This is to certify that the
dissertation entitled

HYBRIDITY, COLLABORATION AND RESISTANCE:
LITERACY PEDAGOGY IN AN URBAN ELEMENTARY
CLASSROOM

presented by

JODENE MICHELE KERSTEN

has been accepted towards fulfillment
of the requirements for the

| Doctoral | degree in | Teacher Education |

Susan Florio-Ruane
Major Professor's Signature

May 13, 2005
Date

PLACE IN RETURN BOX to remove this checkout from your record.
TO AVOID FINES return on or before date due.
MAY BE RECALLED with earlier due date if requested.

DATE DUE	DATE DUE	DATE DUE

HYBRIDITY, COLLABORATION, AND RESISTANCE: LITERACY PEDAGOGY IN
AN URBAN ELEMENTARY CLASSROOM

By

Jodene Michele Kersten

A DISSERTATION

Submitted to
Michigan State University
in partial fulfillment of the requirements
for the degree of

DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

Department of Teacher Education

2005

ABSTRACT

HYBRIDITY, COLLABORATION, AND RESISTANCE: LITERACY PEDAGOGY IN AN URBAN ELEMENTARY CLASSROOM

By

Jodene Michele Kersten

In the current educational political climate overshadowed by No Child Left Behind (*NCLB*), elementary teachers are overwhelmed by mandates at the district, state, and national level. In one mid-sized urban elementary school that has failed to make Adequate Yearly Progress for the past four years, according to *NCLB*, teachers are negotiating district curriculum guides, Reading First mandates, a basal literacy program, test preparation, and high-stakes testing. Past research of the intended and unintended consequences of policy meeting practice suggests that the problem lies in how teachers interpret and enact policy (e.g. Cohen, 1990). Contrary to prior research, this research suggests that teachers are constantly interpreting mandates and strategically resisting and hybridizing their current practice with imposed theories of best practice. What appears to be teachers' misunderstanding of the reform may actually be a conscious, politically laden pedagogy informed by the educator's rich knowledge and experiences in order to best meet the needs and interests of their students.

This ethnographic case study was designed to learn more about one experienced third grade teacher's literacy planning and instruction during the 2004 to 2005 school year. Through data collection from literacy co-planning sessions with a full-time intern, weekly observations of literacy instruction, content material analysis, and formal and

informal interviews with the participating teacher four themes emerged. These four interrelated themes are (1) when policy meets practice and the intended and unintended consequences, (2) hybridized literacy practices, (3) collaboration, power, and empowerment; and (4) constraints of time, control, and curriculum. When possible, the participating teacher's and ancillary participants' voices were included to develop an in-depth portrayal of the emotions involved in the negotiation and resistance of policy, a critical element often ignored in educational research (Hargreaves, 1994).

Findings from this study challenge the frequent requirement of collaboration as an element of education reform. It also suggests that the culture of the school and the culture of teaching are far more complex than curriculum developers and educational policy makers assume or suggest through mandates. The questions posed and addressed through this research offer implications for educational policy makers, literacy curriculum developers, teacher education programs, and practicing teachers and principals. This study also suggests the need for educational researchers to focus more on the emotional, or affective, responses of educators when negotiating, resisting, and determining how to cope with policy reforms and requirements at the district, state, and national level.

This work is dedicated to Emily- a passionate individual and role model
for current and future educators

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

TABLE OF CONTENTS

LIST OF TABLES

LIST OF FIGURES

Chapter 1

DESCRIPTION OF THE STUDY

The problem

An unyielding demand- perhaps best represented in George W. Bush's policies found in *No Child Left Behind*- for testing, reductive models of accountability, standardization, and strict control over pedagogy and curricula is now the order of the day in schools throughout the country. (Apple, 2004, x)

Based on continual interactions with urban elementary teachers, teacher educators, and former education colleagues in California, I can confidently state that the current political climate has had a tremendous impact on literacy pedagogy. It has pushed those committed to providing a quality education for children in urban public schools to become enraged. Former colleagues in California have reacted by taking to the streets in protest marches and writing letters to the individuals making decisions that impact the teachers' students and their profession. They refuse to abandon literacy pedagogy that is best for their linguistically, culturally, and ethnically diverse children. Educators I work with in Michigan have reacted to *No Child Left Behind (NCLB)* with similar sentiment. Most educators adamantly dismiss the importance of the policy- assuming this too will pass like previous reforms.

The impact of *NCLB* is more salient in some classrooms than others, particularly those that have not made Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP)[1]. Many schools must comply with state programs such as Reading First which require districts to select one of five

---

[1] The district measures Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) based on: (1) the Michigan Education Assessment Program (MEAP) test, the statewide assessment program used to test and report student achievement in the core academic subjects at certain grade levels, (2) attendance rates for elementary and middle schools; and (3) graduation rates for high schools.

1

basal literacy programs by Houghton Mifflin, Harcourt, Open Court/SRA, Macmillan/McGraw Hill, or Scott Foresman[2]. The reality is that educators must negotiate their literacy planning and instruction around the requirements and expectations of *NCLB*. Fortunately, teachers are finding creative ways to "be in compliance" without compromising their beliefs or abandoning literacy pedagogy that they know is best for their unique group of students.

The teacher at work and in context

Rather than focusing on the negative repercussions of *NCLB*, I chose to research the innovate ways in which one third grade teacher, Emily [3], at Westside Elementary School is actively resisting and negotiating prepackaged literacy curriculum, district mandates, high-stakes testing, and the requirements of the Reading First grant. She is fiercely devoted to the literacy development and emotional well being of her children. Her commitment to the teaching profession is evident by her extensive history of collaboration with the teacher education program at the local university. Year after year she opens her classroom to interns and seniors learning how to become teachers. The reason I wanted to work with Emily was because of the accounts of her practice by students and fellow educators at the university. I needed to learn more about how this teacher was managing excellent literacy instruction given the current political climate.

In her January/February editorial for the *Journal of Teacher Education*, Cochran-Smith (2001) describes this time as one in which, "standardization and prescription are being mistaken for higher standards" (p. 4). Cochran-Smith also states that the "political

---

[2]Elaboration on the five programs, listed on the Michigan Department of Education Reading First Grant application, can be found on the webpage: http://www.michigan.gov/documents/1-05_Version_3_Reading_First_111599_7.pdf
[3] Pseudonyms are used for all participants and locations in this study.

climate emphasizes privatization and deregulation; raising student scores on standardized tests has become the major and sometimes the only goal" (p. 3 - 4). This emphasis on high-stakes testing is palpable in conversations with Emily. She is acutely aware of the importance of standardized test scores, particularly since her school has failed to make Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) for the past four years. She is preparing her third grade students for the Michigan Education Assessment Program (MEAP)[4] to be administered in October of their fourth grade year. Emily recognizes her responsibility in preparing the students at least one year prior to the testing date so they can be successful. Her practice reflects the argument of many researchers that serious repercussions are now impacting the ways in which teachers are able to select and teach curriculum (Apple, 2004; Cochran-Smith, 2001; Kohn, 2000; Nieto, 2003). Kohn (2000) argues that, "High-stakes testing has radically altered the kind of instruction that is offered in American schools, to the point that 'teaching to the test' has become a prominent part of the nations' educational landscape" and sadly, "the test essentially *becomes* the curriculum" (p. 29). Fortunately Emily resists making the tests and test preparation the only curriculum. However, this study shows that she is still using valuable time to prepare her children for tests.

Emily is aware of biases embedded in high-stakes tests that may account for the low scores often associated with urban schools such as her own. Shannon (1989) argues that these types of tests often sort students along social and class lines, ensuring social reproduction. Apple (2004) states that basing achievement primarily on a standardized test fails to consider various factors that seriously impact the outcome of test scores such

---

[4] Michigan Education Assessment Program (MEAP): the statewide assessment program used to test and report student achievement in the core academic subjects at certain grade levels. For a complete description of the (MEAP), see http://www.michigan.gov/mde/0,1607,7-140-22709_31168---,00.html

as, "economy, health, education, nutrition, and so on" (p. xi). It also fails to acknowledge biases embedded in high-stakes testing that account for the low scores often associated with urban schools serving culturally, linguistically, and ethnically diverse populations. According to Kohn (2000), "Research has repeatedly found that the amount of poverty in the communities where schools are located, along with other variables having nothing to do with what happens in classrooms, accounts for the great majority of the difference in tests scores from one area to the next" (p. 7). Emily recognizes these factors and her frustration surfaces in conversations; however, she also uses this as a source of motivation to work harder in preparing her children to succeed both on tests and in school.

This research describes how one experienced third grade teacher in an urban school district is negotiating and resisting current policies at the district, state, and national level. This is an in-depth study not only of her planning and instruction, but of her pedagogy. I borrow Simon's (1992) definition of pedagogy, which he asserts is a far more complex and extensive term than teaching, since it is the "integration in practice of particular curriculum content and design, classroom strategies and techniques, a time and space for the practice of those strategies and techniques, and evaluation purposes and methods" (p. 140). Pedagogy suggests a political stance, an integration of the teacher's beliefs and values into her practice. In the analysis that follows we will find that Emily's pedagogy aims to recognize and honor the linguistic, cultural, and ethnic diversity of her students. She is deeply concerned with understanding how her children learn best. Therefore, she shapes her literacy pedagogy in a way that is sensitive to and respects her

students' varied backgrounds. These values are counter to the spirit and substance of the testing atmosphere threatening to control pedagogy today.

Before I had the opportunity to spend time in Emily's room as a researcher and fellow educator, I heard about her phenomenal practice through an intern and seniors in the teacher education course I taught at the university. The intern was moved from the school where I was the liaison for interns, cooperating mentor teachers, and the university. Her placement was not going well, so she was moved to Emily's third grade classroom at Westside Elementary. I continued to speak with this intern and learned more about Emily's innovative teaching. Likewise, seniors in the literacy methods foundation course I taught would return to our university class and share creative, thoughtful lessons observed in Emily's class.

Many of the seniors, as well as the intern, marveled at how Emily was able to teach in a way that did not reflect the basal reading program. They were aware that this school had not made Adequate Yearly Progress and were expected to follow the requirements outlined for Reading First schools. However, they typically saw innovative teaching that included Book Club, engaging centers, and activities that did not appear to follow the curriculum guides or Houghton Mifflin teacher guides. They also witnessed students who were actively engaged during literacy instruction, producing authentic text, and scoring well on assessments. During the year my seniors and intern were in Emily's class, she had many English Language Learners. My students were amazed at how well the students were supported in their English acquisition by Emily's careful planning and instruction. At the same time, I continued to have conversations with Emily that reflected

both frustration and a desire to continue teaching in a way that was true to her beliefs and experiences of how children learn to read and write.

These recounts of her practice led to a broad question for research:

How does one third grade teacher in an urban elementary school negotiate policy into practice in literacy instruction given the current political climate in educational policy?

Preliminary studies: Teachers' and students' perspectives

This dissertation study grew out of two research projects I conducted in the same district in spring, 2003 and fall, 2004. Both the middle school and elementary school involved in the research projects were struggling with the demands of high-stakes testing, district curriculum guides, and prepackaged curriculum. The first study (Kersten, 2003), "Moving Toward Critical Literacy Despite Standardized Testing and Curriculum Guides" focused on two sixth grade classrooms in the most diverse middle school in the district, where over 70% of the 230 students spoke a home language other than English. As a researcher and literacy specialist at the school, I framed this study in an action and collaboration mode. I wanted to support teachers to examine with me the process of negotiating test preparation and required curriculum with a critical literacy approach. In the second study (Kersten, in press), "Literacy and Choice: Urban Elementary Students' Perceptions of Links between Home, School and Community Literacy Practices" I was interested in the students who were being affected by the elementary school curriculum. In this case, I wanted to learn about the non-school literacy lives of the students. I volunteered as an after school leader for a group of nine fifth graders who learned to conduct ethnographic research of the literacy practices in their school, community, and

home. The project was similar to work discussed by Heath (1983) in which students became researchers in their own communities and found, as did Heath, that children were engaged in a variety of complex oral and written language habits that did not always reflect the type of literacy practices valued by schools. In the most recent publication, Heath added an epilogue that emphasizes the importance of teachers understanding their students' home and community literacy practices and ways they can bridge these to academic literacies to increase students' academic success and engagement. With this dissertation research, I knew the participating teacher was committed to learning as much as possible about her students' home lives to shape her curriculum. However, understanding the rationale behind her decision making and learning how she was able to gather information about her students' literacy strengths and practices required an in-depth study of her planning and instruction.

Both preliminary studies showed a mismatch in teachers' beliefs or knowledge of students' home and community literacies and how they might capitalize on these out-of-school literacies to help students acquire in-school literacies. They also showed a further mismatch between what curricular reforms might impose and the expectations of teachers and students in addition to the temporal and spatial constraints teachers must contend with in elementary and middle schools in this district. In working with the two sixth grade teachers, we continually struggled to link the required curriculum to literacy skills and knowledge the students brought to the classroom. When I worked with teachers in the first study we began our weekly planning sessions with the district curriculum guides as the primary focus and considered ways to teach the required curriculum in meaningful and effective ways for the students. Our attempts to move toward critical literacy were

often thwarted by unplanned interruptions such as last minute testing and various time constraints. The best planned lessons did not always come to fruition. Both teachers felt pressure to resort to skill and drill practice in anticipation of the district quarterly exams administered at the end of each nine week period in relation to the curriculum guides.

In the second study, I found that the children were indeed coming from literacy rich environments in their homes and communities which was not surprising, but not acknowledged by their educators. It was not enough to believe that the participants were not doing well in school or unprepared for school because they failed to read and write outside of school or experience literacy use before beginning formal schooling- a common belief both inside and outside of formal education (Snow, Burns, & Griffin, 1998). In fact, every student was engaged in literacy practices that included (1) producing and consuming texts, (2) observing family members engaged with a variety of texts; and (3) participating in literacy events outside of home including church and extracurricular activities. Multiple literacies were entrenched in these participants' lives, suggesting the cause of their academic struggles lie beyond the individual and their families. As a result of formal and informal interviews, meeting with the students two hours weekly, and talking with students throughout the week, I discovered that my research findings were similar to those of other researchers interested in learning more about the literacy lives of children outside of school (Purcell-Gates, 1996; Taylor and Dorsey-Gaines; 1988).

Recognizing disconnections between home, community, and school literacies are an important component of this dissertation study. Given district, state, and national curriculum requirements as well as the demands of *NCLB* and AYP, it is imperative that we learn more about how teachers are keeping students' out-of-school literacies, needs,

and interests as the focus of their pedagogy. This is particularly important in an urban school with an ethnically, culturally, and linguistically diverse student population and the added pressures of using a basal literacy program that may or may not fit the needs of their students. Fortunately, the participating teacher maintains a commitment to multicultural education[5] and a focus on linking the home and community literacies of her students to required school literacies. She plans her literacy instruction through a sociocultural lens to keep the interests, values, and beliefs of her student at the forefront. In addition to the broad questions for research, supplementary questions were important to consider:

1. How does the teacher make decisions about which curricula to include in her literacy instruction?

    a. In what ways are her decisions to include or exclude certain curricula a form of resistance toward given policy?

    b. What factors or resources does the teacher draw upon to make decisions about what and how to teach literacy? (i.e. previous teaching experiences; consideration of children's literacy achievement; linguistic, ethnic and cultural diversity of student population; current educational research)

2. Given that this teacher has an intern[6]:

    a. How does the teacher ensure that her decision making about planning and teaching literacy are overt and explicit for the intern?

---

[5] Nieto (1999) defines multicultural education as "embedded in a sociopolitical context and as antiracist and basic education for all students that permeates all areas of schooling, and that is characterized by a commitment to social justice and critical approaches to learning" (xviii)

[6] For the duration of the study, Emily had an intern from the university teacher education program. She mentored and eventually supported him as he became the "lead teacher" from January until April.

b. What are the teacher's goals for the intern's learning about how to plan and teach literacy?

Based on the findings in the preliminary studies as well as first and second-hand knowledge of the participating teacher's practice, this dissertation research aims to bring light to how Emily is negotiating her literacy pedagogy given education policy at the national, state, and district level. Through formal and informal interviews with Emily and her intern, weekly observations of literacy co-planning sessions with Emily and her intern, weekly observations of literacy instruction, and material analysis, the goal of the research is to consider implications for education policy makers, curriculum developers, teacher education programs, and practicing teachers and principals. I suspect that Emily is not alone in her frustration, as well as her innovative teaching both in her school and across the nation. Emily's school, Westside Elementary, is not unique compared to other urban elementary schools struggling to meet the interests and needs of a diverse student population while meeting the demands of policies such as *No Child Left Behind*. In many ways the current political climate in schools is reflective of the 1980's, yet the consequences are far more severe. Through analysis of Emily's planning and practice, literacy materials, and conversations with Emily, ideally this research will offer a case study of how one teacher is managing requirements while remaining committed to her students and her own beliefs of excellent literacy pedagogy.

Plan of dissertation

The next chapter, Intended Policy Reform and Unintended Consequences, will provide a discussion of research related to this study as well as ways that current research does not address the complexity of hybridized literacy pedagogy, reform elements such

as collaboration, and temporal, material, and relational constraints. I will begin with a discussion of current research regarding what often occurs when top-down policy meets practice and possible explanations for "depressingly predictable results" (Darling-Hammond, 1990). This will include a brief comparison of the reform efforts of the 1980's and similarities to current reform efforts. Research by Phillippi (1998) will provide an example of intended and unintended consequences of an educational reform which replaced basal programs with a constructivist approach to literacy instruction for grades Kindergarten through second, essentially the reversal of Reading First and *NCLB*. Next is a section discussing hybridity, which uses an example by Cohen (1990) to illustrate how teachers often create hybrids in order to retain some of their former practices in response to new, mandated curriculum.

The next section, "Researching the Intersection of Teacher Practice and Policy" considers the influence of school structure and the culture of teaching. School culture and the culture of teaching are often strongly influenced by types of collaboration, power, and empowerment. I discuss Hargreaves (1994) four forms of teacher culture as well as his four types of collaboration, focusing primarily on contrived collegiality teacher culture and collaborative teacher culture. Finally, I finish this section by examining three constraints within a context or structure: curriculum, time, and control. A discussion of curricular constraints provides a brief history of basal reading programs, technical control which leads to the deskilling of teachers (Apple, 1983), and what teachers consider the "real" curriculum (Anagnostopoulos & Rutledge, 2004). Time constraints include limited time for the "unofficial" curriculum, time to meet with colleagues, time to plan, time with students, insufficient time to transition to a new pedagogical paradigm, and time being

11

well spent. The final constraint, control, continues an analysis of technical control and the deskilling of teachers, as well as simple control.

In chapter three, The Study and its Design, I discuss the rationale for selecting the participating teacher and her school. As a Reading First school using a basal reading program as well as district curriculum guides, Westside Elementary provided a unique setting for examining how teachers negotiate an overwhelming number of severe mandates. Emily, the participating teacher, is an experienced educator in the district with a reputation for innovative, engaging literacy practices. She was an ideal individual for learning more about how educators can resist, negotiate, and succeed under constraining conditions. I also try to provide an overall, detailed description of Emily's personality to include her emotions and desires toward her craft, which Hargreaves (1994) argues is often omitted from discussions about teacher practice. A description of each data source includes the method and rationale. Finally, an explanation of the data analysis and interpretation process takes readers through the six months of data collection, analysis, and writing of the text.

Chapters four through six discuss data analysis. Chapter 4, "Hybridity: 'Snippets' of What's Valuable" examines Emily's complex hybridization between the various required curriculum and her own "unofficial" curriculum. The "official" curriculum includes district curriculum guides, Reading First requirements, the Houghton Mifflin basal reading series, preparation for state, district, and national testing, and her own practices such as Book Club, thematic units, and centers. The chapter begins with a discussion of Emily's practice through her own words to capture her voice and emotions and includes her best intentions for literacy planning and instruction for the school year. I

then discuss six distinct hybridizations between Emily's practice, and state, district, and national requirements. The hybridized practices often include more than two areas and are difficult to categorize, so I have created several Venn diagrams to include all activities, strategies, and hybridized practices discussed in co-planning sessions and observed during literacy instruction time. The chapter concludes with excerpts from an informal interview when Emily discusses plans and ideas for next year, given her experiences from this year.

Chapter five, "'This is Gonna Screw Us Up!' Institutional, Financial and Temporal Constraints" examines various constraints in the context of Westside Elementary. This chapter provides several examples of the way time constraints produce frustration and tension in Emily's professional life. Finding time to address district requirements, including test preparation, the Houghton Mifflin basal reading program, district curriculum guides, and elements of Reading First subtract valuable time from Emily's "unofficial" curriculum. Imposed time constraints, such as holidays, professional development, and in-service days, leave a limited number of full five day weeks to maintain consistency in planning and instruction. I also discuss the concept of collaboration and how this is manifested at Westside Elementary, including various barriers that hinder positive relationships and opportunities to meet with like-minded colleagues. Finally, I end with financial and curricular constraint which Emily believes is harming the literacy development of her students. Many of these constraints are best explained through Emily's words and her conversations with others. This chapter includes a great deal of dialogue to best illustrate the context of Westside Elementary and the culture of teaching.

Chapter six, "Collaboration, Power/Empowerment and Resistance", focuses on relationships between colleagues, which includes Emily, the other third grade teacher, the principal, and the literacy coach. Emily's intern is mentioned throughout the study, but is not a significant participant in discussions and situations with the other educators. I provide analysis of how these relationships run along a continuum from strained to supportive, landing at various points depending on the context and point in time. Throughout this chapter is a discussion of power and empowerment and how various participants exercise these in creative and effective ways. I also discuss various types of collaboration manifested through structured and unstructured settings. A significant portion of this chapter is dedicated to in depth analysis of practices completely unrelated to mandates as an example of the "unofficial" curriculum most valued by Emily. These include thematic units, centers, Book Club, and special days at the end of units. The chapter concludes with Emily's final comments on Houghton Mifflin and Reading First from co-planning sessions and informal interviews throughout the study.

Finally, chapter seven discusses implications for theory and practice. Data from this study has the potential to provide insight for curriculum developers and educational policy makers of elementary literacy through a discussion of the history of basal reading programs and the knowledge and beliefs teachers bring to policy implementation. Learning more about how Emily created hybrids and interacted with colleagues is priceless for teacher education programs. Given the current political climate, it is highly likely that pre-service teachers will be faced with similar constraints through various mandates. Emily provides an excellent example of how teachers can exercise their power to resist, negotiate, and adapt curriculum to fit their students' and their own needs.

Because this study is an in-depth overview of collaboration, power, empowerment, resistance, and decision making that is required of an effective urban elementary teacher, both teacher educators and students can learn from these findings. Finally, this study is both a validation and challenge to teachers and principals in similar situations who are actively resisting or would like to resist educational policy and mandates. Emily is a dedicated educator with strong beliefs about what constitutes effective teaching and shares her feelings and values on how to remain true to one's pedagogy under the most difficult conditions.

Chapter 2

INTENDED POLICY REFORM AND UNINTENDED CONSEQUENCES

The purpose of this chapter is to provide a theoretical orientation to addressing questions posed by this research study. Rather than applying these theories as rigid frames, I envision them as pliable tools for seeing ways to develop and revise explanations of complex processes. As such they are useful for contributing possible readings or interpretations of the data collected in this study. They are important beginnings, but not entirely adequate for describing and analyzing the dilemmas presented in the data or any one case. Moreover, there is a reflexive relationship between research and theory so that what I am learning in the field and in my reading of attempts at theorizing shape one another. For these reasons, I will also discuss ways in which these theories do not adequately address the challenges posed in this research and some alternative ways of thinking about and approaching the research question and sub-questions.

When policy meets practice

Researchers have repeatedly found that there exists tremendous inconsistency between what policy is intended to do and what actually happens in classrooms (Coburn, 2001; Cohen, 1990; Cusick, 1992; Lampert, 1985; Lanier and Little, 1986; Phillippi, 1998; Tyack and Cuban, 1995). Lampert (1985) states that there is a belief that, "The teacher's work is to find out what researchers and policy makers say should be done with or to students and then do it" (p. 191). However, classrooms are complex environments where teachers are constantly acting as "dilemma managers" (Britzman, 2003), negotiating their own identity as well as the teaching challenges that arise each day. They

are constructing their practice from their personal experiences as students and their professional education (Cohen & Ball, 1990b). Lanier and Little (1986) describe classroom situations as "always new and never twice alike" (p. 543) and that "Teachers understand that teaching is context dependent and usually does not lend itself to straightforward generalization and prescription" (p. 553). McDonald (1986) believes teaching is full of uncertainty and messy practicality which is an important component of the craft, often ignored by theorists. He states, "Most theory about teaching- and in consequence much policy too- supposes that teaching is at best simply the rational application of means to given ends" (p. 377). Certainly this is not the case; ergo, one-size-fits-all policy may be, and often proves to be, completely ineffective.

Cohen (1990) suggests that it is important to remember that schools are social organizations and "Organizations affect the progress of new ideas and practices" (p. 45) whether these are coming through the pipeline as new policy or as new concepts about teaching and learning developed by educators within the school. From a critical theory perspective, organizations and policy are not neutral. Goodman (1988) asserts that "… in any complex society competing interests struggle to move society in one direction. Public institutions such as schools reflect and contribute to the struggle" (p. 205). Sarason (1990) agrees with Goodman's analysis and states that historically, schools have been viewed as a vehicle for social change. Recognizing the power of teachers to influence how policy will eventually look in practice, as well as the social and historical context of policies and their implementation present a complex, multilayered quandary for educators. This will be explored through this research.

Many researchers (Coburn, 2001; Cohen & Ball, 1990b; Darling-Hammond, 1990; Hargreaves, 1994) contend that schools must respond simultaneously to multiple initiatives, often contradictory in nature, resulting in teachers finding themselves with multiple messages about pedagogy and having to sort out policies that land on top of other policies. Cohen and Ball (1990b) argue:

It costs state legislators and bureaucrats relatively little to fashion a new

instructional policy that calls for novel sorts of classroom work. These officials

can easily ignore the pedagogical past, for they do not work in classrooms, and

they bear little direct responsibility for what is done in localities– even if it is done

partly at their insistence. However teachers and students cannot ignore the

pedagogical past, because it is their past (p. 334).

Shannon (1989) also believes that educational researchers rarely look to the past to understand the present when attempting to make sense of classroom literacy practices. There must be an attempt to align instructional policy (Spillane & Jennings, 1997). Until this happens, policy makers and others ordering teachers how to do their job must recognize what they are asking teachers to forget while simultaneously expecting them to learn and change.

Tyack and Cuban (1995) discuss top-down mandates, similar to *NCLB* and the first wave of reforms in the 1980's, that simply did not produce the dramatic changes the reformers envisioned. In 1988, Goodman wrote:

During the last decade, concern over teachers' accountability has increased in the

United States. Dozens of national and state reports have advocated tighter control

over what happens in our nation's classrooms. In response to this concern, several

18

educators have promoted and schools have adopted the use of prepackaged

instructional programs as the basis for classroom curriculum. Although the

programs were implemented in the name of improving instruction, some

educators have questioned this development. (p. 201)

This opening paragraph of Goodman's article could be written today. Policy makers and

policy enforcers are again obsessed with accountability at the district, state, and national

level and assert that prepackaged instructional programs are the answer. How little has

been learned from the 1980's.

Futrell (1989) provides a history of the four reform movements of the 1980's and

pinpoints the fallacies of each wave. Similar to today, the first wave came not from

educators, but politicians who called, "'More!': more tests for students and teachers,

more credits for graduation, more hours in the school day, more days in the school year,

more regimentation, more routinization, more regulation" (p. 11). The goal was to control

and regulate teachers, much like *NCLB* today. The second wave, a reaction to the first,

recognized the need to localize reform and include the voices of educators. Shortly after,

the third wave discovered that the top-down, hierarchical initial wave of reform yielded

inefficiency. The idea of efficiency in education was primarily based on the idealized

form of bureaucracy known as scientific management by Frederick Taylor (Goodman,

1988). Scientific management is the analysis of a job in order to determine its separate

components. Each component is then divided among workers to be efficient and cost-

effective. As industry and institutions became more complex, various mechanisms of

control were developed. Over time, schools have been shaped to look like industries,

concerned with efficiency and interested in creating a product, standardized test scores, with pupils as the raw materials, and teachers as the workers.

Futrell (1989) writes her article during the fourth wave, following the disappointing results of inefficiency, suggesting that educational excellence for all students need not look the same. She states that "solid evidence demonstrates that, to educate young people to their full potential, we must legitimate divergent paths to that goal" (p. 14). These paths include a variety of curriculum, instruction, plus local control of reform, and appropriate support and resources for teachers to meet the needs of their students. Giroux and Freire (1989) wrote the introduction to Shannon's Broken Promises during the same year as Futrell and share similar concerns with the conservative reforms impacting education. They describe the time as a back-to-basics movement for reading instruction and a major target in the public schools. Giroux and Freire assert that policy makers at the national and state level ignore the voices of teachers and students for a more formulaic approach to literacy instruction. Sadly, 2005 reflects the first wave of education reform in the 1980's, suggesting that the lessons from that era have been ignored.

Darling-Hammond (1990) elaborates on the "depressingly predictable results" of top-down policies similar to the 1980's and today, and offers possible explanations for the outcomes:

> ... top-down policies can 'constrain but not construct' practice, that local leadership and motivations for change are critical to policy success; that local ideas and circumstances always vary (therefore local agencies must *adapt* policies rather than *adopting* them); and that teachers' and administrators' opportunities

for continual learning, experimentations, and decision making during implementation determine whether policies will come alive in schools or fade away when the money or enforcement pressures end. (p. 341)

Tyack and Cuban (1995) make a similar argument, suggesting that as long as teachers are not involved in the designing and adopting of policy, they will not implement them as intended by the policy makers. Spillane and Jennings (1997) and Hargreaves (1994) suggest this is due to the various beliefs, knowledge, and dispositions to learning about policies that teachers bring to their practice. From their in-depth study of the literacy practices of three teachers, Spillane and Jennings state, "These teachers' stories suggest that what teachers learn about practice from aligned policies depends as much on who they are as learners as it does on the kinds of opportunities reformers offer to them" (p. 475). Expecting teachers to follow policies in a standardized fashion, with varying amounts and type of support for learning about the expectations of the policy is foolish. Teachers simply become "street-level bureaucrats", leaving their imprint on the policy and determining how it will be translated into practice (Tyack & Cuban, 1995). Florio-Ruane (2002) echoes this notion of teachers making decisions that are not determinative because the circumstances of their practice are complex and open-ended. The work with individual students is also varied with uncertain outcomes. She states, "Teachers retain sufficient agency to act in new, creative ways" (p. 210). The sum of these variables can not possibly be imagined nor controlled by policy makers and curriculum developers. It is foolish to believe that because teachers receive the same instructional policies, their practice will appear uniformed and similar (Cohen & Ball, 1990b). Apple (1983) argues

that this type of creative practice and resistance does exist and is worthy of celebration and investigation.

Bisplinghoff (2002) provides a compelling argument for teacher autonomy in response to rigid district mandates. In her district, the main concern was improving test scores on a national standardized test. As a veteran teacher, she understood how to work within required district mandates to create an individualized planning format for her students. As a researcher/practitioner she asks, "What changes need to occur in this curriculum for it to support my ongoing work with students?" (p. 127). While she taught the required curriculum, she continued to modify her practice to meet the needs of her students. This resulted in high scores on the Iowa Test of Basic Skills and consistent student and teacher satisfaction in the classroom. Bisplinghoff's practice was appropriate for her students only when she altered the requirements to fit her students' needs. Similar to Bisplinghoff's approach, in the next section I will discuss the innovative ways that teachers approach requirements while maintaining their own beliefs about effective literacy practice.

Intended and Unintended Consequences

Phillippi (1998) discusses in great detail the intended and unintended consequences of an educational reform which replaced basal programs with a constructivist approach to literacy instruction for grades Kindergarten through second. The intended consequences of the grass-roots reform, shaped by local educators, were (1) professional freedom from basal reading programs, (2) abolishing ability grouping, (3) an increased enthusiasm for reading and writing; and (4) improved classroom atmosphere. Phillippi found these were achieved to varying degrees, due to differences in teachers'

22

background knowledge and personal attitudes, as well as time and resource constraints. The policy was also meant to "empower teachers to be professional and to require them to make informed decisions in their classrooms" (p. 3). On paper it appeared to value teacher knowledge and experience, and honor agency, but certain barriers did not allow this to happen.

Phillippi found that along with intended consequences were a range of significant unintended consequences. These presented tension and frustration for the teachers impacted by the district literacy reform. Some of the most significant constraints included an increased work load in terms of preparation, insufficient time to work with colleagues, lack of support, and pressure to implement a constructivist approach in a short amount of time. Moving from a more traditional, text-book driven, direct instruction pedagogy to a developmentally appropriate practice (DAP) created a difficult paradigm shift for many teachers. Similar to this ethnographic study, unintended consequences in Phillippi's study included teacher resistance to implementing the policy because they did not believe the new policy would lead to improved student learning. She also found that teachers developed literacy practice on their own terms, similar to the focus teacher in this research. Once again, policy makers did not consider how teachers would interpret the policy or the possible barriers to completely shifting their practice in a short amount of time.

Hybridity

Some argue that in an effort to negotiate top-down policy into everyday practice, educators may choose to develop hybridized curriculum and instruction (Bisplinghoff, 2002; Cohen, 1990; Cohen & Ball, 1990b). Rather than assuming the mismatch between

policy prompted reform and teacher response is a result of the complexity of the teacher's work and the contextualized nature of her professional judgment, Cohen (1990) suggests that this occurs because "entrenched classroom habits defeat reform" (p. 312). In a case study of the teaching practices of one second grade teacher in California in the area of mathematics, Cohen discusses at length the ways in which the focus teacher works unknowingly to create a hybrid of old and new math instruction. Cohen spent one year in the classroom of "Mrs. Oublier" to learn more about how this teacher was using the new state mandated mathematics curriculum, or what he calls "the relationship between instructional policy and teaching practice". Using the perspective of the new mathematics framework and what it hoped to accomplish in classrooms, Cohen found that the focus teacher's pedagogy was a mixture of old and new practice, a pedagogical hybrid. In attempting to implement the new frameworks, Mrs. Oublier was doing what Cohen believed most teachers do when new policy or curricula is introduced as a solution. Her practice became a result of cobbling new ideas onto familiar practice, which made instruction look similar to what had previously occurred in the classroom. Perhaps most surprising to Cohen was Mrs. Oublier's enthusiasm about her drastic changes in pedagogy and her perception of implementing the new mathematics in accordance with the frameworks. From an outsider's perspective, little had changed in the way of practice in this classroom. Cohen describes this hybridity of mathematics pedagogy as another example of when "Policy has affected practice… but practice has had an even greater effect on policy" (p. 311).

From an alternative perspective, rather than assuming Mrs. Oublier did not understand what was expected of her, it is worth considering the importance of agency. It

is likely that teacher hybridity and apparent resistance to change has more than a single cause, but it would be inappropriate to hypothesize that the resistance was a function exclusively of professional judgment and autonomy or one of habituation and resistance to change. It is necessary to learn more about teachers' local knowledge and the ways practice is situated. Without an in-depth understanding of their knowledge, researchers may stereotype teachers and lack ideas for how teachers, both experienced and novice can be supported in times of change, such as the current *No Child Left Behind* era. Cohen suggests that Mrs. Oublier needed more professional development and instructional support, however it may be the case that she was reacting to the mandates in a way that she believed was most appropriate for her particular students and in alignment with her knowledge of mathematics instruction. Perhaps she understood far more about her pedagogy than an outsider could.

Tyack and Cuban (1995) discuss the phenomenon in Mrs. Oublier's classroom as each reform building on previous ones, resulting in a century of reforms. Indeed, practitioners seek, "Refuge through strategies of accommodation, resistance, and hybridization. In the process schools change reforms quite as much as reforms change schools" (p. 78). Rather than placing a new curriculum in the hands of teachers, with insufficient professional development or support, what often happens is similar to what occurred in Mrs. Oublier's classroom. Yet, if teachers take reforms not as directive and limiting, but as opportunities to consolidate resources, collaborate, frame and solve problems of practice and exercise professional judgment, then the outcome may be neither the "transfer" of policy to practice nor practitioners "cobbling". Perhaps teachers hybridize the strengths of their own previous "best practice" and the policy requirements

to create an entirely original pedagogy. This may be the ideal situation policy makers and curriculum developers should hope for. In this effort to acknowledge teacher agency and the complexity of applying policy to practice, Tyack and Cuban suggest that, "Reforms should be designed to be hybridized, adapted by educators working together to take advantage of their knowledge of their own diverse students and communities" (p. 135). Perhaps by including educators in reform efforts, the importance of context and respect for local knowledge and needs could be retained and respected (Florio-Ruane, 2002; Tyack and Cuban, 1995).

Researching the intersection of teacher practice and policy

Authors of educational policy and prepackaged literacy curriculum presumably create these documents with intended purposes and outcomes. However, research shows that what the reform or curriculum intended to do is not necessarily what occurs in the classroom. Cohen (1990) has provided a case study to learn more about how one teacher negotiated a state mandated mathematics curriculum. Bisplinghoff (2002) and Lampert (2003) discuss strategies that they employed as researchers/practitioners. I offer an ethnographic case study research design to learn more about the locally adapted intersection of policies and curricula as they enter one classroom. Over time and in multiple kinds of data, I use triangulation of evidence (field notes from co-planning sessions and literacy instruction, formal and informal interviews, and material analysis) and a constant comparative approach to building, testing, and revising assertions to research the ways one teacher negotiates the requirements of the curricular documents while maintaining her own literacy pedagogy. I also trace the work as the teacher innovates out of this negotiation. I assume that teachers continue to build on previous

reforms and use what Luke (2000) describes as approaches that coexist, blend and create hybrid approaches to teaching, in light of policy. The data from this study will illustrate the complex hybrids created by one teacher and what that might mean for curriculum developers and educational policy makers.

To understand the need for hybridity in literacy planning and instruction, as well as the complex relationships among educators at Westside Elementary requires an exploration of the roles of collaboration, power, and empowerment. The type of pedagogy practiced by the participating teacher and her colleagues is also a result of various constraints. The following section will discuss research related to these areas as well as the need to add to the existing research to address questions and challenges in this study.

School structure and culture

In his book, The Predictable Failure of Educational Reform, Sarason (1990) contends that when policy makers outside of the system lack a holistic conception of the system they seek to influence, a program of reform is unlikely to succeed. There appears to be "an inability to comprehend the nature of schools systems" (p. 27). This leads to an attack of isolated problems, while neglecting to see the system as an interrelated whole. He discusses the failure of educational reform and the habit of ignoring the power relationships that exist between individuals. Sarason states, "Ignore those relationships, leave unexamined their rationale, and the existing 'system' will defeat efforts at reform" (p. 7). Westside Elementary, like any other institution, has its own distinct culture with complex power relationships. Like any other institution, it is complicated.

Within the unique school culture is a culture of teaching, which Hargreaves (1994) defines as "beliefs, values, habits and assumed ways of doing things among communities of teachers who have had to deal with similar demands and constraints over many years" (p. 165). In order to understand how teachers make sense of their work space, one must understand the work culture. Hargreaves suggests that teachers may be physically separated from one another, but they are psychologically impacted by colleagues as well as the institution, and that their cultures are bounded by existing structures. He describes two dimensions of cultures of teaching: *content* and *form*. The *content* of teacher cultures, "consists of the substantive attitudes, values, beliefs, habits, assumptions and ways of doing things that are shared within a particular teacher group, or among the wider teacher community" (p. 166). The *form* "consists of the characteristic patterns of relationship and forms of association between members of those cultures. The form of teacher cultures is to be found in how relations between teachers and their colleagues are articulated" (p. 166). In order to make sense of why and how Emily negotiates her practice and relationships as she does, it is critical to examine both the content and the form of the context. This includes the influence of power, empowerment, and resistance within: (1) the culture of the school, (2) the culture of teaching within the school; and (3) the various types of collaboration.

Westside Elementary maintains close ties with the university through the collaboration of classroom teachers with fifth year interns and seniors in the teacher education program. Teachers and the principal are anxious to share their practice with novice teachers. The teachers take their roles as mentors seriously, with little monetary compensation, making it evident that they are dedicated to the future of their profession.

They believe in taking an active role in influencing future teachers. The collaboration with the university participants is positive and fruitful. Unfortunately, collaboration among colleagues, through the participating teacher's eyes, is not nearly as generative or satisfying. In the next section I discuss the importance of collaboration, how and why collaboration is intended through reform, the influence of power and empowerment, and the realistic outcomes of collaboration in the context of Westside Elementary.

Collaboration, Power, and Empowerment

Collaboration and collegiality have been presented as having many virtues. They have, for instance, been advanced as particularly fruitful strategies for fostering *teacher development.* Collaboration and collegiality, it is argued, take teacher development beyond personal, idiosyncratic reflection, or dependence on outside experts, to a point where teachers can learn from each other, sharing and developing their expertise together. (Hargreaves, 1994, p. 186)

Collaboration, or collegiality, has been a common component of education reforms dating back to the 1970's. In fact, it has been viewed as critical to "school improvement, curriculum reform teacher development and leadership development" and is often viewed as one of the keys to educational change. (Hargreaves, 1994, p. 187).

However, Hargreaves (1994) warns that collegiality is a term that is quite vague and imprecise, making it subject to a range of meanings and interpretations. Rather than there existing a "real" or "true" collaboration or collegiality, he suggests that there are different forms that have different consequences for different purposes. Hargreaves goes on to state that it is mostly symbolic and "collaboration and collegiality have become powerful images of preferred aspiration" (p. 164). Further, "Much of the research associated with

organizational improvement is concerned with reforming the faith, not reconstituting it" (p. 182). It is often believed that the collaborative solution embodies the following principles: (1) moral support for potential failures and frustrations, (2) increased efficiency through coordinated activities, (3) improved effectiveness by improving the quality of teachers' teaching, (4) reduced overload though a sharing of burdens and pressures, (5) synchronized time perspectives by narrowing differences in time perspective between teachers and administrators, (6) situated certainty, (7) political assertiveness to encourage teachers to interact more confidently and assertively with surrounding systems, (8) increased capacity for reflection though dialogue, (9) organizational responsiveness through pooled collected knowledge, expertise and capacities of the teacher workforce, (10) opportunities to learn; and (11) continuous improvement. (Hargreaves, 1994, p. 245 – 247). Naturally with a list such as this it is not surprising that collaboration is embedded in reforms, however these are idealized outcomes. Hargreaves also warns of the possible wasteful, harmful, and unproductive side of collaboration. Rather than continually calling for more collaboration, additional questions need to be posed about the challenges and potentials of collaboration or collegiality.

Little (1990) states that "much 'that passes for collegiality does not add up to much.' Teachers' collaborations sometimes serve the purposes of well-conceived change, but the assumed link between increased collegial contact and improvement-oriented change does not seem to be warranted" (p. 508). In theory, collegiality should work against the isolation of teachers (Lortie, 1975) and provide opportunities for increased skills, knowledge, professionalism, and morale. Yet this is not what most teachers

experience. Little found that collaborations "often appear contrived, inauthentic, grafted on, perched precariously (and often temporarily) on the margins of real work" (p. 510). What is often ignored in reforms calling for collaboration is attention to the type of collaboration that may develop as well as the complexity of relationships and issues of power influencing interactions.

Little mentions a lack of attention by reform efforts to recognize what various parties bring to the exchange, such as teachers' knowledge and beliefs. She states, "Teachers are now being pressed, invited, and cajoled into ventures in 'collaboration', but the organization of their daily work often give them scant reason for doing so" (p. 530). If teachers do not believe in the potential benefits of collaboration or agree with the structuring of the collaboration, no reform requirement is going to change this or produce the type of outcomes outlined in the mandate. Hargreaves (1994) presents both sides to the collaboration argument, stating "Teacher collaboration can provide a positive platform for improvement. It can also degenerate into stilted and unproductive forms of contrived collegiality" (p. xi). Based on research with principals and teachers across a range of school settings, Hargreaves found that "increased preparation time did not necessarily enhance the processes of association, community and collegiality among teachers" (p. 131). Preparation time can not guarantee collaboration or the development of a collaborative teacher culture.

Hargreaves (1994) describes four forms of teacher culture that include concepts of collaboration, both productive and authentic and contrived. The first type of teacher culture is individualism. Since most schools still support an insulated and isolated environment, teachers are not informed as to how their colleagues teach. It can offer

31

privacy but also promotes isolation and a lack of feedback. The second, the balkanization of teaching or collaboration that divides, is concerned with people associating in small sub-groups with four added qualities: (1) low permeability, or insulation from one another through clearly delineated spaces with clear boundaries, (2) high permanence, or over time, sub-groups remain relatively stable, (3) personal identification, or when individuals become attached to sub-communities closely associated with their working lives which form their identities; and (4) political complexion which is concerned with self-interests such as the unequal distribution of promotion, status, and resources. Sarason (1990) also discusses sub-groups in a complex social system and contends that conflict is rarely absent. However, what is particularly disturbing to Sarason is the amount of adversarialism, particularly in urban schools, and how it becomes self-defeating. What typically occurs is a litany of blame toward those above or below a group's role level. The other two forms of teacher culture, collaboration and contrived collegiality are most relevant and applicable to this research and are discussed in detail in the following section, *Teacher Empowerment*.

Teacher Empowerment

In 1992, White discussed how districts rarely honored the decision making abilities and authority of teachers. Just seven years later, Goyne, Padgett, Rowicki & Triplitt (1999) stated that the days are gone when administrators made decisions about day-to-day operations, and then informed teachers of their final decisions. They stated, "This idea of how to run a school is vanishing and being replaced by a concept known as empowerment or more specifically, *teacher empowerment*" (p. 7). This shift was reflective of the four part reform movement during the 1980's mentioned earlier. Maeroff

(1988) strongly argues that empowerment is essential for school improvement and that when teachers are not adequately valued by themselves and others they can not do their jobs well. However, Hargreaves (1994) cautions when "trading bureaucratic control for professional empowerment, it is important we do not trade community for chaos as well" (p. 260). Creating and fostering teacher empowerment can be a delicate process. In order to move toward teacher empowerment, teachers need to meet with their principals and each other to build collegiality and share in the decision making process. Researchers (Darling-Hammond, 1990; Maeroff, 1988) argue that collegiality is rare for many teachers. Therefore, recognizing the importance of collegiality and empowerment, boundaries related to both, and *types* of collegiality are extremely important (Kane & Montgomery, 1998) if education is to improve for both teachers and students.

An important component of how teacher empowerment occurs is strongly influenced by the type of collaboration that develops as well as relationship dynamics. Collaboration, power, and empowerment each play an important role in establishing the culture and structure of an elementary school. Collaboration is critical for professional improvement and satisfaction of the participants within the institution (Acker-Hocevar & Touchton, 1999; Apthorp, Dean, Florian, Lauer, Reichardt, & Snow-Renner, 2001; Hargreaves, 1994; Little, 1993; Short, 1992; St. John, Manset, Chung & Worthington, 2001; Symonds, 2003). Acker-Hocevar and Touchton (1999) discuss in their study that within the structure of their research site is an attempt to create what Hargreaves (1994) describe as a "collaborative culture". This is comprised of "relatively spontaneous, informal and pervasive collaborative working relationships among teachers" that "are both social and task-centered in nature" (p. 135). Hargreaves describes working

relationships between teachers and their colleagues to have five key components: (1) spontaneity, (2) voluntary, (3) development-oriented, (4) pervasive across time and space; and (5) unpredictable (p. 192 – 193). They are not without problems or limitations; however, this tends to be the most beneficial context for teacher and student learning and growth.

Based on a study of Philadelphia's humanities collaborative and a mathematics collaborative in Los Angeles, Little (1993) states, "Subject collaboratives equip teachers individually and collectively to deepen their subject knowledge and to assume a more assertive role in the reform of curriculum, pedagogy, and assessment" (p. 6). A required element of Reading First includes time for collaboration to improve teachers' subject matter knowledge and opportunities to share their practice. Unfortunately, the inauthentic collaborative meetings created by Reading First have developed a "contrived collegiality teacher culture" based on regulations, fixed in time and space, with an implementation rather than development orientation. Hargreaves (1994) describes contrived collegiality as "more controlled, regulated and predictable in its outcomes, and is frequently used to implement system initiatives or the principal's preferred program" (p. 135). As a result, the two major consequences are inflexibility and inefficiency. Teachers become delayed, distracted and demeaned as their professionalism and discretionary judgments become overridden (Hargreaves, 1994). The contrived collegiality teacher culture at Westside Elementary, in opposition to a collaborative one, has incited negative consequences for those involved, such as tension between the teachers, literacy coach, intern, and principal. Power struggles between the various players hinders opportunities to create a collaboration teacher culture, and forces people to embody their prescribed roles. In this

study, the principal is less inclined to force the Reading First initiative than the literacy coach, but she is ultimately responsible for the teachers' practices and students' academic outcomes.

Hocevar and Touchton elaborate on the relationship between structure, culture and power:

> The distribution of power within an institution is as much a part or a reflection of its culture as it is of its structures. Structure, culture and power interpenetrate one another. Micropolitical theory seeks to identify the overt and covert ways groups devise control over what issues, and who acquires and exercises control and power over others. Often, these rules are explicated in the everyday practices within the context and relationships in teachers' work lives. These rules become part of their tacit knowledge about the culture and micropolitics of the schools (p. 22)

Recognizing the connections between structure, culture, and power is an important theoretical foundation for this study.

Symonds (2003) states, "The culture in schools, as well as the systems and structures that support that culture, can be a determining factor in quality teaching" (p. 7). One important factor influencing the culture at Westside Elementary is the literacy coach. Symond's research found that, "In schools where teachers meet with coaches regularly, teachers, coaches and administrators report distinct cultural shifts, including increased: (1) teacher willingness and ability to collaborate, (2) peer accountability (3) individual teacher knowledge about other teachers' classrooms and instructional strategies, and (4) support for new teachers" (p. 33). Symond's findings reflect the best case scenario and

theoretical intentions of collaboration. However, meeting with a literacy coach on a regular basis does not guarantee positive outcomes.

The school structure may appear rigid to an outsider, but participants within the structure are often able to manipulate relationships by exercising power and empowerment. Short (1992) defines empowerment as "a process whereby school participants develop the competence to take charge of their own growth and resolve their own problems. Empowered individuals believe they have the skills and knowledge to act on a situation and improve it" (p. 5). Short continues to state that empowerment is a complex construct which involves six dimensions: involvement in decision making, teacher impact, teacher status, autonomy, opportunities for professional development, and teacher self-efficacy (p. 8). Recurrent themes by other researchers (Irwin, 1990; Klecker & Loadman, 1996) are similar: autonomy, problem-solving, responsibility, growth, choice, control, and decision-making (Duhon, 1999). In order to create an empowering environment for participants, educators need to be aware of these dimensions and themes and how they intersect and influence teachers' work lives. Each individual varies in their degree of empowerment as well as how they exercise their power to influence the structure and their colleagues, making the structure and culture ever-changing and complex.

Duhon (1999) discusses three distinct theoretical positions about the role of empowerment for instruction and achievement. The first, The Teacher Professionalism View, "argues that teachers are in the best position to assess the needs of their students" (p. 8). The second, The Bureaucratic Centralization View, "is skeptical about the training, skills, and goals of teachers." The final view, The Loose Coupling Perspective, "claims

that schools are 'loosely coupled', meaning that decisions occurring in one part of the school do not reverberate in clearly patterned ways elsewhere in the school. Thus changes in teacher participation in school-level decisions would have little impact on classroom practice" (p. 8). In this study, the Bureaucratic Centralization View dominates the logic of literacy instruction given prepackaged curriculum and a Reading First representative who holds teachers accountable for using the core curriculum. However, when deeply examining what is actually occurring in one classroom, it becomes apparent that The Loose Coupling Perspective is closer to the reality. The participating teacher has a sense of empowerment to make decisions about what is best for her students despite the Bureaucratic Centralization View which is attempting to enforce top-down mandates from *No Child Left Behind.*

Just as empowerment can exist at varying levels, so can dysempowerment. Kane and Montgomery (1998) state that dysempowerment is not the opposite of empowerment, "Rather, it can co-exist with empowerment to varying degrees and levels of intensity" (p. 264). Dysempowerment occurs when one's dignity is affronted, resulting in "feelings of humiliation, anger, indignation, and hostility" which can "impair trust, commitment, motivation, cooperation, and innovation" (p. 264). Through the process of dysempowerment, the primary outcome is an "individual's affective response to his or her interpretation of a perceived negative event; and the *subsequent outcome* in the dysempowerment process is an impairment in the individual's task motivation associated with psychological empowerment" (p. 264).

In this study, there is evidence of both empowerment and dysempowerment which has a remarkable impact on relationships among colleagues. This in turn influences the

day to day interactions between teachers, the principal, and the literacy coach. Chen and Miller (1997) found that "Lack of collegial relationships, teacher cohesiveness, friendly and harmonious relations, a sense of school community, and satisfactory relationships have also been reported as major factors contributing to work-related stress" (p. 8). In addition, Kane and Montgomery (1998) state that lack of collegiality or instances of dysempowerment over time can amass and produce strong cumulative consequences. Issues of empowerment as well as the nature of the relationships between colleagues can influence not only the school culture but the personal lives of those involved. Kane and Montgomery (1998) contend that empowerment is closely linked to trust among colleagues and "a history of trust between individuals leads to trust in the future, as well as confidence in the trustee's continuing goodwill" (p. 267). In this study, I discuss issues of empowerment and trust among colleagues and how this impacts the participating teacher at both the professional and personal level.

Constraints within a context/structure

In her discussion of teacher empowerment, Duhon (1999) borrows Irwin's (1990) definition of context which is, "the full school setting- physical surroundings, subject matter to be taught, socio-economic and racial composition, skills and motivation of teachers, management style in the building, relationships between teachers and principals, teachers with teachers, community perceptions, internal and external pressures" (p. 12). Each element of the context is interrelated, creating an extremely complex structure to navigate and examine. In the following section I will focus on elements of the context which act as constraints for educators. These are by no means all of the constraints

38

present in this study, but do represent the most serious and challenging ones according to the participating teacher.

Curriculum

One dimension of teacher empowerment is the opportunity for teachers to make decisions that impact their practice and the functioning of the school (Short, 1992). What could be more important than curriculum? Apthorp, Bodrova, Dean and Florian (2001) state:

> A curriculum that is comprehensive, developmentally sequenced, and aligned with standards and benchmarks is only as good as the teachers who use it. Recent research on exemplary literacy teachers indicates that teachers' knowledge is a critical link in helping all students become literate. Exemplary teachers, whose students achieve at high levels, understand their subject matter – literacy, literature, and language. They also understand the developmental stages of becoming literate. With this pedagogical content knowledge, they are able to appropriately select, reinforce, and expand the curriculum in response to what students need to become better readers and writers. (p. 11)

Having space and support to tailor curriculum to students' needs and interests is critical for student success as well as a teacher's sense of empowerment. White (1992) echoes this finding in her study with over one hundred personal interviews with teachers and administrators. When teachers made decisions about curriculum, they felt more encouraged to invest energy in their practice, students reacted favorably, and it opened communication within their own school and among teachers and principals from other schools. This also led to an increased sense of professionalism and self-esteem when

39

teachers were granted the opportunity to express their ideas and shape the curriculum. In fact, White states, "When teachers can define their own curriculum, they feel more organized and in control of their classroom. Teachers expressed the belief that the more input they had on curriculum decisions and the more comfortable they were with teaching, the better lessons students received and the more students learned" (p. 74). The final outcome in the classroom was less reliance on prepackaged curriculum and textbooks.

Unfortunately at Westside Elementary, and other schools forced to adopt basal reading programs as a result of *No Child Left Behind* and not making Adequate Yearly Progress, teachers are limited in their opportunities to select the best curriculum for their students. Instead, they are trained in how to use the materials and expected to use the core literacy program. Many researchers (Apple, 1983; Goodman, 1988; Hargreaves, 1994) describe this growth of prepackaged sets of curricular materials as technical control which leads to the deskilling and degradation of educators. Apple (1983) states:

> It includes everything a teacher 'needs' to teach, has the pedagogical steps a teacher must take to reach these goals already built in, and has the evaluation mechanisms built into it as well. But not only does it pre-specify nearly all a teacher should know, say, and do, but it often lays out the appropriate students responses as well. (p. 149).

Once teachers have been deskilled, they must be reskilled in the use of the materials.

In the Reading First grant application is an explanation and justification for the deskilling of teachers. A core reading program is defined as the primary instructional tool to be used by teachers to teach reading. It should serve as the primary reading program,

but "does not imply that other materials and strategies are not used to provide a rich, comprehensive program of instruction" (p. 36). Yet the next question, "Why adopt a core reading program" is answered as "Teaching reading is far more complex than most professionals and laypersons realize" and "The requirements of curriculum construction and instructional design that effectively move children through the 'learning to read' stage to the 'reading to learn' stage are simply too important to leave to the judgment of individuals" (p. 36). The individuals referred to in this document are teachers. It concludes by stating that when the core curriculum addresses instructional priorities, determined by the developers of the core curriculum, then teachers will need to supplement and modify instruction less. The core reading program supplies all the answers, requires little thought or ingenuity on the teacher's part, and ensures ultimate deskilling.

Shannon (1989) and Goodman (1988) argue that deskilling reduces the teacher to a managerial role, ignoring the teacher's intimate knowledge of their own needs and interests as well as their students'. This in turn reduces the quantity and quality of instruction. Teachers begin to lose their curricular and pedagogical skills which hurt students. In addition, prepackaged curriculum is composed of texts that are typically more age driven rather than skill driven, and fail to consider what background knowledge the children bring to the curriculum (Apthorp et al, 2001). Policy makers and curriculum developers are creating and demanding that teachers use this deskilling curriculum that is developed for the average reader in the grade, rather than letting teachers make these critical curricular decisions.

It is important to note that Apple was still writing about the power and influence

of standardized, grade-level-specific textbooks three years later. Perhaps more disturbing

is the fact that his analysis applies nineteen years later. Futrell (1989) was writing during

the same decade as Apple, practically warning educators and policy makers of the errors

of the four waves of educational reform. Currently we are seeing the same trends toward

deskilling teachers, more testing, reliance on prepackaged curriculum, and the silencing

of educators. Often veteran teachers are dismissed as being traditional and skeptical, but

they most likely are seeing policies with an uncanny similarity to the past. Granted the

context may have changed, but educational policy demonstrates a frightening amnesia

which educators do not always share. Twenty years later, teachers are being told how to

teach, what to teach and when their students will be tested, similar to the 1980's.

In a study by Anagnostopoulos and Rutledge (2004), teachers make surprising

curricular decisions in response to mandates to improve standardized test scores.

Principals and teachers were followed for a four year period to learn how they made

sense of and responded to both their schools' failure and high rates of academic course

failure. English teachers at one of the high schools were expected to implement the

principal's reading initiative to improve student achievement scores. The researchers

found that the teachers "characterized the strategies as 'superficial' and as disrupting

what they referred to as the 'real' literature-based curriculum" (p. 19). Once the school

was released from probation, the teachers focused less on the reading initiative and began

"aligning the curriculum externally, with district policy, and internally, with their

departmental colleagues" (p. 19). The teachers essentially returned to the "real"

curriculum and with time, reasserted their collective control over the English curriculum.

This study challenges the stay-power of initiatives and new curriculum if the educators do not support either from the beginning and see it as taking time and focus away from the "real" curriculum and their professional identities. In this study, there are significant literacy practices that are identified as the "unofficial" curriculum or curriculum that is not part of or supported by the Reading First mandate and Houghton Mifflin. Often the "unofficial" curriculum in this study is part of a thematic unit or practice prior to becoming a Reading First school.

Bergeron and Rudenga (1993) discuss barriers to thematic teaching, which the participating teacher in this study manages to incorporate into her literacy instruction despite pressures to use the core literacy program. What Bergeron and Rudenga found was that teachers in their study believed thematic teaching was hampered by time constraints, curriculum demands, and traditional thinking. They state, "the need to cover a certain amount of curriculum, to use the textbooks and workbooks provided, and to implement a new series or other curricular unit was perceived by teachers as obstructing their use of thematic instruction" (p. 8). One participant commented how someone would always be pressuring teachers to use the textbooks and materials, whether this was the principal or part of a state requirement. Goodman (1988) found a similar case in his research of a veteran teacher with a closet full of thematic units developed over years who was not able to use these due to a district implemented policy of "curriculum monitoring" (p. 204). Teachers were pressured to use prescribed curriculum and follow a prescribed timetable. As a result, "Unique and original units of study based on teacher's and pupils' interests are no longer considered appropriate to the school district's goals" (p. 204). At Westside Elementary, teachers face similar pressures from the district as well

as the literacy coach who represents the mandated literacy curriculum. Fortunately, Emily is not the type of teacher to acquiesce to mandates that do not fit her theory of best literacy practices.

Time

Many researchers have found that time constraints play an important role in the professional and personal lives of teachers (Bergeron & Rudenga, 1993; Chen & Miller, 1997; Darling-Hammond, 1990; Hargreaves, 1994; Maeroff, 1988). Hargreaves (1994) states, "Time is the enemy of freedom. Or so it seems to teachers. Time presses down the fulfillment of their wishes. It pushes against the realization of their wants... Teachers take their time seriously" (p. 95). Participants in the study by Bergeron and Rudenga (1993) commented specifically on how time constraints impacted their practice. In their study of international literature on teacher stress, Chen and Miller (1997) found time constraints to be correlated with stress and burnout. Through the General Health Questionnaire and Maslach Burnout Inventory (MBI) they found that:

- 63% of 168 Northern Ireland teachers reported moderate-high stress levels due to time constraints

- Tension between teachers and administrators in regard to time was a problem with 238 Australian elementary and secondary school teachers

- 230 Kindergarten through sixth grade Midwestern public school teachers felt lack of time was the greatest impediment to job satisfaction

- 337 primary, secondary, and special British school teachers said lack of time was ranked as the number one stressor (p. 2)

Time constraints may be connected to incorporating the required curriculum as well as the teacher's "unofficial" curriculum, time to meet with colleagues in an authentic way, time to plan, time with students, or time being well spent. Maeroff connects issues of power with time constraints, stating "Teachers have more chances of gaining access to the mechanisms of power if they operate as a network of like-minded agents of change" (p. 475). When time constraints limit opportunities for collaboration, not just with colleagues but like minded colleagues, the outcome is dismal. In this study, time constraints are a tremendous barrier and the focus of chapter five, "'This is gonna screw us up!' Institutional, financial, and temporal constraints".

Phillippi (1998) found time constraints to play an important role in the lives of teachers in her study. Teachers in Kindergarten through second grade were expected to shift their literacy instruction from basal based, teacher directed to a constructivist, developmentally appropriate approach. This required a great deal of time to prepare literacy materials, to which one teacher said, "the set up, the preparation of the materials in order to teach this way is horrendous- simply horrendous" (p. 12). Rather than relying on the materials from the basal program, they were expected to create materials which typically took place during their own time before and after school and on weekends. For many teachers, particularly those with families that included small children, this was very taxing.

Another type of time constraint in Phillippi's study was the limited time allowed to transition to this new approach of literacy instruction. For many teachers it felt sudden with little support. This created a situation "in which it was difficult for many teachers and principals to establish personal meaning of the policy" (p. 17). For others, extra

training sessions and professional development took a great deal of time. Many teachers agreed with the philosophy of the mandate; however it required an unreasonable amount of time and commitment on their part with minimal support. Phillippi concludes that teachers "worried that all of the work brought on by the sudden and drastic changes would undermine teachers' willingness and ability to do all that was required" (p. 13). Hargreaves (1994) also discusses research in which teachers felt pressure and anxiety due to excessive time demands to implement new programs. The teachers felt as though their time perspective was different from the administrators, who appeared to be insensitive to the time pressures experienced by the teachers.

For novice teachers, time constraints become evident and sometimes overwhelming. In this study, readers learn how the participating teacher's intern quickly understands that his teaching time is limited by factors such as holidays, professional development and in-service days, and incorporating the "official" curriculum. Goodman (1988) offers another example of an intern who tried to develop a meaningful whole-language approach to literacy development that became increasingly difficult to incorporate into her daily practice due to an establish system controlled by workbooks. Children in her classroom were not allowed to participate in individual reading conferences until they had completed their workbook pages. This typically excluded children who disliked reading because they had the most difficulty completing the pages. By the time the intern assumed full responsibility for teaching the standardized curriculum, she found no time to continue meeting with the students to discuss their books. Once again, the "official" curriculum dominated the "unofficial" curriculum regardless of how meaningful, engaging or beneficial it was to students and teachers.

Hargreaves (1994) discusses four interrelated dimensions of time, with the first being technical-rational dimension of time, or "time as a finite resource or means which can be increased, decreased, managed, manipulated, organized or reorganized in order to accommodate selected educational purposes" (p. 96). Teachers' time can, and often is manipulated by the administration to support desired educational objectives that are not necessarily reflective of teachers' desires. It is often shaped for the greatest efficiency and productivity. Hargreaves suggests that time may be the most important means of breaking down isolation and developing collegiality curriculum development. However, the way teachers choose to use extra time can vary and produce different results.

The second, micro-political time, is concerned with the status of curriculum, or which subjects receive more time or favorable scheduling. For elementary teachers, classroom work is the dominant, overwhelming conception of teachers work. As an individual's power and prestige increases, so does their time away from the classroom. Typically this explains why it is rare for elementary teachers to be away from the classroom, unlike secondary teachers who usually have more planning time. Phenomenological time suggests that time has its own existence in schedules, timeliness, and time constraints. Time appears to be external to the teacher despite being a subjective phenomenon. The final dimension of time, sociopolitical time, refers to way in which forms of time become administratively dominated or how administrative control rules teachers' work and curriculum implementation process. This is a brief overview of the four interrelated dimensions of time that impact teachers' work. It suggests that time constraints are varied and complex and it is not surprising that in this study, issues of time were extremely important in Emily's mind and experiences.

Control

Another common constraint in elementary institutions is the struggle for control among participants including teachers, principals, specialists, and district administrators. Shannon (1989) discusses three types of control, developed by Apple (1982), that include the following forms: simple, bureaucratic, and technical. In his study, Shannon found that teachers were contending with simple control. He states:

> ...in the Right to Read school district, the reading coordinator's insistence that the third grade teachers continue to follow the basal curriculum even though a basal author agreed with the teachers' complaint is a form of simple control. The teachers, as a group, had little legitimate recourse but to comply with the reading coordinator's dictates; there was no further appeal possible. Of course, as individuals, these teachers could shut their classroom doors and follow their own conscience. (p. 79).

Shannon's findings are nearly identical to the findings in this study. He later states that other teachers relay this incident of teachers resisting the basal program, but are not certain that those who resisted would avoid being reprimanded. In this study, the third grade teachers attend meetings where they are cajoled to use the Houghton Mifflin core curriculum, and then return to their classrooms to teach in an appropriate way for their students. Emily is reprimanded in various ways by the literacy coach, creating feelings of frustration similar to the teachers in Shannon's study that resisted directives that went against their better judgment. Emily also rejects being told what to do by the literacy coach who represents Reading First.

Shannon describes the third form of control, technical, as embedded in the commercial reading materials. He found that few teachers and administrators questioned the legitimacy of the materials controlling their teaching. The materials, which are typical of most prepackaged literacy programs, controlled "the program's goals, methods of instruction, main source of texts for reading, and evaluation" (p. 80) with little resistance by teachers or administrators. Contrary to Shannon's analysis, my analysis suggests that teachers are less amenable to technical control by the basal programs and continue to resist and negotiate the requirements associated with Houghton Mifflin and Reading First. Shannon states that when the teachers accept the technical control of the basal program, they become deskilled since the guidebooks govern their practice, allowing little room for thoughtful reading instruction. Fortunately, Emily rarely accesses a teacher's guide which allows her to consider other possibilities for literacy planning and instruction that is most appropriate for her students' needs and interests.

Summary

This research draws upon four themes, or conceptual lenses, to view the participating teacher's resistance and negotiation of policy within multiple structures. These include (1) the intersection of policy and practice, (2) hybridized curriculum and instruction, (3) school structure and culture; and (4) constraints. I discuss research related to each theme in distinct sections; however it is possible to see how these are also interrelated. The intersection of policy and practice includes a comparison between reform policies of the 1980's and today, as well as an in-depth look at the intended and unintended consequences of a study by Phillippi (1998). Hybridity, a common reaction by teachers in an effort to negotiate top-down policy into everyday practices, is often a

result of various constraints. School structure, school culture and the culture of teaching are interrelated and influenced by issues of power, teacher empowerment, and collaboration. Finally, collaboration is far more complex than perhaps education reform suggests, often yielding less than promising outcomes that create temporal constraints as well as tension between colleagues. Hargreaves (1994) offers four types of collaboration, of which two apply to this research, but rarely in a clear-cut way. Often the type of relationships or interactions between the participating teacher and her colleagues are along a continuum of contrived and collaborative teacher culture rather than fitting neatly into a particular category of collaboration. Chapters four through six will explore these complex themes, or conceptual lenses, in depth with examples that challenge the current available research and hopefully add new insight for future research, teacher practice, and reform.

Chapter 3

THE STUDY AND ITS DESIGN

"The Michigan Department of Education admits to incorrectly labeling three more Middleton elementary schools as not making 'adequate yearly progress'" ("Middleton" State Journal, April 30, 2004)

Introduction

In the spring of 2004, several months prior to the start of the study, Westside Elementary School appeared in a list in the local newspaper as one of several schools incorrectly labeled as failing to make AYP. The implications for this error were immense. Westside Elementary was designated as a Reading First school by the district and adopted Houghton Mifflin as its core literacy curriculum in the fall of 2003. Teachers attended monthly professional development meetings for Reading First, as well as monthly in-services after school for Houghton Mifflin training during the 2003 – 2004 school year. They were trained in LETRS[7] and expected to use the Balanced Literacy Program outlined by the district[8]. Teachers were still required to use district curriculum guides[9] for math, language arts, science, and social studies for grades second through fifth. Having worked with six of the teachers at Westside Elementary throughout the school year, I was well aware of their frustration and confusion in negotiating all of these requirements in their literacy planning and instruction. I also knew there were several

---

[7] The Reading First grant provided 30 additional hours for professional development for teachers to learn LETRS which was led by the Literacy coach who is also the representative for Reading First. Complete description of program available at http://www.letrs.com/

[8] The district Balanced Literacy Program is intended to provide literacy strategy training for teachers, regular literacy professional development and a trained literacy coordinator. More information can be accessed at http://Middletonschools.net/curricula/balanced_literacy.htm

[9] Pacing Guides were created by a team of educators in the district for social studies, language arts, math and science. They are intended as a realistic time frame for instruction and assessment which is compatible with student growth and achievement. http://web.isd.k12.mi.us/curricula/pacing_guides/pc.htm

teachers actively resisting various portions of these mandates and continuing to teach in a way that was best for their students. Given this context, I created a research design that would delve into the literacy pedagogy of one teacher who refused to abandon years of experience and success for the sake of being in compliance with district, state, and national policies.

When designing this research project, it was important to consider Florio-Ruane's (2002) suggestion for learning more about teacher practice. She states, "To understand local knowledge in teaching and teacher education, we need in-depth studies of individual teachers at work and of the variety of ways that teachers think about and do that work" (p. 209). Therefore, it was logical to select an urban elementary school in a district juggling curriculum guides, high-stakes testing, and prepackaged curriculum and then to research in depth how the teacher was making decisions in her literacy pedagogy. It was also sensible to select a teacher with whom I had developed a relationship the year before and who was pushing against mandates and remaining true to her beliefs about children's learning and literacy pedagogy.

Study design

This qualitative study was designed to learn more about Emily's planning and literacy instruction for the 2004 - 2005 school year. Initially I was concerned that my involvement might disrupt the mentoring process for her intern, Greg. I found that Emily needed to be explicit and intentional in sharing her decision making of literacy curricula and practice and that my presence did not appear to influence his growth or her teaching. In fact, participating in co-planning sessions created unique circumstances when Greg could observe conversations between Emily and me about the complexity and challenges

of planning and teaching elementary literacy. There were also situations when I could observe conversations between Greg and Emily as she spoke about her practice in a way that a novice could learn from and easily understand.

For this study, I used the methodological tools of audio taping weekly literacy co-planning sessions with Emily and Greg, field observations of literacy instruction, both formal and informal interviews with Emily, and the collection of literacy artifacts and materials. Through analysis, these data provided insights as to how and why Emily made certain decisions about literacy instruction, given the various requirements and restrictions in her school district.

School and District Context

This research is situated in a district which serves more than 17,600 students in Kindergarten through twelfth grade. The district dates back to 1847, originally as a one-room schoolhouse in the north side of the city. In 1861 it was formally incorporated. Currently the district is comprised of forty-one schools, two office buildings, a service center, warehouse, bus garage, a child care center, and an environmental education and conference center. The district serves an ethnically and socioeconomically diverse population with a student body in Kindergarten through twelfth grade of approximately 46% Caucasian, 33% African American, 12% Hispanic, 5% Asian, and 1% American Indian.

The school site, Westside Elementary School, is a school of choice and approximately 100 of its 376 students take advantage of this district option. The school also provides bussing. According to the principal, (Barbara, informal conversation, 9/9/04) most of the children who begin the school year are able to complete the school

year at the same site, making Westside's mobility rate approximately average in the district[10]. The student population at Westside Elementary closely parallels the demographics of the district student population. The only significant difference between the student population at Westside Elementary and the district percentage is for Asian students. This is due to the significant percentage of Hmong and Vietnamese students.

Figure 1: Student demographics for Middleton School District and Westside Elementary
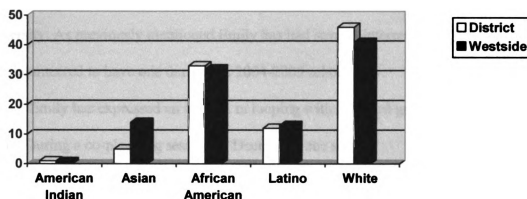
Emily

The participating teacher, Emily, has an extensive history of working with the local university by volunteering as a cooperating teacher for interns and seniors in the teacher education program. I met Emily during the 2003-2004 school year when she volunteered to host seniors for their field placement for a literacy method course I taught at the university. I also learned more about her teaching practices and view of children through an intern who was moved from my school site, where I was an intern field instructor, to Westside Elementary half way through the school year. Emily and I spoke with one another at meetings for cooperating teachers and field instructors and I felt that

---

[10] See Appendix A for Westside Elementary School demographics

her philosophy of literacy instruction and how children learn would make for a timely, informative study of how teachers negotiate policy into practice.

Emily has worked in both middle school and several elementary schools for a total of thirteen years as a classroom teacher in the same district. She has taught at several schools and believes this is how she has learned a great deal about teaching. I wanted to work with Emily because she demonstrates a commitment to sharing her teaching philosophy with novice teachers and is anxious to maintain involvement with the university. As previously mentioned Emily has had several interns from the university and volunteered to have one during the 2004-2005 school year.

Emily has expressed an interest in looping with her third graders to the fourth grade. During a co-planning session in December, she said:

> Now Barbara (the principal) wants me to loop and I love looping, I think it's the best teaching you can do. Now it would probably be very beneficial to this group to have me loop because they're really... they know me, we could just start right off, just go over the rules, they know my language and to get ready for the fourth grade MEAP, and 'Remember this from last year', 'Oh Yeah!!', and I could just do my little chants and stuff... (Emily, co-planning, 12/7/04)

She believes that this group would benefit, as would all children with looping, since beginning in the 2005-2006 school year, third grade teachers will administer the state mandated test. She hopes to continue working with the same students because she believes they can do well on both the state required MEAP test as well as the national IOWA test. During the fourth week, Emily commented on how the MEAP is criterion referenced and, "at least it is 'passable' and I can get most of my kids to pass it if I'm

doing good teaching and using good strategies" (Emily, co-planning, 9/21/04). It should be noted that Reading First schools are required to purchase and administer the IOWA, which is described in the Reading First grant application, as a way to measure progress due to the adopted core curriculum. Ironically, if Emily's students do well on the IOWA, it can not be attributed exclusively to Houghton Mifflin or Reading First since her practice includes activities and approaches to literacy instruction outside of the core curriculum and district mandate.

When speaking with Emily, it is evident that she is dedicated to the success of her students and the school. Although Emily lives in a district with a better reputation for education, she and her spouse have selected to send their two children to Westside Elementary. Emily regularly shares her love of learning, such as participating in local Writing Programs and district and national conferences, and her personal desire to improve her teaching practice through collaboration with colleagues, professional development days, and teacher in-services. She regularly uses resources, such as books and internet sites, outside of the "required" core curriculum and literacy program to meet the needs and interests of her students.

During various conversations in co-planning meetings and informal and formal interviews, Emily has expressed an acute awareness of discrimination based on ethnicity and socioeconomic status. Emily is White; however as a parent of a multiethnic child, and married to an African-American person, she is sensitive to how children are treated in schools based on their ethnicity. On various occasions she has expressed concern about how colleagues and her intern view children who do not share their ethnicity or

socioeconomic status. The following situation exemplifies her awareness of socioeconomic status and how this can impact children.

Each year the school schedules a field trip that requires parents to pay part of the costs. This year the school has planned a trip to Chicago. Colleagues, as well as her intern, felt that students who could not afford to go should have to raise the money. Emily became angry, asking others what they would like the children to do and answering for them, suggested "scrub the floors?" She asked one teacher how it felt to be poor, to which the teacher could not answer. She then talked about how parents need to pay for necessities such as food, rather than a trip to Chicago. She believes that if the students were middle class then their parents would simply pay for the trip, but that there is a belief that poor students should have to "earn it- to work for it" which she is adamantly opposed to (Emily, informal interview, 12/5/04).

On another occasion, while observing, students could purchase popcorn for 25 cents. Not all of the students brought money, so Emily bought extra bags of popcorn so all the children could have a bag for their snack. She commented that sometimes she will pull kids aside and ask "is it a matter of money" (Emily, informal interview, 12/5/04) and they will often admit that it is, but are not going to say this out loud. Emily seems to understand how it feels to be poor and has alluded to being poor at various points in her life.

Finally, Emily has shared on several occasions how upset she was while teaching at another school that discriminated against students who were poor and did not have transportation. The school had an evening performance and Emily felt the school needed to provide transportation; however colleagues did not feel this was necessary and did not

want many of the poorer students at the performance because they felt that the children did not know how to act appropriately. Emily argued that if the students did not know how to behave, they needed to be at the performance and should not be excluded for lack of transportation. Emily also shared that the teachers only wanted White students at the performance and this was wrong. She finished by saying that the principal wanted her to be quiet and that some schools would rather have mediocre teachers who won't speak out about inequalities such as this.

Emily and I have engaged in many conversations about teaching in urban schools. She would much rather teach in urban schools and has little patience for those who feel that the students in her school or schools like it, are "less than" students in other more affluent schools and districts. This has been an issue with an intern who did not see the children being "as good as" children in other districts in the surrounding area. Emily takes this personally since her own children attend the school and she believes her students deserve a rigorous education and are capable of academic and personal success. She feels that the rewards of teaching in an urban school are great and discusses how a wealthier school might have more resources, but different problems.

For the past two years, Emily was teaching in a portable classroom, but has moved into the main building and is across from the library. It is not uncommon to find her students working in the hall or in the library when it is not being used by other classrooms. From a phone conversation in August, she commented that it is better since she felt removed from the school; however she is slightly concerned because she likes her students to be able to talk and she knows they tend to get loud. I replied, "Well, you can always close the door", to which she responded that she doesn't like to close the door so

"everyone else will just need to get used to the noise!" (9/1/04). Emily's room often feels busy, with students moving around and working with one another. It feels crowded, with 25 desks and chairs, as well as other tables for centers. However, by looking at the walls covered with student work and bulletin boards related to their literacy focus, it is evident that this is a serious place of learning and support. During observations, Emily often gets students attention with "firecracker applause", "round of applause" and "patting selves on their back". She provides space for children to share their own background knowledge, new knowledge, and thoughtful inquiries.

The next section will discuss in detail how data was collected from August, 2004 through January, 2005. This included observations and audio recordings of co-planning sessions with Emily and Greg, observations of literacy instruction, formal and informal interviews with Emily, and material analysis.

Co-Planning Sessions

Each Tuesday after school for approximately one and a half hours, I joined Emily and her intern, Greg, while they co-planned their literacy instruction for the following week. During these sessions, I audio taped their discussion and used this opportunity to ask questions about her decision making in terms of which curriculum she chose to include and exclude. I was interested in how she selected material from the core curriculum, Houghton Mifflin's literacy series, as well as her own materials (Book Club, centers, various units, etc.). I also used this time to learn more about how she plans instruction and materials around the curriculum guides and how up-coming testing impacted her decisions. Since Emily has experience working with seniors and interns in the past, I guessed that she would find it valuable to be explicit in her decision making

and rationale behind instruction for novice teachers. This was the case, and offered excellent opportunities to learn more about how she thought about literacy and her students' learning.

I participated in a total of eight literacy co-planning sessions, beginning the second week of school in September and ending the last week of the first semester in December. I returned during the second semester to participate in the sessions, but after a conversation with Emily and Greg, decided that it would not be beneficial to continue participating in the meetings since Greg would begin his lead teaching in the second semester. Rather than visiting Emily's classroom during the co-planning time, I decided to continue observing while she taught and using the time when Greg was teaching to speak more with Emily about her literacy pedagogy.

Classroom observations

I observed literacy instruction on nine occasions during the first semester and continued to observe during the second semester. However, only observations during the first semester are included in this study. During this time I documented the materials used (both core curriculum and supplemental curriculum), the type of instruction, and the text consumption and production of the students. I visited the classroom on various days to get a sense of a typical week, noting changes due to testing or other interruptions that affected instruction. All observations were handwritten and transcribed as soon as possible.

During observations I often moved around the room, keeping my focus on Emily and Greg, while interacting with students to see what type of text they were consuming and producing. This gave me an opportunity to track the literacy development of several

students. The focus of this research project was on Emily, however noting marked improvement in the reading and writing abilities of a few students offered evidence of Emily's effective literacy instruction.

I also made a point of observing during the last days of the two major units in the first semester, the Book Club Mystery Unit and the required district curriculum guide unit of fairy tales, folk tales, and tall tales. These are two days that Emily refuses to relinquish, despite time restraints and a lack of connection to the Houghton Mifflin series. These days are described in detail in chapter four.

Content/Material Analysis

I analyzed Houghton Mifflin's core curriculum as well as the third grade literacy curriculum guide created by the district. This was necessary to understand how Emily was creating hybrids across and between various materials and resources. I also analyzed district, state, and national tests to see how they related to the other artifacts. Emily continually mentioned additional resources such as Strategies that Work (Harvey & Goudvis, 2000), Mosaic of Thought (Zimmerman & Keen, 1997), and Craft Lessons (Fletcher & Portalupi, 1998) as part of professional development, so it was necessary to learn how she was accessing these for information and teaching strategies and how they did or did not coincide with Houghton Mifflin and the district requirements.

During an informal meeting in January, Emily shared two binders that I had not seen her refer to during co-planning sessions or at any other time. The first binder, Balanced Literacy, is a district produced program and is intended for use by all elementary school teachers. The second binder, Language Essentials for Teachers of Reading and Spelling (LETRS), is for Reading First schools and is what Emily describes

as full of "why we teach certain things, not how". Teachers received training in LETRS in the 2003 – 2004 school year, which was led by the literacy coach/Reading First representative.

Formal and Informal Interviews

In August 2004, before I began meeting with Emily and her intern for co-planning sessions and before observing literacy instruction time, I met with Emily to discuss her literacy pedagogy. This was an important time to learn more about her teaching career and what she hoped to teach her intern about literacy planning and instruction. Throughout the year, we engaged in a variety of both formal and informal interviews, similar to think alouds, to gain insight as to how she negotiated the required core curriculum, test preparation, and curriculum guides. I also include dialogue with other individuals involved in the school, including the intern, the other third grade teacher, principal, and the literacy coach/Reading First. This is important because Emily is often engaged in authentic conversations about her practice with others. Asking about her practice in an interview format may not have offered the same rich detail and insights.

At the end of the first semester, after coding observations and co-planning sessions, I developed a list of questions that needed clarification. Emily and I met on "records day"[11] so I could ask her these questions. Many of her responses appear as question and answer segments throughout chapters four through eight. During the analysis phase, from January through March, 2005 I continued to ask Emily for clarification through informal meetings and phone conversations.

---

[11] Records Day: the district provides teachers with one day at the end of the semester, without students, to complete report cards.

Data analysis and interpretation

Data analysis occurred throughout the research project by continually rereading transcriptions of interviews, co-planning sessions, and detailed field notes to search for what LeCompte and Shensul (1999) call "ideas, themes, units, patterns, and structures" (p. 45). By continually rereading data I was also able to intermittently ask Emily to clarify or answer questions from the data. I followed a three step analytic process which included (1) inscription, (2) description; and (3) transcription (LeCompte and Shensul, 1999) to locate themes in the data. This three step process began in 2003 and concluded as data collection ended in January, 2005.

The inscription phase began in 2003 when Emily shared with me her frustrations with district, state, and national requirements. We occasionally spoke at meetings for mentors and liaisons in the teacher education program. The settings were rarely private one-on-one conversations; rather several teachers at a table would be discussing the politics of the district as they related to their own teaching and their interns. At this time I noted Emily's references to literacy pedagogy hybrids, the basis for my research question. Emily was not the only teacher voicing opposition to the various mandates, but was willing to share strategies or approaches she had developed to suit the needs of her students. Eventually, both formal and informal interviews with Emily during the early months of the research project affirmed my initial hypotheses regarding her literacy planning and instruction. It was evident that she was negotiating requirements at the district, state, and national level in an attempt to continue teaching in a way that was appropriate and successful with her students.

The second and third stages, description and transcription, began in September 2004 and continued through the end of the first semester in January 2005. Thick description was in the form of detailed field notes of observations and co-planning sessions, analysis of artifacts, and transcriptions of (1) formal and informal interviews, (2) audio taped co-planning sessions with the intern; and (3) phone conversations with Emily. All field notes were transcribed within 24 to 48 hours from hand written field notes and audio tapes.

Both deductive (top down) and inductive (bottom up) analysis were employed. By using deductive strategies, codes began to emerge from my observations and co-planning session field notes. During the third week in January, once all the data had been collected, I developed a coding system that yielded eight categories. These categories emerged as I began reading the data, and I continued to add categories as needed. As each category become apparent, it was assigned a color and abbreviation:

Table 1: Coding system for data analysis

Color	Category	Abbreviation
Red	Houghton Mifflin/Reading First	HM/RF
Dark blue	State mandated (IOWA, MEAP)	ST
Orange	Student needs	SN
Green	Colleagues	C
Brown	Outside resources (books, writing programs, professional development, etc)	OR
Light blue	District (curriculum guides, quarterlies, testing)	D
Purple	Literacy and school culture	L/SC

Table 1: Coding system for data analysis (continued)

Pink	Literacy instruction other than Houghton Mifflin (Book Club, centers, etc)	OLI (other literacy instruction)

As I read through the data, I underlined any words, sentences, or sections that related to the eight categories in the appropriate color using colored pencils. Many words and lines of the text were underlined in more than one color. For example, during a co-planning session on November 30, 2004, my notes read:

> She says the literacy coach wanted to know how much she is doing with parts of speech. The literacy coach says she would be covering English if she used the core program.

These two sentences were underlined in purple and red since they related to both Houghton Mifflin/Reading First and literacy and school culture. By underlining with colored pencils, I was able to return to the data while writing about hybridity and look for text that was underlined in two or more colors. This was also a quick way to locate data since I used abbreviations in the margins for each category.

While writing the dissertation, I found that Reading First and Houghton Mifflin needed to be separated. Reading First is a grant provided by *No Child Left Behind* for schools that fail to make Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP). There are certain requirements unique to the Reading First grant. Reading First allows districts to select one of five basal reading programs and Middleton district selected Houghton Mifflin. There are certain materials and resources provided by Houghton Mifflin that are not necessarily a part of Reading First. The state mandated category remained the same, but

any text relating to state requirements was often underlined in more than one color. In chapter four I discuss how test preparation for state mandates (IOWA and MEAP exams) was never in isolation, rather Emily was able to hybridize state requirements with Houghton Mifflin and her own practice. Student needs and outside resources are discussed throughout the dissertation in terms of Emily's teaching. She is mindful of her students' strengths, needs, and interests and this guides her literacy practice. She is able to find strategies, theories, or ideas for teaching to her unique group of students through outside resources, such as Strategies that Work (Harvey & Goudvis, 2000), Mosaic of Thought (Zimmermann & Keene, 1997), and Craft Lessons (Fletcher & Portalupi, 1998). Therefore, these categories were used to provide a rationale and resources behind Emily's decision making in literacy planning and instruction. Colleagues and literacy and school culture were closely related and became absorbed into discussions about Westside Elementary school culture and the culture of teaching. Finally, district and literacy instruction other than Houghton Mifflin were often underlined in more than one color as these were typically hybridized practices.

Once the text was color-coded and I had read through the notes and began writing, I identified five recurring themes: (1) resistance and power, (2) hybridity, (3) resources (time, materials, and space), (4) structure and agency; and (5) fulfilling the professional roles. Hybridity became the theme for chapter four. The word "resources" was changed to constraints as I realized that Emily was more often coping with a lack of resources, and this became the theme for chapter five. Resistance and power, as well as empowerment and collaboration were combined to discuss findings in chapter six. Structure and agency as well as fulfilling the professional role were interwoven through

the data analysis chapters as I found that these themes impacted how and why Emily hybridized her practice, the ways in which constraints occurred in the school and Emily's practice, and the ways in which collaboration, empowerment, resistance and power transpired at Westside Elementary.

Chapter 4

HYBRIDITY: "SNIPPETS" OF WHAT'S VALUABLE

As any teacher knows, approaches old and new coexist within staffrooms and across schools despite the best attempts by material developers, researchers, and governments to swing the system in particular directions... In classrooms in particular approaches tend to coexist, blending and creating hybrid approaches to teaching that no text book developer, researcher, or bureaucrat could have conceptualized. (Luke, 2000, p. 451)

Introduction

Apple (1983) echoes Luke's statement, that both students and teachers may use curriculum in ways undreamed of by state bureaucrats or corporate publishers. Emily's classroom is a site of pervasive hybridization in literacy planning, practice, and discourse which requires an in-depth study to begin to understand how she shapes her pedagogy in creative ways. Anagnostopoulos and Rutledge (1994) describe this practice as how "Teachers can both resist and accommodate policy as they draw and re-draw boundaries between mandated practices and what they consider the 'real' curriculum" (p. 43). Emily strategically integrates the required Houghton Mifflin core curriculum, district requirements, and her own practices of what she considers "valuable" instruction or the real curriculum, and activities in her two hour literacy block. Emily's resistance to using a basal reading program that does not, in her opinion teach reading and writing (Informal interview, 9/1/04) occurs throughout the study. She believes that Reading First does not motivate students to learn to read and write (Informal interview, 9/1/04). She does not understand how the required ninety minutes of literacy for Reading First is only reading

and does not include writing. Emily asks, "How could they not think that writing is part of literacy? It is imperative to getting kids to read" (Emily, co-planning, 9/21/04). Emily also questions the ninety minutes of uninterrupted reading. Based on background knowledge and experience, she states that children need some variety during the morning literacy block such as a math center or writing (Emily, co-planning, 9/21/04).

Emily does not oppose policies at the district, state, and national level in an effort to make a statement or resist for the sake of resisting; rather she creates hybridized practices and negotiates and resists policy to meet the needs and interests of her students. Her students in the past have shown noticeable literacy growth with this type of practice. Fortunately she is supported by her principal who recognizes Emily's success with students struggling to read and write. After fourteen years of teaching, she is neither apologetic nor reticent in sharing what she believes to be good teaching, made evident by her willingness to speak out in staff meetings and grade level literacy meetings. She views herself as an advocate for her students, even when her actions create more stress and tension for her professional life.

Emily is not alone in creating hybridized practices given top-down reforms at the state, national, and district level (Bisplinghoff, 2002; Cohen, 1990; Cohen & Ball, 1990b; Luke, 2000). Often hybridization occurs between two distinct areas such as Houghton Mifflin and the district curriculum guides. At other times, the hybridization is a result of several areas coming together as snippets integrated into Emily's "unofficial" literacy curriculum. Venn diagrams illustrating how the various hybrids exist are included in this chapter; however, many practices were difficult to place since they cut across multiple areas. This is a reflection of the complexity of hybridization and an excellent example of

the type of innovative thinking and action required on the part of educators. In this chapter, I discuss the various hybrids Emily has created in response to the current political climate, in an effort to maintain her own values and beliefs of what is best for her students and how children learn to read and write.

For this research, the term "hybrid" or "hybridization" is based on Webster's (1994) two primary definitions: (1) an offspring of genetically differing parents (as members of different breeds or species) and (2) one of mixed origin or composition (p. 362). Emily's hybridized literacy instruction begins with her own practice, or how she has taught in the past and what she refuses to relinquish in response to mandates. These include, but are not limited to Book Club, centers, research reports, and a combination of reading and writing. Various requirements are introduced, such as Reading First, the Houghton Mifflin basal reading program, and test preparation. Emily must then create hybrids. She extracts the strengths of her own practice, identifies the strengths of the various requirements, and then creates a unique pedagogy. By doing this she is able to stay in compliance, maintain her own pedagogy, tailor instruction to the unique needs and interests of her students, and include both the "official" and "unofficial" curriculum in a limited amount of time each day.

In this research case, hybridity differs from adapting, assimilating or adopting. Adapting and assimilating suggest absorption of the new or required practices or curriculum into the existing ones. Adopting is a method of replacing the former practice or curriculum with the new or required curriculum or practice. Hybridity suggests the merging of the strengths of various areas for a new and unique pedagogy in response to mandates. The various mandates and relevant terminology are listed in the table below.

Table 2: Levels of policy and relevant terminology

Policy/Program	Level	Requirement
No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB)	National	Signed into law January 8, 2002 by President Bush for nationwide educational reform
Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP)	State	States establish academic achievement goals by setting academic standards in core subjects and measuring progress using tests aligned to state standards. States set annual progress goals for school improvement Schools are identified as needing improvement if they are not meeting these goals.[12]
Reading First	From National to state level	NCLB established Reading First as a new, high-quality evidence-based program, building on findings by the National Reading Panel Funds are dedicated to help states and local school districts by establishing high-quality, comprehensive reading instruction in kindergarten through grade 3. Designed to select, implement, and provide professional development for teachers using scientifically based reading programs, and to ensure accountability through ongoing, valid and reliable screening, diagnostic, and classroom-based assessment.[13]
Houghton Mifflin	District	Basal reading program designed for Reading First schools
Curriculum guides	District	Created by a team of educators in the district for social studies, language arts, math, and science. They are intended as a realistic time frame for instruction and assessment which is compatible with student growth and achievement.[14]

---

[12] http://www.ed.gov/nclb/accountability/ayp/yearly.html
[13] http://www.ed.gov/programs/readingfirst/index.html
[14] http://web.lsd.k12.mi.us/curricula/pacing_guides/pc.htm

Emily's practice through Emily's words

In his book which examines teachers' practices and theories of educational research, Hargreaves (1994) states, "Teachers' voices, though, have their own validity and assertiveness which can and should lead to questioning, modification and abandonment of those theories wherever it is warranted. In this book, we will see that teachers' words do not merely provide vivid examples of theories at work. They also pose problems and surprises for those theories" (p. 4). Hargreaves' words are applicable to this research. Emily's practice and insights about literacy pedagogy challenge common elements of reform, such as collaboration, that are viewed by policy makers as solutions. Therefore, her voice and exact words are heard throughout this text in reference to elements of reform and practice. She also resists the tendency Goodman (1988) speaks of as teachers being socialized into the norms of their occupation in which they hesitate to employ innovative approaches to instruction or to use more substantive content. Emily's theories of how best to teach literacy to meet the particular needs and interests of her students complicate and challenge supposedly straightforward district and state mandates. Further, her own theories of how to teach and teacher's identity create tension between herself and certain colleagues, and also serve to build alliances between herself and other colleagues. Rather than attempting to paraphrase or edit exchanges between Emily and her colleagues, I include them to allow participants to speak for themselves. Emily's views of teaching in her particular context are complex, from her ideas about best practices to appropriate curriculum. When sharing her ideas she is often animated, detailed and passionate, which I have tried to capture and include in this text, particularly this next section.

During co-planning sessions with Greg and conversations with me, Emily shares mixed feelings about the required curriculum and mandates, calling them both "dumb" and "not so bad", as opposed to positive descriptors. Her reactions are not so different from teachers that Apple (1983) talked to about prescribed curriculum. One teacher said, "Look, I have no choice. I personally don't like this material, but everyone in the district has to use this series. I'll try to do other things as well, but basically our curriculum will be based on this" (p. 159). He later states that this same teacher found interesting ways to subvert the requirements by using it three days a week instead of the entire week. In Emily's case, over the course of the six month study, the data shows a decrease in use of the prepackaged curriculum and a return to the type of instruction most reflective of her years of teaching before becoming a Reading First school. Toward the end of the study, I ask Emily to describe her own practice as she and Greg, her intern, compare their classroom to Maggie's, the other third grade teacher.

Jodene: So how would you describe yours, if it's different than hers?

Emily: I think mine in more hands on, more noise, more, let's get involved with the kids, let's walk around. It's not a lot, I mean there's three times in the day when they do independent work- in the morning, when they come in from lunch I want them to do DEAR[15] by themselves and at the end of the day when they do handwriting. A lot of it is small group, whole group, partners, um, I don't do a lot of independent work- just those 3 times a day. And it actually, and you know this group isn't even a good group for independent work, you know, because they, because you have such a diverse group, you need your lower kids to work with other kids and what I've found is that, that's usually the kids I get and that's not going to change ever and so what I've found is that those kids work best doing partner work where they are working together and conversing and figuring it out- it's just like today I was really envious when I walked by Maggie's room and it was just so quiet and there's a part of me that wishes, sometimes... I can't. And Barbara (her principal) loves it! And my class is always going to be like that. And I can't change my personality but there's just some days, like when I wish, you know I really wish I could just say 'read this story and answer the questions' and I can't- and to me I just need to model it and show it and I know that's good

---

[15] DEAR is the acronym for Drop Everything And Read, which is their daily sustained silent reading time

73

teaching, it's just that it's work and you get tired sometimes and so... sometimes I walk by and I'm not really thinking, 'oh I would like to teach that way', but there's a part of me that is thinking that would really be nice, just sometimes to be like that and I haven't figured out- by the end of the year they do more of it in math and they'll do some other transitions ...

Greg: See I think a big difference between you two is, you want the kids to figure it out themselves, you'll be less of the only resource in the room-

Emily: I'm not the only knowledge in the room... because they're going to have to go out and find the information and I don't want to be their only source and I really want to teach them, 'how do I go out and find this information on my own' and I really want to teach them to be life-long learners and to really enjoy learning and I try to get that intrinsic, but you know, you just don't know if you do... and I want to get them to think- I want to get them to really think about things, so... because they are really good thinkers. They can think in third grade, they really can do it- they can think! (Emily, co-planning, 12/14/04)

Emily is extremely sensitive about the needs of her students. She recognizes that her style of teaching, which uses a great deal of movement and various grouping patterns, constant modeling and on-going support, is critical for their academic and personal growth. She creates opportunities throughout the day for the children to work with their peers, particularly during the literacy block in centers and Book Club (Raphael, 2002) to help each other grow. Emily is able to discuss her hopes for her students as well as her own mixed emotions about her practice. To teach differently might be easier, and at times Emily says it is appealing. If she were to use more independent seat work, she would reflect Shannon's (1989) statement that, "Nearly 70 percent of students' time during reading lessons is spent working independently on seatwork- workbooks, worksheets, and boardwork" (p. 100). However, she knows what her students need and is adamant about providing the best literacy pedagogy possible which does not include a significant amount of time doing independent, quiet seatwork. During a co-planning session in September, Emily states, "I spent a lot of time over the weekend thinking about

Houghton Mifflin and thought it was really dumb that they have to respond to a written response that I haven't modeled and I didn't think they would spend that time engaged in writing at all" (Emily, co-planning, 9/14/04). From her statement it is obvious that she spends a great deal of time thinking about how to motivate her students and engage them in meaningful writing. Using the Houghton Mifflin worksheets has not proven to be engaging and she believes her students will construct more text by writing a letter to her or Greg, which she and Greg will respond to in the form of a letter. Not only is she opening more lines of communication with her students, she is teaching them how to write a letter, providing an authentic writing activity, and supporting their literacy development with constructive feedback. This type of thoughtful analysis of the effectiveness of Houghton Mifflin shows how Emily is not resisting the basal reading program because she simply does not want to use it. She is resisting because it is not engaging for her students and does not support their literacy development as well as her other strategies.

Emily is also thoughtful about high stakes testing. She comments how the students score the lowest on the IOWA test on vocabulary and word usage and she is concerned with how to teach vocabulary. Emily states, "Houghton Mifflin does not offer good suggestions on how to teach vocabulary" (Emily, co-planning, 9/21/04) and adds that it is ridiculous to use the IOWA test since it is not criterion referenced, meaning not everyone can score above the 50th percentile. She then shares her preference for the MEAP because at least it is "passable" and she can get most of her kids to pass it if she's doing good teaching and using good strategies (Emily, co-planning, 9/21/04). Emily is

not opposed to assessments, but feels that it is unfair to use a non-criterion referenced test since it is impossible for all students to excel.

During a co-planning session in the beginning of the school year, the literacy coach came into Emily's classroom to mention that a meeting would be held the next morning to discuss the administration of the Developmental Reading Assessment (DRA). Many of the first, second, and third grade teachers were frustrated because they had recently administered the Dynamic Indicators of Basic Early Literacy Skills (DIBELS) [16] and wanted help. Emily replied that she preferred to assess each child herself so she would know what each child needed. Excessive testing is a reality at Westside Elementary. Rather than complaining, Emily uses the tests as another source of information to determine how to support her students' literacy development (Co-planning, 9/21/04).

Emily has commented on several occasions that her students are lower than Maggie's, since all their scores were lower on the initial DIBELS reading assessment in September. According to this assessment at the beginning of the year, only seven of Emily's students were at grade level. Emily knows that her principal has a great deal of trust in her ability to motivate students and support their literacy achievement. For these reasons, Emily tends to have students placed in her class who are at a lower reading level than the students in the other third grade classroom. This greatly impacts her view of how to shape her literacy instruction.

Throughout the planning sessions, Emily discusses the various strategies she will use to support her struggling readers. She lists the ways in which she and Greg will need

---

[16] For a full explanation and schedule of testing, see Appendix B. Information available on http://dibels.uoregon.edu/

to help these students: pulling them aside for additional Guided Reading, using the Houghton Mifflin CD with the stories rather than having students read the stories themselves, partner reading, teaching specific strategies, and varying the spelling program. She knows the Houghton Mifflin anthology is written at a third grade level and many of her students can not access the text alone at this point in the school year. Apthorp et al. (2001) identify this issue as critical for teachers and schools to recognize. They state that basal series are intended for the average student at each grade level and "…if a curriculum is age driven rather than skill driven… then 'early delays are magnified at each additional step as the gap increases between what children bring to the curriculum and what the curriculum demands'" (p. 8). For this reason, Emily believes that the core curriculum is not the best material for teaching her particular group of students. Rather than relying solely on the literacy program, she employs supplemental resources such as Strategies that Work (Harvey & Goudvis, 2000), Mosaic of Thought (Zimmermann & Keene, 1997), and Craft Lessons (Fletcher & Portalupi,1998) in addition to Book Club, centers, Guided Reading, and writer's workshop. Through various instructional strategies and suggestions from the aforementioned texts, she is able to improve upon her students' reading and writing abilities.

As a mentor, Emily has agreed to teach Greg about her own literacy pedagogy and to help him develop as a novice teacher. Perhaps most importantly, Emily uses her role as a mentor to continually point out the strengths of her students, providing a counter perspective to the occasional deficit language Greg uses. During the initial co-planning session, Greg shares that he is surprised by how much the students are able to do (Greg, co-planning, 9/7/04). Emily is extremely mindful of each student's feelings and academic

success, constantly emphasizing how much the students *are* able to do and how she and Greg can best support each student. Future conversations will reinforce Emily's belief in the potential of each student and her responsibility to provide a literacy program that is supportive and builds on their abilities and interests. Emily is a classic example of a teacher as the 'street-level bureaucrat' (Tyack & Cuban, 1995) manipulating top-down policies to fit her pedagogy. Cohen and Ball (1990a) explain this as "the effects of education policies and programs depend chiefly on what teachers make of them" (p. 233). Emily manipulates policy in a principled, responsible, and effective way that considers her students' needs and interests. Her resistance and negotiation is thoughtful and in the best interests of her students. It would probably take less time and energy to follow the core curriculum, but Emily feels this would not be most beneficial for her students.

Best Intentions

During the first co-planning session on September 7, 2004, Emily laid out the Houghton Mifflin teacher's edition between her plan book and Greg's plan book. She stated, "One of my goals is to use more Houghton Mifflin this year than last year" (Emily, co-planning, 9/7/04). However, past experiences with Reading First and Houghton Mifflin have tainted her view of both programs. In an earlier conversation (Informal interview, 9/1/04), Emily commented on how much she disliked the Reading First program and only used it one day per week last year. On multiple occasions, Emily uses the terms Reading First and Houghton Mifflin interchangeably since the two are closely linked, but during the informal interview she is referring to the materials from the Houghton Mifflin reading program. During this same discussion Emily said she liked the leveled books, which she uses for Guided Reading and will continue to use this year, but

that the anthologies are "too big" and kids don't "get excited" (Emily, informal meeting, 9/1/04). She shares that there are some strategies from Reading First that she uses, but never the workbooks, which she chose not to order this year because, "They [the district] know that I'm not going to use it and it's just a waste of money" (Emily, co-planning, 9/7/04). She also states that Reading First was not useful for her ten English language learners last year. The basal series includes a workbook for second language learners that Emily believes is simply not effective. Rather than using the worksheets, she taught vocabulary to her English language learners during Guided Reading or "on the carpet" during whole class group time and those were the most helpful approaches.

During the co-planning session, Emily explains to Greg that they will read one story from the anthology each Monday and include activities in the centers that relate to the story for the week. However, after a few months this changes and it appears that less of the core curriculum is being used during literacy instruction time. The majority of time is spent with students engaged in centers (including one center with Emily for Guided Reading and various centers addressing the requirements from the district curriculum guide), Book Club, thematic units, and writing. By January it would be difficult for a visitor to identify the core curriculum required by Reading First, yet students are engaged in reading and writing and their literacy assessments testify to the effectiveness of Emily's practice[17]. Finally, more frequently than the Houghton Mifflin materials, Emily will include the district curriculum guide in the planning sessions. She shares how she feels fairly comfortable with the curriculum guide and emphasizes to Greg the importance of continually looking back at the guide to think about when and how to teach the required skills.

---

[17] Student achievement is measured by growth on DIBELS assessments from September to January

From research on educational reform in literacy, Emily's practice can be best described as "the connected-text approaches" and "the trade books approaches" (St. John, Manset, Chung, & Worthington, 2001, p. 11 – 12). The connected-text approach includes "independent reading, cooperative learning, creative writing, emergent spelling, paired reading (student-to-student) and reading aloud" (p. 11). The trade books approach "combines trade books and Big Books, but de-emphasizes basal readers. In this approach, schools use texts that are literature-based and engaging for students, rather than structured elements of reading programs that emphasize increasing levels of difficulty" (p. 12). Rather than Big Books, Emily uses Book Club. St. John et al. discuss these approaches in terms of school wide programs; however Emily has managed to create both of these approaches in her classroom despite contrary school wide literacy reform.

The remainder of this chapter will discuss how Emily hybridizes the required Houghton Mifflin curriculum and district curriculum guide with her own practices. She develops innovate ways to integrate skills and requirements to be, as she often states, "in compliance", while remaining devoted to her own "unofficial" literacy practices. Her strategy is best described during one co-planning session as she discusses a professional development day presentation and says, "You know how you can take snippets of what people say? She had some really good snippets. And she was like, these are just some things that I think would be helpful and so that was really good about writing their personal narratives, like the license plate, she did four paragraphs, so little things that kids can remember" (Emily, co-planning, 12/7/04). Emily is an expert at taking snippets from various sources to teach the skills and strategies her students need to become better readers and writers. Her hybridization is intentional, thoughtful, and more complex than a

resistance model. Fortunately, having Greg present, similar to a sounding board, forces

Emily to be explicit about her decision making and this often includes her thoughts and

feelings related to policy and her students' learning.

Hybridized literacy practices

There are five primary areas that Emily hybridizes during her literacy planning

and instruction. These include: (1) district requirements, (2) Reading First, (3) Emily's

practice, (4) state/test preparation; and (5) Houghton Mifflin. From Figure 2 it is possible

to note that district requirements, Reading First, and Emily's practice all have qualities

unique unto themselves that are not hybridized. Figure 3 includes state requirements,

which focus on MEAP preparation. Emily does not teach test preparation in isolation.

Rather, any test preparation with her students is hybridized with other areas, such as her

own practice or Houghton Mifflin. This is the only area that does not feature activities,

skills or strategies separate from other areas. During observations that included MEAP

preparation, it was not possible to know that the activities were strictly related to the

MEAP (Field notes, 11/23/04). The two Venn diagrams show each distinct area as well as

hybrids and are followed by explanations.

Figure 2: Hybridity of district requirements, Reading First and Emily's literacy practices

Reading First
40 minute grade level meetings with literacy coach

LETRS
Phonics Month-by Month
DIBELS center

District Requirements

Quarterly Exams
Balanced Literacy Binder

Word wall
Thematic unit: fairy tale, Folk tale, tall tale
Skills & strategies from curriculum guide
DRA and DIBELS Assessments for
Guided Reading Groups

Emily's "unofficial" literacy practices
Book Club
Centers
Thematic units (Mystery, Generosity)
Research reports
Storybook Weaver
Mosaic of Thought, Strategies that Work,
Craft Lessons

Figure 3: Hybridity of Houghton Mifflin, state requirements and Emily's literacy practices

State Requirements

Integrated theme test
(MEAP structure)

Houghton Mifflin

Anthology
Assessment
Reading only
Blackline masters
Workbook pages

Guided Reading Leveled books
Centers: computer (eduplace.com) & listening center
Spelling program

Emily's "unofficial" literacy practices
Book Club
Centers
Thematic units (Mystery, Generosity)
Research reports
Storybook Weaver
Mosaic of Thought, Strategies that Work,
Craft Lessons

State Assessment, Houghton Mifflin, and Emily's Practice

Emily is deeply concerned with preparing her students for the Michigan

Educational Assessment Program (MEAP)[18] in October of their fourth grade year.

However, rather than preparing them exclusively for MEAP, she has found innovative

ways to blend the format of MEAP with the requirements of both the district and

Houghton Mifflin. In September, Emily decided that after reading aloud stories from the

Houghton Mifflin anthology, her students would work on comprehension skills, an

important component of the state test. She tells Greg, "The Houghton Mifflin teacher

edition is good for that" (Emily, co-planning, 9/7/04). In this way, she is using the

Houghton Mifflin anthology as required by the Reading First grant, but in a read aloud

format to make it accessible to all of her students. This makes it possible for all students

to focus on comprehension and participate in the discussion as Emily prepares them for

the MEAP comprehension section.

In January, Emily plans to teach a short unit on the characteristic, generosity. She

will find books at the library that focus on this topic and use these books for read alouds.

She then plans to have students make T-charts to compare two stories. This is similar to

prewriting for a comparison paper they will write on generosity. Emily plans to use a

rubric that is based on the rubric to score the MEAP. In the corner of her room where she

conducts read alouds is a poster related to the MEAP with the word GLUE, which is an

acronym for the following writing checklist:

---

[18] For a complete description of the Michigan Educational Assessment Program (MEAP), see
http://www.michigan.gov/mde/0,1607,7-140-22709_31168—,00.html

Give your opinion, do you agree?

Link it to the titles you see

Use examples from both texts

Explain how everything connects

During this brief conversation about shaping the generosity unit, Emily has integrated her own ideas for a thematic unit, generosity, and preparation for the MEAP. Her planning is deliberate and rather than abandoning her ideas for an engaging unit, she manages to create a unit that will be interesting to her students and prepare them to do well on the state test. There is a sense of strategic planning for reading and writing, rather than plugging in test preparation when possible, which results in an interesting hybridized practice.

During this same co-planning session, Emily shares why she believes the state test scoring system has changed. She states:

> It used to be 4's (instead of 6) so when they changed the MEAP I changed it too... see what they did, part of the problem with the MEAP is that lower-income kids can write just as well as other kids, and so they're trying to make it harder and this is just my belief, and this is just personal but they want to prove that other kids can write better than- I think they do the test, they want this, they want there to be this difference. That's my belief. And so they keep making it harder and harder. Let's make them write it in third grade now- I mean, it used to be a fifth grade thing now, really and now they're making kids write it in third grade. (Emily, co-planning, 12/14/04)

District and State Requirements

During the second quarter Emily needs to teach a unit featuring folk tales, fairy tales, and tall tales as required by the district language arts curriculum guide. She uses this as an opportunity to write comparison paragraphs using two fairy tales, to prepare her students for the format of the MEAP. Emily spent two days reading aloud Sootface (San Souci, 1994) and Rough-Face Girl (Martin & Shannon, 1992) (Ojibwa and Algonquian versions of Cinderella). Students then created Venn diagrams for the two fairy tales and Emily walked them through the construction of the paragraph.

Emily begins the lesson by asking, "Do the stories show the theme that beauty is in the inside?" (Emily, field notes, 11/23/04). She tells the students they will need to answer a question like this on the MEAP exam in fourth grade. She wants the students to think about how they might answer this question in paragraph form. Each child received a piece of lined paper and Emily models on the chalk board how to answer this question in paragraphs. She wants the students to write along with her, but before they begin writing, she asks them what they need to do at the start of a paragraph. They answer, "Indent!" As a class they do a chant and dance that reminds them to indent. She also reminds them that the holes go on the left side, and draws a picture of a piece of paper with holes on the white board. She asks the question again, "Do the stories show the theme that beauty is in the inside?" and begins writing a paragraph while thinking out loud. Emily pays close attention to details as she models. She stops after each sentence to ask the students what they think and then they create a sentence together. She writes:

Yes, both The Rough-Face Girl and Sootface have the theme that beauty is in the inside of a person (she stops to have kids explain this first sentence so they

86

can write the second sentence). If you are nice, you are beautiful no matter what you look like on the outside. (Emily, field notes, 11/23/04)

Emily continues to remind students of when to indent and points out that she is talking about just one of the stories first. She begins writing the first sentence and a student reminds her to underline the title which she does and thanks him for noticing. The paragraph continues:

In The Rough-Face Girl an example of beauty in the inside is the rough faced girl was nice even though her sisters and the whole village was mean. Her sisters made her work hard and it caused her to get burned. The whole village laughed at her because she was ugly.

Emily asks students for examples as she writes, modeling how to write a coherent sentence and how to provide support for their argument. One of the students points out that the clock stopped to which Emily laughs and says they can't go home today. She concludes the lesson by saying they will just talk about the next paragraph since they don't have time to write it. A few minutes later, the art teacher walks in and the kids get ready to change subjects.

Emily and Greg are walking down the hall when I leave, to co-plan other subjects. Emily comments on how the students need to know how to write a paragraph with a topic sentence and supports and how this may seem really boring and tedious, but she feels that she needs to do this. She is concerned with how they will do on the MEAP if she does not practice with them. As previously mentioned, the test will be given in October of their fourth grade year, which would give the fourth grade teacher little time to prepare the

students. For this reason, the MEAP is more a reflection of the third grade teacher's practice than the fourth grade teacher.

Houghton Mifflin and Curriculum Guide

Emily and Greg comment how the Houghton Mifflin Guided Reading books fit in well with the tall tales, fairy tales, and folk tale unit from the curriculum guide. Emily says, "It works out really well with the pacing guide and it should… and I think that's why they changed fairy tales and tall tales to this time, because last time it was too late and we'd already read those" (Emily, co-planning, 12/14/04). There is a new curriculum guide this year, so Emily is referring to changes made to coincide with the Houghton Mifflin program. Emily also says there is a fifth grade play about Paul Bunyan in the Houghton Mifflin anthology that is really good. Greg asks if it will be too difficult to read for the students, to which Emily replies, "No- because they're all improving" (Emily, co-planning, 12/16/04).

Emily is able to use the leveled books, but is less optimistic about the utility of the anthology. She says,

> But see Houghton Mifflin doesn't really coincide; our Houghton Mifflin doesn't really coincide with the pacing guide so I'm teaching all the skills but I'm doing it more with the pacing guide than the Houghton Mifflin. I don't really look at it and say, okay what skill is this story doing, I look at it and say, okay, how are we writing, how can this tie into reading, like that. What am I seeing in their writing? (Emily, co-planning, 12/14/04)

Emily is concerned with both the curriculum guide and Houghton Mifflin, but her main focus is on the development and growth of her students as readers and writers. If either

source is helpful, she uses them. If not, Emily seeks other sources to achieve the same ends. Emily's approach is similar to what Coburn (2001) observed with several teachers in her study. Some teachers selected particular stories from the textbook, or anthology, "bringing the new reading series into each of their classrooms in a way that adapted it to their preexisting program rather than guiding their program by the reading series" (p. 157). Another group of teachers "used the supplementary set of phonics readers, but not the main textbook" (p. 157), similar to Emily's practice toward the end of the study when she uses less of the anthology but continues to use the supplementary leveled books.

Reading First, Houghton Mifflin, and Emily's Practice

In order to "be in compliance" (Emily, interview, 1/12/05) with the requirements of Reading First, Emily tries to integrate activities related to the Houghton Mifflin stories into her centers. She also tries to read one story per week, but this is not a priority. Emily shared during our initial meeting that the anthologies are "too big and kids don't get excited" about reading them (Emily, interview, 9/1/04). She adds that the texts are not helpful for English Language Learners. There is a workbook for English Language Learners in the materials provided by Houghton Mifflin, but Emily tried to use this the previous year and it was "not effective" (Emily, interview, 9/1/04). During the first few months, students are at the listening center wearing headphones and listening to the stories from the anthology on a CD. Occasionally Emily will put out worksheets to check for comprehension. She comments that, "In case someone walks in we can say, 'Yeah, they're writing from this story'" (Emily, co-planning, 9/7/04). However, she found that the students were not completing these and by the third week the students could either complete the worksheet or write a letter to Emily or Greg.

Emily explains that she and Greg do not have a chance to talk with kids. Often the kids are trying to share personal stories and information as they are being rushed out the door, which is why Emily made letter writing an option. At the beginning of a co-planning session in September she says, "I spent a lot of time over the weekend thinking about Houghton Mifflin and thought it was really dumb that they have to respond to a written response that I haven't modeled and I didn't think they would spend that time engaged in writing at all" (Emily, co-planning, 9/14/04). Instead of completing the worksheets, which she believes is somewhat "over their heads" at this point in the school year, they are using the time to write letters to Emily or Greg to increase opportunities for communication. Students will also practice letter writing during Guided Reading. Emily did not require students to write a formal letter, other than beginning, "Dear Mrs. Smith". She is interested in her students doing an activity that is more engaging than a worksheet. The following week while observing I noticed that all of the students chose to write a letter rather than complete the comprehension worksheet. Each student wrote more in the letters than what was required on the worksheet.

Emily has commented several times that she doesn't mind the stories in the trade books, also referred to as leveled books, which she uses for Guided Reading. The twenty-five sets of leveled books are useful since they are divided into four levels: very easy, easy, on level, and challenge. Emily tries to do Guided Reading at least two times each week, for approximately fifteen minutes with each of her middle and high group readers. Four to five times each week during DEAR she meets with her lower readers so they can work on strategies and skills that good readers employ. Since DEAR time has been

extended to twenty-five minutes by January, she uses this time to also meet with her middle/low readers who need a little extra time to progress to a middle group.

During the second co-planning meeting on September 24, I am surprised when Emily gets a book from the Houghton Mifflin material box about how to create centers. She says she is going to try one of the suggestions from the book for a center focused on writing. She refers to the book in my presence once and decides not to use this idea the following week. At other times she tries to incorporate Houghton Mifflin into her centers. Beginning in November, Emily has students access a website by Houghton Mifflin called eduplace.com. During the planning session, Emily describes the site to me:

> **Emily**: Let's do that so we can say we're doing it... (laughing) They have a website that's not too bad with games that kids can play... they played a spelling game... there's like, the morning message is still too hard like correcting the sentences, but they have other ones on there that I'll look at for a good one. It has different skills on there and there's like a little game they can play on the computer. They did the spelling one and it was pretty cool, like they had to find the correct spelling words and they... like they had the beginning of the spelling word and the end and they had to find the middle sound and what they did was... um, and they were really good about, they were really good, I said, Okay you know what level you're on in spelling and they had to pick the level and it was kind of hard for me to say that and I was like, okay the kids that are lower... and they had to-
>
> **Jodene**: They already know (meaning all the students are aware of each other's reading ability)
>
> **Emily**: They do! You know, but it wasn't a big deal, but it was still hard to say it like that, but it wasn't a big deal. And because they are in groups that are based on their ability in reading it's not a big deal to go over there because they're gonna be with the same kind of kids... but if we let them choose, then they're gonna notice it more. (Emily, co-planning, 9/24/04)

Emily comments that she will also dedicate center time to practicing test taking twice a month. As a Reading First school, they must administer the DIBELS three times this year in September, January and May, and submit scores to the Michigan Reading First

Management team. The DIBELS is intended to test for phonological awareness, alphabetic principle, and fluency with connected text[19]. In the centers, students will read a passage while their partner times them with a stop watch and then they will switch roles.

By the last co-planning session on December 14, Emily comments that they haven't done Houghton Mifflin "in forever". This is not surprising since a great deal of time was dedicated to centers for research reports of different countries and how they celebrate the winter holidays. Students work in pairs and present their finished reports at a "Parents' Night" in December. This is a thematic unit Emily teaches each year and is not willing to give up for the "official" curriculum. Data collection concluded in the third week of January, but it would be interesting to see if Emily tries to use more of the core curriculum later in the year, which was her intention in September.

District Curriculum Guides and Emily's Practice

During our initial meeting, Emily says that she mostly follows the curriculum guides because of the quarterlies[20] and because the curriculum guides follow the state benchmarks. She refers to the "skills and strategies" listed on the back of the guide and how she tries to address these as she plans her lessons. Emily then clarifies her statement, saying she will teach the skills and strategies "as they come up", not necessarily when they are listed in the curriculum guides. She gives the example of personification being taught in the first quarter when she uses Song of the Trees (Taylor, 1975) for Book Club, but shows how it is listed in a different quarter on the curriculum guide. Emily comments throughout the study that she doesn't mind the curriculum guides, however "they don't

---

[19] These three areas are listed in the Reading First grant application:
http://www.michigan.gov/documents/1-05_Version_3_Reading_First_111599_7.pdf

[20] Quarterlies are exams in language arts, mathematics, science and social studies that are administered in November and April and follow the requirements listed in the curriculum guides.

tell how to get kids to learn, what are good strategies" (Emily, interview, 9/1/04). She frequently refers to books such as Strategies that Work (Harvey & Goudvis, 2000) and Mosaic of Thought (Zimmermann & Keene, 1997) when she discusses teaching strategies because they offer specific approaches to teaching comprehension. This is one of many examples of Emily problematizing the mandated curriculum, while sharing her professional autonomy and ideas for approaching these problems of practice. Rather than waiting for someone or a text to tell her how to teach, Emily seeks resources whether it is people in a professional writing program or professional literature.

When I analyzed my data and the curriculum guide, I found overlaps in Emily's practice and the curriculum guide which she did not mention. For example, Emily comments on wanting to use text-to-text comparisons for making connections between two folk tales during the fairy tale, folk tale, and tall tale unit required on the curriculum guide for the second quarter. She states that this is in the book Strategies that Work (Harvey & Goudvis, 2000). However, after looking through the curriculum guide, I found that in the first quarter, under the narrative test column is the metacognitive strategy: make text-to-self, text-to-text and text-to-world connections. Whether or not it is intentional, I found many skills and strategies that Emily teaches through Book Club, the mystery unit, and the country research project that she did not mention during co-planning. Regardless, students are learning these skills through centers, Book Club, Guided Reading, and whole group language arts activities.

Emily teaches thematically and begins each year with a mystery unit to excite her students about reading and to prepare them for Book Club. All of the books, which are primarily from the Cam Jansen series and Box Car Children series are read aloud so all

students can participate. She includes discussion and a writing component with each book. When I ask whether the mystery genre is part of the district curriculum guide, she responds that it fits with the requirement of teaching "realistic fiction and picture books" during the first quarter. Unlike the curriculum guides for older grades beginning with sixth grade, the third grade curriculum guide does not list specific texts to be read. This allows some freedom for teachers to select the texts as long as they fit the required genre. Emily is able to continue to teach the mystery unit and could reasonably argue that this is in alignment with the curriculum guide for the first quarter.

The second major unit of the semester is folk tales, fairy tales, and tall tales. This is listed on the second nine weeks in the curriculum guide. Emily uses this as an opportunity to select books for Book Club that fit into this genre. She selects The Whipping Boy (Fleishman, 1986) and The Minstrel in the Tower (Skurzynski, 1988). She uses these two texts to comply with the requirements of the curriculum guide, but also as texts to compare and contrast in preparation for the MEAP. Emily also includes many fairy tales, tall tales, and folk tales as whole group read alouds and examples for students when they construct their own tall tale, fairy tale, or folk tale during writing time. She creatively works this unit into her centers by having Rapunzel: A Happenin' Rap (Vozer, 2001), a rap version of the traditional fairy tale, in the listening center, as well as another center where students make a travel brochure to a fairy tale land. The visiting paraprofessional works with students on fairy tale plays, at various reading levels, at another center. During co-planning, Emily says "we won't be doing Houghton Mifflin for a while..." because of this unit, which brings laughter. It is a perfect example of how she is having to meet the requirements of the district, but is willing to sacrifice time away

from Houghton Mifflin to do this. At no point does she stop Book Club or centers for the sake of Houghton Mifflin, Reading First, or the curriculum guide. In mid-November the students begin working on realistic fiction, which is required in the curriculum guide. Emily knows that some students will want to include elements of fairy tales, tall tales, and folk tales. She will use this as an assessment to see if the students are able to analyze their own writing and recognize whether or not it is realistic fiction.

During the final co-planning session, I want to gain a better sense of Emily's opinions and feelings toward the curriculum guide at this point in the school year. The conversation follows a discussion about the quarterly exams that need to be administered in the spring.

Jodene: When are you doing quarterlies?

Emily: I think they're maybe in March or something?

Jodene: Are they skipping the second quarterly?[21]

Emily: Right, so it really shouldn't be until the end of the year...We just do it twice- like we just do it in Decem- they just shouldn't do it, really, if they don't use it correctly. I mean, I don't mind doing quarterlies because it gives you some assessment and that's fine, but the thing is they don't use them in the correct way- we're not looking at what do we need to reteach, how are we teaching it, they don't use it in the correct way

Jodene: I've heard, I hear what you're saying, is that teachers would get the feedback, but now we're in the third quarter so we don't have time to go back and reteach.

Emily: And you can't, and that's dumb.

—————

Greg: Do you like the pacing guides?

---

[21] Prior to this year, teachers needed to administer the quarterly assessments four times per year, after each 9 week period.

Emily: I like the pacing guides. I don't mind it at all. I don't have to look in that great big book (state standards and benchmarks)

Jodene: They seem logical to me because I had to do 5th, 6th, 7th, and 8th grade when I was working with those teachers and it made sense, you could see it progressing from one grade to the next, but it also assumes that your kids are coming in with a certain knowledge base that you–

Emily: Yah, and that's the bad part. Yah, but I do think you have to have something that you have to say, otherwise you have teachers who don't teach anything and I do think it's made people be on the same page in this district and I think it has made – and there are parts of it I didn't like, let me tell you, because I wanted to do all thematic teaching and this said, but it's making me teach, I'm having to check and make sure I'm teaching certain things, so it's alright. I don't hate it or anything like that." (Emily, co-planning, 12/14/04)

Emily is less opposed to the curriculum guides than she is to Houghton Mifflin and

Reading First. In fact, she feels that it holds teachers accountable for teaching certain

skills that coincide with the benchmarks in the Michigan Curriculum Framework. At one

point she commented to Greg that it is easier to use the curriculum guides than to go

through the state standards and benchmarks binder. Apthorp, Bodrova, Dean and Florian

(2001) echo Emily's sentiments regarding standards-based reform, which is the intent of

the district curriculum guides. Apthorp et al state:

Few analysts have considered the fundamental question: If standards and testing

disappeared tomorrow, what would be the alternative? To hear the critics of

standards and tests, the answer would be educational paradise. Such an

assumption rests upon the faith that, absent standards and testing, every classroom

would offer expectations that were clear, rigorous, and objective. (p. 46)

This is the first year that the teachers are only administering the quarterlies twice,

rather than four times. The district decided that because of the excessive testing, with the

MEAP, IOWA, DIBELS, and DRA[22], two quarterly assessments were sufficient. As a Reading First school, Emily does not need to administer the Language Arts quarterly since they must test the students with DRA and DIBELS three times each during the school year. During an informal interview on February 16, 2005, Emily comments on the usefulness of the quarterly assessments. She believes the science is easy and the math is helpful for knowing what areas her students may need more support or reteaching. However, she believes that the social studies is very difficult, and more of a reading test and map skills assessment. Although, she notes that it is useful for letting the students practice how to take a test by filling in the bubbles.

Centers

In the beginning of the year, Emily mentioned trying to incorporate Houghton Mifflin into centers through the listening center, making sentences, and using Guided Reading books that relate to the stories. This was often prefaced with a caveat of trying to be in compliance with the mandated curriculum. Toward the middle of the year there was less evidence of Houghton Mifflin in the centers. Interestingly enough, she rarely discusses connections between centers and the curriculum guides. During the last co-planning session, I asked Emily how she organizes her spelling program. She responds, "There is no third grade list" and apparently never has been on the curriculum guide for third grade. Yet on the curriculum guide under the **Spelling** headings for the second, third, and fourth quarters says "accurately spell words from 2nd quarter third grade list", "accurately spell words from 3rd quarter third grade list" and "accurately spell words from 4th quarter third grade list" (Third Grade Language Arts 2004 – 2005 Pacing Guide) Emily still refers to the curriculum guide during co-planning sessions and many of her

---

[22] See Appendix B for a complete explanation and schedule of district testing

lessons match what is suggested in the Language Structure, Mechanics and Grammar section:

Table 3: Comparison of Emily's practice and the district curriculum guide

Date	Curriculum Guide Language Structure Mechanics and Grammar	Emily's practice Weekly Spelling Focus
9/7/04	(1st qtr) long vowels "i" (spelled i, ie, igh) and "o"	Long vowel sounds
9/14/04	(1st qtr) Short vowels a, e, i, o, u	Short vowel sounds
9/21/04	(1st qtr) long vowels ai, ay	Long a
11/9/04		Beginning and ending with –th, rimes –in and -on
11/16/04		Words beginning and ending with "sh", rimes –ow and –oy
11/30/04	(2nd qtr) prefixes un-	Prefix un-

On November 30, Emily and Greg discuss how to teach contractions, which is listed in the second quarter. Emily spends a great deal of time thinking about how to teach this so that it is a tactile experience the students will remember. She shares a time when she tried to teach contractions last year by having the students use fishing poles. Unfortunately the lines became tangled and she was "yelling like a fanatic- and it was so stupid!" (Emily, co-planning, 11/30/04). She believed her students would be completely engaged and excited about fishing, but "it was terrible!" Emily also mentions using a center to teach dictionary skills, which is listed in the first nine week period. Sharing these types of stories is important for Greg's development as a teacher. He can learn how to plan activities that are purposeful and engaging and recognize that creative lessons do not always go as planned. Yet, Emily is still committed to creating exciting activities that teach specific skills and strategies critical to reading and writing development.

Assessments and Emily's Practice

Emily has shared on several occasions that she does not feel that the DIBELS is an effective strategy for learning how the students read, such as which strategies or skills they use to decode and comprehend the text. She adds that the DIBELS is counter to the strategies she is trying to teach her students, such as going back to check for understanding. The test is timed and focuses primarily on fluency. Emily states that there is a retelling at the end, but it's difficult for the teacher to check off every word the students say from the passage (Emily, co-planning, 9/14/04). However, she does use the scores from both the DRA[23] and DIBELS, along with other criteria, to place students into leveled, but flexible, groups for Guided Reading. At one point she comments, "I won't really know (how to place the students) until the (DIBELS) test on Friday" for Guided Reading groups (Emily, co-planning, 9/14/04). Yet during the actual testing day when I observed, she said, "it is just one indicator" (Emily, field notes, 9/17/04). She uses the scores as a beginning indicator, but does not rely on these scores to determine permanent groups. Within a few weeks, she had altered her groups as students appeared to need more, less, or different types of support. Her approach differs from research findings that indicate when test scores are available teachers rely on these to form reading groups (Shannon, 1989). The researcher found that in some cases, this was the only indicator teachers used to group students. Fortunately Emily acknowledges both the embedded biases and potential inaccuracy of these reading tests and keeps her grouping flexible.

During another planning session, Emily is thinking about an activity to use in an extra fifteen minute block before art. She decides to have the students do "Making

---

[23]For a full explanation and schedule of testing, see Appendix B. More information available at: http://www.pearsonlearning.com/dra/index.cfm

Words", a phonics activity by Patricia Cunningham. She comments to Greg that this is an important activity because there is a similar assessment format on the IOWA test. During these moments, it is evident that Emily has learned how to make the most of time and how to integrate as many requirements as possible while respecting the needs of her students.

In November Emily wants to teach a unit on generosity which is her own idea rather than something listed on the curriculum guide or in Houghton Mifflin. She wants to read several books so students can compare them. Emily believes this is a good way to prepare her students for the MEAP. She explains the format of the test:

> What they do on the MEAP test, they have to write a personal narrative. They read these two texts that have, um, see we're kind of doing this backwards, but that's okay- they have to have the same theme. So they have to read two different books that show generosity, they have to then... I did it the other day, you were here... (she is talking to me about observing her teach the paragraph comparing two fairy tales), right, so the theme was something. So I will have read it earlier here, so the theme is something... and then I'll read another one here and then write a comparison paragraph. So they have to read the two books, then the comparison paper, and then write a personal narrative. (Emily, co-planning, 11/30/04)

The past few weeks look like MEAP preparation. Even though these students won't take MEAP until October Emily wants them to be ready. In this example, Emily is improving upon the required curriculum by integrating an engaging unit to prepare her students for the test and to improve their writing skills.

Evidence of student achievement

Emily invests a great deal of time and energy into knowing her students intimately. Throughout co-planning sessions, Emily and Greg discuss their students' reading and writing development as they discuss appropriate grouping, activities, and texts. Emily is able to speak in depth about each child's development and what she hopes to see by the end of the school year. During the co-planning session on November 9, 2004, Emily spends a few minutes discussing one student who struggles with his spelling, to the point that his writing is incomprehensible. She shares with Greg the strategies she is using with that student. She also talks about one student's low level of confidence and how this is severely impacting her writing. Emily refers to this student's sister who was similar (Co-planning, 11/9/04). She is mindful of strategies that open lines of communication, such as letter writing as a center, and is willing to share her own background with students to build trust. Emily creates a safe learning environment where she knows her students well and student achievement is evident through observations during literacy instruction, test scores, and conversations during co-planning.

Observations

In the beginning of the school year, Emily explains to Greg her goal of encouraging students to think about strategies they use to become better readers and writers. During the first observation in September, Emily has the students in the carpet area which she uses for whole class time and Book Club. Before reading for Book Club, Emily asks students to review what "good readers do". They respond follow along, use a finger, read fluently, read with excitement, and reread (Field notes, 9/27/04). Students are sharing books and reading along as Emily reads aloud *Cam Jansen and the Mystery of the*

Monster Movie (Adler & Natti, 1997). She pauses during reading to check for comprehension through questioning and discussion. Emily also models visualization, and allows time for students to make predictions and ask her questions. In the next activity, creating a character map using a character from the book in Book Club, she encourages students to make inferences about the character based on information from the text. Two weeks later, during Book Club, she reminds students that strong readers and writers know it is important to listen, read for fluency, and follow along (Field notes, 9/22/04). The terminology she introduces in the beginning of the year becomes embedded in her students' discourse when discussing their own reading and writing strategies. For example, one component of the DIBELS assessment is comprehension questions after the student has read a passage. As Emily asked the comprehension questions, she also asked students how they were able to deduce their responses. Many replied that they were making inferences. On multiple occasions, Emily validated students' responses with comments such as, "good job making an inference" (Field notes, 9/17/04).

Emily wants her students to be reflective of the strategies they use to decode text. She wants Greg to ask students questions as they read such as "How can we figure out the words?" to encourage students to look at the pictures as they read (Emily, co-planning, 9/7/04). She also wants to get them into the habit of using context clues (Emily, co-planning, 9/21/04). She prepares her students to be reflective through explicit instruction and by modeling. Emily spent the first few weeks of September preparing students to participate in discussion groups for Book Club by using "fish bowl". In this activity, a small group of students participate in a discussion, referring to their written responses, while the rest of the class watches. With support from Emily, the group

demonstrates how to conduct a discussion and their peers learn by example (Field notes, 9/7/04, 9/22/04). By November, it is evident that students are mindful of the strategies they employ to comprehend text, decide on how to spell words, participate in Book Club discussions, and compose comparison paragraphs. By December, students are sharing their Book Club entries with their small groups without support from Emily or Greg. They read the text and share with each other, then ask and answer questions similar to the modeling with "fish bowl" in the beginning of the school year. At one point, a student in the group I joined asked the group next to them to "be quiet" (12/16/04), since the nearby group was engaged in a heated debate about the text My Father's Dragon (Gannett, 1948). This is precisely the type of learning and exchanges Emily wants to see happening in these discussions. Students were challenging one another and referring to the text to support their position. The months of modeling and explicit instruction by Emily and Greg are manifested in students' discussions such as this example, as well as their writing and reading.

Emily encourages her students to seek answers. During a read aloud of Soot Face (San Souci, 1994) for the fairy tale, tall tale, and folk tale thematic unit, one student stops Emily to ask for the definition of "birch" (Field note, 11/23/04). Emily prefaces a response by demonstrating visualization and sharing this as a comprehension technique. She makes text-to-text connections while reading and encourages her students to do the same. At various point, she stops reading to ask students to define words, such as "heed" and "gleam". She rereads the sentences to give them context clues, takes suggestions for the definition of the word, and encourages students to decide on the most sensible definition as a group. These techniques follow her belief that, "I'm not the only

knowledge in the room" (Emily, co-planning, 12/14/04). Emily's students use one another for information and support. Through modeling and grouping students for reading and writing activities, they have learned to use one another as a resource. The children have also learned the importance of using resources, such as encyclopedias and informational texts to address their questions and interests for research reports which will be discussed further in chapter six. As Emily's students learn more about reading and writing, they are also learning valuable skills to support their literacy development.

Test scores and assessments

During an informal meeting with Emily to discuss the accuracy of data analysis, she shares that "all but (2 students) went up in the DIBELS" assessment in January from September (Emily, informal interview, 2/16/05). In December, before she has assessed the entire class, she is pleased because one of the two lowest readers improved. The student didn't feel as though she had, but Emily reassured her that she was making progress by reading more words and retelling more than the initial assessment in September. Out of her whole class, only one stayed the same (Emily, field notes, 12/7/04). During an observation in December, Emily shared that most kids doubled their scores, but she is still concerned about the lowest scoring students. They are making progress but she wants to see more improvement. The average score for third grade is 90. She notes that about half of her students are at 90 and is visibly discouraged, even though they started out much lower and it's only the middle of the school year. Some scored at 45 in September, which means many students have shown a great deal of growth by January.

Writing

By the fourth week of the school year, Emily and Greg agree that there has been a turn around this week in terms of the amount of writing students are producing (Co-planning, 9/21/04). Emily comments that their letter writing during center time has been "awesome". Greg discusses how the students are exceeding expectations by writing more than the required half page for their Book Club predictions. Emily continues to motivate the children by saying she believes they can do more, which she truly does. I asked Greg why he thought they were writing more and he said it was because they are excited and motivated about the text and their confidence is increasing. After a month, Emily believes this group does best with a lot of structure and now that she has a sense of their needs as a group, she can provide this structure. As a result, they are doing better in their writing.

Emily relies on various resources when planning her writing instruction. She wants her students to work together in a writer's workshop type model. However, she believes they need specific objectives to help each other with their realistic fiction pieces in November. During the co-planning session, Emily shares a strategy she learned at the Michigan Reading Association conference. Students are told to look for a specific element or "target" and when they find it in their peer's writing, they place a sticker on the "target". She has found this strategy to work for peer editing and believes this also encourages students to be more mindful of their own writing (Emily, co-planning, 11/9/04). After students have worked with peers and developed a complete draft, Emily conferences with each child individually. Together they read through the draft as well as her written comments to help them write a final draft. Emily comments on how some kids will go back and improve their next writing task based on the conference. She believes

the conferencing really helps some students. From the conferencing draft to the final draft she notices students using dialogue, including a strong ending, and adding more to their writing. The conferencing is time consuming, but Emily is able to speak in detail about each student's writing and this informs her future instruction (Emily, co-planning, 12/14/04). Students then share their final writing during author's chair (Field notes, 11/12/04) to be questioned and praised by their peers since all students know what is expected for each genre.

Looking to next year

At the end of the semester on January 21, 2005 I met with Emily to discuss some questions that surfaced as I began coding data. The following are questions and paraphrased answers from the informal interview:

Jodene: How different does your practice look as a Reading First School teacher compared to prior years as a non Reading First school teacher?

Emily: I am using more Houghton Mifflin this year than last year. For example I am using the computer as a center (students can access the Houghton Mifflin website and do spelling and parts of speech games) and doing a story every Friday. I am still choosing based on what is valuable to learning. However, if I'm pressured for time, the Houghton Mifflin is the first thing to go. So, for example, today is records day (Friday) and I did not read a story but I'm not going to read it on Monday or Tuesday- I just won't do it. In Guided Reading I am teaching certain skills from Houghton Mifflin. I am doing some of this to be in compliance with the Reading First mandate. I know the program better this year (this is the 2nd year of using the series) so I have figured out what is valuable. Part of how I make these decisions is from my credential program that said good teachers use authentic literacy to teach, not prepackaged curriculum.
[Emily explains how she selects literature based on her class and their interests and how the contents of the Houghton Mifflin anthology do not always fit. For example, she will decide what to do in the second semester based on how the first semester went and what she learned about her students.]
The themes and units I use each year changes. During my first year I did a unit on ocean life and think that perhaps this year I will do a unit on wolves. I always start the year with the mystery unit because it gets kids interested in literature right away and this is important for Book Club. I also do the fairy tale unit because it is required in the district pacing guides.

Jodene: How will your practice look next year if you are not a Reading First school? What will you keep from Houghton Mifflin and what will you definitely get rid of?

Emily: "I wouldn't abandon Houghton Mifflin", but will continue to match stories to my own themes and use what fits in. I would like to treat the anthology more like Book Club. (Emily, interview, 1/21/05)

Six months of observing co-planning sessions and literacy instruction in Emily's classroom has yielded a wealth of data reflecting her ability to hybridize literacy mandates with her own best practices. Some teachers in Emily's position could reasonably rely on the core literacy curriculum from Houghton Mifflin, which would meet the requirements for Reading First. However, Emily chooses to honor the individuality of each student, tailor curriculum to meet their needs and interests, and develop "unofficial" curriculum that is engaging and challenging. This chapter has focused on hybridization across two or more areas and attempted to show the complexity of Emily's pedagogy. The next two chapters will discuss additional structural and personal challenges Emily must contend with in any given day at Westside Elementary.

Chapter 5

"THIS IS GONNA SCREW US UP!" INSTITUTIONAL, FINANCIAL, AND TEMPORAL CONSTRAINTS

"We have not had a full five days of school since school started, and this won't

happen until the fourth week of school." (Emily, co-planning, 9/7/04)

Introduction

During the first week of co-planning, Emily shares her concerns about time

constraints and having enough time to fit in what she refers to as "everything". This

includes requirements from Houghton Mifflin, Reading First, the district curriculum

guide, test preparation for district, state, and national exams, and her "unofficial"

curriculum. "We just don't have enough time" is a recurring phrase throughout the next

six months. As Emily fills in the boxes of her plan book, she is sure to include time to

model each activity she wants her students to accomplish. To her intern she states, "I

have to model every little thing I want them to do" (Emily, co-planning, 9/7/04). She

continues to do this throughout the remainder of the study, making this a priority. This

pedagogical "habit" is something Apthorp, Bodrova, Dean and Florian (2001) state that

exemplary literacy teachers do through "routine demonstrations of how literate people

think as they read and write- including errors and self-corrections" (p. 11). Emily is

adamant about demonstrating and discussing what "good readers and writers do" before

and during literacy instruction, regardless of the amount of time this requires.

Emily is not alone in negotiating the temporal, institutional, and financial

constraints of elementary teaching. Research shows that these are common concerns and

challenges for educators at all academic levels across the world (Chen & Miller, 1997). In

their review of international literature, Chen and Miller found that time constraints and

collegiality were positively correlated with teacher stress. In a survey questionnaire of 230 Kindergarten through sixth grade Midwestern public school teachers, the researchers found that, "Lack of time was the greatest impediment to job satisfaction" (p. 2). Emily struggles to integrate and accommodate the literacy mandates within a seven hour school day, yet maintains a positive attitude and desire to continue learning and becoming an exceptional pedagogue. In the following pages of this chapter, I will discuss five areas of temporal, financial, and institutional constraints that surface through observations and conversations with Emily. While exploring these five areas, it is important to consider how Emily is responding to these constraints both as a teacher and a colleague. The five areas include: (1) time for test preparation as well as the "unofficial" literacy curriculum, (2) time to meet with like minded teachers, (3) challenges presented by professional development days and holidays, (4) staff meetings; and (5) limited programs and support for students.

District Requirements and Test Preparation

During the first co-planning session on September 9, 2004, Emily continues to refer to the language arts curriculum guide, ensuring that Greg understands its importance. I did not see Emily and Greg use the curriculum guide during co-planning again until the end of November. This is not to say that they were not referring to it at other times, but it was not central to their planning while I was present. In November, they read through the various sections, checking off what they have taught and discussing which skills, strategies, or concepts they still need to teach (Co-planning, 11/30/04). Emily comments, "I think in the end we will see that a lot is covered, it's just hard to do in this nine week period, so we'll just keep looking back for different centers so we can

109

see what we can do there" (Emily, co-planning, 11/30/04). Her final comment is that the only thing she doesn't like about the curriculum guides is, "It prevents you from really getting into something [Kwanzaa] the way you could", since they are now spending time on the district required unit of tall tales, folk tales, and fairy tales.

As Emily looks through her plan book in mid-November, she simply states, "This is gonna screw us up!" She is referring to an extra music class. They have three "specials"[24] that day so they will not have time for writing. Professional development days typically occur on Wednesday, when her class is scheduled for gym. When the children are not in school, the gym time is moved to the following Wednesday. This results in two gym classes on the same day and happens once a month. Three times this year they have had three specials on one day to make-up for a missed special earlier in the week or the prior week. Emily says this is particularly difficult when they have library in the morning at 9:00, then music at 11:10, shortening their literacy block.

The following week of co-planning, Emily is agitated as she explains how they thought they had until the end of the next week to administer quarterly tests based on the curriculum guides. That day, they learned that the completed tests are due the following Monday (Co-planning, 11/16/04). Emily and Greg decide they need to skip Book Club (Raphael, 2002) on Thursday to administer the Science quarterly test. Soon Maggie, the other third grade teacher, walks in. Emily teaches science to both third grade classes and Maggie teaches social studies to both groups. Their conversation proceeds as follows:

Emily: Hey, when are giving your test?

Maggie: So, did you review with the kids today?

_____

[24] "Specials" include music, art and library which are taught by other teachers.

110

Emily: No! Forgot to… do you want me to come in and do 15 minutes tomorrow? I'll come in tomorrow- because he'll be teaching… (referring to Greg)

Maggie: I'm not even going to be here tomorrow

Emily: Then it will be fine! (everyone laughing) It's not even a big deal. Did you review with my kids? (social studies)

Maggie: No… (everyone laughing). There's that one experiment-

Emily: Shut up! (laughing about an experiment that didn't go well)

Maggie: You can only review so much with the social studies. Today they're looking at the map and go south what do you hit, go west what do you hit…

Emily: Okay, what are you doing at 9:00? Because I have library, I can come in at 9:00.

Maggie: Well, why don't we do it Thursday morning, we'll flip-flop, I'll come down here for 15, 20 minutes, you go to my room for 15, 20 minutes, we'll just do a quick review.

Emily: Okay, let's do that…

Maggie: Then Thursday we can just give the test…

Emily: Okay, that's fine

Maggie: Is that going to mess up your morning?

Emily: No! That's fine, because whatever they don't get done I'm just going to have them do here (later in the day) (Co-planning, 11/16/04)

Following this exchange, Emily says she feels far behind. She is also concerned about finding time for her students to practice songs for a school wide program. Emily wants her students to do well on the quarterlies, so the extra review is important; however it requires juggling the typical schedule. The tests also take time away from Science and other activities that are more valuable for the students' learning.

By December, Greg is sensitive to time constraints, due to various factors such as professional development days and fitting in the requirements from Reading First,

Houghton Mifflin, and the district. A conversation ensues during their co-planning session when Greg asks, "Did you always feel this crunched on time when you taught?"

Emily: No. I feel more crunched.

Greg: Why is that?

Emily: Because I didn't do centers, we did centers on Friday. We didn't do Guided Reading. I did Book Club, I did morning message, I did writing, I did a lot of the same stuff, but I did not do centers.

Greg: Now why did you decide to do centers, what made you...

Emily: Because I did, um, I always did them on Fridays. But what made me think about them was, um, I went to L.I.F.T[25] and they had some really good ideas, but when I went to it they couldn't tell me any good ideas about what to do for... I said, okay, what do you do, when you are pulling these groups back, what do you do with your other students?

Greg: Oh, so they just taught you what to do with the group, not with the others, and that's the bigger issue-

Emily: Right!

Greg: 'Cause, I mean, not that it's easy to work with that group, but you have to figure out what to do with the other 20 kids-

Emily: I couldn't figure it out and they said if I had good management skills, then I would be able to- I would just know. Well, I didn't think that was it. So the first year I didn't change anything, 'cause when I went to L.I.F.T it was all year, so I changed some things, like I was doing Running Records, doing stuff like that, but I wasn't putting it into practical use, so then the next year I taught fourth grade and I did read the article, answer the questions (laughs) and SQ3R, that was something I did every single week-

Greg: As a center?

Emily: Yes! And I had them doing a workbook page and I'd never had them do workbook pages before- you know I don't even teach like that- but I did that because I didn't know what to do. So it was like workbook pages, and handwriting, I had them write their words five times each and then I had a

---

[25] MLPP/L.I.F.T. is the abbreviation for the Michigan Literacy Progress Profile. This is part of the district's Balanced Literacy approach which provides training for educators in teaching phonemic awareness, phonics, writing, comprehension, concepts of print, oral reading, oral language and attitudes toward literacy. For a more detailed description, see http://www.misd.net/Languageart/mlpp.htm

spelling center and back there I taught them some spelling skills- some phonics- so I did that with them. And then... um, every year I've gotten better at it. It just takes a long time and that's the part- I mean it did for me- some people can just jump right into it and feel really good about it but I really loved doing Book Club and I wasn't willing to give that up. I thought it was a really good way to teach. So for me, I wasn't willing to give it up... (Co-planning, 12/7/04)

In the conversation, Emily is trying to explain to Greg how difficult it is to manage time and create a learning culture where all the children are engaged in literacy activities, even while she is leading a Guided Reading group. She emphasizes that this takes time to develop. Emily focuses on literacy practices unrelated to Houghton Mifflin or Reading First such as Book Club and centers. These are more typical of her "unofficial" curriculum and she struggles to fit these in with the required core curriculum. She also uses this time to reiterate that she is not the type of teacher who uses workbook pages or has her students write the same word five times. Emily puts a great deal of thought into her planning, so when she has to take time away from her "unofficial" curriculum to prepare students and administer quarterly exams it is extremely frustrating and in conflict with her beliefs and values as an educator.

Time to meet with like-minded colleagues

Emily faithfully attends the Tuesday meetings with Maggie, the other third grade teacher, and Linda, the literacy coach and Reading First representative. Emily often comments on the tension in the meetings because she feels that Maggie does not talk and it has something to do with Emily being in the room. She has commented a few times that when she is not there, Maggie will share and this bothers her. Emily is the type of teacher who is focused on supporting her students' learning and believes that collaboration with colleagues is critical. A more extensive discussion of the goals and realities of collaboration are discussed in chapter seven, "Collaboration, Power/Empowerment and

Resistance". However, wanting to meet with like minded teachers is appropriate for this

section since temporal and structural constraints do not make this type of collaboration

possible. In December we talk about the possibilities of meeting with like minded

teachers:

> **Emily**: I'd love to be in a meeting with (teachers from other grades). I'd love to talk with them and say, how can we make this work- but then we have other teachers who just don't-
>
> **Jodene**: There's no time that you could just do that on your own-
>
> **Emily**: We have no, no! Because whenever we have stuff we have to go to meetings and they present how to teach so there's no real time for us.
>
> **Jodene**: So there are no in-house professional development days that you could do that?
>
> **Emily**: Well, we did, but it wasn't really anything- it was on writing, which is fine, but really, I've already been doing it. It was on MEAP writing. I've already been doing that.
>
> **Jodene**: So they bring people in, but you don't really have a chance just to sit and talk… Well, I guess that is your grade level meetings on Tuesdays…
>
> **Emily**: Yeah, so… and Maggie and I, I think we look at some things the same but we have such different- we look at teaching so different, wouldn't you say? (to Greg) (Co-planning, 12/14/04)

Emily is anxious to collaborate with teachers who want to discuss their practice and think

about how to improve the entire school. Emily's situation is common for many

elementary teachers. In discussing reform in Kentucky, Holland (1997) states that less

than one-third of the teachers in grades Kindergarten through third had time to meet with

other teachers during their day. If they wanted to meet, it needed to be on their own time

without pay. Similar to Emily, Coburn (2001) found that educators in her study "sought

out like-minded colleagues to talk about their classrooms" (p. 151). Likewise, Little

(1990) states that the organization of space, time, and task constrain potential

interactions, yet colleagues still manage to learn indirectly and informally about their colleagues' practice through moment-by-moment exchanges outside of required meetings such as with the literacy coach or staff meetings. Unfortunately, there exists little research as to how these informal meetings impact practice.

The only time the school provides an opportunity for Emily to meet with colleagues is each Tuesday for Reading First. Unfortunately this is not the type of meeting that allows for generative conversations or the sharing of ideas about best literacy practices. This is an example of the type of isolation Lortie (1970) describes as an "egg crate school" in which "schools are organized around teacher separation rather than teacher interdependence" (p. 14). Emily feels isolated and is anxious to collaborate on topics that she feels are relevant and critical for improving student learning and the school as a whole. Being forced to sit in a meeting with a teacher who does not speak and a literacy coach who must act as the Reading First representative is not helpful for thinking about literacy instruction or conducive to learning. This type of meeting does not fit Emily's vision of meeting with like-minded colleagues to improve practice and student achievement.

Shannon (1989) believes that Emily's desire to meet with like minded teachers who are resisting mandates is critical for significant changes in reading programs. He discusses the failure of past movements that emphasized individual change and goes so far as to call this selfish and competitive on the individual's part. Goodman (1988) agrees that "a single individual or even an identifiable group cannot act alone with much success" (p. 213). Emily does not exhibit these qualities of selfishness or competitiveness with colleagues, but it is reasonable to believe that if she were able to meet with others

115

willing to challenge the rationalization of reading programs, they would support one another and tackle "fundamental issues of their work and work conditions" (Shannon, p. 141). Through conversations with Greg and me, Emily articulates her resistance and it is possible to see a tremendous difference between the intended Reading First mandate and what actually transpires during literacy time. Shannon argues that this type of collective resistance must begin at the local level and eventually lead to state and national networks. This type of collective movement offers teachers a chance to defend their students and their own rights as civic minded professionals and gain control over their literacy practice and their craft.

Professional Development and Holidays

> The most promising forms of professional development engage teachers in the pursuit of genuine questions, problems, and curiosities, over time, in ways that leave a mark on perspectives, policy, and practice. They communicate a view of teachers not only as classroom experts, but also as productive and responsible members of a broader professional community… (Little, 1993, p. 6)

Emily is not opposed to professional development days. In fact, she has commented several times on the quality and usefulness of some of the speakers' ideas. However, Emily is frustrated by the second week of school, commenting, "We have not had a full five days of school since school started, and this won't happen until the fourth week of school", due to holidays and professional development days. This is particularly difficult for consistency with her Guided Reading groups, which she wants to work with at least twice per week. Emily wants to continually learn through district professional development days as well as other programs such as the Red Cedar Writing Project

(RCWP)[26]. Unfortunately, the frequency of these professional development days disrupts the weekly literacy routine which is highly valued in Emily's practice.

In November, Emily comments again how a professional development day is disrupting their usual literacy schedule for the week. This is a particularly stressful time since she is trying to finish their country research reports and feels it is necessary to extend the center times so that students can complete their reports (Co-planning, 9/16/04). The same comment resurfaces as Greg and Emily are planning in December, looking ahead to the first few weeks in January. As Emily flips through her plan book she sees that the following Wednesday is a professional development day. In the third week of January, Monday is Martin Luther King, Jr. day and Friday is records day[27], creating a three day week. Emily comments that they may not do centers for two weeks and "this will kill them!" [the kids] since they enjoy centers. She decides there must be a way to fit in centers, which she will think about over the winter break. Finally, Emily comments that they need to do the DIBELS assessment in the third week, which requires a great deal of time for Emily to assess each child individually.

On a more positive note, Emily has commented how the first year of professional development for Houghton Mifflin felt like a waste of time, but this year seems to be better. She explains during a co-planning session:

> We've complained so much about Houghton Mifflin training that they've really,
>
> um, our Reading First people have really tried to change it so it's more beneficial,
>
> so we're going over strategies that work in that class... it was really good. It was

---

[26] The Red Cedar Writing Project is sponsored by Michigan State University and provides four weeks in the summer for local teachers and researchers from MSU to work together to share their teaching experiences and develop classroom-based research projects. See http://writing.msu.edu:16080/rcwp/

[27] Records Day: the district provides teachers with one day at the end of the semester, without students, to complete report cards.

really beneficial. It made me feel really good about what we do in here. A lot of stuff we do… (referring to the literacy specialist's presentation) she was talking about how to do a personal narrative and I already do that! (Emily, co-planning, 12/7/04)

During a professional development day the prior week, Emily comments how the presenter discussed reading difficulties and the difference between skills and strategies (Emily, informal meeting, 1/5/05). Emily says she never thought about it this way and felt it was very helpful. She is generally positive about professional development days. In the beginning of the year, she said they were typically very good.

Perhaps if professional development days reflected the type of successful programs discussed by St. John, Manset, Chung and Worthington (2001), Emily would find professional development days even more constructive and feel less frustrated when these days take away from teaching time. St. John et al. state, "The professional development hypothesis essentially is that teachers need time for professional development that involves collaboration on strategies for improving educational outcomes" (p. 3). Emily enjoys the professional development days, but it is not a time for collaboration. Rather, it is usually someone coming in from outside the school to give them strategies and tools. St John et al. found that successful professional development should be, "School based, that is, focused on particular problems of each school and selected by the teachers and principal to help address those problems" (p. 3) Emily shares that when they do have the opportunity to meet as an entire group, especially in staff meetings, to work collaboratively to address school problems, this does not happen.

Phillippi (1998) also found in her study that teachers were frustrated by staff development days and the lack of time to discuss what they were doing in their classrooms. The teachers wanted to get together to talk about the new policy, but during the first year of the policy others had decided the content of the meetings and there was little time to fit in anything beyond what was planned. One teacher commented on feeling like the district policy makers did not trust teachers to use their time productively, to discuss their practice, so they planned speakers and kept meetings tightly scheduled. This added to teachers' frustration with the new policy.

Staff meetings

On December 7, Emily talks about staff meetings and the lack of quality discussions and wasted time. She states:

> What they really need to talk about in our building is what things can we keep the same from grades to grades that when they (the students) are going to another teacher, what are some things they should really know, so there are so many power issues. We don't talk about what makes better instruction. We talk about issues that, you know, people have those power issues, that I had no idea it was a problem about the lounge... like this lounge is a mess. I talk to (another teacher) and we don't have time to talk about that kind of stuff." (Emily, co-planning, 12/7/04)

Emily continues to talk about power issues by saying,

> And we don't really talk at staff meetings, because it's really, you know how staff meetings are, who's in the refrigerator, who's parking in the wrong spot, it's just du-, you know how they are, it's just stupid! Most schools I've been at talk about

really dumb things. You know, they talk about, just dumb things (Emily, co-planning, 12/7/04).

The type of power issues Emily is referring to seem petty on the surface, but suggest underlying struggles among staff members. Perhaps it is a strategy to avoid more serious problems, by discussing parking spaces and the appearance of the lounge. Regardless of the reason, it is a source of frustration for Emily who believes these meetings could be productive. It is one of the few times when the entire staff is together and could discuss ways to improve the school, specifically student academic achievement, and Emily feels that the time is not used productively.

Emily believes that staff meetings would be an excellent time to establish a common literacy pedagogy discourse among the teachers to maintain consistency from one grade to the next. She feels that this is particularly important for writing and offers the example of a colleague interchanging the phrase "personal narrative" with "story". Emily talks about how she avoids calling a personal narrative a story because it is not the same. When her colleague mentioned the students did not know how to write a personal narrative, Emily was confused since she taught this the year before to the same group of students. She realized that the teacher was saying "story" which is why the students were not following the characteristics of a personal narrative. Emily knows that this is important for the MEAP since they will be asked to write a personal narrative and she has invested a great deal of time in teaching her children this particular genre. For this reason she continues speaking, "But we could use some of the same language and that's what they need to talk about. It doesn't necessarily mean you need to teach the same way, but

we need to use the same language and do we need to be teaching writing? Yes!" (Emily, co-planning, 12/7/04)

Staff meetings are a primary example of temporal and institutional constraints. Emily views this as valuable time to collaborate as an entire staff to improve literacy instruction school wide. However, this does not happen since people are more concerned with power issues and petty topics. She mentions at one point that the staff wanted to have meetings twice a month, but this never happened. She suggests that part of the problem is that people want to leave the school by 5:00. Emily finishes her thoughts about staff meetings by saying, "We don't really talk about teaching… real issues, what is really best for kids, what do we need to do to make our school better" (Emily, co-planning, 12/7/04).

Limited Programs and Support for Struggling Readers

In a co-planning session, Emily is particularly concerned with two students who are not making the type of literacy progress she would like to see. She believes she is not meeting their needs and is deeply troubled by this. This leads to a discussion of outside resources and programs to support these children. Both students are in H.O.S.T. (Helping One Student to Succeed) which is staffed with all volunteers and the Literacy/H.O.S.T. teacher. The students spend ten minutes working on skills and ten minutes reading. During that time they are reading with someone but not writing. Emily is discouraged by this, but feels that the reading is still helping. The Literacy/H.O.S.T. teacher is working with the students, but it is three students with one teacher rather than one on one. Emily believes that her lower readers, which is seven to eight students, are doing extra reading through Guided Reading, but this may not be enough.

Emily refers to how Reading Recovery would not agree with the H.O.S.T. program since Reading Recovery believes that the lowest students should be receiving support from the most qualified teachers. Reading Recovery is no longer in the district, unless the building wants to pay for it separately. This is highly unlikely, since according to the Reading Recovery Council of North America (2000), districts need to consider the following costs:

> Districts generally report costs per child that range between $2,300 to $3,500. The investment reduces the number of children who need ongoing, expensive services. Because a large number of initially low achievers respond quickly and require only a short-term intervention, the resources saved can be used to support the small percentage who need longer-term help. Costs, then, must be considered against the costs of retention and/or special provisions for children requiring long-term specialist help" (p. 27)

The initial cost can seem overwhelming to a district that is losing student population and trying to cut costs. Unfortunately, what is unrecognized is, "When you compare the success rate of Reading Recovery with other programs that keep children for years and never get them reading on grade level, Reading Recovery is a bargain!" (Reading Recovery Council of America, p. 27)

Finally, Emily mentions a paraprofessional who comes in each day to help with centers who is good, but, "She is not a teacher. She's good… but it's not me." (Emily, co-planning, 12/7/04). Emily's comments show her frustration with not having enough time to work with kids that are "right on the edge" and ready to show significant improvement in their reading abilities. She believes that if she had more time to work with them

intensely in Guided Reading, she would see the type of improvement and results that are so important for struggling readers.

Curriculum Constraints

Another constraint Emily faces is financial resources for the type of instruction that she knows makes a difference for all readers. For the first Book Club (Raphael, 2002) reading, she did not have enough copies for each student. During an observation in September, all of the students are gathered on the back carpet, listening as Emily reads aloud a few chapters from their mystery book, <u>Cam Jansen and the Mystery of the Movie Monster</u> (Adler & Natti, 1997). As previously mentioned, there are not enough books for every student to have their own copy, which may or may not have contributed to students looking in places other than the book being shared between three students. At one point, Emily stops to acknowledge the situation, stating, "It's hard to share with three people..." but encourages students to "read along" (Field notes, 9/8/04). This situation exemplifies findings by Chen and Miller (1997) that lack of job materials is a common stressor for American Kindergarten through secondary school teachers (p. 6).

Emily is determined to use the Book Club curriculum and teach thematically despite temporal and material constraints. By teaching this way, she is able to share quality literature with the students, engage students in meaningful textual production, and share ideas and background knowledge during discussion sessions as part of Book Club. The students are excited by the texts Emily selects for Book Club, as well as the thematic units such as the mystery books. This is extremely important to her. Emily wants her students to be excited about literacy and believes that their excitement is related to their success as readers and writers. She is willing to hybridize her literacy practices as

described in the previous chapter, to be in compliance with mandates, but continues to teach in a way that is best for her students' academic and personal growth. Bergeron and Rudenga (1993) discuss this type of thematic instruction as having the "potential for integrating classroom content in an authentic and motivating manner" (p. 2). In their study, they found that teacher participants cited various factors that undermined their thematic instruction such as, "time constraints, curriculum demands, traditional thinking, and uncertainty" (p. 7). Emily's experiences with implementing thematic teaching are similar to the findings in Bergeron and Rudenga's study. Teaching more from the Houghton Mifflin series than last year, preparing students for exams, and including elements of Reading First take time away from her "unofficial curriculum" that is thematically based, such as the mystery unit. Without a doubt, Emily would agree with a teacher participant in the study who said, "There's always going to be somebody breathing down your throat to use the textbooks... whether it be your principal or just the state requirements" (p. 8).

Limited choices and voices

St. John, Manset, Chung and Worthington (2001) argue, "Given that the new wave of research-based reading reforms is creating opportunities for educators to make informed choices about improvement strategies, a better effort should be made to disseminate useful information into the hands of educators who are making choices about reform strategies" (p. 24). A significant component missing from the Reading First reform is teacher choice and voice. The district chose to write the grant for schools not make AYP and to require Houghton Mifflin as the core curriculum. Representatives from the district delivered mandates without considering the possibility of various

demographics or the voices of the teachers who would need to implement these mandates. The district ordered the principals and the literacy coaches to coerce teachers to use Houghton Mifflin as an element of Reading First without providing space for teachers' involvement. St John et al. mention opportunities for educators to make informed choices, but the choices at Westside Elementary are limited to the materials and regulations surrounding Reading First. Teachers may choose how to participate in the weekly meetings or even how much of the core curriculum to access and include in their literacy instruction. However, their choices are narrowly defined since they did not choose Reading First in the beginning and were not given the opportunity to share in the decision.

Finally, it is important to note that the Houghton Mifflin and Reading First mandate is not "teacher-proof". The literacy coach may ask if teachers are using the materials, and in Emily's case, the answer could be "yes". She does use the leveled books for her Guided Reading groups and the anthology and CD for her listening center. However, this is fairly limited in comparison to how the materials are intended to be used as outlined by the teacher editions and Reading First grant. Each teacher edition provides specific strategies in how to use the materials as well as additional teacher guides to incorporate workbook pages, posters, overheads, and activities into the daily literacy block. Rather than the curriculum controlling Emily's practice, as described in Apple's (1983) definition of deskilling and reskilling, Emily controls the materials and uses them to suit her needs.

Conclusion

Like other teachers in the building, Emily is struggling to work within the institutional, temporal, and financial constraints surrounding elementary teaching. She is frustrated by the time needed for district curriculum guides, Reading First requirements, Houghton Mifflin, and test preparation. These requirements take valuable time away from her "unofficial curriculum". Emily envisions potential for change and growth if she had the time to meet with like-minded colleagues. She also desires better use of staff meetings to talk about real issues that concern student learning and school improvement. All of these constraints could prompt certain educators to give in to policymaker's wishes, to retire their vision of effective literacy instruction. Fortunately this is not the case for Emily. In the next chapter, "Collaboration, Power/Empowerment and Resistance", I discuss the complexity of collegial relationships, the various ways that teachers are reacting to mandates, and the role of power and empowerment in shaping relationships. The chapter concludes with Emily's literacy practices completely unrelated to mandates and her vision for future literacy pedagogy.

Chapter 6

COLLABORATION, POWER/EMPOWERMENT AND RESISTANCE

Maggie: So what are you doing?

Emily: We're planning

Maggie: Wow, I'm impressed - is that the Reading First?

Emily: (looking at me) – Yeah, she knows I did NOT use it last year, she knows!

Maggie: Yeah, this is Houghton Mifflin, so if anyone asks us what we're using, this is Houghton Mifflin-

Emily: This is the bible! This is me in the [Reading First] meeting[28]... I don't use Houghton Mifflin; I don't use something that doesn't teach reading... (Co-planning, 9/7/04)

During the first literacy co-planning session Maggie, the other third grade teacher, came into Emily's room and the above conversation occurred as Greg and I became the audience. Emily's turns are peppered with phrases of resistance, such as "did NOT use it last year" and "I don't use something that doesn't teach reading", as they discuss the Houghton Mifflin core curriculum. There is a sense of camaraderie as the two laugh and sarcastically discuss using the materials to teach reading, "If anyone asks". From the exchange above, it appears that Maggie is also resisting the mandates; however this is not always the case throughout the remainder of the study. Their relationship to one another, as well as the required curriculum is complex, as are most of the relationships at Westside Elementary. In this chapter I discuss three individuals who play an important role in Emily's literacy pedagogy and her daily experiences. They are Maggie, the other third grade teacher; Barbara, the principal; and Linda the literacy coach and Reading First

---

[28] Each week, during the lunch period, the Reading First/Literacy coach meets with teachers by grade level to discuss how they are implementing Houghton Mifflin and to answer questions regarding literacy.

representative. This chapter seeks to examine the connections between these individuals as well as the impact of: (1) collaboration, (2) individuals fulfilling their professional roles as teacher, principal, and literacy coach/Reading First representative; and (3) power and empowerment.

Collegial relationships and mandated policy

Many agree that the interaction among personnel in schools is necessary for promoting and institutionalizing change. At the same time, researchers have noted the centrality of collegial relationships in schools identified as unusually effective and the importance of collegiality as an aspect of school climate.

(Short, 1992, p. 4)

Collaboration

Coburn (2001) states that "Not all schools have as many formal opportunities for teachers to work together or the culture of collegiality that fostered the high level of informal interaction" (p. 160) found at the school in her study. This was important for the growth and sensemaking of the teachers in her study. Researchers and policy makers recognize that time for collaboration is important in organizations such as schools. According to Symonds (2003), this is critical, since, "For members of a knowledge-based profession, teachers have remarkably few opportunities for structured peer interaction focused on practice" (p. 8). Elementary schools that have received Reading First grants through *No Child Left Behind* have added literacy coaches ostensively to their staff to provide guidance in literacy practice and opportunities for teacher collaboration. However, the literacy coach is in a difficult position. She is both the literacy coach and Reading First representative with the primary responsibility of ensuring compliance with

the Reading First grant. Weekly lunch meetings for the third grade teachers with the literacy coach are often a topic of conversation during co-planning sessions. The retellings frequently include elements of confrontation, tension, and frustration, according to both Emily and Greg.

The type of collaboration described by Emily and Greg is best defined by Hargreaves (1994) as, "contrived collegiality teacher culture" in that, "collaboration among teachers is not spontaneous, but regulated by administration; is compulsory, not voluntary; is fixed in time and space-scheduled by administration; implementation-rather than development-oriented—teacher are told what to implement; and outcomes are predictable rather than unpredictable" (p. 15). In theory, providing time and space to discuss literacy strategies should be a positive approach to teacher development and learning. Little (1990) states that, "researchers have ascribed various benefits to teacher collaboration, among them student achievement in inner-city schools, teacher morale in terms of stress, support for innovation, and an easing of the 'reality shock' visited on beginning teachers" (p. 509). Both Hargreaves and Little suggest that the right type of collaboration should yield positive outcomes; however under the conditions at Westside Elementary, this type of collaboration has not produced the desired results at all times.

While the required grade level meetings with the literacy coach have not yielded a collaborative teacher culture, it is important to note the importance of context. On different occasions it appears that Emily and Maggie are engaged in a type of co-resistance as they speak sarcastically about being in compliance and the Houghton Mifflin Teacher edition as "the bible" (Emily, co-planning, 9/7/04). Throughout the study, it became apparent that context is critical. During grade level meetings, Maggie is

silent. Outside of these meetings she demonstrates similar mild irritation and sarcasm toward the required basal reading program as Emily. This suggests that the participants present in the space, the time of the school year, the physical space, and recent events influence the type of collaboration that occurs. It would be misleading to state that Westside Elementary is a collaborative or contrived teacher culture at all times. Rather, the type of collaboration that occurs can vary along a continuum of more or less collaborative or contrived due to a number of factors.

Additional research cites collaboration as critical for teacher learning and development (Apthorp, Bodrova, Chen & Miller, 1997; Darling-Hammond, 1998; Dean, & Florian, 2001; Little, 1993; St John, Manset, Chung & Worthington, 2001; Short, 1992). St John et al (2001) state that opportunities for collaboration should provide time so that, "groups of professionals at schools can work together to solve the school problems most critical to student learning" (p. 3). In this case, the critical problem is literacy planning and instruction using Houghton Mifflin and following the requirements of Reading First. Furthermore, in their study, St John et al found that, "when teachers have time to collaborate, they exhibit an increased capacity to keep more students achieving at grade level" (p. 19). Stigler and Hiebert (1999) also found that student achievement increased when, "the school has been restructured to provide time for teacher collaboration and even cross-school observations by teachers" (p. 145). At Westside Elementary, teachers have weekly opportunities to work together through the Reading First mandate; however generative collaboration is not a guaranteed outcome. Stigler and Hiebert state:

Indeed, teachers who are told simply to collaborate often find that they are not

sure what they are supposed to do, or how such collaborations can help them to

improve their teaching. One school district that restructured to allow teachers time

to collaborate found within months that teachers were complaining about the time

they were supposed to spend meeting together. 'Let's just go home early,' said

one of the teachers, 'and use the time at home to prepare for tomorrow's lessons.'

(p. 149)

Hargreaves (1994) explains this type of outcome as a result of teachers having different

life circumstances. He states that, "The teachers' work is highly contexted. It is not and

cannot be standardized in the way that administrators sometimes want it to be" (p. 198).

Providing time for collaboration can not guarantee generative collaboration between

teachers, nor a common vision and motivation to make that vision a reality. St. John et al.

caution against the oversimplification of the complexity of reforming programs, such as

the literacy program at Westside Elementary. A lack of collegiality can also contribute to

work-related stress (Chen & Miller, 1997). This will be examined in depth as I discuss

collaboration and the complex relationships between Emily and various colleagues,

particularly the other third grade teacher, principal, and literacy coach.

Power and empowerment play a tremendous role in the nature of the relationships

between these four women discussed in the next section. This includes Barbara, the

principal; Linda, the literacy coach and Reading First representative; Maggie, a third

grade teacher; and Emily. Barbara has empowered Emily, which is made evident through

interactions with Linda. Acker-Hocevar and Touchton (1999) state that, "Teachers cannot

be given power (empowered) without accepting it. This has to occur on the part of

teachers. On the other hand, administrators must know how to create conditions that foster empowerment and release their control over teachers, alter their roles, and engender commitment, trust and respect" (p. 26). Emily readily accepts empowerment from Barbara. She knows she has the trust and respect of her principal and is able to use this as leverage with Linda in resisting Houghton Mifflin and Reading First.

Short (1992) discusses power and empowerment as, "Empowerment has been defined as a process whereby school participants develop the competence to take charge of their own growth and resolve their own problems. Empowered individual believe they have the skills and knowledge to act on a situation and improve it" (p. 5). Emily has been granted power from Barbara and uses this, not only in her relationship with Linda, but to control the type of literacy instruction that occurs in her classroom. Throughout the study, Emily demonstrates three key components of empowerment described by Short. These include:

- Status: Status as a dimension of empowerment refers to teacher perceptions that they have professional respect and admiration from colleagues. In addition, teachers believe that they have colleague support. Teachers also feel that others respect their knowledge and expertise. (p. 10)

- Self-efficacy: Self-efficacy refers to teachers' perceptions that they have the skills and ability to help students learn, are competent in building effective programs for students, and can effect changes in student learning. (p. 11)

- Autonomy: Autonomy, as a dimension of empowerment, refers to teachers' beliefs that they can control certain aspects of their work life. This may be control

over scheduling, curriculum, textbooks, and instructional planning. The hallmark

of autonomy is the sense of freedom to make certain decisions. (p. 12)

Emily's status is increased by her support from Barbara. She believes she can make the

best decisions for the literacy development of her third graders, and builds a program

outside of the required curriculum. Emily is adamant about controlling the type of

curriculum and instructional planning her students receive.

Emily and Maggie

The exchange which began this chapter, between Emily and Maggie, is worth

analyzing at multiple levels. In an earlier Reading First grade level meeting, Maggie

mentions not receiving the money or materials they were promised, and asks why the

teachers should do the program. She is frustrated because by the time the district ordered

materials, they were no longer available. Maggie's negativity toward Reading First and

Houghton Mifflin is blatant and similar to the sentiment Emily shares throughout the

study. This was a rare instance when the third grade teachers were resisting together

during the mandatory collaborative meeting.

In other conversations with Emily (Co-planning, 9/21/04; Co-planning, 12/14/04)

she shares how Maggie does not speak in meetings, thereby undermining the goal of

collaborative meetings. The effect is opposite to what certain studies indicate, which is,

"collective participation of teachers from the same grade or department provides more

active learning opportunities for the participants" (Apthorp et al, 2001, p. 123). Emily's

response is, "I know she's a good teacher, but she does not share" (Emily, co-planning,

9/21/04). This is incredibly frustrating because Emily typically talks and asks questions

while Maggie listens. Little (1990) describes this type of situation as, "Perhaps the single

most pervasive expectation among teachers is that colleagues will give one another help and advice when asked" (p. 515). This is the best case scenario. Alternative, Little warns:

> Discussion about practices of teaching, under such circumstances, becomes difficult to separate from judgments of the competence of teachers. Understandably, teachers may show little inclination to engage with peers around matters of curriculum and instruction if doing so can only be managed in ways that may jeopardize self-esteem and professional standing (p. 516).

Perhaps Maggie does not speak as a way to protest the required meetings. Or, she may be protecting her image as a competent literacy teacher who does not need to ask for help. These are merely speculations since this research focuses on Emily; however Maggie's behavior is similar to teachers in related research. Phillippi (1998) found that teachers in her study did not feel safe to ask questions and their silence is also a form of resistance. Apple (1983) offers another possibility. He argues that prepackaged curricular systems require less interaction for teachers since "nearly everything is rationalized and specified before execution" and that "if everything is predetermined, there is no longer any pressing need for teacher interaction. Teachers become unattached individuals, divorced from both colleagues and the actual stuff of their work" (p. 152). This yields little need for collaboration. In other arenas, such as factories, this type of deskilling led to contradictory pressures and generated countervailing tendencies. These are all possible explanations for the type of silence Maggie exhibits. Furthermore, Little argues that teachers who are in the same unit, in this case grade level, may discover that they are at odds in terms of literacy philosophy or pedagogy. Being in the same grade level does not guarantee like-mindedness or a similar desire to share ideas about pedagogy.

Emily wishes she had time to meet with teachers who are also actively resisting Reading First and Houghton Mifflin. She believes that other teachers "are not talking about what they are doing in their classrooms and good teaching" (9/21/04). In December, this topic resurfaces and Emily says:

> I talk so differently with Maggie than I talk with (1st grade teacher). The conversations I have with (1st grade teacher) is so different. With (1st grade teacher) I talk the whole time about strategies and school and what are you doing in this and I don't ever talk with Maggie about this. The only time we do is during grade level meeting and today she actually talked today and I wasn't there. That's when she talks. She talks when I'm not in the room and so that's only when she talks... so I don't know what that's about. Something's not right when I'm in the room. (Emily, co-planning, 12/7/04)

Emily refers to this again the following week by saying, "Maggie doesn't talk when I'm in the room, so it's something to do with me. I don't know what I do. I make her feel uncomfortable in some way because she doesn't discuss when I'm there. So... so I don't like that" (Emily, co-planning, 12/14/04). From these statements it is evident that Emily's ideal culture aligns closely with Acker-Hocevar and Touchton's (1999) definition of "collaboration teacher culture". In collaboration teacher culture, teachers are empowered which:

> ...fosters and builds upon qualities of openness, trust and support between teachers and their colleagues. Within this culture, collaborative working relationships between teachers are spontaneous, emerging form the teachers themselves; voluntary because of the perceived value of working together;

135

development-oriented, to meet the need, not the mandate of their won

professional confidence and expertise as a community; pervasive across time and

space, it is not a schedule activity; and outcomes are unpredictable because

discretion and control over what will be developed is within the control of the

teacher, not the mandate. (p. 14)

Westside Elementary has provided opportunities for collaboration, which is critical for

teacher learning and growth as well as potential student achievement (Apthorp et al,

2001; Darling-Hammond, 1998; St John et al, 2001), however if all teachers are not

willing to speak and share ideas then the potential for growth is limited. The result is

tension and frustration for Emily, who is genuinely anxious to collaborate with

colleagues. During an informal interview (2/16/05) Emily discusses collaboration

meetings the previous year as being more productive and enjoyable since there were three

teachers participating (Maggie, Emily and Mike). Mike, another third grade teacher, was

willing to share ideas as well as his successes and failures. He wanted to learn how to

improve his practice. Emily also recounts how she read Mosaic of Thought (Zimmerman

& Keene, 1997) and Strategies the Work (Harvey & Goudvis, 2000) for their meetings.

As it turns out, she was the only one that read which limited their conversations of the

texts.

Emily and Linda

Linda is the full-time literacy coach at Westside Elementary. Emily has shared

that Linda holds a Masters of Arts in Reading and has a long history of lower elementary

teaching experience. Each week, Linda meets with teachers by grade levels to provide

support for implementation of the Houghton Mifflin literacy curriculum. She is in a

precarious position since she represents Reading First, which many teachers at Westside are covertly and overtly opposing to varying degrees. Roemer (1991) provides a possible explanation for elements of tension between Linda and classroom teachers. In her study, Roemer found that it is extremely difficult to create a community among participants when their statuses and working conditions are unequal. Linda may be on the staff, but her position represents a more powerful status than the teachers since she has to push the implementation of an outside policy. Her working conditions are different. She is not in the classroom planning and teaching the required core curriculum, rather, she acts as a weekly reminder and enforcer of Reading First. By doing her job, Linda often makes other people's jobs more difficult to do.

Linda fulfills her role as literacy coach and Reading First representative by visiting classrooms, providing resources, leading collaborative meetings, and offering suggestions for literacy instruction. She was also responsible for teaching the Language Essentials for Teachers of Reading and Spelling (LETRS) in-service training sessions the previous year. Emily suggests that Linda is more focused on working with the Kindergarten through second grade teachers, than the third grade teachers. This year, Linda has not been able to increase the third grade teachers' willingness and ability to collaborate or "increase individual teacher knowledge about other teachers' classrooms" (p. 4) which Symonds (2003) states is an important characteristic of an effective literacy coach. Linda has not been able to act as an advocate between teachers and district leaders, which Symonds suggests is part of the role of a literacy coach. Linda represents Reading First and her alliance tends to be with the district more than the teachers. Both Emily and Barbara have commented on not being a Reading First school next year, which

means that Linda will be transferred to a different Reading First school. In a way, the teachers can wait out this part of the mandate and return to their "real" curriculum (Anagnostopoulos & Rutledge, 2004) and school culture prior to *NCLB* and Reading First.

A thorough description of Linda's role is provided in the Reading First grant application[29]. Her essential duties and responsibilities are tremendous for one person and particularly difficult given the context. Emily, and possibly the other teachers realize that Linda may not be at the school next year. They also recognize Linda's dual role of literacy coach and Reading First representative. For Linda it may be difficult to enter other teachers' classrooms since this is not typical of elementary school culture (Lortie, 1975), but when the individual attempting to enter is forcing a mandate on her colleagues and representing the district more than her colleagues, it creates futile situations. Linda's responsibilities, according to the grant are:

- Provide leadership and support for Kindergarten through third grade classroom teachers and Kindergarten through twelfth grade special education teachers

- Foster a climate of learning and support among teachers

- Effectively focus group dialogue, cultivate individual and group resources, and effect attitudes and performance toward best practice

- Model effective instructional strategies and assessment techniques

- Coach teachers in implementing effective evidence-based instructional strategies in classrooms

- Plan and consult with teachers

---

[29] Reading First Grant Application: http://www.michigan.gov/documents/1-05_Version_3_Reading_First_111599_7.pdf

- Document progress of teachers and students through careful data collection

- Attend regular meetings of Reading First literacy coaches at the regional level

Later in this section, Emily discusses what Linda does to support her and how this does and does not fit Emily's idea of an effective literacy coach as well as the description of her position provided by the Reading First grant.

During a co-planning session in the fourth week of school, Emily is anxious to share a conversation that occurred between Linda and herself. She is upset by the exchange and shares what happened:

> Linda approached me yesterday and said, are those normal centers that you do on Friday and let me rephrase that, anyway, we were in the copy room and she said, are you doing the five parts of literacy[30] and I said do you mean phonics, reading, writing, and… anyways, she said are you doing that and I said 'yes, I'm doing that.' And she said are you using the core curriculum and I said, what is the core curriculum? (laughs) and she said Houghton Mifflin. And I said, Linda, you know I'm not using that. I use it once a week now and that's really good for me and I'm doing the vocabulary and I'm doing parts of it but I'm not using it every day. She said, you need to be using Houghton Mifflin every day and I said I am not going to use Houghton Mifflin everyday. For one thing, I sat in that meeting with you last year and I told you that if you were going to make me do Houghton Mifflin that I am not in the right grade, that I am not going to use Houghton Mifflin, that I do not think that teaches reading in an appropriate way and I do not think it gets kids excited about reading. I sat in that meeting and I told you and I told the Reading First person and I told Barbara and Barbara told me… So I said I am not the right person for third grade and Barbara turned to me and said 'yes, you are the right person to teach third grade.' So you have to know that part of the reason that I'm able to do this is because I have principal support. And she told me you know you need to use it and I said until Barbara tells me I need to use it, I'm not. I'm teaching in a way that I think is appropriate to kids and you know that way. You know that this is not the program that gets kids excited about reading. (Emily, co-planning, 9/21/04)

During this conversation, Emily draws on three types of "gatekeeping" (Coburn, 2001) against literacy instruction to defend her reason for not using the core curriculum. Her

---

[30] The five essential components of reading instruction that are required by Reading First are: phonemic awareness, systematic, explicit phonics, vocabulary development, oral reading fluency and comprehension strategy instruction. Description available at http://www.michigan.gov/documents/1-05_Version_3_Reading_First_111599_7.pdf

rationale for not relying on the Houghton Mifflin literacy series, borrowing from Coburn's list in gatekeeping against messages about reading, were: (1) "Too difficult for her students", (2) "Completely outside the bounds of comprehension"; and (3) "Doesn't fit". (p. 154 – 155). Emily has commented on several occasions that the curriculum is too difficult for her students, so she chooses curriculum that is more supportive of their needs. Second, Emily sees some of the approaches as beyond comprehension in terms of motivating the students. Houghton Mifflin encourages teachers to use repetition to teach and Emily believes this is boring and disengaging for students. Finally, Coburn (2001) discusses in her study how, "Most teachers in the school had well-developed and quite complicated structures for teaching reading in their classrooms- ways of organizing time and children, materials that they used, and kinds of activity structures" (p. 155), as is the case with Emily. She assumes that Linda recognizes these barriers and disincentives to using the core curriculum and treats these as gatekeepers to maintain her own pedagogy outside of Houghton Mifflin and Reading First.

A common characteristic of the literacy coach's role is to conduct classroom observations. Symonds (2003) describes this as "the glue between coached collaboration sessions and classroom practice. After a collaboration session, a coach will observe a lesson and then debrief with the teacher or debrief with the grade-level group" (p. 15). At no point has Emily mentioned collaboration in developing a lesson and having Linda observe. In the above passage, Linda's observation was focused on whether or not Emily was using Houghton Mifflin, rather than the quality of literacy instruction she observed. Linda has visited Emily's room on several occasions when I was present, and her visits

lasted no more than 10 minutes as she moved about the room to see the activities children were engaged in during center time.

During the next co-planning session several weeks later, Emily repeats the exchange between Linda and herself, nearly verbatim, but with increased anger. She says, "They don't like me because I'm outspoken" (Emily, co-planning, 11/9/04). Emily continues to talk about Houghton Mifflin and how a representative visited her room during the first year of Reading First in 2003 – 2004 and sent a memo to her principal about how she was not using the materials. Emily said the representative needed to come in her room for a week to observe her, not a half hour two or three times in the year. However, the Reading First grant only requires visits by state Reading First Facilitators three times each year to observe and interview the teachers. Emily says the visitors believe that, "if I'm not doing Houghton Mifflin everyday, then I'm not teaching". This is her belief about Linda as well. Emily completes this retelling by stating, "Fortunately I have a very supportive boss". Her principal has commented, "It's because you open your mouth and say I'm going to teach a way that's appropriate" (Emily, co-planning, 11/9/04). I ask what the consequences are for not using the core curriculum materials and Emily replies that her principal said not to worry since they will most likely not be a Reading First school next year since their scores will probably improve. Sarcastically, Emily says the scores will go up "because I taught Houghton Mifflin." She also shares that Linda will be moved to a different school but does not indicate how she feels about this. Emily's experiences and feelings are echoed in Phillippi's (1998) study in which teachers were also required to use a basal. One teacher in her study comments, "…you had a book and it was mandated from the top and you do it and you feel as if you're not

141

doing a good job if you don't get through the whole book" (p. 6). Pressure to use the required basal is present in both studies, making the teachers feel badly about their pedagogy, even when they know it goes against their beliefs of effective literacy instruction.

In late November, Emily shares her frustration in not knowing how to teach parts of speech in a way that is engaging and clear for her students. She spends the least amount of time on this because she can't see the value in teaching parts of speech separate from reading and writing. During their weekly meeting, Emily asked Linda for suggestions in how to teach this. Linda's response was if Emily were using the core curriculum she would be teaching this. This is not helpful. During the co-planning session, Greg and Emily discuss this matter further:

> **Emily**: If I did a workbook page, then maybe that would work
>
> **Greg**: Oh yeah, maybe that would make it sink in (both laugh)
>
> **Emily**: I mean, do they really think that works?
>
> **Greg**: Just because they spend time on it doesn't mean it works. Well, I guess you're hitting on it... (Co-planning, 11/30/04)

In the end, they brainstorm centers that they can create to teach and reinforce parts of speech.

During the final co-planning session on December 14, Emily and Greg are both irritated by a situation that occurred earlier in the day regarding the required Reading First grade level meeting, involving Maggie and Linda:

> **Emily**: Okay, they met today at lunch, Linda did.
>
> **Greg**: Yah, I heard.
>
> **Emily**: But they didn't tell us. Why didn't they come down and get us?

Greg: Yah, I don't know.

Emily: So they must not have really cared. That's what I felt like.

Greg: Yah. Maggie was like, yah, thanks for skippin' and I was like, 'what?'

Emily: I went down there and there was no one there. (Co-planning, 12/14/04)

Whether or not Linda was responsible for ensuring that Greg and Emily participate in the meeting is unclear. However, Linda's role as the literacy coach is to create situations for collaboration and to support the teachers. From this exchange it is evident that being excluded from the meeting is a sensitive topic for Emily and Greg, making Emily feel as though she is not valued or cared about by her colleagues. Kane and Montgomery (1998) discuss potential outcomes from this incident of dysempowerment for Emily and Greg. They state that, "negative attitudes and behaviors resulting from an individuals' dysempowerment may spread vicariously to others in the group… generating a climate of collective dysempowerment." (p. 269). In this situation, Emily feels dysempowered, as though her dignity has been affronted and a "violation of a fundamental norm of consideration and respect" (p. 262) occurred. As the conversation between Greg and Emily continued, he recognized this breach of collegiality, agreeing and siding with Emily.

As a representative of Reading First and the one to enforce Houghton Mifflin, Linda is at a disadvantage among her educator peers. Symond's (2003) discusses the importance of how a literacy coach is brought to the staff. She states:

> If literacy coaching is an afterthought or an add-on, teachers won't buy into the strategy. Teachers are highly attuned to "fads" thrust upon them from administrators and if they are truly to trust and welcome literacy coaches into

their classrooms and work seriously at changing their practice, they must feel

confident that literacy coaches are connected with their districts' long-term plans.

(p. 38)

Unfortunately for Linda, the staff knows that once they are released from the Reading

First mandate, she will be transferred to another school. Linda is very much a "fad" of *No*

Child Left Behind. As a result, Emily's role has become the questioner and talker during

meetings, Maggie is silent, and Linda is policing the use of Houghton Mifflin. The

structure is ideal for creating frustration and tension among colleagues rather than a

collaborative teacher culture.

Barbara

Barbara has been the principal of Westside Elementary for four years. Previously

she spent many years in the classroom as an elementary teacher and substituted as a

principal at another elementary school in the district. In a meeting with seniors from the

teacher education program at the local university Barbara explains how Westside

Elementary is a Reading First school and the focus on literacy achievement is primarily

for grades Kindergarten through third. She is pleased to share that the students were 80%

proficient on language arts for 2003 - 2004 but this makes it difficult to make AYP for

the current school year. They were designated as a failing school since their test scores

decreased for five years. Barbara expresses concern with being a Reading First school

because she feels that, "It does not leave teachers with choice in instruction. Teachers

need choice" (Barbara, presentation, 9/9/04). Goodman (1988) also argues that thoughtful

and creative teachers need space to make meaningful instructional and curricular

decisions to prevent a loss of pride in their work. He warns that, "After enough time

passes, even initial talent and craftsmanship will eventually atrophy. Then, teachers may become permanently disenfranchised" (p. 205).

Barbara recognizes the high-stakes involved for teachers as well as her and finishes the talk by telling the seniors that during the ninety minutes of literacy each morning, she can not plan fire drills and teachers can not teach math. The Reading First grant clearly states that a literacy block cannot be interrupted by announcements, assemblies, field trips, or other activities[31]. Barbara does not directly state this as a problem; however, by the context it suggests that this is not something she believes is reasonable for an elementary school.

In a conversation the previous semester, Barbara told me under no uncertain terms that the teachers hosting seniors could not teach math one day a week for the seniors' placement. Barbara knows what is being taught in classrooms, but it was her duty to tell me- the representative of the university methods course in math and literacy for the seniors. Eventually the district made an exception so that teachers were allowed to switch their literacy and Math lessons on Thursdays, when the seniors were in the classrooms to observe math. I knew that Barbara did not have a personal problem with the teachers switching the lessons, but she needed to make sure she told me they were following the Reading First grant guidelines. Like Emily, Barbara is trying to be in compliance, even when it goes against her better judgment.

Another duty Barbara must contend with is making sure the teachers are administering the Houghton Mifflin Integrated Theme tests several times per year. When I asked Emily what the principal does with the scores, she replied that Barbara just

_____

[31] Reading First grant: http://www.michigan.gov/documents/Reading_First_FAQs_115984_7.pdf).

needed to know teachers were doing the tests. The scores were not used for any particular purpose to Emily's knowledge.

Barbara and Emily

Emily is forthright with her negative feelings toward Houghton Mifflin and Reading First. Before the start of the school year Emily told her principal that she was questioning whether or not she should teach third grade since it is closely monitored by Reading First representatives. Barbara, who knows Emily does not rely on the core curriculum, insisted that Emily remain at third grade. This is an example of Emily feeling supported by her principal and she made this clear to colleagues, particularly Linda. During confrontations, Emily tells others that she has the support of the principal and if they have issues with her literacy instruction then they need to speak with the principal. Barbara's relationship with Emily demonstrates respect and admiration between educators. In various ways, Barbara is both fulfilling her role as a principal of a Reading First school and supporting Emily. Acker-Hocevar and Touchton (1999) describe her actions as when, "Principals might play a sponge role in protecting teachers from unnecessary pressures from their districts and the state" (p. 27) and "administrators have a direct influence on power relationships within their schools" (p. 10). Emily knows she can tell Linda to talk to Barbara if she is not pleased with Emily's teaching. Barbara's support has certainly influenced the power relationship between Emily and Linda. As an administrator held accountable for the students' test scores, Barbara is protecting herself by allowing Emily to teach in an effective way. Maeroff (1988) describes her actions as, "Administrators must learn that empowering teachers is in administrators' own best interests- and, more important, in the best interest of students" (p. 477). Experience has

146

taught Barbara to empower and trust Emily to teach in a way that is most effective, even when it is out of compliance with the requirements of the Reading First grant.

The relationship dynamics between Linda, Maggie, Emily and Barbara are complex. Sarason (1990) argues that educational reformers avoid addressing existing power relationships which undermines reform. According to Shannon (1989), teachers and administrators in his research functioned in a scientifically arranged organization similar to a large modern corporation with a formal hierarchy of authority with varying power. Each worker had a respective role to fulfill and had internalized a system of thought necessary for production and was able to justify their use, or forcing others use, of commercially produced basal programs. In short, "There was an acknowledged separation of roles in the program- administrators were to set policy and teachers were to follow that policy. Policy was translated into practice through a single set of basal materials…" (p. 57). From a surface observation, the same might be said of Westside Elementary. The district selected Houghton Mifflin, in response to being a Reading First school, and it is the responsibility of the principal and the literacy coach to force teachers to use the core curriculum. A more in-depth look shows that all participants except Linda are resisting the organization and its demands to conform to the Reading First mandates. If educational reformers are truly interested in seeing change in outcomes, these complex relationships need further consideration and attention in future reforms.

Power and empowerment

Acker-Hocevar and Touchton (1999) define empowerment as:

a cognitive response to work conditions that either increase one's sense of

intrinsic motivation or decrease it. In terms of hierarchical relations we view

teachers' access to power relations through applying the 'rules of the game' to attain preferred outcomes. In other words by having a working knowledge of the system and how to get around certain obstacles in the formal power structures, these teachers might affect change. (p. 3)

The four individuals discussed so far (Emily, Maggie, Barbara and Linda) are working within and against formal power structures initiated by Reading First and Houghton Mifflin. Each individual is working to affect change in different ways. Linda is using her role as the literacy coach and Reading First representative to enforce mandates, while Emily is resisting and negotiating these same mandates. Maggie is silent in meetings, but vocal and in agreement with Emily outside of Reading First meetings and away from Linda. Barbara, who is ultimately responsible for enforcing mandates at the district, state, and national level, supports the teachers and their right to make choices, but can not make this known to "outsiders". In the following section I describe the literacy practices Emily employs, despite mandates at the district, state, and national level.

Resistance: Practices unrelated to Houghton Mifflin or Reading First

"How could they not think that writing is part of literacy? It is imperative to getting kids to read." (Emily, co-planning, 9/21/04)

Reading First requires teachers to use the daily ninety minute literacy block for reading and language arts. The district, however, has altered the language from the Reading First grant application, and requires teachers to teach reading, not writing during this time (see Pardo, 2005). Ironically, the Houghton Mifflin literacy series includes reading and writing in the teacher's edition, making it inconsistent with the district's

interpretation of the Reading First mandate. In the Reading First grant application

section, Frequently Asked Questions, it suggests that teachers continue writing beyond

the ninety minute block, but does not require the exclusion of writing. In fact, it states,

"We always ask districts to think about how effectively/thoroughly teachers are

implementing the comprehensive program and how well teachers understand what

writing shows as a window into students' literacy understanding" (p. 3).

     During every observation of literacy instruction, Emily followed the philosophy

of the district's Balanced Literacy program which strongly encourages teachers to engage

their students in reading, writing, listening and speaking during the literacy block. Each

of these four areas was included whether students were engaged in centers, Book Club, or

special projects. Emily consistently followed "on-target" literacy practices and avoided

"off-target" literacy practices outlined by the U.S. Department of Education report. For

"on-target" practices she had created a literacy block in which "(1) students are

surrounded with literature and are given opportunities to read and be read to; staff also

teach specific skills through reading, writing, speech, and music, and (2) students use

simple rubrics to assess their own and peer students' work on a regular basis throughout

the year" (p. 5). Emily's students were reading, writing and speaking with one another

throughout daily center times. As a whole group, the children sang various songs each

morning by reading the lyrics on a handout. The songs ranged from holiday tunes in

German and popular music by Mariah Carey to silly songs that required phonic

substitution and blending. The children also used rubrics for their writing and engaged in

group time to assess one another's writing during Book Club (Raphael, 2002). Avoiding

"off-target" literacy practices meant circumventing the following: "(1) staff rely on basal

textbooks/reading series to determine the balance of phonics and literature, and rarely supplement the curriculum, and (2) during small group instruction, most students do seat work using worksheets, while a small group of students receives literacy instruction" (p. 3). Emily's practice is a blend of "unofficial" curriculum and children are engaged in various literacy activities while Emily works with small groups for Guided Reading. The next section will discuss Emily's pedagogy unrelated to Houghton Mifflin, which met the effective literacy practices outlined in the U.S. Department of Education report.

Centers

Emily draws upon a variety of resources for her centers. She shares with Greg and me how using centers has not always been easy, but has become a valued element of her literacy practice. During a co-planning session in December, she says:

> So when I started centers it was very... I started slow. And no one gave me permission to do that- I just needed to do that and if I hadn't I wouldn't have done it. No one would have... I did dumb things, like write your words 5 times each, like we did that on the white boards and that is how you have to start it out... to do all these new things they have NO idea what to do, you know, and we repeated a lot of the same things- they need repetition and that kind of stuff. If you do one new thing it's okay. And I taught fourth grade and it's very different in fourth and fifth grade. Third grade, there's some skills I really need to get done- not the same skills, I would just do it differently. (Emily, co-planning, 12/7/04)

During the five months I was in Emily's room, I observed a tremendous range of activities. These included, but were not limited to:

1. Guided Reading with Emily	10. GeoSafari: phonics
2. spelling/phonics	11. ordering sentences into a paragraph
3. listening center	12. ordering words into sentences
4. Wheel of Words: word study	13. magnetic sentences
5. plays	14. guess the covered word
6. Vowel crosses: phonics	15. Venn diagrams
7. poetry and parts of speech	16. art
8. writing center	17. reading
9. computer: spelling, phonics, parts of speech	18. contractions
	19. word wall/stamping

Students enjoyed the centers, which were appropriate for their range of ability levels. During the beginning of the year, the majority of the planning time was spent teaching Greg how to organize and coordinate centers for maximum engagement and textual production. As the year progressed, the time to plan centers decreased as Greg learned the purpose of each centers and how to pair and select appropriate centers.

Children also used listening centers during DEAR time. Emily had three listening centers in January, so students could listen to full texts and read along. The centers were for Sounder (Armstrong, 1972), Pippi Longstocking (Lindgren, 1997), and The Watsons go to Birmingham (Curtis, 1963). Emily taught them how to look for the last word in the sentence to read along and know what the reader has just finished reading. She feels this is another way to teach reading and offers students a chance to read entire novels that are interesting and appropriate for their reading level.

Book Club

Emily makes time for Book Club (Raphael, 2002) nearly every day, whether this is done as a read aloud and partner reading, or part of a center. For example, during the mystery unit she made time with the "official" Book Club format, centers, and sustained silent writing time. For the week of September 21st, Book Club was interspersed in the literacy block as follows:

Table 4: Weekly activities related to Book Club

Day	Activity
Monday	Writing center: continue work on mystery stories
Tuesday	• Emily read the first two chapters of <u>Box Car Children</u> • She uses five students and a sample writing to do fish bowl to model how students are to discuss in their groups
Wednesday	Book Club: • Model character map from a previous book, <u>Cam Jansen</u> Writing • Emily models how to write a "good" problem • Students work on their character and setting for their mystery story
Thursday	Book Club: • Emily discusses the packets that go along with the book and various writing activities students can choose to do and discuss in their small groups • Emily models illustrating a picture from the text that is not in the text
Friday	No Book Club activities planned

When comparing books used in Book Club to the Houghton Mifflin anthology, Emily discusses how excited the kids are about reading Cam Jansen (Adler & Natti, 1997) mysteries and The Box Car Children (Chandler Warner, 1977). We agree that there is something special about holding an entire book in their hands rather than the heavy, awkward anthology. Emily says, "When they are done with a story, there is no reason for them to go on- to read more. Nobody goes and picks up the anthology" (Emily, co-planning, 9/21/04) during their free time or sustained silent reading time, whereas students will ask to continue reading their Book Club book independently. Emily also recognizes the importance of varying the type of books she uses for Book Club, which Apthorp et al. (2001) state is important for vocabulary development. They discuss the impact of "*wide reading*... that is, reading many books from a variety of genres, about a variety of topics, and at increasing levels of difficulty" (p. 10). Emily applies this theory both to her selection of Book Club books and use of leveled books for Guided Reading.

During the second quarter, after completing the mystery unit, the genre of books Emily and Greg select for Book Club shifts. The curriculum guide require a unit on fairy tales, tall tales, and folk tales. Emily selects the two books, The Minstrel in the Tower (Skurzynski, 1988) and The Whipping Boy (Fleischman, 1986). During Greg's guided lead teaching[32] in late October and early November, he uses the timeless fantasy book, My Father's Dragon (Gannett, 1948). A long conversation occurs during one of the co-planning sessions when Greg asks Emily how she selects books for Book Club:

> **Greg**: So when you select your books for Book Club, how do you, do you worry about what other teachers have taught or will teach. I mean, how do you know which books the second grade teacher-

---

[32] Interns are responsible for planning and teaching math and literacy for two weeks during this time, with the support of their mentor.

Emily: I don't. But you can look in the um, Middleton School District pacing guide. I try to pick text that, especially when I was at (another school) that kids could relate to. I couldn't pick the same text that even I pick now because it was very different... And it depends on the kids you get...

Greg: Right. So how did you pick this- (The Minstrel in the Tower)

Emily: Well this one I picked as the castle unit, I didn't pick it- I read the book and I said, 'okay, this would be an okay book because there's a boy and a girl in it and this will relate well to Whipping Boy and they can make that text to text connection here. I do think they're going to be able to relate to the girl in here, who's kind of wild and the boy makes voices so I think there will be some things in there that they'll be able to relate to in there

Greg: Right. Because the thing is, with like My Father's Dragon, I didn't really pick it for any reason except that I read it and liked it and I knew it really well...

Emily: And that's okay. I mean, I've done, you'll see in January, I um. I bring in a book that's totally about me that I wrote, it's a picture book, and I say, when I have them write in January, I say you have to write with your heart. And this you'll see... my heart writing, and this you'll see, this is my life - I'll start to make more connections with kids... and it's just this picture book and it's about my life (there are some very personal, difficult topics in her story)

Greg: And do you think that by sharing they make a connection with you-

Emily: They make a connection with me

Greg: And then does that in turn make them connect with the writing because they've seen you do it?

Emily: Yah, I think that helps and I think what happens is... I think it depends... from the group, now some groups want to talk about what I wrote and some groups sit back and say, 'oh my gosh!' and so some groups just really went off on that tangent with how they relate to the book and other kids are more closed-mouth and will go write about it... something that's happened-

Greg: Do you ask them to write a response or just write their own?

Emily: No, we talk about it, and say now you need to write with your heart- really need to do this with your heart... but it works really, really well. It's really hard, you know it's really hard for me to do, but it's worth it, every minute of it. (Co-planning, 12/7/04)

154

The conversation turns to how some kids have more difficult experiences, related to poverty and life circumstances to write about and share, while others do not.

> **Emily**: Yah! And that's fine because those kids can relate to all the other things in the room, all the ways the middle class ways that I teach...

> **Greg**: And the other kids... will have a more positive connection with those other kids once they've heard those stories?

> **Emily**: I think they understand more. I think they look at them and understand. I don't know if they think, 'it's okay that you don't act right', but I think there's more of an understanding.

> **Greg**: Really? And they tolerate it more?

> **Emily**: I think that they understand that not everyone is lucky. But those kids will want me to read it right away, because teachers don't really share that kind of stuff... (Co-planning, 12/7/04)

The exchange that occurs between Greg and Emily is powerful. Emily is explicit about her pedagogy. She must share her rationale for selecting texts and making connections with students in order to mentor Greg. These type of exchanges offer the researcher unique insight into Emily's decision making process and thoughts on pedagogy. Emily takes her mentoring role seriously, equally committed to the learning and nurturing of her students, and the preparation of future teachers in urban elementary schools. If the researcher had asked the same question, it is not guaranteed that Emily would have responded in the same way. The particular context allows for a rich, in-depth look at how Emily is maintaining her craft given the political climate.

The conversation began with Greg asking Emily how she selects texts for Book Club and developed into a much deeper discussion of how to relate to children through literature. Emily chooses books that her children can identify with either the topics or characters, and uses this to encourage and support their writing. She also shares her own

writing and how her life has had difficult points, which creates space for conversations with students who have also had difficult experiences. To Emily, this is a natural approach to teaching literacy. She is doing what Apthorp et al. (2001) found exemplary teachers do. They state that teachers in large, urban districts, "designed instruction so that students could bring their personal experiences to the classroom and didn't shy away from sensitive or uncomfortable issues that sometimes arose as a result" (p. 13). In fact, Emily initiates and encourages difficult conversations in a safe space through literature, her own writing, and her students' writing. This is also an instance when Emily accesses sociocultural theory to guide her practice. She considers the experiences of her students and uses this to make decisions for selecting literature, knowing that the literature will be a focal point for discussions. Emily recognizes the importance of knowing her children well in order to select appropriate literature.

At different points in the semester Emily comments on not willing to give up Book Club. She views it as an opportunity for children to not only interact with quality full length narratives, but to make connections with both the text and Emily, and to improve their writing. Through whole group discussions as well as Book Club groups, Emily's students are engaged in the type of thoughtful, literate conversations that increase understanding and challenge students to make meaningful connections (Allington, 2001; Apthorp et al, 2001). Emily believes that this is something that could not be achieved with the Houghton Mifflin literacy program.

Final Days: Mystery Unit and Fairy Tale Ball

Emily enjoys and believes in teaching thematically, so the first semester revolves around two units: (1) mysteries and (2) fairy tales, tall tales and folktales. Emily begins

each year with the mystery unit because the students typically become excited about the books she selects for Book Club. It is also an effective way to engage students in writing, by exciting them with quality texts and having them write their own mysteries. The second unit, fairy tales, tall tales and folktales, is required for the second quarter by the district curriculum guide. At the end of each unit, Emily organizes a special day when students engage in a variety of literacy activities that reinforce what they have learned in a creative, exciting, and memorable way. At the close of the mystery unit, Emily creates a murder scene in the classroom and students become detectives. For the fairy tale, folk tale and tall tale unit, Emily organizes a fairy tale ball which lasts the entire morning and includes a range of centers, dancing, and fine dining.

Mystery Walk

On October 1st, I ducked under criss-cross "caution-crime scene" taped on the door to enter a darkened classroom. Emily is dressed in a tan trench coat and Sherlock Holmes type hat. The lights are turned out and the shades half-drawn as students work silently at their desks. In a very serious tone, Emily tells her students, "There's been a crime". Their interest is piqued and the excitement begins to grow as she gives each student a packet of papers. Emily reads the directions aloud, interrupted once as a student yells out, "There's clues on the carpet!" referring to the "crime scene". On the floor at the "crime scene" are several gold jewelry pieces, an empty two liter bottle of Coke, two piles of dirt with foot prints, a chalk outline of a body, and a note which reads:

"Meet me at 11:00 p.m. at Westside Elementary. You need to bring all of your

gold or I will reveal your secret to the world.

From,

You know who.

Students begin to work at their seats as Emily brings one group at a time to examine the crime scene and take notes on the clues. Another group is guided out of the room to start meeting suspects in the hall. Once all the students have visited the crime scene, completed the worksheet and visited the suspects, they return to class for a discussion. During the 100 minute activity, students have had to read, write, discuss, predict, and rationalize. They used words and phrases Emily taught them during the mystery unit such as evidence, suspects, guilty, motive, innocent, committed the crime, detective, and clues. Throughout their discussion and debates as to who committed the crime, the students are checking their notes to either support or refute classmates' hypotheses. From this discussion, Emily is able to emphasize the importance of clues and discusses how many students omitted clues in their mystery stories. Several children say, "Ooh!" and a few laugh and nod. They are given time to amend their writing later in the week. The following week the students have completed their mysteries and share with their classmates during "author's chair"[33].

It is now 11:00 a.m. and the crime has been solved. As Emily prepares the students for recess they continue to ask if the crime was real. One student, who is sure this was real, suggests that they contact the police before the suspect flees, now that they

---

[33] Authors chair is an opportunity for children to share their finished writing with their classmates. The author sits in a chair and reads their work while classmates listen. Classmates then ask questions and share comments about the writing. For a more detailed description see http://olc.spsd.sk.ca/DE/PD/instr/strats/author/

know who committed the crime. Emily reassures them that once they return from recess they will write a letter to the police explaining the motive and criminal as well as what should happen to them. It probably helps that the glass door near their classroom is cracked this morning so several students believe this is how the suspect tried to get into the building.

Fairy Tale Ball

Today is January 20, 2005 and this is the final day of the fairy tale, tall tale, and folk tale unit required by the district curriculum guide. Emily stayed late last night to transform the library into a formal dining room. The tables are assembled into a long row, covered with pink paper and full place settings with plates, cups, forks, and napkins. The lights are out and there are pink candles lit and placed along the center of the table where the children are sitting. Emily is dressed as a witch with a black hat and cape. Like Emily, several students have dressed up for the ball. Many girls are wearing fancy princess dresses and some are even in special shoes with their hair done. Most of the girls are wearing heart headbands that Emily gave them. Three boys are dressed as Pecos Bill and two are wearing knight costumes. One is dressed as Paul Bunyan, carrying an ax and a stuffed blue dog made to look like Babe the Ox. The children listen as Emily explains the centers for this morning. She occasionally refers to a packet that goes along with each activity while the students read along.

There are five additional adults in the room. Emily's mother and step-father were called at the last minute to help. The school counselor as well as a student's mom and his aunt have volunteered to help with the ball. Emily has designed four centers which

include bingo and Reader's Theatre in the library, a math center with graphing and measurement of a giant in the hall, and a scavenger hunt through the halls of the school.

Bingo

Emily's mom is leading this activity, calling out fairy tale titles, characters and types of characters (i.e. prince, giant, king, and witch). Each child has a traditional bingo board with a free space in the middle. When someone wins they are allowed to take a lollipop from a giant canister. Every student wins at least one lollipop before moving to the next center.

Scavenger Hunt

The school counselor is leading the scavenger hunt. Fortunately she knows the students by name and since this activity requires time in the halls, following directions to find the next fairy tale posted in the halls, and a great deal of movement it's helpful to have someone familiar with the children. Emily has written extensive directions, which each child must read to progress to the next clue. She has copied the covers of the stories, which serve as the clues, and the students must write down the title as well as whether it is a tall tale, fairy tale, or folk tale.

Measure/estimate the giant and graphing:

In the hall is a large cut out poster of a giant that the kids are using to estimate parts of his body and record in their packet. They estimate then measure various parts with a soft measuring tape. Emily's step-father is helping with this center. The students also choose their favorite tale and put a cut out bear in the space to create a graph titled, "Our Class Graph of Favorite Fairy Tale, Tall Tale or Folk Tale". The graph includes Paul Bunyan,

Rough Faced Girl, Cinderella, Tale of Rabbit and Coyote, Three Billy Goats Gruff, Pecos Bill and the Gingerbread Man.

Reader's Theatre: "Little Late Riding Hood"

One student's aunt and mother have come to help. His aunt begins guiding the students in this center once Emily moves to another part of the room. Emily commented earlier that the student's mom does not speak English, which is why his aunt has accompanied her. His mom is busy preparing the food during the centers time. Unfortunately the paraprofessional arrives halfway through center time and the student's aunt moves away from the center to sit in a chair and watch. It was nice to see parents involved, which Emily also values.

10:20 Dancing

Emily has assembled a CD player and a record player on the back table. Some of the students are curious about the record player and I explain that it is similar to a CD player and show them how the needle plays the record. They are absolutely fascinated-particularly the aspiring DJ's! Emily is encouraging all the students to dance and most of them are anxious to participate. She plays music for "the cha-cha slide", which is similar to the electric slide with someone rapping what to do (move front, move back, left foot, right foot, turn it out...). The second song is the Macarena, which many students seem to already know. The next song is the Virginia Reel, which takes some time to explain. It is a type of square dancing, which some of the kids said they hoped it wasn't as soon as the music started. However, it took little time for them to start dancing and enjoying themselves. The final song is the Village People's YMCA which nearly all the kids seem to know, or quickly learn.

Once the music and dancing are done, the kids sit down to eat. They made pizzas the day before, which Emily and the counselor pass out. There are also cookies, sweet treats, Jell-O cups and soda. Two students have put on a Nelly CD and another student brought a JoJo CD called "Fairy Tales"[34]. Emily lets them play their music and the majority of the kids are singing along.

Partner read with Kindergarten Class

Each Wednesday, Emily's students go next door to partner read with the Kindergarten class. Her students use their Guided Reading books that they have practiced reading that week, to share with the Kindergarten students. The Kindergarten teacher and Emily pair the students appropriately and will change partners if it seems necessary so both students can feel successful and enjoy the time together. Emily believes this is a great way for her students to practice reading to younger children and learn how to "be the teacher" (Emily, informal interview, 2/16/05). She helps her own students by selecting literature that the younger children would enjoy and instructs them in how to share the pictures and get the younger children interested in the text.

Countries and winter holiday research reports

During the third week in November, Emily has her students begin researching a country and how the people celebrate the winter holidays. Each pair of students has selected one of the following countries:

---

[34] JoJo (2004). Fairy Tales Album. Producer Vincent Herbert, Tre' Black, Blackground Records.

- Italy
- Poland
- Iceland
- Brazil
- Norway

- Liberia
- France
- Hawaii
- Mexico
- Germany

- Korea
- Hungary
- Finland

Students work in pairs and for the first time this year and are able to choose the order of the centers they work in. Each student is responsible for their partner and their own work. They receive a rubric on the first day and spend the next three weeks completing their projects. The centers are:

1. Computer: Using an encyclopedia program, they look up information about their country. They must also find the map for their country and print this to add to their report

2. Make a cover page: This must include their name, the name of the country and an illustration representative of their country

3. Visit the school library and find an informational book about their country (the library is across the hall and Greg is there to help students find an appropriate book)

4. Read an article about their country and answer a set of questions

5. Read their library book about their country

6. Listening center: Make a little book that features various countries and how the citizens celebrate the winter holidays

On November 23, I sat at the table where students were designing a cover for their report. Emily is circulating the room, helping as needed. One student studying Iceland

has drawn a picture of an iceberg with a penguin on the cover. When Emily comes by, he wants her to look at his work and says:

Student: Look! I drew a penguin.

Emily: Do they have penguins?

(S shrugs his shoulders and smiles)

Emily: Well, you better check. Is it cold?

Student: Yeah. That's why I drew a glacier!

Emily: Okay, but you better check (referring to the penguin)

Emily moves around the table to look at the covers for the students who are studying Hawaii.

Student: It's hot (while she colors a sun)

Emily: How do you know?

Student: Because I read about it. And there's not that much clouds in Hawaii

(Field notes, 11/23/04)

Emily then looks at the cover of the student researching Korea. The child is uncertain of what to draw so Emily suggests that she check her library book and read more about Korea before designing her cover illustration. The student goes to her desk and returns with her book about Korea. She spends some time flipping through pages, then settles on a page with a picture of a fence and people and tries to replicate this on her cover. While sitting at this table, I can hear snippets of conversations, such as:

Student 3: Do you know where the encyclopedia is?

Student 1: Over there

**Student 3**: Okay, I'll go check it out. (Field notes, 11/23/04)

Students at this table are referring to the encyclopedia and their library books to accurately portray their country with the cover illustration rather than relying on Emily as the only source of information. Several students are helping each other with spelling and discussing the different characteristics of their countries. At no point does Emily tell students to work since they are motivated and engaged and visibly disappointed when it is time to stop working.

Once students complete all of the centers, Emily makes time to model how to write their information into paragraphs for a final report. They will all have the same beginning and ending for their report, but the main sections will vary depending on the students' information. The final reports will be on display at the Parent Night function in December. At that time, students are experts presenting information about their countries to the visitors.

The previous examples of how Emily incorporates centers, Book Club, thematic units, partner reading with the Kindergarten class, and research reports can occur because she is able to hybridize her practice to address mandates. Her students score well on assessments, thus validating her literacy practice and ensuring the support of her principal. After fourteen years of teaching, she has the experience and background knowledge necessary to navigate the school culture, even as a Reading First school, and continue to keep her students engaged and improving as readers and writers. Through the aforementioned practices she is able to teach particular skills and strategies listed in the curriculum guides and found on standardized tests. Her negotiation and resistance require a great deal of time and energy for careful planning and implementation, made evident throughout this research.

After nine classroom observations, for a total of 17.5 hours it was evident that Book Club and thematic units dominated over each of the other requirements. It is important to note that the 105 minutes for assessment occurred on one day as Emily administered the DIBELS assessment to her students, individually in the library, while Greg taught centers in the classroom (Field notes, 9/17/04). The least amount of time was spent on Houghton Mifflin and Reading First which are required by the district, along with the curriculum guide. During co-planning sessions (9/7/04, 11/30/04, 12/7/04), Emily commented on the utility of the curriculum guides and was willing to refer to them periodically to shape her planning and instruction. By the second quarter she was able to shape her thematic unit around the requirements of the curriculum guide, making the curriculum guide more attractive and manageable. Figure 4 shows the total minutes for each literacy requirement as well as Emily's own literacy practices[35].

Figure 4: Emily's literacy instruction in minutes during classroom observations
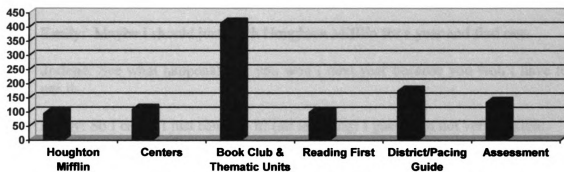
Final comments about Houghton Mifflin and Reading First

During a co-planning session in December, I ask Emily for some final thoughts about Houghton Mifflin and Reading First given her comments at the beginning of the

---

[35] For a detailed table showing each observation day and minutes per activity, see Appendix C.

year about using Houghton Mifflin more this year than last year. This is the end of the first semester of the second year. She shared a month ago that the school will most likely make AYP this year, which means they will keep the materials, but no longer need to follow the Reading First mandates. I ask Emily about the rigidity of the Reading First program and the use of the materials, to which she replied:

> **Emily**: I think they're just worried that you're using it and that I think they do want you to do certain skills and certain strategies, but I don't, like I don't think they're gonna have a problem with you teaching in a different way. I think they want you to teach certain skills- I think it's because I have a good principal, that it doesn't feel that rigid to me. They've been really flexible about it- about how I teach. And Linda tried to be- she tried to be 'you should be doing that all the time', but I said 'no, I'm not doing it- I'm doing this. Talk to Barbara.' So for me it hasn't been real rigid, but I've used more of it than I ever have. I'm really using the small books all the time which I did last year too. I try to do more in centers, I try to do more vocabulary from it and I try to read the stories on Friday so I try to do more of it. I don't think it's bad. I just don't want to do it every day. I don't think it's bad- and I don't want to do a bunch of workbook pages because to me that's me giving them knowledge, that's me figuring it out for them. I don't know, but maybe if we did they could do more independent work... I don't know (we all laugh). NO! I'm serious- it's hard! Don't you think it's hard?
>
> **Jodene**: Well, just by giving them worksheets, they're doing it independently
>
> **Emily**: Maybe I should just teach Houghton Mifflin for a year and find out-
>
> **Jodene**: See what happens! But you won't next year because you won't have to use it-
>
> **Emily**: So I can't! I just can't do it! (all laughing) I guess I'm not very flexible. (Co-planning, 12/14/04)

Ironically, Emily's pedagogy is remarkably flexible. Throughout the semester she demonstrated her knowledge of elementary literacy, attention to students' literacy development, and remarkable modeling for her intern in terms of planning and instructing with Reading First, Houghton Mifflin and the district curriculum guides. She has managed to balance these priorities and requirements through hybridization and

innovative instruction. Emily continually resists certain requirements, takes "snippets" of what seems reasonable, and keeps her students' learning as the focal point in literacy planning and instruction.

Chapter 7

CONCLUSIONS AND IMPLICATIONS

Tests don't improve student learning, teachers do. A curriculum alone doesn't improve student learning. But teacher-guided student interactions with the curriculum and teacher selections of elements for discussion, expansion, and emphasis do. High standards alone don't improve student learning. But teachers who communicate high expectations by providing intellectually challenging learning activities and materials do. (Apthorp, Bodrova, Dean, & Florian, 2001)

The guiding question for this research developed two years ago from my curiosity as to how Emily was managing district curriculum guides, test preparation for district, state, and national exams, a required basal literacy program, and her own best practices. I learned of Emily's innovative teaching through a former intern's emails and conversations with seniors completing their literacy field placement in her room. As a former third grade teacher in California in urban schools similar to Westside Elementary and a former literacy coach in the district, I wanted to learn more about her pedagogy. After six months of co-planning sessions, observations of literacy instruction, and conversations, I realized that Emily's practice was far more complex than I could have imagined in August, 2004. While reading through pages of transcription, it became apparent that multiple theories, such as collaboration and power/empowerment, needed to be explored while theories I assumed to explain her practice from the beginning, became irrelevant. The findings from this research add to current research about what happens when policy meets practice, as well as possible types of collaboration. It exposes the challenges faced by a third grade teacher in an urban school district who is negotiating

and resisting current policies at the district, state, and national level. As I conclude this study, I believe Emily's practice has a great deal to both challenge and add to our knowledge of teacher education programs, curriculum development, and education policy in regard to elementary literacy.

Cohen and Ball (1990b) state:

New policies can only reach the practice that they seek to correct by way of the teachers who have fashioned the practices that want correction. Teachers are at once the agents who cause the instructional problems that state and federal policies of this sort seek to correct and the agents for their correction. (p. 336)

Emily does not completely dismiss the mandates, nor does she see her literacy instruction as problematic. She acknowledges the constraints created by these various policies, but does not allow these to corrupt her practice and what she knows is best for her students. Instead she hybridizes her own best practices with the useful materials and ideas from Reading First, the Houghton Mifflin basal reading program, and the district curriculum guide. She is selective, extremely thoughtful, and intentional. To describe her practice as resistant to policy would belittle the energy, thought, and time she invests in planning and instruction. To describe Emily as needing more professional development to understand the intentions of the policy, similar to Cohen's (1990) suggestion with Mrs. Oublier, would also degrade Emily's practice. She understands the intent of the policies, but chooses what is appropriate for her students based on her professional experiences and knowledge and familiarity with her students.

Emily manifests St. John, Manset, Chung and Worthington's (2001) warning that, "Policy makers and educators should be more skeptical about the claims made by

researcher/reforms… while the new wave of research-based reading reforms holds promise, it is far from a panacea for educators" (p. 23). Emily exercises her power to make this a reality in her classroom. She shares her skepticism about the core curriculum based on genuine attempts to use the required materials which yielded dismal results. The previous year she used the English Language Learning materials in the Houghton Mifflin reading series and found little success. Eventually she returned to her own practices that were successful in the past. She tries to get students excited about the anthologies and worksheets, only to find that students produce more meaningful text when the activities are more authentic, such as letter writing. Emily is skeptical of Reading First and Houghton Mifflin and her practice may look resistant on the surface, rather than a combination of resistance, hybridization, and negotiation.

Based on my findings of Emily's complex literacy pedagogy I believe this research offers valuable insights for curriculum developers, education policy makers, teachers and principals, and those involved in the development and reshaping of teacher education programs. Whenever possible, Emily and the peripheral participants' words were included to convey their thoughts and emotions rather than being filtered through my interpretations. This made it possible to learn more about the principled rationale behind Emily's decision making about curriculum and practice for her particular students under the current circumstances.

Implications for Theory and Practice

Curriculum Developers

In discussing a peer coaching program instituted by a school board, Hargreaves (1994) suggests it was, "Excellent in its rationale and intent perhaps, this program was

perceived very differently at the level of practice than it appeared in its ideal form" (p. 205). His analysis sums up the continual mismatch between intended policy and unintended consequences as they occur in public schools. To explain this phenomenon, Hargreaves states, "Teachers don't merely deliver the curriculum. They develop, define it and reinterpret it too. It is what teachers think, what teachers believe and what teachers do at the level of the classroom that ultimately shapes the kind of learning that young people get" (p. ix). The developers of prepackaged curriculum can not possibly image all the considerations teachers must entertain when planning literacy instruction. Yet, Phillippi (1998) states that, "Even today most school districts tend to rely on commercial reading materials to maintain public confidence in the reading programs because these materials appear to assure the public that district standards are high and that the methods used are efficient and effective" (p. 21). Similarly, Shannon (1989) states, "Walk into any American elementary classroom during a reading lesson, and there is a ninety percent chance that you will observe a teacher and students working with commercially prepared materials" (p. xiii). He explains how reading instruction has remained fairly constant over the past sixty years, including commercially produced materials. He asserts that the lesson contents have slightly changed over the years, "but the basic structure of the materials and the lesson which result from them have changed little" (p. xiv). In fact, the rationale for the format of basal reading materials comes from the first two decades of the twentieth century. Reading standardization was essentially complete by 1960. Certainly, prepackaged curriculum has improved over time by including more culturally relevant text to represent the increasing diversity among school aged children. This is a significant improvement over basal material that has been found to be racist, sexist, and age-biased

(Shannon, 1989). However, if the materials are not a valuable component of the teacher's literacy instruction, the content becomes irrelevant.

In Emily's room, the materials for the third grade Houghton Mifflin basal program fill a large bookshelf with teacher guides, leveled books, transparencies, Integrated Theme tests, a resource package with reproducible pages, posters, and handbooks ranging from classroom management to English Language Learners. There are even specific guides for how to teach skills, outlined as Day 1, Day 2, et cetera for teachers who want extra guidance. A class set of three large anthologies fill another shelf. Shannon (1989) describes the typical materials in basal reading series: "graded anthologies, guidebooks, and workbooks pioneered sixty years ago and their more recent components- graded worksheets, charts, games, puppets, computers, and floppy disks produced by publishing companies in seemingly endless supply" (p. xiv). All of these materials are often difficult for teachers and students to keep track of and use. As a result, "teachers become a support system for the textbook rather than the other way around" (p. xiv).

Fortunately Emily makes thoughtful decisions as to which materials she will include in her literacy block. Three or four copies of the anthology may be used at the listening center during center time and leveled books are typically used during Guided Reading time. However, this is the extent of Houghton Mifflin's presence in the classroom. Emily is not resisting for the sake of resisting- rather she has used some of the other materials and is familiar with the teacher editions. She simply finds the materials boring or less effective than her own strategies and materials. During a co-planning session, she discusses the format of the teacher edition in how to use the anthology and

workbook, stating, "Some of it's just boring. It would get boring because you have to read the same thing over and over again. So, that would get boring. But I think it's a lot of workbook..." (Emily, co-planning, 12/14/04). She has found other ways to teach the same skills and strategies through more engaging formats such as Book Club and centers. She tried to use the materials for English Language Learners the previous years and found them to be less effective than her own strategies. The materials simply do not meet her guidelines of effective materials and instruction.

Toward the end of the study, I asked Emily if Houghton Mifflin felt rigid and if she ever feels constrained in what she is supposed to teach as a Reading First school. She replied:

> So for me it hasn't been real rigid, but I've used more of it than I ever have. I'm really using the small books all the time which I did last year too. I try to do more in centers, I try to do more vocabulary from it and I try to read the stories on Friday so I try to do more of it. I don't think it's bad. I just don't want to do it every day. I don't think it's bad- and I don't want to do a bunch of workbook pages because to me that's me giving them knowledge, that's me figuring it out for them. I don't know, but maybe if we did they could do more independent work... I don't know (we all laugh). NO! I'm serious- it's hard! Don't you think it's hard? (Emily, co-planning, 12/14/04)

Again, Emily is not dismissing Houghton Mifflin and Reading First curriculum entirely. She shares how hard it is to make the best decisions for her students using the materials. Her experiences and knowledge of teaching tell her that workbook pages and teacher

editions do not have the answers for helping her students to become better readers and writers. Therefore, Emily finds alternative ways to support her students.

NCLB has attempted to steer elementary literacy practice by requiring a basal reading program. In reality the majority of the materials sit on a shelf gathering dust. Funding that could have been used to purchase materials chosen by teachers have gone to waste. This year Emily acknowledges that she probably wouldn't use the Houghton Mifflin materials and it would have been a waste of money (Emily, co-planning, 9/07/04). When Maggie tried to order and use the Houghton Mifflin workbooks the previous year, the district took too long and the teachers never received them. Both Maggie and Emily have tried to order or use the materials in the past, but these examples show how discouragement may play an important role in why and how teachers eventually resist policy and mandated practices. Anagnostopoulos and Rutledge (1994) argue that, "Teachers can both resist and accommodate policy as they draw and re-draw boundaries between mandated practices and what they consider the "real" curriculum" (p. 43). Filling shelves with binders, teacher guides, and materials does not guarantee use. Perhaps if teachers were more involved in the decision making process, districts could save money or shift funds to more useful materials and resources that would be employed. After more than a century of basal reading programs, perhaps it's time to question what teachers are actually doing with the materials and how they might have a stronger voice in curriculum development to best meet their needs as well as their students' strengths, interests, and needs.

Given Emily's knowledge of her children's skills and interests and her own familiarity with the basal program, she rarely uses materials from the resource package.

When time is limited, she eliminates activities and readings from the anthology. The only materials she uses consistently and has discussed positively on multiple occasions are the leveled books for her Guided Reading groups. Emily's practice is more similar to teachers during the first few decades of the twentieth century, than teachers from the past eighty years.

When basal readers were widely distributed and in use from the beginning of the twentieth century to the 1920's, teachers were using the materials according to their own ideas (Shannon, 1989). In order to gain more control over teachers, commercial publishers began using reading experts to develop "scientifically based" teacher guidebooks. This trend has continued into the twenty-first century. In the first few pages of the Houghton Mifflin teacher guidebooks are pictures and names of several well-known researchers in elementary reading. Perhaps this is to convince the educator that these experts have invested a great deal of thought and care into developing an ideal basal program. This may be the case, but each group of children and teachers is different with a variety of needs and background knowledge. It is not surprising that during a co-planning session, Greg mentioned how he might find the teacher guides useful for a novice teacher. This does not apply to Emily with her thirteen years of experience. In fact, as I was looking through the materials Emily commented that the core curriculum would be, "good for a beginning teacher or someone who doesn't want to plan or think" (Field notes, 2/5/05).

In Phillippi's (1998) study, teachers were expected to teach in an opposite way to Reading First. They were *discouraged* from using the basal program and materials in order to focus on a constructivist approach. One teacher describes herself as, "clinging to

the textbook", but this does not guarantee effective instruction. Emily makes this point throughout the study. The same teacher in Phillippi's study continues, "Anyone can come in off the street and read page twenty-five" (p. 15), which is precisely Emily's argument. Teaching is more than following a basal focused literacy program. In Emily's opinion, powerful teaching requires an in-depth knowledge of her students' strengths, interests, and needs as well as appropriate materials to tap into their background knowledge and improve their reading and writing. A generic basal program such as Houghton Mifflin can not adequately provide what she and her students need.

Emily invests a great deal of time and thought into her literacy planning and instruction, making honest efforts to include the Houghton Mifflin materials but not at the expense of her "unofficial" curriculum. Toward the end of the study, she commented on wanting to perhaps use the anthology more like Book Club next year, knowing that they may not be a Reading First school if their test scores improve. Emily, like many teachers discussed by other researchers (Cohen, 1990; Cohen & Ball, 1990b; Hargreaves, 1994; Spillane & Jennings, 1997) brings a wealth of knowledge, experiences, and beliefs to her practice. Curriculum developers must recognize that teachers like Emily may not embrace the program or use the materials as intended. It is also important for curriculum developers to consider ways to provide materials that can be adapted and absorbed into existing practices in unique contexts (Tyack & Cuban, 1995). By learning more about how a teacher such as Emily uses the prepackaged curriculum to best meet the needs and interests of her diverse elementary students, curriculum developers can be more aware of the dilemmas and challenges teachers encounter when attempting to teach the curriculum as intended by teacher editions, as well as what they may choose to keep or discard.

Finally, prepackaged literacy curriculum, such as the Houghton Mifflin series used at Westside Elementary, is a billion dollar business and has become part of the "solution" to low test scores. As Kohn (2000) argues, "Too much is invested by now; too many powerful interest groups are backing high-stakes testing for us to assume it will simply fall of its own weight" (p. 51). Shannon (1989) echoes Kohn's statement, asserting that basal reading materials are, "produced to make the largest possible profit for their publisher" (p. 53), which tends to be fairly lucrative and conservative. Given this reality, it is critical to consider how teachers can work within a context dominated by basal programs, as a result of *NCLB* as well as publishers attempting to control the curriculum. Research such as this is encouraging because it is a powerful example of one teacher resisting a basal program forced on her practice. Whether or not this is happening in Emily's colleagues' rooms, within the district, or across the country can not be certain. However, these findings offer some explanation for the unintended outcomes of when policy meets practice via basal reading programs. Teachers such as Emily are not robots. Emily brings experiences, knowledge, commitment, and values to her literacy planning and instruction which results in a unique pedagogy. Hopefully more examples such as this will demonstrate the power teachers have to control elements of their profession for the well-being of their students and themselves.

Educational Policy makers

Seeing teachers as learners would bring into policy-design conversations that things we know about learners- that they respond to learning opportunities in different ways; that they bring to their learning opportunities in different ways; that they bring to their learning dispositions, experiences, and knowledge that

influence how and what they learn; and that their learning takes time and hard work. (Spillane & Jennings, 1997, p. 477)

When policy meets practice, there is little certainty that what policy makers envisioned actually occurs in the classroom, as reflected in Emily's classroom. One example from Reading First is the required ninety minutes of uninterrupted reading. Emily recognizes that this is unrealistic and hardly conducive to both her own teaching and her students' learning. These types of demands practically push teachers to find alternatives to teaching exclusively what is required. Hybridization is a logical reaction. Cohen (1990) states, "It is relatively easy for policy makers to propose dramatic changes in teaching and learning, but teachers must enact those changes" (p. 327). Policy makers need to recognize and respect these multiple and varied expectations placed on teachers. In Emily's classroom, she is faced with mandates from Reading First, the district, a required basal reading program, and test preparation and administration. She is expected to raise test scores, use a new curriculum while concurrently being trained in how to use it, and follow both a teacher guide and curriculum guide. If Emily responded to all of these demands as they are intended by the policy makers, there would be little if any room for professionalism and decision making on her part. Therefore, she is essentially forced to be selective, negotiate, and hybridize her practice to keep the focus on her particular students and their specific needs and interests. This is not something policy makers consider.

Some policy has gone so far as to label reforms and materials as "teacher-proof", a concept originating in the 1950's and 1960's (Apple, 1983; Futrell, 1989). This is not only insulting, but unrealistic. Teachers possess a great deal of agency and power to

shape the new reform to their own conceptions of how it should appear in practice. Shannon (1989) believes this overwhelming reliance on a basal based approach to literacy instruction is degrading to teachers and has reduced school literacy to merely completing materials. Therefore, rather than criticizing teachers for "failing" to implement policy and curriculum as planned by others, it is far more productive to learn how teachers negotiate reform to meet their own concepts of sound pedagogy and the needs and interests of their unique group of students. Certainly a growing body of literature addresses teacher and student learning with respect to policy, but this research is particularly timely given the current rigid and punishing political climate of high-stakes testing, curriculum guides, and prepackaged curriculum.

Spillane and Jennings (1997) suggest that, "Thinking about teachers as learners from policy rather than implementers or doers of policy makers' proposals suggests some new issues for policy makers to consider in designing policy" (p. 478). Many teachers are overwhelmed with the various constraints and dilemma management of daily life in the classroom (Britzman, 2003). Emily is a wonderful example of a passionate teacher trying to "be in compliance" by learning about and following mandates, such as attending weekly grade level meetings with the literacy coach, administering tests, and occasionally including the core curriculum. However, "To focus on formal policy alone is to misrepresent all that teachers are responding to and grappling with as they work to improve their practice" (Coburn, 2001, p. 162). Policy makers need to recognize all that teachers must consider in their daily practice and begin to see them as learners with voices and valuable ideas. After all, teachers are ultimately responsible for their students' learning and are the ones held accountable and most severely blamed when students do

not score well on tests. The insights policy makers could gain through respectful conversations with educators is immense. If conversation is not an option, research such as this that includes the voices of teachers, principals, and interns is extremely valuable. Otherwise, educators' ideas and words continue to be filtered through researchers and ignored by policy makers.

Cohen and Ball (1990) contend that "Policy makers believe that they can steer school practice and change school outcomes… Yet educational researchers report that state and federal policies have affected practice only weakly and inconsistently" (p. 233). Assuming that one-size-fits-all policy is the solution for low test scores ignores factors contributing to the context producing these scores. Collaboration continues to appear in reforms, assuming that if teachers have more time to work with each other and discuss their pedagogy that their practice and students' learning will improve. Policy makers fail to acknowledge the importance of the type of collaboration, whether it is producing a "contrived collegiality teacher culture" or a "collaborative teacher culture" (Hargreaves, 1994). Inserting a literacy coach, who is also the Reading First representative, and forcing weekly grade level meetings under the guise of collaboration has not been positive or productive at Westside Elementary. In fact, this requirement has produced tension among teachers and even silenced some. This aspect of the policy has certainly created outcomes, but mostly negative. People can not be forced to collaborate. This is counter to the definition of collaboration. Emily has faithfully attended weekly meetings for Reading First, but the outcomes have been less than positive or generative.

Coburn (2001) states, "Informal networks among teachers are largely unacknowledged by the policy world. Yet they have enormous potential to play an

influential role in teachers sense-making. It is their flexibility, their spontaneity, their voluntariness, and their situatedness that make informal groups such powerful and supportive contexts for teacher sensemaking" (p. 163). On several occasions Maggie came into Emily's room to discuss their teaching and the politics surrounding Reading First and Houghton Mifflin (Co-planning, 9/7/04, 11/16/04). In the beginning of the school year their conversations could be construed as co-resistance (Co-planning, 9/7/04). Could this conversation have taken place with Linda in the room? Perhaps, but given the context and history of interactions between the three educators, it's unlikely. Perhaps policy makers need to learn more about the type of collaboration that is most productive and supportive for teachers and carve out time and space for these naturally occurring relationships within the policies. Based on the findings from this research, collaboration is influenced by factors such as the participants, the physical space, the time in the school year, and recent events. Based on my observations and interactions with Westside Elementary as a researcher and instructor working with the teachers, the type of collaboration can shift from a collaborative teacher culture to a contrived teacher culture, depending on multiple factors. Learning more about what actually happens in classrooms and across the school may seem irrelevant when creating idealized policy, but the outcomes will continue to reflect minimal change if these factors are ignored.

Stigler and Hiebert (1999) summarize the need for increased interaction between policy makers and teachers:

Teachers are caught in a persistent dilemma: Although they frequently receive advice and recommendations on how to change their teaching, and they know that some of these changes would probably benefit their students, they also lack the

learning opportunities needed to study the recommendations, decide which changes would be meaningful, and learn how to implement them. This leads teachers to devalue suggestions proposed by outsiders such as researchers or policy makers, because they fail to see them as relevant to their everyday classroom practice. And those who suggest the changes seldom get continuing feedback from teachers. (p. 155)

Perhaps teachers realize some of the recommendations could be tailored to fit their students' learning needs and strengths, but the advice lacks flexibility to fit the local knowledge and context. Therefore, rather than *requiring* an element of reform such as collaboration between educators, who often engage in meaningful and authentic collaborative projects and conversations with colleagues not outlined by policy, policy makers should consider collaboration between themselves and those having to translate policy into action in classrooms every day (Coburn, 2001). Finally, Cohen and Ball (1990b) suggest that significant pedagogical change may be possible through conversations between policy makers and teachers, "Yet creating such a conversation would be costly, time-consuming, and difficult for many teachers and policy makers. Teaching would thrive on such a rich and slow enterprise. But policymaking seems to thrive on schemes for swift change in instruction, swiftly adopted and often just as swiftly forgotten" (p. 337). Indeed, Emily anticipates an end to Reading First at her school. Her practice will unlikely look different next year, and hopefully the pressure and tension will subside. It is questionable whether or not an outsider would recognize that Westside Elementary was ever a Reading First school by observing Emily's classroom this year.

From this research, it is apparent that policy makers should consider educational change as a whole, recognizing the interrelationships between various parts of the context (Hargreaves, 1994). It would seem that a literacy reform, such as the one discussed by Phillippi (1998) in which the policy makers were within the same district, would promise more potential. However, she found that teachers still struggled to interpret the mandates, implement the new approach as intended by the policy, and contend with temporal and resource constraints. This strongly suggests that in order for policy shifts and new practices to be successful, policy makers both in-house and outside of the districts need to consider potential barriers faced by teachers as well as the background knowledge and attitudes of the teachers and principals. They need to consider the local and contextual factors that influence reform in the classroom as well as the more practical issues, such as time, curriculum, and control constraints. As previously mentioned, teachers are not robots. They bring experiences, knowledge, attitudes and values to their practice and policy is interpreted through these various lenses. It is fairly obvious that Emily brings a great deal of experience and knowledge to her practice and uses these as lenses to measure the usefulness or appropriateness of mandates and curriculum. She must contend with constraints that policy makers do not need to consider in an idealized policy. This forces her to make choices.

Roemer (1991) discusses similar conclusions. In her study of a collaborative effort between university faculty members and secondary English teachers to produce an assessment for writing, unintended consequences occurred despite specific language in their proposal. She states an intended consequence in the project as, "There will be nothing top down or hierarchical in the way the plans are designed or implemented" (p.

440). However, this was impossible since the project began as a state mandate, a district administrator was in charge, and teachers were forced to enact the assessment. Like Phillippi's study, the mandate appeared to be controlled by insiders, but there were still elements of power struggles and contrived collaboration yielding dismal results. This argument is discussed in more detail in the final section of this chapter, "Practicing Teachers and Principals".

Finally, Sarason (1990) suggests that policy makers must begin asking questions such as, "In what ways do our recommendations differ from those made by comparable groups twenty or even fifty years ago?" (p. 13) rather than assuming that what they are proposing is simply better than what has been happening in the past. Essentially, the mandates that Emily and her colleagues are negotiating and resisting look very similar, yet more stringent, to the reforms of the 1980's. The resemblance is somewhat disturbing since policy makers *should* know that the reform efforts of the 1980's yielded fairly dismal results. Perhaps they need to be asking why more testing, more technical control, less teacher voice and choice should yield different results the second time around. Sarason asks, "Why should similar diagnoses and actions today be more effective?" (p. 14). Amnesia is making the lives of teachers and students as constrained as twenty years ago, yet this does not seem to make a difference to policy makers.

In the end, it is teachers who must negotiate policies as they enter the classroom. In Emily's case, she selects curriculum and practices that are appropriate for her students. Her decisions are guided by experience, knowledge of her craft, and a view of herself as a public servant. She is the professional who knows her students and craft far better than any policy maker. She is not a maverick or in need of more professional development

(Cohen, 1990). Emily makes principled decisions about how to teach her children to read and write. When mandated practices and curriculum are conducive to her goals, she will employ them. Otherwise, Emily carefully chooses how to teach the necessary skills and strategies, typically through creative and well-crafted hybridized literacy practices.

Teacher Education Programs

Darling-Hammond (1990) states, "…teachers teach from what they know. If policy makers want to change teaching, they must pay attention to teacher knowledge. And if they are to attend to teacher knowledge, they must look beyond curriculum policies to those policies that control teacher education and certification…" (p. 346). In this study, Emily draws on thirteen years of teaching experience in elementary and middle schools in the same district. She also considers ideas and strategies learned through professional development. Emily emphasizes the importance of attitude and desire when she states:

> I learned so much by doing… by doing in the classroom and in talking with other
>
> teachers, 'what do you do', and MRA (Michigan Reading Association)… I love
>
> MRA, I've learned a lot from MRA, a lot. But it's not so much from the district. I
>
> did learn a lot about writing my first couple years from conferences… but you
>
> have to want to do it. If you don't want to do it, it's not going to matter (Emily,
>
> co-planning, 11/9/04).

She also draws upon theories from her teacher education program, stating, "Part of how I make these decisions is from my credential program that said good teachers use authentic literacy to teach, not prepackaged curriculum" (Emily, informal interview, 1/21/05). Emily's message to Greg is that she has learned a great deal from experience, but her

credential program and participation in outside organizations such as the state reading association and nearby university writing program also influence her literacy practice.

Emily has a wealth of knowledge and experiences to draw upon, but for the novice teacher, they may be teaching from their own experiences as students (Lortie, 1975) and more recent theories and concepts from their credentialing program. Many programs require students to spend time in classrooms as an important component of their methods courses as well as extended periods of time in an internship. Even with these experiences, pre-service teachers are accessing knowledge from their days as students and limited experiences in a few other teachers' classrooms. Their experiences vary in time and intensity, as well as quality. Given these variations, the way these individuals will interpret policy in their own classrooms is unpredictable. This begs the question, what role do teacher education programs play in preparing future teachers to make rational and principled decisions as educators in the current political context?

Fey and Sinith (1999) provide a model of "constructive interdependence" where pre-service teachers learn through discussion with one another and reaching agreements. They found that these social relations became sites of uncertainty and tension during collaboration as well as instances of resistance, similar to what was observed in this study. Their goal was to, "encourage college students to assume responsibility for developing knowledge that would empower them as teachers" (p. 102). This also provided an experience of having to work with colleagues to reach understandings and to push their own thinking about knowledge in math and literacy. Fey and Sinith's model of pedagogy prepares teachers for the type of conflict and resistance they may encounter as professionals. They cite Green (1994) who suggests that this type of "'disruption has to

187

do with consciousness and the awareness of possibility (p. 1)'. Such disruption leads to 'widening the spaces' in which we move, recognizing the 'inevitable tension between the desire to be and the forces that condition from within and without'" (p. 103). In this study, Emily's resistance was in response to outside forces and her desire to teach in a particular way. This conflict created new spaces and points of dissonance, such as during grade level meetings with Linda, which would not have existed if Emily was not working toward new possibilities under the constraining conditions.

Under the conditions at Westside Elementary, Greg may have served as a sounding board and a support. As he listened to and learned about Emily's resistance and negotiation, he also served as a partner in finding fault with elements of policy, such as the required grade level meetings (Co-planning, 12/14/04). Their co-resistance to the meetings may have been the most authentic collaboration occurring at Westside Elementary. Greg was learning more than how to plan and teach literacy. Novice teachers, such as Greg, must recognize their own ability to resist conditions, grapple with tension and uncertainty, and contend with conflict as a journey toward empowerment. Emily created a space for Greg to witness and participate in these types of contexts.

Fey and Sinith (1999) also explain how teacher education students often view their own education as what Freire (1995) describes as a "banking concept of education" in which "education thus becomes an act of depositing, in which the students are depositories and the teacher is the depositor" (p. 53). When the students were forced to engage in extensive inquiry in mathematics with peers, some resisted and felt that this was not preparing them to teach math or science. In response, the author developed a "concern sessions" time for students to voice their resistance. Sinith states, "Such sharing

is an essential step toward building a community, and, with the support of a community, negotiation and reflection about mathematics education become possible" (p. 106). When teacher education students have an opportunity to share their resistance, which occasionally occurred at Westside Elementary, they were moving toward community building. This was the type of outcome Emily desired- opportunities to share her thinking and feelings with others along with discussions of best practices. Often, during co-planning sessions, Greg fulfilled that role.

Fey discusses the use of collaboration in her course, which reflects more of a contrived collegiality since groups were permanent and organized to represent diversity of gender and ability, rather than ideas. She mentions discussions as sometimes being intense and confrontational. She appeared to be pleased with this context and states, "I was able to build a community that allowed space for resistance" (p. 107). For future teachers it is critical that they engage in groups and experience points of conflict and resistance since this is more likely to occur than an authentic collaborative culture. Yet it is just as important that students experience a collaborative context. She contends that this allowed students to find their voice. I would argue that this is equally possible in a more supportive collaborative context. Either way, teacher education programs should consider exposing students to various collaborative situations similar to the type they will face as practicing teachers. This will provide them with experiences to draw upon, knowledge of how to possibly resist and co-resist productively, and how to negotiate when necessary. More importantly, Fey and Sinith argue that resistance can be a catalyst for growth. Emily's resistance and mentoring forces her to think deeply about her literacy pedagogy and how she interacts with peers. It also influences how she approaches

professional development, outside resources, and her mentoring of Greg. Cochran-Smith (2001) encourages educators to teach against the grain, particularly given the current political climate, and Emily is a perfect example of this philosophy. Future teachers should experience this type of tension and conflict and what it means to resist so that they will be prepared to do this in their own classrooms and schools.

One could easily argue that Emily has fourteen years of experience and there exists a connection between years of experience and the ability to look critically at curriculum. This may be the case, however, I would argue that even as a novice teacher, Greg can begin to look critically at curriculum and policy and learn how to begin hybridizing literacy practice. I certainly would not expect Greg to do the same type of hybridizing his first year as a teacher that Emily does as a veteran teacher. However, he will be faced with the same requirements as Emily and to best meet the needs of his students he will need to consider this type of practice. Emily is providing the mentoring Greg needs to learn how to negotiate and resist. She encourages agency with comments such as, "If you're a good teacher, you can make anything work... you can make it work" (Emily, co-planning, 11/9/04).

Emily may be opposed to scripted basal programs and mandates, but she is very specific in the type of language she wants Greg to use. For example, during a co-planning session, she says to Greg, "Now I'll say, now look at the story and think about..." (Emily, co-planning, 11/9/04). Not only is she explaining the concept of a picture walk, she is also using the same words with Greg that she would use with her students. Her "scripting" or insistence on certain terms do not limit agency; rather she wants him to use the common terms that are found in teacher editions (i.e. comprehension, context clues,

fluency) and literacy related texts. Emily mentions a need for common language from one grade to the next for consistency so students will understand the most accurate and common terminology used in literacy. During the co-planning session, the following exchange takes place:

> **Emily:** You need to have the same language, and if you don't, that's hard, because people want to teach their own way and you kind of have to give that up.
>
> **Greg:** But I think part of that's a good thing. I think teaching your own way is a good thing, because I don't think I could teach. I need to teach my own way... I mean, me wandering around the room, I don't know...
>
> **Emily:** You're right, but we could use some of the same language and that's what they need to talk about. It doesn't necessarily mean you need to teach the same way, but we need to use the same language and do we need to be teaching writing? Yes! (Co-planning, 12/7/04)

Emily wants Greg and her students, to have literacy content knowledge including the specific discourse. She recognizes how important content knowledge is when resisting and creating hybridized literacy practices. She demonstrates this need for Greg by relying on various professional resources such as books and organizations. She also wants Greg to participate in professional development provided by the district to deepen his knowledge of elementary literacy. Teacher education programs have a responsibility in preparing students with the content knowledge, and if possible, providing mentors similar to Emily who model planning and instruction that is appropriate and most beneficial for her students, even under the demands of various mandates. It would be unrealistic to expect novices to teach like Emily. However, it is possible to support them with the academic preparation and mentoring to move in a similar direction.

In closing, Shannon (1989) cites Brophy (1982) who would agree that most teacher education programs want teachers to feel confident and "responsible for

establishing appropriate educational objectives for their students, preparing appropriate curriculum materials, conducting and evaluating the outcomes of instruction, and making whatever adjustments should prove necessary in these activities" (p. 84). Brophy goes on to state that because of the control by school boards, school administrators, and commercial publishers, teachers are no longer able to use these skills and approaches for literacy instruction. Fortunately Emily is dedicated to teaching the way she was taught in her teacher education program while resisting the type of deskilling that often occurs as described by Apple (1983). Greg is learning this philosophy as well as how to negotiate multiple requirements in a principled and rational way.

Practicing Teachers and Principals

Once mandates have been created by policy makers and curriculum developed by individuals outside of schools, they are then forced into classrooms by district administrators. It is the teachers and principals who are left with the overwhelming task of meshing policy with practice. Research strongly suggests when this top-down mandate process occurs the outcomes vary a great deal not only from one classroom to the next, but from the intended policy. As this research shows, the principal and teachers exercise their power in various ways to produce appropriate practice for their particular context. Whether or not the majority of teachers at Westside Elementary are employing the required basal literacy program as intended is not certain. However, given the findings from this research, it is apparent that the mandates are not implemented as intended by either the district or Reading First and that Emily's hybridized practice and resistance are supported by her principal.

Phillippi (1998) discusses the type of resistance that can occur when there are unequal power relations between the policy makers and the teachers and principals. The teachers in her study felt as though the policy was not open to dispute, rendering them powerless to make decisions about their own literacy practice. The policy makers believed that removing workbooks and basal texts would create room for teachers to develop appropriate literacy materials and resources. They also believed they were providing teachers with opportunities to "apply their intelligence, judgment, and experience to the ways in which they implemented the appropriate practices" (p. 29). However, they underestimated the amount of intellectual work required by teachers and failed to provide sufficient support. What the policy makers did not anticipate was teacher resistance to the way the mandates were implemented as well as the removal of their current literacy program. Some teachers felt the basal program was fine and viewed the new approach as another fad of "good practice" that would disappear after some time. Understanding the attitudes and experiences of teachers may have helped the new program to succeed, rather than requiring yet another top-down mandate for change.

Phillippi also makes the point that introducing a new type of literacy program as the latest best practice suggests that what the teachers were doing was not good enough. As a result, some teachers felt insecure about their pedagogy, wondering if they were "doing it right", while others "resisted learning... because 'powers that be' were telling them how to teach" (p. 20). The powers that be- the district policy makers- truly believed they were giving teachers the power to decide, but so much had already been decided by the time the mandates landed in the teachers' classrooms. Teachers eventually dismissed it since they believed the research for the mandate was done by people who did not know

their classrooms or the daily challenges of teaching. Emily's perspective is similar to the teachers in Phillippi's study. She discusses how Reading First and the Houghton Mifflin curriculum are not appropriate for her students. They do not provide the type of instruction or materials that she knows are effective for teaching reading and writing.

Phillippi states that, "The unexamined questions about who has the power to determine classroom practices created an undercurrent of power struggles" (p. 38). Perhaps the most disappointing finding in Phillippi's study was that teachers who may have favored the constructivist approach resisted the new practices because it was a requirement. In the end, the type of learning opportunities for students varied depending on how the teachers interpreted and implemented, or did not implement, the policy. If we assume that literacy policies are intended to improve student learning, then obviously teachers and principals need to have their voices heard. Phillippi's study, as well as this study, clearly show the influence and power teachers and principals have in determining how a policy looks in practice. By ignoring these key players, there is little guarantee that change will occur for the benefit of the students or the educators.

Futrell's (1989) review of four distinct waves of education reform in the 1980's suggests that little was learned from that time. Teachers and principals have been excluded from conversations about how to best meet the needs of students. Instead, policy makers and curriculum developers have assumed control of reform with little thought as to how these mandates will look in classrooms. Perhaps the best case scenario is a repeat of the 1980's. Perhaps educators can look forward to the second wave in which decision makers will recognize that top-down mandates are not the magic bullet for improving test scores and that silencing those with the difficult task of enacting their

orders will guarantee dismal results- not to mention unnecessary stress and frustration for those educators. A quote by a teacher, Irmgard Williams, in Holland's (1997) article discussing the Kentucky Education Reform Act suggests a fairly simple move in the right direction. She states, "You can have the mechanics, but if you don't have teachers with heart and a passion to teach, what do you have? From the top down, there ought to be something we do to show people we're proud of them. It might make better teachers if more recognition was given" (p. 268). This same veteran teacher appreciated the education reform act because it allowed her to diversify her instruction to meet her students' needs. Holland describes Williams as, "Like a talented artist, Williams knew that good teaching requires a continual refinement of the craft, an ability to adjust techniques as circumstances change" (p. 269).

Policy makers and curriculum developers need to assume that teachers are working hard, want the best for their students, and believe in their profession. Acknowledging the difficulties of teaching and recognizing what teachers and principals are already doing right would be a refreshing change. From a teacher immersed in reform and required by outsiders to change her pedagogy, Williams asks an extremely important question, "How can you tell another teacher how to teach?" (p. 271). Emily shows that telling others how to teach is neither helpful nor effective. She has been told how to teach by the state, the district, the literacy coach, and speakers in professional development sessions, yet in the end she is responsible for how and what her students learn. She knows her students best and ignoring the insights of teachers such as Emily is irresponsible of policy makers, curriculum developers, educational researchers, and others interested in improving literacy achievement.

In the concluding part of Shannon's (1989) book <u>Broken Promises</u> is a section titled "Working with and for Teachers." He contends that teachers have a great deal of power and by resisting reading programs they can defeat the current basal dominated literacy instruction seen in most elementary classrooms across the United States. He encourages teachers to discuss and consider the historical and philosophical foundations of reading programs in the context of their daily work experience. Research such as this is important for encouraging teachers to celebrate their practice. Emily was often surprised and validated by our discussions about her literacy planning and instruction. Greg also played an important role as a sounding board. As Emily needed to be specific about the rationale behind her practice she could hear her own words. Sharing her pedagogy with others is an important step in creating conversations that reveal the complexity of literacy instruction. To take this project one step further, as Shannon suggests, might be to have teachers such as Emily begin reflecting on their everyday practice with colleagues to challenge basal programs. I believe there are many teachers like Emily who know that prepackaged curriculum is not appropriate for their students and they are either resisting or want to resist. Teachers need to end their dependence on basal publishers and reading experts, similar to Emily, and regain control of their profession. This research offers a rich narrative of one teacher who has found ways to resist and negotiate for the good of her students. She is unafraid to push against mandates as well as people representing those mandates. Emily is an example of successful literacy instruction in a time of high-stakes testing, prepackaged curriculum, and curriculum guides. This research has a great deal to offer to practicing teachers and principals wanting to do the same.

Conclusion

Teachers must be at the heart of the solution. Not only are they the gatekeepers for all improvement efforts, they are also in the best position to acquire the knowledge that is needed. They are, after all, the only ones who can improve teaching. (Stigler & Hiebert, p. 174)

Hargreaves (1994) states, "People are always wanting teachers to change" (p. 5). This is often manifested in education as top-down policy, yet this approach has not been terribly successful. Darling-Hammond (1990) argues that, "One reason for the failure of any top-down curricular change efforts is that they fail to consider how the new ideas will lodge in the local policy context" (p. 344). Research suggests that teachers do not enact policy as it is prescribed by others (Bisplinghoff, 2002; Cohen, 1990; Luke, 2000) and, "Little is known about how teachers perceive instructional policies, how they interpret them, and how different kinds of policies influence teaching learning... for policy research has seldom investigated the effects of policy on the actual work of teaching and learning" (Cohen & Ball, 1990, p. 234). Therefore, rather than trying to imagine all the ways in which educators might enact policy into practice, it is most beneficial to use this ethnographic case study to consider how Emily made important decisions about her literacy instruction.

Spillane and Jennings (1997) suggest that a case-study approach to investigating teacher practice, "is well suited to in-depth analysis of complex issues like classroom teaching. In depth cases can highlight important questions for further investigation and provide insights that may be useful in other related contexts" (p. 451). Learning more about how Emily negotiates education policy and hybridizes literacy instruction between

policy mandates and her own best practices is invaluable for teacher education, educational policy, curriculum developers, and other teachers and principals. This is an attempt to reverse the typical approach of policy studies, or as Cohen and Ball (1990a) call, "work from the classroom outward" (p. 236) to understand one teacher's decision making process and views of imposed policy on her practice. Hargreaves (1994) also states, "We know much less about how teachers *feel* while they teach; and the emotions and desires which motivate and moderate their work" (p. 41). He continues, "There has been rather less focus on how teachers themselves talk about the emotional dimensions of their work" (p. 141).

Throughout this text I used Emily's and other participants' words whenever possible to describe, justify, and capture the essence of their thoughts and emotions rather than attempting to interpret for them. McDonald (1986) emphasizes the importance of including teachers in the discussion of policy meeting practice when he states, "... the teachers' voice can contribute to school policy essential knowledge that is available from no other source" (p. 360) and that the teacher's voice includes power and meaning. Unfortunately, teachers are often faced with the difficult decision of voicing what they know at the cost of giving up their ability to act. McDonald continues, "And so they leave inquiry to the theorist, who theorizes without benefit of the teacher's intimate knowledge of practice, and, in time, the resulting theory comes round to the teacher in the form of some policy directive" (p. 361). Emily's voice is strong, confident, and knowledgeable. She is anxious to share her opinions and her experiences with others, particularly her intern. The motivation behind Maggie's silence is not known, however her silence creates tangible consequences. Learning more about how these teachers are negotiating and

resisting policy as it enters their classroom is critical. Sharing Emily's practice through this writing is a validation of her politically laden pedagogy.

Data from this research challenges elements of reform that are assumed to make a difference in the school structure and culture. This is critical for educational policy makers to recognize. In considering the endemic failure of educational reform, Sarason (1990) suggests that, "The problem is not what to do but how to think, how to take seriously the idea that there is a universe of alternative explanations for past failures of reform" (p. xi). Some of the same concepts, such as collaboration, continue to be recycled in reforms with little consequence to the problems in education. Collaboration has been championed as an important component of reforms (Acker-Hocevar & Touchton, 1999; Apthorp, Dean, Florian, Lauer, Reichardt, & Snow-Renner, 2001; Hargreaves, 1994; Holland, 1997; Little, 1993; Short, 1992; St. John, Manset, Chung & Worthington, 2001; Symonds, 2003), yet the forced collaboration by the Reading First mandate and *No Child Left Behind* has yielded dismal results in this study. Rather than forcing collaboration in an inauthentic way, policy makers need to consider ways to promote collaboration that is welcomed and useful for teachers. As noted earlier, the most authentic collaboration appeared to be between Emily and Greg, and Emily and Maggie as they co-resisted. Perhaps the imposition of policy encouraged a form of collaboration that policy makers could not have imagined. Maggie, Greg and Emily's collaboration was essentially an effort to resist the policies forcing contrived collaboration.

Policy makers also need to consider the impact of power and empowerment and how these factors might influence relationships among colleagues. Creating policy that promote teacher empowerment rather than limiting the strengths of teachers is incredibly

important, but not found in the intended policies impacting the school in this study. Fortunately, the unintended consequences of Reading First yield complex power issues among participants. Emily knows she is supported and empowered by her principal and can use this to neutralize pressure from Linda. Emily can also speak her mind in meetings because Barbara knows Emily is a strong teacher and will support her. Policy makers must recognize the complexity of these types of relationships and how they envision policy into practice will be influenced by issues of power and empowerment.

Shannon (1989) offers an analysis of teacher identity and pedagogy that is not surprising, but hardly acknowledged by policy makers. He states,

> In short, my experience has been that teachers are quite capable of critical thought about their work, able to trace the connections of objects and routines to their societal roots in the social structure, and eager to hypothesize about a future in which they have greater control over their instruction. Moreover, they seem to realize quickly that other teachers are their allies in their struggles to resist the management of their instruction. (p. 139)

Shannon ends his book with a summary that includes the statement, "It will not be easy-basal publishers, business, government, and school administrators will not give up their power over reading instruction without a struggle" (p. 147). Fortunately there are teachers like Emily who are fighting for control over their literacy planning and instruction. There are also teachers like Maggie who demonstrate co-resistance with Emily at various points in time. If policy makers were truly interested in supporting teachers who in turn support the academic and personal growth of their students, they would begin listening to the insights and knowledge that teachers have to offer.

This research is important for both curriculum developers and teacher education programs because it illustrates the type of innovative hybridization teachers might enact when forced to negotiate mandated curriculum with their own "unofficial" curriculum. For individuals in teacher education programs, this is an excellent example of how one might plan their literacy instruction to "be in compliance", without abandoning their own beliefs about how children learn to read and write. Emily is in a difficult situation, given the tension between her own knowledge of sound literacy pedagogy and mandates at the district, state, and national level. Yet, she is able to use "snippets" from various sources, pulling from her past teaching experiences as well as professional development and the required curriculum to produce an exciting, engaging literacy program. Not only are children enthusiastic about literacy, they are showing profound improvement in their reading and writing abilities. This is the reality of one classroom at a Reading First school which has a great deal to share with novice, future, and practicing teachers.

It is also important for future teachers to recognize the impact of policy on teacher practice, as well as strategies they might employ to maintain their own beliefs and values about how their particular students learn. It is critical that teacher education students understand the history of commercialized basal programs and the politics that surround it. Teacher education students need to be aware of the various types of collaboration they may encounter as well as their own potential power and empowerment as a colleague and educator. Finally, future teachers need to think about how they will make choices that are best for their own students as well as their own integrity as an educator. Providing case studies such as this may help pre-service teachers consider the types of realistic dilemmas and challenges they will be faced with in the near future.

201

Likewise, curriculum developers would benefit from recognizing the power of teachers in making curricular decisions. At Westside Elementary, teachers are expected to use the materials from their Houghton Mifflin literacy program. Emily uses some of the materials, but not necessarily the way they are intended by the curriculum developers. She is selective in what she employs and it would be important for curriculum developers to consider what type of materials they can offer teachers that are useful, sensitive to the unique backgrounds of children, and flexible enough so that teachers can make the final decisions about when and how to utilize materials. Shannon (1989) writes that these programs have been used for over a century with little change. However, a more in-depth look at Emily's practice suggests that perhaps teachers are not using prepackaged curriculum as intended by the developers, district, and colleagues. We know that teachers often teach from their prior knowledge and can assume that most teacher education students experienced basal programs as part of their literacy instruction. If this cycle is to be disrupted, future teachers need to be made aware of the political history of commercialized reading programs and provided models for change. Emily is presenting a different approach to literacy instruction for Greg, but this needs to be more wide-spread. If teachers are to gain control over their workspace, they need the knowledge to resist and access alternative approaches. Teacher education programs are an important place to start.

This study contributes an in-depth examination of the difficult situations both teachers and principals are placed in when mandates are created by district administrators and policy makers and forced into a school literacy program. Those individuals who are writing and requiring mandates are concerned with quantitative data that shows improved

learning through higher test scores. Teachers and principals must be concerned with more than raw data. They know the names, faces, and lives of the children behind the test scores. They operate within a unique school structure and culture that cares for the whole child, not just their literacy scores on district, state, and national exams. The findings from this research also highlight the nature and complexity of relationships between colleagues within a context. Each individual brings a set of values and beliefs to their teaching and leadership, which has various implications for interactions and the type of collaboration possible.

While researching the history of literacy policy for this dissertation, I became increasingly frustrated by the similarities between education reforms in the 1980's and today. I have taught and worked along side veteran teachers who comment on the recycling of programs, ideas, and policies. I compare this time to the second wave of the four part reform in the 1980's, but I am hopeful that the results may be more promising. I am hopeful that this return to prepackaged curriculum and deskilling of teachers will not need to occur again. Teachers such as Emily lead me to believe that there are educators struggling to regain control of their practice and protect their identities as professionals with rich experiences and knowledge to draw upon to meet the needs and interests of their students as well as themselves.

Hargreaves (1994) concludes his book, <u>Changing Teachers, Changing Times</u> by stating that his writing is not a litany of solutions to the challenges of restructuring education. He states that there is no one best model or singular certainty. Context is important and educators should have choices for how and when to apply and adapt models to fit their own settings. The same can be said for this study. I do not offer

solutions for reforms. I am not suggesting that all teachers resist, negotiate, or develop hybridized literacy practices like Emily. Rather, the purpose of this study is to challenge concepts of reform, such as collaboration, and to expose the emotions, thoughts, and creativity of one teacher working under stressful, constrained conditions. I believe her experiences are similar to other elementary teachers during this climate of top-down policy. Hopefully this text provides a move toward solutions or answers, or perhaps generates questions to move forward in empowering teachers and challenging the status quo.

It is appropriate to end this chapter and text with a quote from Hargreaves (1994) who challenges the concept of collaboration and the multiple ways this appears in organizations. He states, "The challenge of restructuring in education and elsewhere is a challenge of abandoning or attenuating bureaucratic controls, inflexible mandates, paternalistic forms of trust and quick system fixes in order to hear, articulate and bring together the disparate voices of teachers and other educational partners" (p. 260). Perhaps this ethnographic case study offers one strong voice of a teacher engaged in constant restructuring of her literacy planning and instruction for the benefit of her students. Sharing her thoughts through writing as well as her on-going mentoring of interns and seniors in the local teacher education program is promising. Her practice allows others to understand the innovative ways educators can and do negotiate and resist policies once they enter the classroom. In closing, this type of ethnographic case study is invaluable for future teachers in teacher education programs, practicing teachers and principals, as well as curriculum developers and policy makers.

APPENDICES

Appendix A

Westside Elementary School Demographics[36]

School Name: Westside Elementary   **District Name:**   **County:**
                                           district information   schools in county

Mailing Address: **Physical Address:**   **Phone:**

NCES District ID: **NCES School ID:**   **State District ID:**   **State School ID:**

School Characteristics

Grade Span: (grades PK - 5)

PK	KG	1	2	3	4	5								

Type: Regular school
Locale/Code: Mid-size Central City / 2
Status: Currently operational

Total Students: 376
Classroom Teachers (FTE): N/A
Student/Teacher Ratio: N/A

Charter: no   Magnet: N/A   Title I School: N/A   Title I School-Wide Program: N/A

Enrollment Characteristics

Enrollment by Grade:

	PK	KG	1	2	3	4	5	Ungraded
Students	0	65	64	51	54	66	54	22

Enrollment by Race/Ethnicity:

Students	3 (.8%)	52 (14%)	120 (32%)	48 (13%)	153 (41%)

Ethnic minority: 223 (59%)
White: 153 (41%)

Enrollment by Gender:

	Male	Female	Unknown
Students	205	171	0

Free lunch eligible: 175   Reduced-price lunch eligible: 28   Migrant Students: N/A

Note: "N/A" means the data are not available or not applicable.
Note: Details may not add to totals.

---

[36] Source: CCD public school data for the 2002-2003 school year

Appendix B

2004 – 2005 District Testing Calendar[37]

Assessment	Dates	Grades
DIBELS	September 9 – 14	K- 3 : Reading First schools only
DRA	September 1 – 30	K – 5
Fall Curriculum Assessments: Language Arts, Math, Science, and Social Studies	Testing: Nov. 18 – 22, Reteaching: Nov. 29 – Dec. 10	District wide
DIBELS	January 10 – 14	K- 3 : Reading First schools only
DRA	January 10 – 21	K – 5
Spring Curriculum Assessments: : Language Arts, Math, Science, and Social Studies	Testing: March 7 – 18 Reteaching: Mar. 10 – Mar. 18	District Wide
IOWA Test of Basic Skills Reading, Mathematics and Language	April 18 – 26	K – 9
DIBELS	May 2 - 6	K- 3 : Reading First schools only
DRA	May 2 – 20	K – 5

DIBELS[38] – (Required for Reading First Grant schools and Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) schools.) Middleton students in grades K – 3 at Reading First and high priority schools ONLY, are assessed using the Dynamic Indicators of Basic Early Literacy Skills (DIBELS). The DIBELS are a set of standardized, individually administered measures of early literacy development that can be used both diagnostically and to monitor student progress.

DRA - (Required by the School Board). ALL students in grades K – 5 will be assessed fro the first time this year using the Developmental Reading Assessment (DRA). The DRA is an assessment that helps teachers identify students' strengths, abilities, and reading levels in a one-on-one conference that includes a running record and an oral retelling.

Iowa Tests of Basic Skills (ITBS) - (Required by the School Board). A standardized nationally norm referenced test (2000 Norms) given each spring to Middleton students in

---

[37] From the School District Research, Evaluation & Pupil Accounting, August, 2004.
[38] Good, R.H. & Kaminski, R.A. (Eds.) (2002). Dynamic Indicators of Basic Early Literacy Skills (6th Ed.) Eugene, OR: Institute for the Development of Educational Achievement. Available: http://dibels.uoregon.edu/.

grades K – 9. All students are assessed in reading, mathematics and language arts. AT grade nine this test is called the Iowa Tests of Educational Development (ITED).

Middleton School District Curriculum Assessments – (Required by the School Board). These tests aid district staff in evaluating student progress in meeting Middleton curricular benchmarks and state BLCEs for each content area. This year, curriculum assessments will be administered to students in grades 2 through 12 in November and in March. **ALL TESTING MUST BE COMPLETED ON THE DAY TESTING OCCURS.** If you have any questions about the curriculum assessments, or need additional materials during the testing periods, call the Curriculum Office at (phone number).

APPENDIX C

Emily's literacy instruction in minutes during observations

Date & Day	Houghton Mifflin	Centers	Book Club & Thematic Unit	Reading First	District/ Pacing Guide	Testing
9/8 (W)			35 Cam Jansen	45		
9/17 (F)						105- DIBELS
9/22 (W)	15 Listening center: story & comprehension worksheet	10	40 The Box Car Children 35 Writing own mystery			
9/27 (M)	15 Guess Covered Word: vocabulary from story 35 Read aloud & partner read 15 Listening center & comprehension worksheet	45		10 Spelling 10 phonics		
10/1 (F)			120 Mystery walk			
11/12 (Th)	15 Listening Center & summary worksheet	15	50 My Father's Dragon 15 Author's chair		20 Writing fairy tales	

Emily's literacy instruction in minutes during observations (continued)

11/23 (T)	30 Venn diagram of 2 fairy tales, Comparison paragraph (MEAP)	20 Fairy tale read aloud		75 Country research reports		
12/16 (Th)			35 Morning message & Guess the Covered Word	45	40	
1/20 (Th)		135 Fairy tale ball				
Total Minutes	135	175	100	415	110	95

REFERENCES

Acker-Hocevar, M., & Touchton, D. (1999). *A model of power as social relationships: Teacher leaders describe the phenomena of effective agency in practice.* Paper presented at the annual meeting of the American Educational Research Association, Montreal, Canada.

Adler, D. & Natti, S. (1997). *Cam Jansen and the mystery of the monster movie (Cam Jansen, 8).* New York: Scholastic.

Anagnostopoulos, D. & Rutledge, S. (2004). *Making sense of school sanctioning policing in urban high schools: Charting the depth and drift of school and classroom responses.* Paper presented at the American Educational Research Association, San Diego, CA.

Apple, M. (1983). Curricular form and the logic of technical control. In M. W. Apple and L. Weis (Eds.) *Ideology and practice in schooling.* (p 143 – 165). Philadelphia, Temple University Press.

Apple, M. W. (2004). *Ideology and curriculum.* New York: Routledge Falmer.

Apthorp, H. S., Bodrova, E., Dean, C. B. & Florian, J. E. (2001). *Noteworthy Perspectives: Teaching to the Core—Reading, Writing, and Mathematics.* Aurora, CO: Mid-Continent Research for Education and Learning.

Apthorp, H. S., Dean, C. B., Florian, J. E., Lauer, P. A., Reichardt, R. & Snow-Renner, R. (2001). *Standards in Classroom Practice: Research Synthesis.* Washington, D.C.: Office of Educational Research and Improvement, U.S. Department of Education.

Armstrong, W. H. (1972) *Sounder.* New York: Harper Trophy.

Bergeron, B. S. & Rudenga, E. A. (1993). *Delineating and undefining thematic instruction.* Paper presented at the Annual Meeting of the National Reading Conference, Charleston, SC.

Bisplinghoff, B. S. (2002). Teacher planning as responsible resistance. *Language Arts 80*(2), 119 - 128.

Britzman, D. P. (2003). *Practice makes practice.* Albany: State University Press.

Chandler Warner, G. (1977). *The box car children, #1.* Niles, Illinois: Albert Whitman & Company.

Chen, M. & Miller, G. (1997). Teacher stress: A review of the international literature. Retrieved February 3, 2005, from Educational Resources Information Center (ERIC) database.

Coburn, C. E. (2001). Collective sensemaking about reading: How teachers mediate reading policy in their professional communities. *Educational Evaluation and Policy Analysis 23*(2), 145 – 170.

Cochran-Smith, M. (2001). Learning to teach against the (new) grain. *Journal of Teacher Education, 52*(1), 3 - 4.

Cohen, D. K. (1990). A revolution in one classroom: The case of Mrs. Oublier. *Educational Evaluation and Policy Analysis, 12*(3), 311 - 329.

Cohen, D. K. & Ball, D. L. (1990a). Policy and practice: An overview. *Educational Evaluation and Policy Analysis, 12*(3), 233 – 239.

Cohen, D. K. & Ball, D. L. (1990b). Relations between policy and practice: A commentary. *Educational Evaluation and Policy Analysis, 12*(3), 331 – 338.

Cunningham, P (1994) *Making Words: Multilevel, Hands-On Developmentally Appropriate Spelling and Phonics Activities Grades 1-3.* Good Apple Inc.: New York.

Cunningham, P. (2002) *Month-By-Month phonics for third grade.* Carson-Dellosa Publishing Co.: Greensboro, NC.

Curtis, C. P. (1963). *The Watsons go to Birmingham.* New York: Bantam Doubleday Dell Books for Young Readers.

Cusick, P. A. (1992). *The educational system: Its nature and logic.* New York: McGraw-Hill.

Darling-Hammond, L. (1990). Instructional policy into practice: 'The power of the bottom over the top'. *Educational Evaluation and Policy Analysis, 12*(3), 339 – 347.

Darling-Hammond, L & Ball, D. L. (1998). *Teaching for high standards: What policy makers need to know and be able to do.* Philadelphia: Consortium for Policy Research in Education.

Discover This (2005). *GeoSafari by Educational Insights.* Retrieved March 15, 2005, http://www.discoverthis.com/geosafari.html

Duhon, G. M. (1999). *Teacher Empowerment: Definitions, implementation, and strategies for personal renewal.* McNeese State University, LA. Retrieved March 1, 2005, from Educational Resources Information Center (ERIC).

ETA Cuisenaire (2005). *Reading Rods Skills Kit.* Retrieved December 9, 2004, http://www.etacuisenaire.com/readingrods/readingrods.jsp

Englebaugh, D. (1994) *Art through children's literature: Creative art lessons for Caldecott Books (through children's literature).* Portsmouth, NH: Teacher Ideas Press.

Faundez, A. (1998) Learning to question: A pedagogy of liberation. In A. Freire and D. Macedo (Eds.) *The Paulo Freire reader* (pp 186 – 230). New York: Continuum.

Fey, M. H. & Smith, C. F. (1999). Opening spaces for collaboration and inquiry in teacher education classrooms: The place of resistance. *Action in Teacher Education,* *21*(3), 102 – 110.

Fleischman, S. (1986). *The whipping boy.* New York: HarperCollins Publishers.

Fletcher, R. & Portalupi, J. (1998) *Craft lessons: Teaching writing K – 8.* York, Maine: Stenhouse Publishing.

Florio-Ruane, S. (2002). More light: An argument for complexity in studies of teaching and teacher education. *Journal of Teacher Education 53(3),* 205 - 215.

Futrell, M. H. (1989). Mission not accomplished: Education reform in retrospect. *Phi Delta Kappan,* *71*(1), 8 – 14.

Gannett, R. S. (1948). *My father's dragon.* New York: Random House, Inc.

Good, R. H. & Kaminski, R. A. (Eds.) (2002). *Dynamic Indicators of Basic Early Literacy Skills (6th Ed.)* Eugene, OR: Institute for the Development of Educational Achievement.

Goodman, J. (1988). The disenfranchisement of elementary teachers and strategies for resistance. *Journal of Curriculum and Supervision,* *3(3),* 221 – 239.

Goyne, J., Padgett, D., Rowicki, M. A. & Triplitt, T. (1999). *The journey to teacher empowerment.* Auburn University. Retrieved February 10, 2005, from Educational Resources Information Center (ERIC).

Hargreaves, A. (1994). *Changing teachers, changing times: Teachers' work and culture in the postmodern age.* London: Cassell.

Harvey, S. & Goudvis, A. (2000) *Strategies That Work: Teaching Comprehension to Enhance Understanding*. York, Maine: Stenhouse Publishers.

Heath, S. B. (1983). *Ways with words: Language, life and work in communities and classrooms*. New York: Cambridge University Press.

Houghton Mifflin Education Place (n.d.) Retrieved September 25, 2004, http://www.eduplace.com/

JoJo (2004). *Fairy Tales Album*. Producer Vincent Herbert, Tre' Black, Blackground Records.

Johnson, C. (1955) *Harold and the purple crayon*. New York: HarperCollins Publishers.

Kane, K. & Montgomery, K. (1998). A framework for understanding dysempowerment in organizations. *Human Resource Management, 37* (3 & 4), 263 – 275.

Kersten, J. (in press). Literacy and Choice: Urban elementary students' perceptions of links between home, school and community literacy practices. In V. Purcell-Gates (Ed.) *Cultural Practices of Literacy*. New York: Erlbaum Publications.

Kersten, J. (2003). *Moving toward critical literacy despite standardized testing and curriculum guides*. Paper presented at the annual Penn Ethnography Conference, Philadelphia, PA.

Klecker, B. M. & Loadman, W. E. (1998). *Empowering elementary teachers in restructuring schools: Dimensions to guide the mission*. Paper presented at the annual meeting of the Mid-South Educational Research Association, New Orleans, LA.

Kohn, A. (2000). *The case against standardized testing: Raising the scores, ruining the schools*. Portsmouth: Heinemann.

Lampert, M. (1985). How do teachers manage to teach? Perspectives on problems in practice. *Harvard Educational Review 55(2)*, 178 - 184.

Lanier, J. E. & Little, J. W. (1986). Research on teacher education. In M. C. Wittrock (Ed.), *Handbook of research on teaching* (3rd ed) (pp. 527-69). New York: Macmillan.

LeCompte, M. D. & Shensul, J. J. (1999). *Designing and conducting ethnographic research: Ethnographer's toolkit*. Walnut Creek, CA: AltaMira Press.

Lindgren, A. (1997). *The adventures of Pippi Longstocking*. New York: Penguin Putnam Inc.

214

Little, J. W. (1993). *Teachers' professional development in a climate of educational reform*. Washington, DC: Office of Educational Research and Improvement.

Lortie, D. C. (1975). *Schoolteacher: A sociological study*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Luke, A. (2000). Critical literacy in Australia: A matter of context and standpoint. *Journal of Adolescent & Adult Literacy, 43*(5), 448 - 461.

Macomb Intermediate School District (2004). *Michigan Literacy Progress Profile*. Retrieved January 26, 2005, http://www.misd.net/Languageart/mlpp.htm

Maeroff, G. I. (1988). A blueprint for empowering teachers. *Phi Delta Kappan, 69*(71), 472 – 477.

Martin, R. (1992). *The rough-face girl*. New York: Paper Star Book.

McDonald, J. (1986). Raising the teacher's voice and the ironic role of theory. *Harvard Educational Review, 56*(4), 355 – 378.

Michigan Department of Education (2005). *2004-2005 Reading First Grant Announcement*. Retrieved March 14, 2005, from http://www.michigan.gov/documents/10 5_Version_3_Reading_First_111599_7.pdf

Michigan Department of Education (2005). *Michigan Educational Assessment Program*. Retrieved September 13, 2004, from http://www.michigan.gov/mde/0,1607,7-140-22709_31168—,00.html

Middleton School District (2002). *Middleton school district balanced literacy description*. Retrieved January 16, 2005, http://Middletonschools.net/curricula/balanced literacy.htm

Middleton School District, The Office of Curriculum, Assessment and Professional Development (2003). *Pacing guides, Language Arts 3rd grade*. Retrieved January 16, 2005, http://web.lsd.k12.mi.us/curricula/pacing_guides/pc.htm

"Middleton" State Journal. April 30, 2004.

Nieto, S. (1999). *The light in their eyes: Creating multicultural learning communities*. New York: Teachers College Press.

Nieto, S. (2003). *What keeps teachers going?* New York: Teacher's College Press.

Official DIBELS homepage (2004). Retrieved January 18, 2005, http://dibels.uoregon.edu/

Pardo, L. S. (2005). *Beginning teachers learn to teach writing: Finessing teaching context shapes evolving practice.* Unpublished doctoral dissertation, Michigan State University, E. Lansing.

Pearson Reading Group (2004). Developmental reading assessment (DRA). Retrieved January 18, 2005, http://www.pearsonlearning.com/dra/index.cfm

Phillippi, K. (1998). *Mandating a constructivist approach to early elementary literacy instruction: The intended and unintended consequences in one school district.* Paper presented at the annual meeting of the American Educational Research Association, San Diego, CA.

Pilkey, D. (1993). *Dogzilla.* New York: Harcourt Brace and Co.

Purcell-Gates, V. (1996). Stories, coupons, and the TV Guide: Relationships between home literacy experiences and emergent literacy knowledge. *Reading Research Quarterly, 31*, 406-428.

Raphael, T. (2002) *Book Club: A literature-based curriculum* (2nd ed.). Newark, DE: International Reading Association:

Reading Recovery Council of North America (2000). *Reading Recovery: Fact Sheet.* Columbus, OH. Retrieved March 3, 2005 from Educational Resources Information Center (ERIC).

Red Cedar Writing Project (2003). Retrieved January 26, 2005, http://writing.msu.edu: 16080/rcwp/

Riverdeep Products, *Story Book Weaver.* Retrieved September 15, 2004, http://www.riverdeep.net/products/storybookweaver/storybook_weaver_deluxe.jh tml

Roemer, M. G. (1991). What we talk about when we talk about school reform. *Harvard Educational Review, 61*(4), 434 – 448.

Routman, R. (1991). *Invitations: Changing as teachers and learners K-12.* Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann.

Rusch, E. A. & Perry, E. A. (1993). *Resistance to change: Fact or stereotype.* Paper presented at the annual meeting of the American Educational Research Association, Atlanta, GA.

San Souci, R. (1994). *Sootface.* New York: A Picture Yearling Book.

Sarason, S. (1990). *The predictable failure of educational reform: Can we change course before it's too late?* San Francisco: Jossey-Bass Publishers.

Saskatoon Public School Division (2004). *Instructional strategies on-line (Author's Chair)*. Retrieved February 9, 2005, http://olc.spsd.sk.ca/DE/PD/instr/strats/author/

Shannon, P. (1989). *Broken promises: Reading instruction in twentieth-century America*. Massachusetts: Bergin & Garvey Publishers, Inc.

Short, P. (1992). *Dimensions of Teacher Empowerment*. The Pennsylvania State University, PA. Retrieved March 4, 2005, from Educational Resources Information Center (ERIC).

Simon, R. (1992). Empowerment as a pedagogy of possibility. In P. Shannon (Ed.) *Becoming Political. Readings and Writings in the politics of literacy education*. (p. 139 – 151). Portsmouth, NH. Heinemann.

Skurzynski, G. (1988). *The minstrel in the tower*. New York: Random House, Inc.

Snow, C., M.S. Burns, and P. Griffin (1998). *Preventing reading difficulties in young children*. Washington, DC: National Academy Press.

Sopris West Inc. (2005). *LETRS: Language essentials for teachers of reading and spelling*. Retrieved January 16, 2005, http://www.letrs.com/

Spillane, J. P. & Jennings, N. E. (1997). Aligned instructional policy and ambitious pedagogy: Exploring instructional reform from the classroom perspective. *Teachers College Record, 98*(3), 449 – 481.

St. John, E. P., G. Manset, C. Chung and K. Worthington (2001). *Assessing the rationales for educational reforms: A test of the professional development, comprehensive reform, and direct instruction hypotheses*. Indianapolis: Indiana State Department of Education.

Stigler, J.W. & Hiebert, J. (1999). *The teaching gap: Best ideas from the world's teachers for improving education in the classroom*. New York: The Free Press.

Symonds, K. W. (2003). *Literacy coaching: How school districts can support a long-term strategy in a short term world*. San Francisco, CA: Bay Area School Reform Collaborative.

Taylor, M. D. (1975). *Song of the trees*. New York: Penguin Putnam Inc.

Taylor, D., & Dorsey-Gaines, C. (1988). *Growing up literate: Learning from inner-city families*. Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann.

217

Tyack, D. & Cuban, L. (1995). *Tinkering toward utopia: Reflections on a century of public school reform.* Cambridge: Harvard University Press.

U.S. Department of Education (2000). *9 Effective literacy practices: Based on the indicators of capacity for school reform project's Massachusetts Literacy Study Findings.* Washington, D.C: Education Alliance/LAB at Brown.

Vacca, R. T. & Vacca, J. L. (2002). *Content area reading: Literacy and learning across the curriculum.* (7th ed.) Boston: Allyn & Bacon.

Vozer, D. (2001). Rapunzel: A happenin' rap. New York: Picture Yearling.

White, P. A. (1992). Teacher empowerment under "ideal" school-site autonomy. *Educational Evaluation and Policy Analysis, 14*(1), 69 – 82.

Zimmermann, S & Keene, E. O. (1997). *Mosaic of thought: Teaching comprehension in a reader's workshop.* Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann.