms. Lingo was asked to explain why she chose the low group to start reading instruction. She stated that:

> All right, if I get them first, I've got their
> attention. They haven't heard anything else,
> other than the directions for the seatwork,
> to boggle their minds, to have to remember.
> They haven't been to the listening center.
> They haven't had any stimulus there (Inter-
> view Transcript, 11/21/78)

Hence, in the beginning participation structure (PS) of a typical reading lesson, both the high and low ability reading groups appear to protect their social boundaries in a similar fashion to fend off intrusions and distractions that take them away from the task of learning and practicing reading.

However, when Tables 15 and 18 are matched with one another, of the 17 total interruptions for the low group during the beginning PS, three of those interruptions were from outside sources, leaving 14 that were teacher initiated. Of the 17 interruptions for the high group, nine of these were from outside sources and eight were teacher initiated. This difference appears to lie in the fact that the low group is the first reading group of the day and, as previously stated, this is the time when Ms. Lingo (operating polychronically) is busy monitoring the

rest of the classroom, getting them organized and set-tled into the remaining three learning stations. As Ms. Lingo states:

> Well, when I'm there in that reading group, though, I'm not only directing that one; I'm taking care of the ones on the rug and at their seats, too. I've got to have all of them in my line of vision (Interview Tran-script, 8/27/79).

It is not until the middle PS that the boundaries of the low group appear to break as students respond to both external and internal interruptions and turn their atten-tion to outside the reading table. In the high group, the students do not become as distracted and keep their focus to the task at hand: learning and practicing reading. As McDermott (1976) has indicated, poorer readers seem to lose their interest in the task at hand and their social boundaries are easier to break. By all appearances such is the case for the low ability reading group under study.

As can be seen in Table 18, during the middle PS, when the low group was interrupted, they took themselves off the task of learning and practicing reading twice as often as the high group, although both groups had an equal number of interruptions.

In the final PS of the reading lesson, the frequency of interruptions and the low group's response to those interruptions shows an even greater discrepancy. The low group is interrupted 24 times as opposed to 16 times for the high group. However, more critical is the fact that

during this final PS the low group turns their attention
away from reading instruction 11 times as opposed to only
once for the high group during the same PS.

As mentioned earlier, it is during this PS that round
robin oral reading typically takes place. Ideally, this is
the time when the members of the group not reading have an
opportunity to follow along and silently practice their
reading skills. But the low group are poor readers and
their reading rate is slow and laborious, thus not holding
the attention of the other group members (McDermott, 1976).

By matching Tables 15 and 18, it is also evident
that Ms. Lingo, during the final PS, initiates 19 of the
24 interruptions of the low group as opposed to ten
teacher-initiated interruptions for the high group. It
is necessary to recall that this is the time, the end of
the reading lesson, when the other reading groups in the
classroom are finishing up their learning activities,
creating a lot of commotion in the rest of the room; and
because Ms. Lingo operates in a polychronic time frame,
she feels it imperative to attend to activities other
than and in conjunction with the event that is taking
place at the reading table. As stated earlier, Ms. Lingo
feels she has to have all the students in her line of
vision and attend to the learning stations in the rest of
the classroom.

Summary

By means of patterns in handling interruptions, different information regarding the rules for social conduct and reading are conveyed to the low group than are conveyed to the high group during reading instruction; i.e., the low group is "told" by the positioning of Ms. Lingo, that it is permissible to look away from the reading table during the time allocated for learning and practicing reading and, therefore, taking themselves away from an opportunity to learn and practice reading. These differences in turn affect the information conveyed to both groups regarding reading skills.

It appears, then, that the high group, over a span of an entire reading lesson, holds their boundaries and remains on task more consistently than the low ability reading group. This phenomenon may be defined as "perseverance" at task (Carroll, 1963). As an example of their perseverance, during the lesson of 5/13 (middle PS), Ms. Lingo looked over the rug area saying, "Don't unplug that!" Nobody in the group looked up, and all remained on task, following along while Erica was reading. During the beginning PS of another lesson (3/5, tape juncture #35), Ms. Lingo got up to adjust the tape deck being used at the rug area. The reading group continued on task, reading silently to answer a question posed prior to her leaving the group. This kind of behavior was rarely observed for the low ability reading group.

As can be seen in Table 18, the farther into the lesson they go, the more distracted the low group become and, thus, pull out of the lesson, watching and listening to Ms. Lingo interact with the rest of the classroom as a whole. As stated in the beginning of this chapter, her postural positioning seemed to function as a cue to contextualization for them more often than for the high group which supports the notion (Gumperz, 1979) that positioning does have impact on the groups cited, expecially the low ability reading group. And that such posture when it interacts with reading differences and the dynamics of small group interaction makes reading a very different event, indeed, from group to group.

As shown, when the interruptions are descriptively analyzed in this particular classroom, the effects of these interruptions and how the teacher interacts and conveys information to the high and low ability reading groups in relation to these interruptions seems to have a greater adverse effect on the opportunity to learn and practice reading for the low ability reading group than it has on the high ability reading group.

Synopsis

After reviewing previous research pertaining to classroom interactions during the time allocated for reading instruction, interviewing the classroom teacher and aide, and analyzing the videotapes taken during the

process of collecting the data, it was described and illustrated that four distinctive communicative behaviors taking place during the time that was allocated for reading instruction do appear to have impact on the overall opportunity to learn and practice reading in the classroom under study. These communicative behaviors were identified as positioning, teacher feedback, taking turns, and interruptions.

Positioning was defined as what a person does with his/her body, eyes, head, etc., as s/he is engaged in an interaction with another person(s). Positioning then becomes a form of communication. Under the subheadings of reading lesson, outside interruptions, the bookcase, and changing questions, it was shown that, in fact, Ms. Lingo uses this mode of communication to convey information regarding reading skills and rules for social conduct for both the high and low ability reading groups.

During a reading lesson, this communicative behavior was exhibited when the high ability reading group changed from round robin oral reading to choral reading. That is, when the postural positions among the group members shifted, these shifts co-occurred with the change from oral to choral reading. The members of this group kept each other informed on what was going on and, therefore, changed the involvement of the participants.

It was also shown that when an interruption occurred and Ms. Lingo shifted her postural position from inside

to outside the group(s), the reading group(s) picked up on her positioning and became fragmented and distracted from the task at hand. However, when the physical environment was altered, moving the bookcase to retard access from outsiders into the group and vice-versa, the reading group appeared to be able to maintain their boundaries more effectively, thus providing an atmosphere of togetherness in a joint learning venture.

Under the subheading changing questions, a change of positioning occurred when the mode of questions shifted from factual to inferential questioning. It was described and illustrated that when this occurred, the postural focus changed and all the participants at the reading table became involved in a joint venture of answering a question, thus providing an opportunity of togetherness and group cohesiveness.

In the secition describing teacher feedback, it was shown that in the classroom under study, this teacher uses feedback as a transition mechanism between one student and another to continue the flow of the instructional episode, to signal the end of a participation struction, to serve as a means to bring the group back together to a common juncture and to offer praise to the reading groups as a whole for a job well done.

The section entitled taking turns described and illustrated that everyone, regardless of group membership, had an equal opportunity to read orally either alone or

in a group and were randomly selected to begin reading. There were also occasions when a student was asked to read to get them back on task.

However, such was not the case in answering teacher directed questions. When questions were directed to the high ability reading group, a distinct difference from that of the low group occurred. Members of the high group all seemed to have equal opportunities to answer questions in a symmetrical fashion while members of the low group did not have equal opportunities to answer questions and were called on without any apparent order. Because of this difference, members of the high group appear to have a more equal opportunity to learn and practice reading as opposed to the members of the low ability reading group.

Finally, under the heading of interruptions, it was shown that previous research has looked at interruptions within the context of reading related circumstances and has neglected to look at interruptions as an intrusion into the reading group and the task at hand that occur when the teachers' attention is drawn elsewhere in the room, from outside the group and from within the group.

The notion of time (polychronic and monochronic) was shown to be an influencing factor that precipitated an interruption in that it "allowed" Ms. Lingo to inadvertently open the physical boundaries of the reading group both from within and outside the group.

It was also described and illustrated by analyzing the various forms of data collected that the types and frequencies of interruptions varied between the high and low ability reading groups under study. At first glance, it appeared that the difference was minimal and that the interruptions seemed to have an equal amount of impact on both groups. However, in looking at <u>when</u> these interruptions occurred during a reading lesson and in analyzing <u>how</u> the individual groups in question reacted when an interruption occurred, a significant difference surfaced. When an interruption occurred during the time that the low ability reading group was at the reading table, they became disorganized and allowed a break in their boundaries, thus taking themselves off the task of learning and practicing reading more frequently as opposed to the high ability reading group which held their boundaries and remained on task. Therefore, the "real" difference lies in the qualitative effect of those ever present interruptions not in the quantitative effect in respect to this classroom under study.

This study extends and expands the notion of interruptions and how they are connected to such behaviors as <u>positioning</u>, <u>turn taking</u>, and <u>teacher feedback</u> as they occur within the participation structures which comprise the entire reading lesson. Also, it is within the whole social context of a classroom where these behaviors take place. Therefore, when these communicative behaviors are

descriptively analyzed in this particular classroom, the effect of these behaviors and how this particular teacher conveys information to the high and low ability reading groups in relation to these behaviors seem to have a greater adverse effect on the opportunity to learn and practice reading for the low group than it has on the high ability reading group.

CHAPTER V

CONCLUSIONS AND IMPLICATION

Introduction

The aim of this study was to observe, describe, and analyze the social relations as they are manifested in interactions between a teacher and students in both high and low ability reading groups. The study was undertaken to document these interactions and practicing reading, such as time available to read and instructional feedback. In addition, the study considered whether such conditions provide different opportunities to learn and practice reading for the high and low ability groups.

In order to provide clear insights into the social relations operant within a classroom in general and within high and low ability reading groups in particular, the following two general questions were posed in this study:

1. Are there systematic differences in how the teacher interacts with the high and low ability reading groups, and do those differences have an effect on the opportunity to learn?

2. How does the teacher convey information to children in different reading groups regarding reading skills and the rules for social conduct?

To answer these questions, the descriptive analysis of reading lessons occurring in this particular classroom was presented in the preceding chapters.

This chapter is divided into three sections. The first section is entitled "Answers to the Research Questions." Within this section, the two general questions posed are examined and answered as they relate with one another. The second section is entitled "Conclusions." Within this section, conclusions are drawn by referring to the analytic description in Chapter IV to support the answers to those two general questions. The third section, under the heading of "Implications," contains four subheadings addressing the need for further study of the following features of classroom instruction which, either individually or in interaction, help to constitute the environment in which students learn: (a) the <u>physical setting</u> of the classroom, (b) the <u>role of the aide</u>, (c) the role of teachers in relationship to the <u>dynamics</u> of small group instruction, and (d) the influence of the different <u>units of time</u> (polychronic and monochronic) within activities as they interact in a classroom setting.

Answers to the Research Questions

The research questions posed at the outset of this study were the following:

Question #1

      Are there systematic differences in how
teacher interactions transpire between
the high and low ability reading groups,
and do those differences have an effect
on the opportunity to learn?*

Question #2

      How does the teacher convey information
to children in different reading groups
regarding reading skills and the rules
for social behavior?

Before these questions can be answered, it is first ne-
cessary to point out that each question is related to one
another, the first being answerable in terms of the second.

The way the teacher conveyed information to the chil-
dren in both the high and low ability reading groups was
by means of various patterns of behavior that were dis-
cussed in Chapter IV. It was in these behaviors that
differences in interaction emerged to provide answers to
the questions posed. With these notions in mind, the
answer to the first part of the first question is "yes":
this research demonstrates that there <u>are</u> systematic dif-
ferences in how the interactions between teacher and stu-
dent(s) transpire in the high and low ability reading
groups in this particular classroom. The answer to the
second question provides evidence for these differences in
treatment by means of description of the different ways

* It should be pointed out that Question #1 is con-
structed of two subquestions which will be answered sep-
arately. This will become clearer in the answering of
the question.

the teacher conveys information regarding reading skills and rules for social conduct in the two reading groups. Not only do these differences in treatment exist, but the data show that they have an effect on the resources available and the opportunity that the students have in different reading groups to learn and practice reading. The overall opportunity to learn and practice reading was both qualitatively and quantitatively different for the low group than for the higher reading group. These qualitative and quantitative differences and their implications will be discussed further in the next sections of this chapter.

Conclusions

It has been shown that the high and low ability reading groups in this classroom are organized differently, both socially and pedagogically. The high group, because it contains more competent readers, appears to hold its social boundaries more effectively against intruders than the lower ability reading group (McDermott, 1976; Allington, 1978, 1980). Therefore, the low ability reading group, as an activity, appears to be more distractable and interruptable because of their relative inability to maintain social boundaries due to the complexities related to their difficulties in reading. During these complexities, those communicative behaviors that were previously identified as postural positioning, turn taking, teacher feedback, and interruptions occurred. Therefore, the problem

stems from the low group's reading ability and how they interacted with those communicative behaviors.

The first section of Chapter IV, "Posture," graphically showed that Ms. Lingo posturally shifts her body to attend to matters outside of the reading groups. This, in turn, breaks down the social boundaries (Scheflen, 1974) and not only effects the reading gorups, but also affected the groups placed around the room at various learning stations, signaling to them that it was acceptable to interrupt the group at the reading table. It is also shown that moving a bookcase between the reading groups and the rest of the classroom has a profound impact on the postural positions and attention to the task at hand by both Ms. Lingo and the students at the reading table. This move may have benefitted the reading group by creating a physical boundary between the reading table and the rest of the classroom, thus helping to maintain the social boundaries that are so important to group structures (Scheflen, 1974). By being able to maintain their boundaries, an atmophere of togetherness in a joint venture is provided, thereby enhancing the reading group's overall opportunity to learn and practice reading.

Ms. Lingo more often than not uses reading time, for both the high and low ability reading groups, for the same purpose. That is, she not only must attend to the teaching of reading, but strongly feels that she also must somehow monitor the rest of the classroom for

impending behavior problems and act as a source of infor-
mation for those students who are not engaged in learning
and practicing reading. This conflict of demands has
implicatons for her use of time. That use of time can be
inferred, in part, by her postural position as she pulls
in and out of the respective reading groups.

Ms. Lingo's positioning to monitor simultaneously
activities inside and outside of the reading group exerts
a profound qualitative effect on the low ability reading
group, thus affecting their opportunity to learn and prac-
tice reading. The managing of multiple activities in
time and space has been called "proxemics" by Hall (1958).
This thesis has shown that management of time for Ms.
Lingo may be polychronic; the expectation for the stu-
dents' time will be monochronic--they will attend to one
thing at a time. The analysis has shown that this dif-
ference is often the source of cues to students that may
mislead them from their focus of attention to the task of
learning and practicing reading.

The analysis of "Teacher Feedback" presented in this
thesis shows that in this particular first grade class-
room, Ms. Lingo uses feedback as a transition between the
evaluation and initiation processes that are part of the
school lessons (Bellack, 1966; Mehan, 1979) to continue
the flow of the educational episode and to bring the
group back together to a common juncture. Feedback is
also used to offer praise to the reading group as a whole

and to change from one participation structure to another. There does not appear to be any qualitative difference in the use of feedback for either the high or low ability reading group.

The act of "taking turns" to read appears to be consistent between groups as Ms. Lingo attempts to give all students of both groups an equal opportunity to read. As the evidence cited shows, time was a constant factor in how turn taking was allocated among the students for both the high and low ability reading groups. Ms. Lingo also called on students in both groups as a method to "bring" them back to the task at hand.

However, it was also pointed out in the analysis that the form of questions asked by the teacher differ between the two groups. The questions directed to the high ability reading group allow greater participation and are of the sort to promote thought-processes and reasoning not required on the factual questions directed to the lower reading group.

Thus, answering teacher directed questions is different for the two groups under study; the high group students all seem to be equal participants in answering questions and create an environment of continuity and cohesiveness. The members of this group all know that they will have equal opportunities to answer questions which seems to keep them more involved with the task at hand.

Conversely, the low group is shown to have an erratic pattern of answering questions, thus not creating an environment of continuity and cohesiveness to help keep them involved with the task at hand. The order of being called on to answer questions is more predictable and equally distributed within the high ability reading group than the low ability reading group, thereby providing the high group a greater opportunity than the low group to learn from their reading.

The evidence cited in the section entitled "Interruptions" shows that the treatment by Ms. Lingo of the high and low group differs in that she believes that the high group can and does stay on task in a manner that the low group, because of its members' reading abilities and the inability to hold out intruders and maintain social boundaries, cannot (McDermott, 1976; Allington, 1978, 1980). As previously documented, by posturally shifting her body toward and away from the low group, Ms. Lingo models non-attentive behaviors. The low group, picking up these contextual cues (Gumperz, 1977), change their involvement from "in" to "out" of the reading lesson. It follows then that those children, especially in the low group who have already been seen as inattentive and having behavior problems (McDermott, 1976; Allington, 1978) interpret Ms. Lingo's postural shifts as cues freeing them to turn away from reading instruction and join her

in monitoring activities in the rest of the classroom
(see Figures 29 and 30). Ideally, the low group's atten-
tion should be on the task at hand which is learning and
practicing reading. But, as Ms. Lingo explained during
a viewing session:

R: Now, while Tony's reading, what are the
rest supposed to be doing?

L: Following along while he reads. You no-
tice very few of them area. That was just
too much attending for them (Viewing
Session Transcript, 8/27/79).

Even though she is aware of the fact that "very few of
them" are following along, their behavior is, for all
practical purposes, not commented upon during the lesson.

It was also described and illustrated that the dif-
ferences between the high and low groups regarding types
and frequencies of interruptions seemed minimal. However,
in looking at when these interruptions occur during a
reading lesson and in analyzing how the individual groups
in question react when an interruption occurs, an impor-
tant difference surfaces. The low ability reading group
becomes disorganized and allows a break in their bound-
aries, thus taking themselves off the task of learning
and practicing reading more frequently as compared to the
high ability reading group which holds their boundaries
and remains on task. This socially constructed lack of
"perseverance" on the part of the low group, in contrast
to the high group which stays on task, has a profound
qualitative effect on the low group's overall opportunity
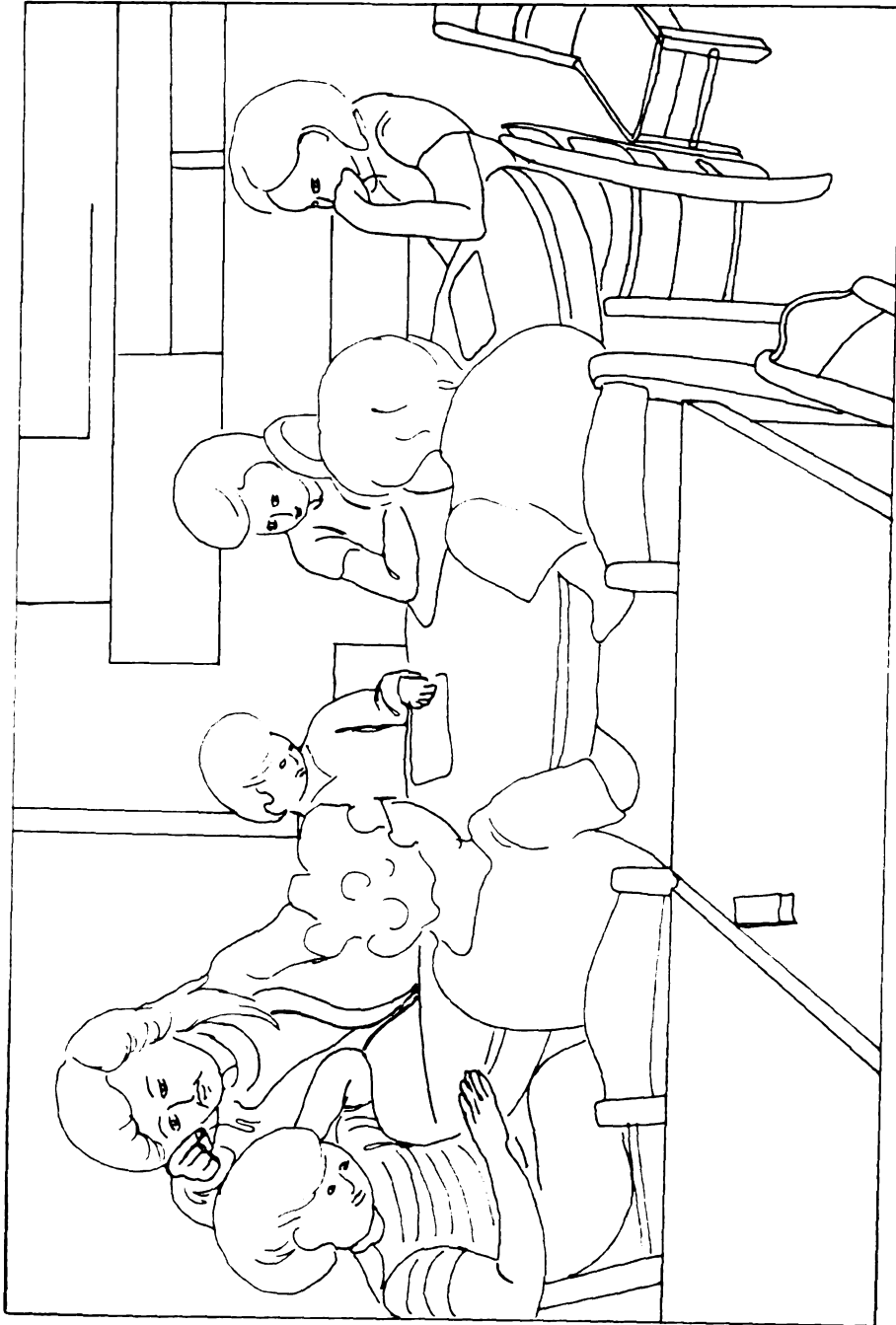
Figure 29.

to learn and practice reading. When the low ability reading group directs their attention to other activities outside of the reading group, which breaks down the groups's postural and social boundaries, this permits them a series of interruptions from the outside which also means a loss of time for reading instruction.

By systematically analyzing the reading lessons for both the high and low ability reading groups within the context of the whole classroom, where the event of learning and practicing reading takes place, one can see that, in fact, this particular classroom teacher interacts differently with the two groups under study in conveying information regarding reading skills and rules for social conduct. In fact, the reading group is more of a "reading event" for the high ability reading group than for the low ability reading group. The high group appears to read more, to have more stimulating interactions when answering teacher directed questions, and to have a greater opportunity to participate equally in the process of learning and practicing reading.

It can, therefore, be concluded, after observing the classroom under study for eight months, looking at video-taped reading lessons for both the high and low ability reading groups, holding viewing and interview sessions, re-reading field notes, and systematically analyzing and describing the behavioral interactions that were ever present during the time allocated for reading instruction

that, in this particular classroom, the quanity and qual-
ity of time and opportunity to learn and practice reading
was less for the low ability reading group than for the
high ability reading group.

Implications

Teachers and students in the United States are, by pub-
lic law, required to spend approximately six hours a day in
classrooms for 180 days during the school year, beginning in
September and ending approximately the second week of June.
As Jackson (1968) states, "Only in schools do thirty or more
people spend several hours each day literally side by side"
(p. 8). Because of this, social intimacy in schools is un-
matched anywhere else in our society.

Due to this mandated togetherness, it would be extreme-
ly difficult, if not impossible, for either teachers or stu-
dents to avoid the social relations and/or interactions that
occur within this type of environment. In fact, social in-
teraction is the medium of their academic transactions
(Bellack, 1966; Mehan, 1978, 1979).

It should be remembered that the classroom under
study was an open classroom consisting of twenty-
four children, divided into four small groups, who were re-
quired to move through four learning stations, spending
twenty minutes at each, within a time frame of one hour and
forty-five minutes. It has been shown that due to the
physical and educational structure and the student movement

in this particular classroom, interruptions frequently oc-
curred.

What is implied by this analysis is that an open,
activity based, learning environment can raise unique
management issues for the teacher and effect the nature
of opportunities available to students for learning.
The notion of management implied here raises four main
issues for further educational research and teacher train-
ing. First, further research is needed to investigate
whether the <u>physical setting</u> affects learning with respect
to boundary-keeping during small group instruction. Se-
cond, educators need to study further <u>the role of the</u>
<u>aide in the classroom</u> and whether that role has been ac-
curately defined so that s/he may be utilized in the most
constructive way. Third, teacher training programs need
to be expanded to include a curriculum that focuses <u>on</u>
<u>the dynamics of face-to-face interactions with small in-</u>
<u>structional groups</u> as well as the academic content they
will cover. Fourth, the notion of <u>different ways of</u>
<u>handling time</u> (e.g., polychronic, monochronic) has been
shown to influence the ongoing interactions between teach-
er and students during reading instruction. Further re-
search, specifically using methods and theory drawn from
ethnography and sociolinguistics, is needed to gain deeper
insights of how these different units of time function
within a classroom setting.

Physical Setting

As evidenced by positioning a bookcase between the reading group and the rest of the classroom, it was fairly easy to restructure and significantly affect the social context within which the reading groups existed. During an interview, Ms. Lingo acknowledged this as follows: "Like when we moved the bookcase between me and the rug (area) ..." (Interview Transcript, 7/27/79).

It is not suggested that teachers should immediately start rearranging the furniture in their classrooms. However, when a bookcase in this room was moved, it did curtail the frequency of the types of interruptions investigated in this study. If the teaching and practicing of reading require environments which enhance various qualities of instruction (e.g., perseverance, time allowed to learn; Carroll, 1963), then perhaps the arrangement of furniture and/or barriers in some classrooms would make them more conducive to reading instruction and ensure those qualities to be optimum. But what is most important is the sensitivity to issues of the social meaning of space so that these kinds of things can be made meaningful by the classroom teacher.

Role of the Aide

In this study, it was discovered, through interview transcripts, that Ms. Help's main functions in this classroom were (a) to teach developmental skills to a small group of children, (b) to monitor that group for any beha-

vior or pedagogical problems, (c) to be utilized in curtailing a discipline problem in the rest of the room when Ms. Lingo "doesn't catch it," and (d) to perform minor secretarial functions.

It makes good sense that in classrooms, especially in open classrooms, the duties and responsibilities of the aide should be carefully studied, analyzed, and (re-)evaluated.

Currently, paraprofessionals are effectively utilized in many professional fields such as medicine and law. If offered the proper training and opportunities, teacher aides could also become more effective assets to classrooms. This, in turn, would relieve the classroom teacher from total involvement in all the activities of the whole classroom and allow him/her to focus on that which s/he received professional training to do: to impart knowledge and skills to children.

Dynamics of Small Group Instruction

As a corollary, perhaps the role of the teacher should also be studied with respect to the various educational and curricular environments that are encountered, before the fact rather than after s/he is already in the classroom.

If a teacher operates in a classroom to impart knowledge and skills, this calls attention to the need to include group management as a component of teacher training curricula. This training is necessary so that the teacher will understand the dynamics of face-to-face interactions

that are manifested by self-contained instructional groups in the context of a larger social system: the whole classroom. As described in Chapter III, Ms. Lingo appeared to be caught between the reading group and the rest of the children in the classroom. She had a responsibility to remain attentive to the reading group and their needs; but, on the other hand, she had to be available to other children to answer questions, mediate disturbances, give permission to leave the room, etc. When these events co-occurred, it was shown that attention to the children outside the reading group took precedence. This, in turn, decreased the time available for those students' trying to learn and practice reading. Further classroom research in this area would answer questions of group management and how to facilitate small group instruction which also permits more time for learning than was exhibited in the classroom under study.

Units of Time

The way teachers and students perceive time differs in that a teacher divides his/her time between an instructional group and the rest of the classroom, whereas students are necessitated to attend only to the task at hand.

It has been shown that when monochronic subjects (students) and polychronic subjects (teachers) interact within the same social system (a classroom), interruptions are more likely to occur than when the participants are either all monochronic or all polychronic situations.

It would seem that some sort of spatial and/or temporal restructuring of that system would help minimize such difficulties when they occur. Hall (1969) states:

> If, however, these two types (monochronic, polychronic) are interacting with each other, much of the difficulty they experience can be overcome by the proper structuring of space (p. 173).

The notion of the different definitions of time (e.g., monochronic, polychronic) needs to take its place as an integral part of future educational research. By employing the methodology used in this study, researchers could gain further insight into the function of time and the important role it plays between a teacher and students and by sharing these methods and insights with teachers, they could become more effective agents of change in their own classrooms.

It appeared that when Ms. Lingo and the reading group operated simultaneously on monochronic time, lessons were smoother, all participants showed more interest in the task at hand, and there were fewer outside interruptions. The whole reading group was operating in concert and, thus, set up boundaries that kept intruders out. This not only affected the quantity of time spent on lessons, but also enhanced the opportunity to learn. The knowledge and insights gained by studying these two time frames in natural settings would be invaluable to classroom teachers as they try to manage and facilitate learning in small instructional groups.

This study suggests that greater sensitivity on the part of educators to the physical setting of the classroom to the role of aides, the role of the teachers in relationship to the dynamics of small instructional groups, and the different ways of handling time can increase the likelihood that all children in a classroom will have ample opportunity to learn and practice reading.

APPENDIX

FIELD NOTES, VIEWING

SESSIONS, AND

TIME LINE

November 5, 1978

Entry   Went to Peterson Elementary and talked to class-
room teacher. She has no problems with me in the
room. She and another teacher are dividing a
cluster reading plan, and she suggested that I al-
so talk to her. Teacher #1 has low-middle group;
teacher #2 high-middle.

#1 asked what I wanted to do and agreed to my re-
search. I told her that I planned to use both
35mm and VTR. She balked at VTR. Said I could
come whenever I wanted to.

Checked with principal, and he said no problems
being in school. If I wanted to do the whole
school, he would have to check "downtown."

Payoff   #1 wants me to test out and diagnose a couple of
her students and find out levels and difficulties.

FIELD NOTES

November 7, 1978

8:48   They (students) all start together. Has them sit-
        ting on a rug; she's in front of them. ___ claps
        out a rhythm, then the kids try to figure out what
        song it is. When they do, they all join in clap-
        ping and singing the song. ___ did about 2-3
        songs, then the kids can come up and clap out a
        song. Other kids try to guess the song. When one
        of them gets the right answer, they all, in unison,
        clap and sing out the song.

9:00   Reading groups: Kids leave room to go to other
        reading room. Kids come in to join ___ groups.

        Board work.

        Make a red rose.
        Make a green ring.
        Make an orange rattle.

9:02   Plays a song about a specific letter. Today's let-
        ter is r. The letter is on a poster in the front
        of the room.

9:06   Asked a kid to read the first line of board work.
        He read everything except rose. He didn't know how
        to read rose, but he knew it was a flower with
        "pickers." Seems to have a speech problem, trouble
        with r sound.

9:07   All kids in unison read the board work, then they
        are asked what words start with r. They stand up
        in groups and are asked to say a word starting with
        r, and the word is put on the board.

9:13   Splitting up into groups. They're just called
        Group 1, Group 2, etc. There are four groups..

        Group 1: round table with ___, reading.
        Group 2: with aide doing shapes, geometric.
        Group 3: board work.
        Group 4: record machine; dittoes accompany the
                  record.

9:15   #1 review of words <u>at</u>, <u>cat</u>, <u>fat</u>, etc. Initial
        sounds. No order in who says words. Review of
        letters and sounds (sounds and symbol connection).
        New girl in group--little, quiet. Sitting away
        from table. ___ just told me she doesn't speak
        English. The "regulars" almost pre-empt what ___
        is going to do. Seem to enjoy what they're doing.

        New kid getting into it. Doing some of the sounds.
        It may be because the sound values are the same in
        English.

9:30   Group 1 matching upper to lower case letters.

9:31   Group 4 done; doing seat/board work.

9:32   All groups change:

        Group 1 to machine.
        Group 2 to round table.
        Group 3 to aide.
        Group 4 to board work.

9:35   Group 2 starting reading. They're into books.
        "Fat, cat, gnat." Discipline problem--boy, black,
        Dion. All boys: two Chicano, two black, two
        white.

9:37   Instruction starting. Kids are told to read two
        sentences and to find out what "Dan is supposed to
        do." There are three sets of sentences. Silent
        reading. Now into oral reading. Started with
        Dion. Dion messing around. ___ has him almost
        sitting on her lap. Dion getting a lot of atten-
        tion. This group seems to be not as attentive as
        Group 1.

9:50   Next page: "A hat on a man" (p. 25). Started
        with Dion again. He read the title; seems like
        instruction's breaking down.

9:52   Group 2 leaves. ___ goes over to help new girl
        fill out paper to do board work.

9:55   Group 3 at round table ready to go. This group is
        on page 26.

9:56   ___ at table. Reading starts--same as #2. Read
        sentence, answer question. Silent reading, oral
        reading of whole page. Everyone reads.

10:01   ___ goes to machine. Discipline problem. Jerry
        kept reading when ___ left.

10:02   ___ is back. More oral reading.

10:07   Doing page 27; new words. They were to learn these last night (homework): <u>can</u>, <u>man</u>, <u>ran</u>, <u>Dan</u>, <u>fan</u>, <u>pan</u>, <u>van</u>. All the kids reading words out loud.

10:10   Group 2 done at machine, going to seat work.

10:11   Group 3 leaves to do machine work. ___ checks out new girl.

10:12   Group 4 comes to round table. ___ assigning seats to Group 2, gets machine work started.

10:14   Group 4 on page 34; reviewing words on page 33. Some still finding page.

10:15   Doing words--<u>cap</u>, <u>lap</u>, <u>map</u>. These words are read with similar words: <u>cat</u>/<u>cap</u>, <u>gnat</u>/<u>nap</u>.

10:17   Page 34; picks kid to read title--"On Dan's Lap." Same as other groups: read sentence, answer questions.

10:19   Done answering questions. Reading orally, whole page. The kids not reading seem to follow along and pay attention to the task at hand.

10:30   Two more kids to read. Other three are moving around, rolling up their books, bored.

10:31   Reading over.

10:32   Kids go back to other room; kids come back to this room.

10:34   RECESS

          ___ just told me the new girl is from the Philippines. Daniel's gone. New second grader, Shawn.

VIEWING SESSIONS

Viewing Session I with ___, July 27, 1979

Group 4 (high ability reading group)
Date of tape: February 26, 1979
Running numbers: ___ to ___

I have a twenty minute segment of video tape I would like
you to look at and comment on. The tape is of the last
reading group and the session took place the end of February
1979. There are some things I would like you to think about
as we're watching the tape:

1. How do you decide who gets to read first
   and so on?

2. How do the kids take turns in answering
   questions?

3. When or why do you shift from one student
   reading orally to a group of students
   reading orally?

Again, I'd like you to comment right along with the tape as
you watch it. Don't worry about interrupting the tape.
Activity goes by quickly on videotape; so if there are times
when you want to comment in detail, let me know, and we'll
shut off the tape so we can talk. I will also be audio
taping our conversation so I can get an accurate account of
this taping session.

Viewing Session July 27, 1979   Sample
                                                     Transcript
Lesson: February 26
Group 4

T   Ok, Sean?   It is...I sound like I am speaking a foreign
      language.

H   You are.

T   Jenny hasn't stopped moving yet.   She is trying to keep
      herself awake.

H   Is that what she is doing?

T   Uhhuh...they're pretty good; by that time, they'd for-
      gotten you were there.

H   Yeah, I was there a month before that.

T   Turn it down (looking at rug area).

H   Do you know what is going on there?

T   Somebody is doin' somethin' on the rug.   Probably play-
      in' with the volume control or somethin'.

H   Yeah.

T   Rrrr...you can't really hear 'em, readin' out loud,
      can ya?

H   It's pretty hard, ah...

T   How about if Jenny, Denise and Kendra read it together.
      Jenny's still movin'; I don't know how she reads.
      Ok, let's look at page 63...Kendra, spell the top row
      of words...spell it.
      Now sound it...what is it...bbbus...bus; next one,
      Jenny...Gus; next one Sean...going right around the
      table...no, what did you say...think about the um-
      brella...u-u-s-s...us; Keyona, do you know the circle
      word?

H   Is that circle word a new word for the day, then?

T   No, it's a Dolch word.

H   Ok.

T   It's not <u>here</u>; it's the opposite of <u>him</u>. <u>Her</u>! <u>Her</u>...
     all right, Denise, the first section of the sentence is
     about...? Next one, Kendra.

     G-gus, Jenny? Sean? Ok, Denise, can you read me the
     whole page, please? Us. H-E-R. Same thing; it's not
     <u>him</u>--it's...<u>her</u>.

     Did you see what I just did to Kendra (laughing)?

     Never even touched her; just put my foot over there
     and pushed.

     Ok, very good. Close your books. Sean, do you want
     to pick the books for me?

     That's it.

H   Yup. Ok, why don't we go through it again and comment
     on it.

T   I've seen enough.

H   Oh? What do you mean, you've seen enough?

     Yeah, the reading does get a lot better, when we get to
     the last tapes I got from June.

T   Yeah.

H   So the advancement was good.

T   There's somebody missin' from that group, though...a
     boy, maybe.

H   I don't know.

T   Maybe it'd be easier if you asked me questions.

H   Well, I can.

T   Then I'd know what you want.

H   Well, any one of those things where you see something
     happening; like, you know, when you look over at the
     rug, or...

T   Well, when I'm there in that reading group, though, I'm
     not only directing that one. I'm taking care of the
     ones on the rug and at their seats, too. I've got to
     have all of them in my line of vision.

H   Ok, and then...

T   Trying to discipline; well, trying to keep order, so to speak.

H   Yeah, and then Ms. Help, she takes care of just the table, then?

T   Basically, unless she catches somethin' that I miss.

H   But you're the...(teacher)

T   Like when we moved that bookcase between me and the rug, and I couldn't always see what was goin' on at the rug.

H   Oh, right. Yeah, just when you see something like that; like when you went...well, one of the things I pointed out right here. One kid will be reading, and then you might go to another kid, and they'll do it singly, and then, like, a bunch of them will.

T   That's strictly a time factor.

H   Ok, well, wait a minute. Let's get back to it, and then when we get to it, and then let's talk about it.

T   62, 62...that's probably 'cause they're sitting there saying 26; 26, here's 26. Panda...ok...we're goin' to read to see if all pups are bad.

H   You know how to work this thing, don't you? Or just tell me to stop.

T   Ok...and find out what pups do...see they're at the point right now where they're already reading to themselves.

H   Right now.

T   The whole game...you know; they're at the stage where they are independent enough to do that...and I know that they're goin' to read it...they have enough confidence in their own ability that they can read something to them...well, the whole page; not just one line, but the whole page which would be--what?--seven-eight lines maybe?--the whole story to themselves with the question beforehand; what they're looking for as they read.

H   Ok, is the question in their book? Or is it just...

T   No, it's in my book.

H   In your book; ok, and then you...ok.

T   I ask...we read the title; I ask the question...

H   Just like school.

T   Just like school, yeah.

H   You ask the questions, and they answer them.

T   Well, they read to find the answers, supposedly...but some of those questions in those books are so...uhm, what do I want to say...uhm, you know; it's not like how many hens did Ben have? You know, where it says right there in the sentence, Ben has ten hens; it's like...this one, it's uhm...what kind of a...well, like, you know--are all pups bad?

H   Ok, so that's an...(inferential question)

T   Yeah, yeah, right. Why aren't all pups bad?

H   Ok, so at this time, though they're all reading by themselves, looking for answers.

T   They're independent enough to be able to read the whole page to themselves.

H   Ok.

T   And while doing that, though, I'm watching each one of them, especially Denise who's on my, well on the right hand; she's on my left. My immediate left. Because she has the most trouble figuring out the words. So I try to keep a close eye on each of them. Denise and Sean, who can't see my eyes moving around the table. See, I got 'em close enough to me that...see? She only read to me the two sentences.

H   Ok, how do you know she only read two sentences?

T   'Cause I been watchin' her.

H   Ok.

T   She's verbal enough that she reads under her breath, you know; so I can tell when she comes to a word.

H   I'm just writing comments. 'Cause I gotta reconstruct this all. I tried to get numbers on the tape, but we can't do that here. Makes it a little harder.

T   Qiana was always reading half-way out loud, so I knew she was gettin' it.

H   Ok, what was going there, then? Do you remember?
(Looking at rug area.)

T   Jerry must have been laying down on the rug and laying
on somebody else's earphone cord or something. He was
probably lying down so that his cord was pulling the
jack away from the others, and you what that insti-
gates, don't you? A tug of war with my earphones.

H   Right...

T   See, there he goes.

H   Ok.

T   Denise is the one you're hearin', I think.

H   Yeah, that could be. It's pretty hard to distinguish
whose little voice is whose.

T   Do you see Keyona right there...what she did?

H   Yeah, what was that?

T   She was soundin' out a word, and it didn't make sense;
so she shook her head and went back and sounded it out
again.

H   Ok, now, how do you know that that's what she is doing?

T   I can hear her. I can hear her, but you can't on the
mike.

H   Ok, that makes sense.

T   Go back and make sure you can tell me the four things
that bad pups do, Jenny. There's four things that bad
pups do. Well, make sure you can tell me what those
four things are. Sure, you did.

H   Why, you don't think she did.

T   No.

H   Ok, and, again, how can you tell?

T   Because she got done too fast; 'cause I know if she
doesn't read as fast as Keyona or Kendra and for her
to get done before either of them...

H   Ok, so who would you say was the fastest in that group?

T   Keyona and Kendra were both pretty close and then...

H   Would that make them the best readers in that group?

T   As far as reading it, yeah...

H   Ability-wise.

T   They had the firmest grasp on their ability to sound things out, their phonetic skills and stuff. And I think they have the most confidence in their reading ability, too.

H   So you would consider them good students, then? In that particular setting.

T   Yes. Ok, Denise is in what we call Group 4; but later on she was moved to Group 3.

H   Ok, and that's the one on your left.

T   Right, she couldn't keep up with these kids.

T   In a later tape, I think you'd probably find her missing from the group. She's the one that came from second grade and was...well, we kind of had her diagnosed as dyslexia.

H   What do you mean, "kind of"?

T   Well, we didn't have a professional diagnosis; that was our own mini-reversals in inversions and had a lot of trouble with vowels and stuff.

     Rrr, circle word r. Couldn't remember it. Keyona, did you get it all read once? Keyona? You all done? Ok, tell me one thing that a bad pup does?

     She wasn't paying attention; that's why I picked her.

H   Ok, who?

T   Kendra.

H   Kendra?

T   U-hm. She was lookin/ back at you or somebody back there.

H   Oh, ok; so that was...

T   To get her back to focus on what she was doin'.

H   Ok

H   Ok, now, you...

T   I went back to Kendra then.

H   Ok, why, do you know?

T   'Cause that's what she had started to tell me. She started to tell me the four things. When I stopped her and told her it was Denise's turn.

H   Oh, ok, I didn't catch that. See, that's why you're here. 'Cause you know all those things.

T   Well, I know all those stories inside and out.

Bat at bugs...tug at rigs...tip jugs, and dig in pits, don't they. Are all puppies bad? Why do they do those things?

H   Ok, and you're trying to get a concept across here.

T   Right.

H   Now is that part of the lesson or is that just something that you want to throw in there?

T   No, well, it's part of the lesson, too; and then I think that this group happens to pick it up a little quicker. With another group, I might have to refer to ...well, what happens when a baby pulls a plant off the stand? Does he do it on purpose?

Why did I pick Keyona? That's a good question. U-um ...she'd answered one of the questions that I asked before...just random.

H   Ok...there are no really right answers to this.

T   Yeah...I think probably it was just a random thing... turn that back just a little bit.

Ok, Keyona, read me the whole story over.

Can you turn it back a little further?

H   Yup.

T   Do they know they are being bad? And they do those things? How come? 'Cause they are just puppies. Sure. See, they're little. Ok, Keyona, read me the whole story out loud.

She's not paying attention (reference to Keyona).

T   Who can tell me one thing? Where? Digs in...digs in pits. What's another thing? There are four things that bad pups do...digs in pits. We want to know the four bad things that puppies do. And one of 'em was digs in pits. Jenny are you finding the others?

No, she's not. She's not paying attention at all.

H   Ok, now, how did you know that?

T   I could see her.

H   Ok...

T   See, I have all five of those shiny little faces looking up at me in my vision.

H   Well, you said earlier that she was kind of moving around a lot that day.

T   What's another thing? Tugs at rugs...digs in pits... tugs at rugs...there's two more things.

Right here. Well, let it go a little further. I'm watching Denise here, you'll see.

What is it, Denise? Wait a minute; it's Denise's turn.

See, I could see.

H   Ok, now, how did you decide it was Denise's turn? 'Cause the other two times both other questions... raise their hands.

T   Raise their hands. Ok, I was watchin' where...see, she follows along in the book with her finger, and I could tell she was on the right sentence. I could see that she was down to the third one there. That I was lookin' for. And I wanted to give her a chance to answer. Back that up just a little bit. Ok.

Digs in pits...tugs at rugs...there's two more things, so find them.

All right, look at I'm watching her (reference to Denise).

H   U-hm.

T   What is it, Denise? Wait a minute; it's Denise's turn. Read that to me, Denise. Sound it out. He tips jugs and bats at bugs.

H   And you saw that?

T   Yes.

Ok, Kendra and Jenny have got somethin' going' here, too. And somebody on the rug is tryin' to get my attention.

'Cause they're just puppies. Sure. See they're little. Ok, Keyona.

Here goes Kendra...she's startin' to tie her shoes or somethin' there...and Jenny's probably redressing herself or somethin'...with her sweater. Somebody on the rug wants something. Kendra, Jenny, and Sean are all paying attention to the rug...tapped her on the back.

H   Ok, so now you...

T   Tapped her on the back (Kendra).

H   To get her back around...

T   U-hm...and Jenny's watchin' me do it, too...see...see ...I don't know what Jenny does here. And Denise is startin' to go off here...she's not payin' attention either.

H   So she's lookin' the other way.

T   Yeah...I think she just picked her foot up or something...they love to tie their shoes.

H   Why? Did they just learn how?

T   I don't know...anything to get away from reading class I guess...ok, that brought her back and Jenny...someplace in here I tell Denise to keep her eyes on the book or somethin'...what's she doin'? I can't tell what she is doin'...oh, she's trying to tie her shoe. That was it, get your shoe tied and get your eyes on the book...oh, that's somebody else in the back of the room I was looking at there.

H   Yeah.

T   I got Denise back, but Jenny's still going' bananas there...redressing herself...something about that sweater...maybe it was a new sweater that day or somethin'.

Ok...Sean.

H   Now, do you have any idea why Sean was next?

T   Probably 'cause he was on one side of Keyona...I think
     I usually pick somebody and then go to either the
     right or left of 'em...it's random.

H   Ok.

T   I suppose I have different reasons each time I do it...
     I don't know...I know we needed the practice....you
     know.

     Sound it...

     Denise can't stay awake...she's yawnin'...look at
     Jenny...

H   Ok, now, you don't see that goin' on, do ya?

T   Oh, yeah!

H   You do?

T   Yeah!...I probably already decided in my own mind that
     as long as she wasn't botherin'...look at her yawnin'
     ...she can't even stay awake most of the time...that's
     what she is doin' there is tryin' to keep herself
     awake...oh, the kids are movin' from the rug now, must
     be...

INTERVIEW TRANSCRIPT

Date: November 21, 1978

H   Ok, I guess we can start talking now.

T   Ok.

H   Ok. Now, one of the questions I have is how is your
     reading instruction set up?

T   Gees. You got another hour?

H   No.

T   How's it set up?

H   Yes. Like what kind of plan do you use? Is there
     theory behind what you do?

T   All right. The theory is a linguistic based program
     with a heavy phonics basis to give these kids, the
     remedial readers, something to fall back on when their
     memory fails. And at the age level these kids are,
     they don't have the memory development that, let's say,
     an average first grader would have. What I do is take
     them at approximately beginning of second semester of
     kindergarten and teach them the readiness skills that
     they've missed in kindergarten because of immaturity
     or, um, lack of development as far as the experience-
     wise or learning disabilities, whatever; and I start
     them there and, hopefully, give them what they've
     missed so that they can take that and build from there.

H   Hmmm. Ok, so you use a...what kind of books do you use?

T   It's Merrill, Charles E. Merrill <u>Linguistic Based Read-
     ing Program</u> which is word families and matrixes.

H   Now, do they stay with that all year?

T   Un-huh. Hopefully, I'll get them through five books.

H   Ok. This is like November, middle of November. Now,
     how many books have they gone through so far?

T   They're half way through the first one.

H.   Ok, now, is this indicative of what the groups usually
     look like?

T   Yes.

H   So, then they go like crazy at the end.

T   Oh, boy, you're not kidding. Once they've got that
     phonics. We haven't been introduced to all the letters
     yet.

H   Right.

T   We've only got half of the letters, little more than
     half of the letters. And they have only been intro-
     duced to one vowel, and that is short a.

H   Yes.

T   So, that's the only thing they can decode. Is a three
     letter word with short a in it. And, hopefully, the
     consonants that they've had.

H   Ok, how many groups do you have?

T   Four.

H   Ok, now; how are the kids grouped? What kind of a pro-
     cess do you use?

T   Teacher judgment is all we had. Before in the past
     we've used 'em--readiness tests. We've used Gates-
     McGintee REadiness Test. We have the scores of the
     Metropolitan Readiness Test that they took in kinder-
     garten, we had 'em...we tried several different tests;
     and when it came right down to the bottom line, the
     only thing that we really relied on was teacher judg-
     ment.

H   Ok, how do you get the teacher judgment part?

T   We keep them for the first two weeks of the school
     year in my own homeroom, yes; and observe them and
     put them through a few things that they should have
     from kindergarten. Like, do they know their colors?
     How many letters of the alphabet do they know, can
     they count; how ready are they to read?

H   Hum...ok, now you have four groups...

T   And ___ has four groups.

H   And ___'s got four groups.

T   At least four.

H   Ok, and you've got the low-middle?

T   Right. The bottom of the middle and the bottom.

H   The bottom. Ok. So, how many hours do you have, like during the day for reading?

T   For reading?

H   For reading.

T   Most of the day. We go from 9-10:30 in the morning and then from 12:30 to 1:15.

H   Give me a typical day.

T   All right. From 9:00-10:30 in the morning for reading, then in the afternoon it's from 12:30-1:15. So it's an hour and a half in the morning and forty-five minutes in the afternoon.

H   Ok, what do they do in between all this?

T   Huh! Math, science, social studies, humanities, language arts, recess, art. We have to cram music. We have to cram all that into the rest of the day.

H   Ok, and then, um...well, if these kids can't read...

T   Right, they can't do the other.

H   Ok, how do you do all that then? Just show and tell?

T   Well, on the first grade level, most of the other is teacher-directed. You know, you not reading out of the social studies book; or if you are, the teacher reads it there. You know, you have one sentence on a page, and I tell them what it says, and then we discuss it.

H   Ok, so what you're really doing then is trying to build concepts in them, those subjects?

T   Right.

H   Ok, after reading they have recess.

T   Then we have math.

H   Then you have math.

T   Then we go to lunch.

H   Then you have lunch.

T   Then we come back. After lunch we have twenty minutes where, before we go to reading, where I can pick up anybody that has had problems with their math and give them individual help, and the rest of the kids it's kind of break time where they can have a picture to color or they play with their clay for a few minutes and just kind of wind down from lunch, so they can get back into the idea of settling down for reading again for forty-five minutes.

H   Ok, then after reading for forty-five minutes in the afternoon--then what?

T   Then we come back, and we have recess again, and we have language arts or we have music or we have library.

H   Depending on what?

T   Yah, on what day it is. Or we have art. We had art today. Ok, with us having the bottom of the middle and the bottom remedial readers from the first grade, these are the majority. I think we have almost every target child, Title I, Chapter 3, ESA child in the whole first grade. There may be a couple that got slipped in there that weren't supposed to be targets, and they're the ones we get the money for--state and federal funded.

H   Ok, all right.

T   Compensatory education, right. Which means that they have, for us to get money for them again, they have to pass sixteen of twenty objectives in reading which, for some of those kids, is going to be like pulling their teeth to get them to pass it.

H   Oh, I see, I see. Ok.

T   Ok, now. We have to focus on those objectives.

H   So you teach the objectives?

T   I, well, as it turns out, when you're talking about first grade objectives, you're talking about color words; you're talking about Dolch words, which is...

H   Do they have to know all 220?

T   No, no, it's only--what? Thirty.

H   Oh, you just have to know the primer.

T   No, they have to know the pre-primer, the primer, and the first reader. They have to be able to recognize beginning sounds, and they have to be able to follow written directions, where they read them and do what it tells them to do; comprehension, different word analysis skills, ending sounds, vowel sounds, short and long, blends, and things like that. So, for us to get the money, I have to teach to those objectives; but, as it works out, those objectives are very much a part of this reading program.

H   Ok, how do you know whether they get those objectives?

T   You have to pre- and posttest.

H   Ok, what kind of test do you use?

T   We have specific tests that the ___ school district gives us, and every first grader has to be pretested and posttested. And you mark on his little pink card whether he's passed it or not.

H   Hum, ok. Now...

T   That might be important as far as this program is concerned. I don't know whether you'll want to include that in the...

H   Ok.

A   Here's a sample of a kindergarten pretest that you give the child.

T   It's all one-to-one teacher-child.

H   So, even if they can't read it, you give the instructions.

T   Right. In that case, none of the kindergarten objectives have to be read by the child.

H   Ok, so this is relationships.

T   It's just basic skills. What they've done is pick out twenty basic skills that the ___ school district feels every kindergartener or every first grader should know. But, see, with these kids, how can we test them on first grade objectives when they haven't passed kindergarten objectives. Supposedly, it's developmental. So we've got to go back and fill in where they're missing on these skills.

H   Would you ever give a kid a posttest on this?

T   On that one?

H   A pretest on this?

T   They all have to be pretested.

H   On these?

A   In reading your objectives, they specify the child must be pretested and posttested.

H   Use these as the...

T   Supposedly every kindergartener in the city of ___ has seen that pretest.

H   Huh. Ok, now, explain...like, I've been here a month, month and a half...six times. You told me once that you started with the low group.

T   Uh-huh.

H   Ok, approximately how much time do you spend with each group?

T   Twenty minutes. They spend twenty minutes in each group.

H   Ok, now, I want either one of you or both to explain that after you've given them directions on the...at the front of the room, ok--then what happens?

T   They go their--where they start, so to speak. Group 1 starts with me at the round table, reading; Group 2 starts with Ms. Help here, working on whatever it is she's working on at the time.

H   Ok.

T   Group 3 does their seatwork first; Group 4, which is the top group, starts at the listening center first. So they just work around the room.

H   Ok, then every group goes through that sequence?

T   Right.

H   Ok, how long did it take you to get that together so they knew exactly when to get up and move?

T   Two days.

A   Two days

H   Ok, how did you go about doing that? How did you tell
      them that? "Ok, kids, here's the way it's going to
      work"?

T   It wasn't that hard to do, really. You just, you got
      to one group, and you moved them away from where they
      were, and then you moved the group you had into there.
      And then while I was moving the ones at the listening
      center over to their seatwork, and then moving the ones
      I had at reading over to the rug to the listening cen-
      ter, she was moving the ones she had up to my group
      and the ones that were doing seatwork back to her. It
      was just kind of flowing.

H   So, it took them two days to figure out how this was
      done?

T   Um-hum.

A   And all you have to do is to tell them to remember what
      group they are in, who is in Group 1. First of all,
      you start out by saying, "Listen to your name--this is
      Group 1" and give the names off.

T   And you put your finger up, and that's your group.

A   And you go through that sequence with 2, 3, 4. And
      eventually, you get so you can just stand in front of
      the room and not say anything and put one finger up,
      and Group 1 knows exactly what they're supposed to do
      first because they know where they go first...It's a
      matter of consistency and repetition; you do the same
      thing every day. You know...never would I start and
      say, "Group 1, go do your seat work first." Group 1
      always goes to that round table first.

H   Hmmm...

T   We never change the sequence.

H   Ok, now, Ms. Help, do you...are you, like, in step
      with what Ms. Lingo is doing? I noticed you pulled
      out some blocks, and one day I noticed you were having
      them stand along side of you, in back of you.

A   Ok, Ms. Lingo is usually working with the actual sounds
      of letters and putting these sounds together. I bas-
      ically work on developmental skills. First of all, we
      started out with Frostig Developmental Program, visual
      motor, relations in space, perceptual constancy, um.
      What you saw me doing when they were standing in front

of me and behind me, we were reinforcing <u>in front of</u>, <u>in back of</u>, <u>beside</u>. That was in correlation with a Frostig exercise that they had to draw lines from a lamp to a box, and it was teacher-directed. Find the lamp that is in front of the box, find the lamp that is beside the box, and so forth. The blocks were another perception. They had a paper that had a shape drawn on it, then they had to take the blocks and make that shape. Now the size that was on the paper was much smaller than the size of the blocks, but they had to try to get together that it's still the same shape; and I didn't limit them to using just one or two blocks --if they needed five blocks to make a shape, fine. At least they got that it went this way and this way. Or whatever was on the paper. Some of them did very well. Some of them did have perceptual transfer.

T   See, it's a matter of looking at something visually and transferring that into a material, a kinesthetic, tactile type of thing. And that's what you have to do with these kids, 'cause that's what they lack.

H   Who lacks more of it? Boys or girls?

T   Boys.

A   Boys.

H   Every time?

T   Look at the ratio in the class.

H   I know; I do. So, then you have them before Ms. Lingo gets them, except for the first group.

A   Except for the first group.

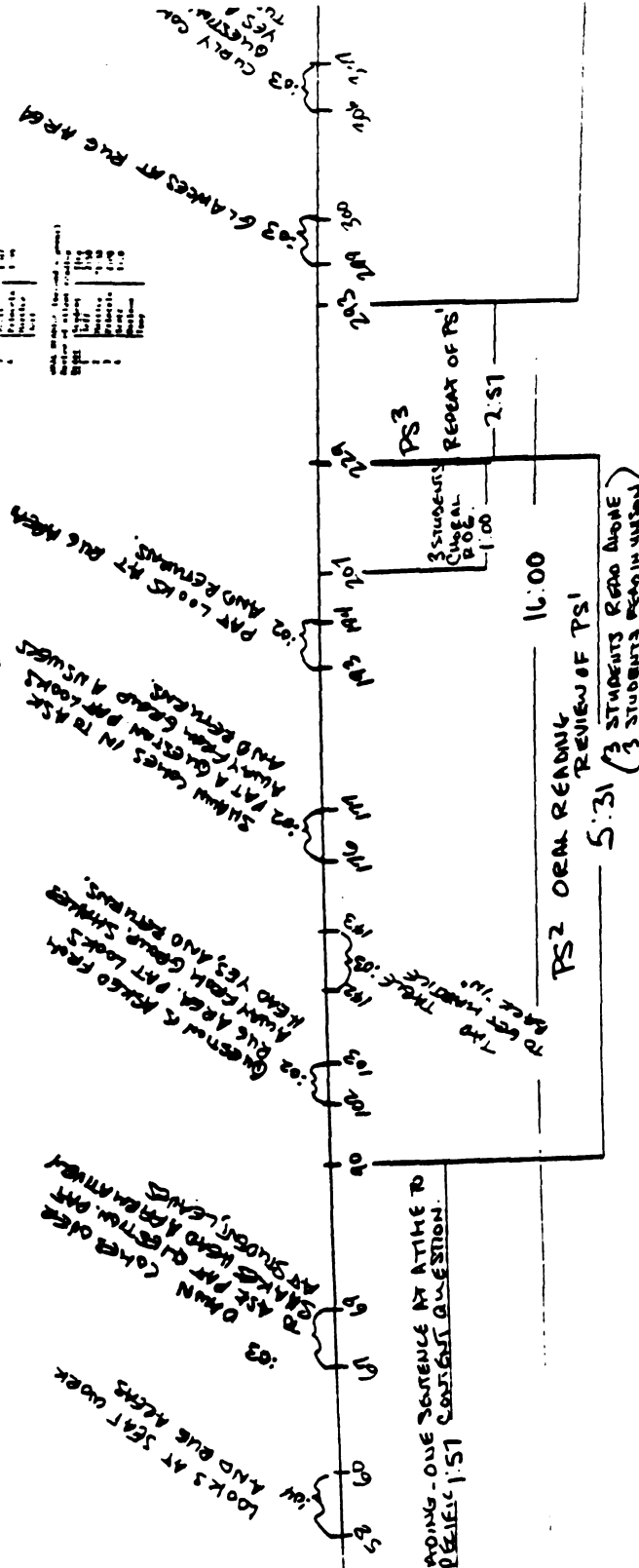H   And then that group you get last?

A   Yes.

T   That's by my choice, though.

H   Ok, when you say "...by my choice," what do you mean?

T   Ok, first thing in the morning, if these kids are in the bottom group, they have the fewest skills. All right, if I get them first, I've got their attention. They haven't heard anything else, other than the directions for the seatwork, to boggle their minds, to have to remember. They haven't been to the listening center; they haven't had any stimulus there. They haven't been here; they haven't had any stimulus here.

Example of a Time Line.

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