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By

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ABSTRACT

A STUDY OF TEACHER DECISION MAKING
IN READING CLASSROOMS

By

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Based on the premise that teacher decision making is a significant variable influencing instructional effectiveness (Shulman, 1975; Shulman & Elstein, 1975; Clark & Yinger, 1978), this study was designed to provide an understanding of teacher decision making as it shaped the course of reading instruction in four classrooms. Using the fieldwork methods of the participant observer, four teachers' classrooms were studied over the course of the school year in order to discover the decisions teachers made and describe how these decisions were reflected in their classroom practice.

The four teachers studied made testing, grouping, materials, and management decisions within the first month of school. These decisions served as the basis of organization for the teachers' reading programs for the remainder of the school year. In addition, these early decisions served as the basis for the modification of decisions, on-the-spot decision making, and the teacher evaluation of student performance.

Through coming to understand the four teachers' decision making, the researcher concluded that the underlying purpose of their

decision making was not concerned with the instruction of students but rather with the facilitation of effectively managing a classroom of twenty-five to thirty students. Teachers relied heavily on materials to (1) make their instructional decisions for them, and (2) to provide the structure and organization for the flow of activities which was needed to achieve optimal classroom management. In addition, the researcher concluded that teacher decision making is not independent of the context in which it occurs, which suggests the need for the conceptualization of a model of teacher decision making based on the realities of classroom life.

The study provides the basis for continued research in the area of teacher decision making in general and teacher decision making in reading classrooms in particular. In the area of teacher education, the study has significance for the development and the teaching of reading education courses.

To Brian and David

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION AND PURPOSE

Background of the Problem

Much of the previous research on reading has focused on how teachers act or perform in classrooms. Only in recent years has the focus of inquiry for research on teaching in general investigated the problems of how teachers think about their students, their related instructional problems, their judgement making, and/or their decision making (Shulman & Elstein, 1975, p. 3; Morine-Dershimer, 1979, p. vii; Brophy, 1980, p. 5). These investigations are based on the notion that aspects of the teacher's mental life and decision making are significant variables influencing instructional effectiveness (Shulman, 1975; Shulman & Elstein, 1975; Clark & Yinger, 1978). Some even go so far as to say that decision making is the most important teaching skill (Shavelson, 1973).

Since reading and reading-related activities often consume more than half of the school day for teachers and students, it appears worthwhile to investigate the following questions: (1) how does a teacher decide what a program of reading instruction will consist of, and (2) why does a teacher make a particular set of decisions concerning reading instruction?

The Problem

The purpose of this study was to provide an understanding of teacher decision making as it shaped the course of reading in four classrooms. Specifically, through analytical description (McCall & Simmons, 1969) of the patterns of teacher decision making, the study identified and classified the decisions the four teachers made concerning their reading instruction and described how these decisions were reflected in the course of their classroom practices.

Significance of the Problem

The results of the study are important for educators and researchers alike. By actually talking to teachers and studying their classrooms, the identification of crucial variables of teacher decision making provides fruitful insights for the development of and the teaching of reading education courses. Coming to understand the dynamics of classroom life provides the teacher educator with the means to link the theories underlying developmental reading to the realities facing classroom teachers.

Teacher decision making as a part of everyday classroom life provides the stimulation for continued research in the area of teacher thinking in general. In particular, the results of this study provide a basis for continued research in the area of the teacher as decision maker in reading instruction as only the beginnings of teacher decision making and classroom life have unfolded in this study.

Research Questions

Specifically, the study focused on providing answers for the following research questions:

1. For each of the teachers studied, what were the decisions they made which appeared to shape the course of reading instruction in their classrooms?
2. For each of the teachers studied, how were these decisions reflected in the course of their classroom practices?

Design of the Study

Sample Selection

The four teachers selected for this study were chosen from among the twenty-three teachers studied as a part of the Conceptions of Reading project. The project is one of the working groups of the NIE-sponsored Institute for Research on Teaching at Michigan State University. During the 1977-78 research year, ten teachers were selected by nomination and on the basis of data obtained from instruments and interviews.[1] During the 1978-79 research year, thirteen teachers were selected on the basis of the types of schools they represented and their reported practices in reading.[2]

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[1]The data collection techniques were a Propositional Inventory (Duffy & Metheny), and a structured interview based on a variation of Kelly's Role Concept Repertory Test (Johnston).

[2]The type of school was determined by both Michigan State Education Department data regarding socioeconomic status and by school district policy regarding the presence or absence of instructional/curricular mandates. Teacher practices were determined by responses to the Propositional Inventory and by interview.

The four teachers selected for this study taught first, second, or third grade. They were solely responsible for the reading instruction in their classrooms.

Data Collection Procedures

The study reflects two years of investigation of four classroom teachers in a suburban and rural area near a large midwestern university. Using the fieldwork methods of the participant observer, data were collected four times during the school year for each of the teachers studied. The first cycle of data collection was in September; the second in November-December; the third in February; and the final cycle in May. Classrooms were observed three to five half days and one full day per cycle. Interview materials were collected before and after school during each cycle.

The activities, sights, sounds, and feelings of the classroom were recorded in field notes and audio recordings of reading groups, and audio recordings were made of teacher interviews. Maps of the room and samples of the children's work were also collected. These materials served as the data base for subsequent analysis.

Data Analysis Procedures

The data were analyzed according to a three-stage qualitative process. First, the interview data were analyzed to identify the decisions the teachers stated they made which appeared to shape the course of reading instruction. Secondly, the field notes of each teacher were analyzed to identify the instructional practices observed when each was involved in reading instruction. Finally, the

decisions and the instructional practices were compared in order to infer how teacher decision making appeared to shape the course of reading instruction (Buike, Duffy, 1978).

Integral to the analysis of the data was Denzin's (1970, 1978) principle of triangulation. The collection of observation data were used to validate and corroborate inferences drawn from the interviews. In the same way, the interview data served to substantiate findings inferred from the observational data.

Definitions

The following terms are relevant to the proposed study and are defined as follows:

Decision - is defined as the stated or inferred thought behind an observed teacher activity or teacher utterance (Shavelson, 1976; Morine, 1976; Yinger, 1978).

Instruction - an "umbrella" term (Durkin, 1979) referring to the various activities and procedures designed to increase a student's ability to read which occur under the direction of a teacher.

Assumptions and Limitations

The major assumptions underlying this study are:

1. The teacher is viewed as a decision maker who, through the process of "limiting and structuring the environment in which he or she must act" (Clark, 1977, p. 4), influences the instructional practices to which students are exposed.

2. Teacher decision making is not independent of the context in which it occurs.

The major limitation of this study is: It is virtually impossible to eliminate observer bias in participant observation studies where the observer is an instrument for data collection.

Summary

The purpose of this study was to provide an understanding of teacher decision making as it shapes the course of reading instruction in four classrooms. Using the theory of participant observation and the techniques of fieldwork, the study identified and classified the decisions teachers made and described how these decisions were reflected in the course of instruction in high and low reading groups.

In general, educators, researchers, parents, and students may benefit from the identification of variables of decision making which appear to shape the course of reading instruction. As well, coming to understand the contextual influence of the classroom environment on teacher decision making provides important insights for pedagogical decision making.

Finally, the study provides the stimulation for continued research in the area of teacher decision making in general, and teacher decision making in reading instruction in particular.

Organization of the Remainder of the Study

In Chapter II of this study, a review of the literature on teacher decision making will be presented. Chapter III of this study

will contain a description of the design of the study, and Chapter IV will provide the results of the study. Conclusions and implications of the findings are discussed in Chapter V. The collection of materials found in the appendices includes a description of the larger study from which this study evolved, samples of field notes, transcripts of audio-taped reading group sessions, and teacher interview schedules.

CHAPTER II

REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

Introduction

It has only been within the last five years that the mental life of teachers has become the focus of inquiry for research on teaching. Prior research concentrated on the study of teachers' behaviors, that is, on how teachers act or perform in classrooms. While this body of work has contributed to our knowledge of what not only teachers but also students do in classrooms, research has typically not dealt with the problems of how teachers think about their students, their related instructional problems, their judgement making, and/or their decision making (Shulman & Elstein, 1975, p. 3; Morine-Dershimer, 1979, p. vii; Brophy, 1980, p. 5).

The purpose of this study was to provide an understanding of teacher decision making as it shapes the course of reading instruction in four classrooms. In general, the number of studies on how teachers think, and, in particular, studies on decision making, are few. In the area of reading instruction, a review of the literature reflects the earlier mentioned trend of investigators focusing on teachers and student performance in reading versus how teachers think about reading instruction and the decisions they make concerning their reading instruction. However, the "small but active and

growing literature on teacher thinking" (Brophy, 1980, p. 5) will provide the basis for this review of the literature.

Decision-Making Model

According to Clark (1978), in a decision-making model the teacher is seen as someone who is "constantly assessing situations, processing information about those situations, making decisions about what to do next, guiding action on the basis of those decisions, and observing the effects of the actions on students" (Clark, 1978, p. 3). Clark believes that research on teaching that is guided by this particular decision-making model seems to focus on explaining and understanding deliberate teacher activity. This notion of deliberate teacher activity is also supported by Shavelson (1976) who characterizes "the process of teaching as one in which teachers consciously make rational decisions with the intention of optimizing student outcomes" (Shavelson, 1976, p. 412).

In his chapter, Shavelson (1976) treats statistical models of decision theory as a heuristic for examining teachers' decision making. He contends that most of the work on teachers' decisions has been limited to armchair theory. While his own work draws on the available empirical literature, he warns that the analysis should be viewed primarily as a heuristic for future research (Shavelson, 1976, p. 386). In the development of a model of teaching from a decision-making perspective, his focus is on what could be rather than what is (Shavelson, 1976, p. 373).

Several assumptions underlie the decision model. These assumptions include:

1. The decision model assumes that a teacher chooses one act or method from a set of alternatives in attempting to reach a goal or a set of goals.

2. The decision model assumes that a teacher's problem is to select a teaching method that is most likely to be effective for the various states of nature (i.e., learners' states of nature, environmental factors, etc.) that may exist.

3. The decision model assumes that for each combination of a particular teaching act or method with a particular state of nature, an outcome can be predicted. While Shavelson states that "estimating the most probable outcomes poses the greatest problem for models of teacher decision making" (Shavelson, 1976, p. 386), the value in "estimating utilities in decision making results from their usefulness in showing that teachers should consider the consequences of each alternative teaching act under each possible state of nature. This means teachers' objectives should be "stated" in precise, observable terms so that the utility of possible outcomes can be judged against a tangible standard for comparison" (Shavelson, 1976, p. 392).

Based on his notion that teachers' decisions are intended to optimize student outcomes, Shavelson (1976) presents an analysis of teachers' decisions during the preactive, interactive, and evaluative phases of teaching. The terms preactive and interactive were borrowed from the work of Jackson (1968) who coined the terms on the supposition that teacher thinking differs greatly in these two situations (Morine, 1976, p. 5). The term evaluative was added to denote the final phase of teaching (Shavelson, 1976, p. 401).

Decisions During Instructional Planning

According to Shavelson (1976), the most important decisions a teacher may make occur during instructional planning. He attributes their importance to the fact that "decisions made in planning can be pondered--they have the advantage of time" (Shavelson, 1976, p. 392) unlike the decisions made during interactive teaching.

Further, he bases the importance of this period of decision making in terms of the teacher as the instructional designer. It appears logical to Shavelson that at this time teachers should use recommendations for design of instruction taken from models of learning and instruction which provide decision options available in teaching (Shavelson, 1976, p. 393).

Shavelson (1976) summarizes teachers' instructional planning as a problem in instructional design that can be described as a decision problem. He stated that the decision problem involves:

1. specifying the outcomes of instruction,
2. specifying instructional design alternatives,
3. specifying students' entry behavior,
4. estimating the outcome of each combination of an instructional alternative and a state of nature,
5. choosing the optimal course of action, and
6. evaluating instruction by observing student behavior

(Shavelson, 1976, p. 396).

Decisions During Interactive Teaching

Decisions made while the teacher is interacting with students "may be planned, extemporaneous, or a mixture of both" (Shavelson, 1976, p. 396). He continued by stating that most of the decisions made by teachers while interacting with students are "probably modifications of decisions made in planning for instruction" (Shavelson, 1976, p. 396). The modifications of these earlier decisions are often made "on the spur of the moment." The ability of the teacher to consider teaching alternatives and the estimation of students' learning states during this on-the-spot decision making is limited.

Shavelson outlines the analysis of a decision during the interactive phase of teaching as containing the following elements:

1. Goals in the decision analysis correspond to the teacher's instructional objectives.

2. The states of nature of particular concern during interactive teaching are the knowledge and motivation of students relative to that which is needed to begin or continue learning at a particular point in the lesson.

3. Alternative courses of action refer to the teacher's repertoire of teaching acts or methods. The utility of a particular teaching act or method represents the teacher's best judgement about the result of using a particular teaching method when students are in a particular state of learning. The judgement is based on the teacher's prior experience in similar situations, on the teacher's philosophy of teaching, and on the teacher's formal knowledge of learning and motivation.

4. Finally, the outcome of the decision, or the consequence of acting on the decision, is student performance. This performance is compared with the objective the teacher intended to achieve in order to evaluate the decision and to re-estimate the student's state of learning (Shavelson, 1976, p. 397).

Evaluation in the Decision Analysis of Teaching

The evaluation phase in the decision analysis of teaching involves the teacher "collecting and using information about the correspondence between the actual outcome of a teaching method and the intended outcome (the teacher's objective or goal) for judging the worth of prior decisions" (Shavelson, 1976, p. 401). This information is then used in making current and future decisions.

The area proves to be most problematic in the model of decision making. Shavelson claims teachers have been characterized *a priori* as rational decision makers who intuitively use evaluation information for estimating the probability of student states of nature and the utility of using alternative teaching methods in the presence of these various states of nature. However, he questions whether

teachers can operate in this manner and whether teachers' subjective probability estimates correspond to objective probabilities in the data gathered (Shavelson, 1976, p. 401).

While he believes that a model of teaching as rational decision making is not unrealistic, the concern for teachers as rational decision makers in actual classroom situations becomes an issue. He cites several studies in the area of judgement and problem solving which indicate that teachers in a situation of low personal involvement can estimate probabilities in their environment somewhat accurately. However, in situations when their evaluation of events not only affects their decisions but their views of themselves as well, teachers' estimates of probabilities or their interpretations of them may show bias (Shavelson, 1976, p. 402).

In summary, Shavelson describes teaching as a process by which "teachers consciously make rational decisions with the intention of optimizing student outcomes" (Shavelson, 1976, p. 411-412). He states that the model seems to apply to many goal-oriented teaching situations and has value in making teachers aware of decisions that they might otherwise make without awareness (Shavelson, 1976, p. 412).

Research on the Decision Model

Expanding upon this earlier work, Shavelson and his colleagues Borko, Cone, and Russo (1979) developed a model for decision making that, in their estimation, identified some important types of information that might influence teachers' instructional decisions. The model which they explain as "simply a heuristic device that provides one way of thinking about teaching from a decision-making perspective"

(Borko, Cone, Russo, & Shavelson, 1979, p. 138) is based on the view that teaching can be characterized as a decision-making process.

> The teacher is seen as an active agent who selects a teaching skill or strategy in order to help students reach some goal. This choice may be based on one or more factors. If all of the types of information mentioned above were used, teachers would need to integrate the large amount of information about students available from a variety of sources and somehow combine this information with their own beliefs and purposes, the nature of the instructional task, the constraints of the situation, and so on, in order to select an appropriate instructional strategy (Borko, et al., 1979, p. 138).

The proposed decision model identifies several important factors that are expected to affect teachers' decisions about instruction. It is believed that teachers are faced with a large amount of information about their students from many sources. In the attempt to deal with this "information overload" (Borko, et al., 1979, p. 140), the model suggests that teachers integrate this information into a "few best guesses" (estimates) about the students' learning, feelings, and behavior.

> These estimates may influence teachers' plans for instruction and the decisions they make, consciously or unconsciously, during instruction. As the model indicates, plans and decisions may also be influenced by the teachers' educational beliefs and the nature of the instructional tasks. The instructional task may also indirectly affect instructional decisions by limiting the alternative strategies that the teacher considers. Finally, the availability of strategies and materials may influence decisions by limiting or expanding the number of alternatives from which the teacher can choose (Borko, et al., 1979, p. 140).

These factors contributing to teachers' preinstructional decisions are outlined in the following figure developed by the researchers.

The four experimental studies conducted by the group of researchers were designed to investigate the effects of some of the

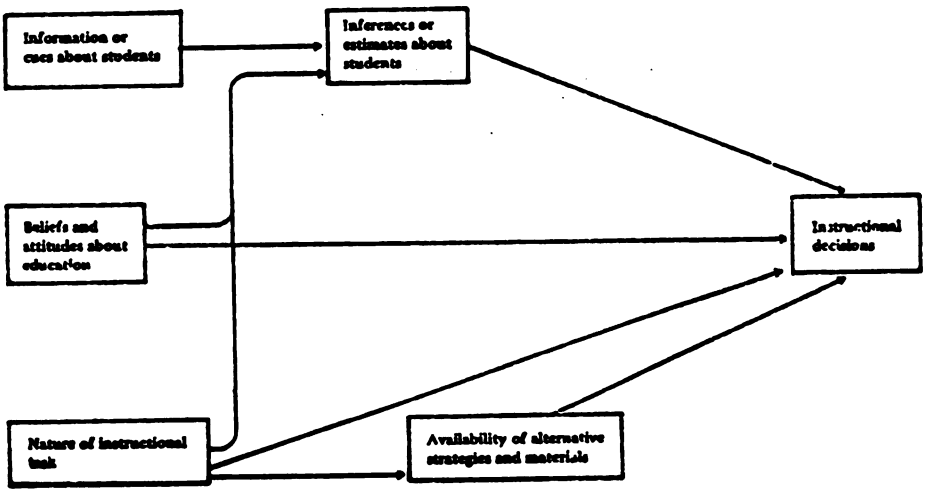

Figure 1: Some Factors Contributing to Teachers' Preinstructional Decisions (Borko, et al., 1979, p. 140)

factors identified in Figure 1 on different types of instructional decisions in different contexts (Borko, et al., 1979, p. 145). In order to study the model, the researchers "systematically" varied parts of the model by simulating actual classrooms in the laboratory. To this end, descriptions of fictitious students and their classroom conduct were supplied to teachers with different educational beliefs. The teachers, upon reviewing the descriptions, were then asked to make several different types of instructional decisions for a variety of instructional tasks (Borko, et al., 1979, p. 144).

In the first study, the accuracy of teachers' estimates about students and the effects of these estimates on instructional decisions were examined. The results of the study suggested that teachers may use different kinds of information to make different kinds of decisions, a finding consistent with the Shavelson, Cadwell, and Izu study (1977). In the case of choosing material at the appropriate

grade level for a student, the teachers based their decisions primarily on their estimates concerning a student's ability and much less on other specific information they were given on the student. Teachers also revised their initial decisions when new information became available. However, the teachers' estimates of student abilities and other specific information were not used when the teachers were asked to discuss their decision during two interactive instructional decision-making situations. When teachers were asked what they would do if the student failed to answer a question, they tended to ignore the information about the student and their estimates of the student's ability in making this decision. Further, when given additional information about the students, teachers tended to ignore it and base their revised decision on their initial one. The researchers concluded that this made sense since information about general ability had little relevance to the particular situation. As well, it appeared that the teachers' responses to the decision depended on factors not measured in the experiment which the researchers concluded might be due to factors of teachers' personal preference for teaching method or philosophy of teaching. The second interactive decision also demonstrated similar results, in that ability and other information played a minor role in the decision for the importance of reinforcement for the student. The prior decision was the most influential factor in the revised decision.

In the second study, the effects of student cues, teacher beliefs, and types of lessons on preinstructional decisions in reading and mathematics were examined. The results of the study

suggested that teachers based their estimates primarily on the one cue most relevant to the estimate. That is, teachers' estimates of the likelihood that a student would master the skills and concepts included in the second-grade reading curriculum were based on the student's prior achievement in reading. Similarly, the estimates of the likelihood of mastering mathematics skills and concepts were based primarily on the student's achievement in mathematics. In addition, estimates of the likelihood that a student would be a behavior problem in the classroom were based primarily on accounts of the students' prior behavior in the classroom.

Teachers' grouping strategies were also found to be based primarily on students' achievement. Some of the teachers in the study only used information about reading achievement in forming reading groups. Others took both achievement in mathematics and reading into account when forming reading groups.

Finally, the researchers concluded that teachers' decisions about appropriate strategies for teaching reading and mathematics were based on several factors: educational beliefs, the nature of the group being taught, and the type of instructional objective.

Study III focused on the influence of three critical factors in the decision model on preinstructional decisions about classroom organization and management strategies. In particular, the study explored the effects of educational beliefs and cues and estimates about students on these decisions at the fifth-grade level.

The results from this study are currently being analyzed and only tentative, preliminary findings were presented. The researchers

did find, as in Study II, that teachers' estimates of the likelihood that a student would master the skills and concepts included in a fifth-grade curriculum were determined primarily by the student's prior academic achievement. Other less important cues were the student's classroom behavior and the ability to work independently. Similarly, estimates of the likelihood that a student would be a behavior problem were based primarily on the student's prior behavior in the classroom.

Analyses of the teachers' decisions about classroom organization and management strategies are not yet completed. However, preliminary analyses indicate that these decisions are based primarily on estimates about the students.

Study IV focused on interactive decisions about classroom management in the context of a reading lesson at the fifth-grade level. One purpose of this study was to examine teachers' use of information about students in deciding how to respond to deviant behavior. A second purpose was to examine how beliefs about education affect these decisions. The data from Study IV is currently being analyzed but the researchers found from their preliminary analyses that the factor primarily responsible for teachers' estimates of the probability of disruption is the previous history of the deviant child.

In summary, these four studies suggest the teachers making decisions in laboratory settings base their decisions on the most relevant information on hand. They look at reading scores to make estimates of the likelihood of mastering certain reading objectives,

and, in turn, look at these estimates to make decisions about forming reading groups. They look at previous behavior to form estimates of disruptiveness and use these estimates to make management decisions. The researchers conclude that these findings provide preliminary support for the usefulness of the decision model for research as a way of helping us to understand the teaching-learning process.

Preactive Decision Making

Several studies on teacher thinking, specifically in the area of teacher planning, provided insights into the decision making of teachers during the preactive setting.

In an early study, Zahorik (1970) investigated the problem: Is the teacher who plans a lesson less sensitive to pupils in the classroom than the teacher who does not plan (Zahorik, 1979, p. 144)? Teacher behavior that is sensitive to pupils was defined by Zahorik as "verbal acts of the teacher that permit, encourage, and develop pupils' ideas, thoughts, and actions" (Zahorik, 1978, p. 144). In the investigation, transcripts of lessons were obtained from a group of six teachers who had planned a lesson and from a group of six teachers who had not planned. Both sets of transcripts were analyzed with an instrument designed to provide data about teacher behavior which is sensitive to pupils. The data were then examined to learn the effects of planning and no planning. The results of the study indicated that "planning (in terms of goals, experiences, and evaluation) and lack of planning are not unrelated to the pupil sensitive behavior that the teacher uses during the lesson" (Zahorik, 1970, p. 149). The typical planning model--goals, activities, and

evaluation--resulted in insensitivity to the pupils on the part of the teacher. Zahorik speculated that the reason for this "appears to be that planning makes the teacher's thinking rigid and puts him on a track that is nearly derail-proof" (Zahorik, 1970, p. 149). Further, he explained, once the teacher decides what outcomes he wants from the lesson and how he will achieve them, he sets out to produce these outcomes regardless of what pupils introduce into the teaching-learning situation.

However, in a study reviewed by Clark and Yinger (1979), Taylor, who examined how teachers planned syllabi for courses in British secondary schools, concluded that the teachers first planning concern was "the prominence of the pupils, especially their needs, abilities and interests" (Clark & Yinger, 1979, p. 234). Following this, in order of importance, the planning concerns for the teachers were subject matter, aims (goals), and teaching methods. The results of the teachers' ratings of the importance of various issues in curriculum planning and a factor analysis of their responses indicated that teachers tended to consider teaching context (for example, materials and resources) as their most important planning concern. Pupil interests, aims and purposes of teaching, and evaluation considerations followed in that order of importance.

Rather than beginning with purposes and objectives and moving to a description of learning experiences necessary to achieve the objectives, as the rational planning theorists proposed, Taylor found that these teachers began with the context of teaching, next considered learning situations likely to interest and involve their

pupils, and only then considered the purposes their teaching would serve (Clark & Yinger, 1979, p. 234).

In his study of Teachers' Planning Models, Zahorik (1975) designed his study to determine what kinds of plans teachers make prior to the time they enter the classroom and begin to teach a group of students. Specifically, the study was designed to investigate the following general problem and subproblems.

What types of planning models do teachers currently use?

1. What planning decisions do teachers make?
2. What planning decisions are made first the most frequently?
3. For teachers who include objectives in their plans, what types of objectives are used most frequently?
4. For teachers who include activities in their plans, what types of activities are used most frequently?
5. To what extent are planning decisions made in the areas of instruction and organization?
6. Do planning decisions vary in relation to level of teaching, type of content being taught, and experience of the teacher? (Zahorik, 1979, p. 135)

The 194 teachers who participated in the study were asked to indicate the decisions they made as they planned to teach one or more class sessions or periods. The data collection instrument consisted of two parts. In Part I, the teachers were requested to list in writing the decisions they made prior to teaching in the order that they usually make them. Part II of the instrument was given after Part I of the instrument had been collected. In Part II, the teachers who had indicated that they did make decisions about objectives and

activities were asked to give an example of an objective and of an activity that they had used recently in their actual teaching situations (Zahorik, 1975, p. 135). The lists of decisions from Part I of the instrument were analyzed according to the types of decisions made and the order of the decisions. Eight categories were used to classify the decisions:

1. Objective - Decisions about goals, aims, outcomes, or purposes;

2. Content - Decisions about the nature of the subject matter to be taught, such as identification of facts, events, or other aspects;

3. Activities - Decisions about the type of learning activity or experience to be used;

4. Materials - Decisions about resources to be used such as books, films, field trip sites, and guest speakers;

5. Diagnosis - Decisions about students' readiness for the particular lesson or session. This would include students' previous learnings as well as their ability and interests;

6. Evaluation - Decisions about how to determine the effectiveness of the lesson or session;

7. Instruction - Decisions about teacher veral and non-verbal behaviors and teaching strategies to be used;

8. Organization - Decisions about how to arrange the teaching-learning environment such as grouping of students, use of space, and use of time (Zahorik, 1975, p. 136).

Zahorik found that the kind of decision used by most of the teachers concerned pupil activities (indicated by 81 percent of the teachers). The decision most frequently made first concerned content (indicated by 51 percent of the teachers) followed by only 28 percent of the teachers indicating decisions made about objectives (Zahorik, 1975, p. 136).

Zahorik concluded from this study that teachers' planning decisions do not always follow logically from specified objectives, and that in fact, the specification of objectives is not a particularly important planning decision in terms of frequent use.

A similar finding was reported by Joyce and Harootunian (1964) in a study where they examined the problem solving abilities of elementary pre-service teachers. In terms of objectives, the researchers concluded that, for the most part, "the subjects had extremely vague and unclear objectives" (Joyce & Harootunian, 1964, p. 424). The subjects reported they were unsure why they were teaching the lessons and had not identified pupil behaviors they wished to change. Only in two cases did the judges rate the objectives as stated in clear terms. Further, the objectives did not relate to procedures. While several subjects stated that their objective was to help the children discover an important scientific idea, they were unable to specify the idea, and the lesson provided only for telling the children the concept (Joyce & Harootunian, 1964, p. 424). Further, the results of the study revealed that the major decisions made by the pre-service teachers were in relation to instructional materials for children. In this study, the teachers' major sources of information about science came from children's literature rather than from adult-oriented books or manuals that accompany the instructional systems prepared by textbook publishers.

In a recent study on teacher planning, Peterson, Marx, and Clark (1978) examined teachers' decision making in actual planning situations. In a laboratory setting, the twelve teachers were

instructed to "think aloud" as they planned an instructional lesson. Their verbal statements were later coded into planning categories such as objectives, materials, subject matter, and process. The results of the study indicate that teachers spent most of their planning time dealing with the content (subject matter) to be taught. The next largest amount of planning time was spent on instructional processes (strategies and activities), and the least amount of planning time was spent on objectives.

Further results consistent with the findings of Zahorik (1975), Joyce and Harootunian (1964), Peterson, Marx, and Clark (1978) were reported by Morine in 1976. In her study of teacher planning (Morine, 1976), conducted in conjunction with a study of teacher and pupil perceptions of classroom interaction (Morine & Vallance, 1975), Morine examined the planning teachers do in preparing for daily lessons with pupils, and in organizing a long-range instructional program in reading (Morine, 1976, p. 20). The specific goals of the study were:

1. to document in a preliminary way the kinds of planning that teachers engage in before a lesson begins;

2. to study teacher thinking about evaluation and modification of a lesson that has just been completed, and teacher decisions about how to proceed with a subsequent lesson;

3. to identify the cues used by teachers in diagnostic activities related to short-term and long-term planning of reading instruction (Morine, 1976, p. 3).

The study was conducted partially in semi-controlled classroom settings. Each of the forty teachers planned and taught a lesson in reading and a lesson in math to stratified samples of pupils from

their own classroom. After each lesson, teachers were interviewed and presented with a series of tasks related to their information processing in both preactive and interactive settings. A month later the forty teachers met in groups to carry out two simulation tasks. In one task, teachers viewed a videotape of pupils reading aloud and diagnosed the pupils' reading difficulty. In the other task, teachers were asked to plan a reading program for a new class of pupils on the basis of information about the pupils contained in the data bank of written records (Morine, 1976, p. 20).

Teacher plans for the reading and math lesson were collected by Morine. The plans were analyzed according to specificity of written plans, general format of plans, statement of goals, source of goal statements, attention to pupil background and preparation, identification of evaluation procedures, and indication of possible alternative procedures. Morine found that teachers tended to be fairly specific in their plans to use an outline form. However, they paid little attention to behavioral goals, diagnosis of student needs, evaluation procedures, and alternative courses of action.

In the South Bay study, teachers planned and taught lessons in reading, following the curriculum they normally used, to groups of pupils in their own classrooms. These teachers were interviewed about their plans in the morning before their reading lessons began. They described their general plan and then answered questions about diagnosis of pupil needs, use of instructional materials, specific lesson objectives, teaching strategy, and seating arrangements. While diagnosis of pupils' needs, lesson objectives, and seating

arrangements were seldom mentioned in the initial plan statements, teacher responses to probing questions clearly demonstrated that these aspects of the lessons were not being ignored but rather, were part of their "mental image" or set of expectations for the lesson (Morine-Dershimer, 1979, p. xi).

In his study of teacher's planning decisions, Yinger (1978) sought to describe the mental processes teachers engage in while making preactive planning decisions. He investigated teacher planning by means of a detailed descriptive case study of one elementary teacher's planning decisions for a five-month period (Yinger, 1978, p. 9). The study was designed to address a need for descriptions and theoretical models of planning processes and to examine the usefulness of certain decision-modeling methods for describing complex decisions made in field settings (Yinger, 1978, p. 9).

Two phases of data collection were involved in the study. During the first twelve weeks of the study, approximately forty full school days were spent observing and recording the teacher's activities in both the preactive and interactive phases of teaching. Also during this phase, the teacher's planning decisions were recorded as she "thought aloud" during her planning sessions (Yinger, 1978, p. 10).

The second phase of data collection further investigated the teacher's planning by observing her behavior in the Teacher Planning Shell (a stimulation task developed for the study). In addition, the teacher participated in three judgement tasks designed to reveal her perceptions of her students and instructional activities. Additional

classroom observations and interviews were also conducted during this phase (Yinger, 1978, p. 11).

Analysis of the data revealed two central aspects of the teacher's planning and instruction. Planning for instructional activities and the use of teaching routines emerged as major findings. Activities were described as the basic structural units of planning and action in the classroom. Activities played an important role in the teacher's planning decisions. Daily planning, weekly planning, and unit planning all involved to a large degree the organization and sequencing of activities (Yinger, 1978, p. 13).

The activities also played the functional role of controlled behavior settings in the teacher's planning and instruction. Seven features of instructional activities were identified: location, structure and sequence, duration, participants, acceptable student behavior, instructional moves, and content and materials. These features were found to be important for the subject when the teacher made planning decisions for instructional activities (Yinger, 1978, p. 14).

Routines were a mechanism that the teacher used to establish and regulate instructional activities and to simplify the planning process. Routines also served to increase the predictability and to reduce the complexity of the teaching environment. They played such a major role in the teacher's planning behavior that her planning could be characterized as decision making about the selection, organization, and sequencing of routines. Yinger (1978) identified

four types of routines: activity routines, instructional routines, management routines, and executive planning routines (Yinger, 1978, p. 16).

Yinger found that much about the teacher's planning focused on instructional activities and that many of the activities were well routinized. A structural model of preactive planning was developed based on the study of this one teacher. Preactive planning was described at five levels: yearly, term, unit, weekly, and daily. At each level of planning, the teacher's behavior was described in terms of her planning goals, information used, the form of the plans, and the criteria for juding planning effectiveness (Yinger, 1978, p. 24).

It was also discovered that, for this teacher, reliance on past experience was a prominent part of the teacher's planning while choice (the selection among alternatives) was not. Instead the teacher tended to develop and elaborate activities over time. This elaboration took place as activities passed from general (e.g., yearly or term) to more specific (e.g., weekly or daily) levels of planning (Yinger, 1978, p. 24-25).

As with other work reviewed in this chapter (Zahorik, 1975; Peterson, Marx, & Clark, 1978), objectives were not a primary concern of teacher decision making. Also, Yinger (1978) found that well developed alternatives were lacking in teacher's plans, a finding consistent with Morine's (1976) work.

Yinger concluded that both findings supported the notion that teacher planning in practice is not characterized by processes

advocated in the rational choice model. That, in fact, when planning, teachers are more concerned about content and activities than about objectives and alternatives (Yinger, 1978, p. 25).

In a planning study that specifically focused on teacher planning in the first weeks of school, Clark and Elmore (1979) investigated five elementary school teachers (Clark & Elmore, 1979, p. 1). The data base of the study was comprised of teacher interviews of five elementary school teachers teaching in the same school. The data were collected during the first weeks of school (Clark & Elmore, 1979, p. 2). The teachers, interviewed separately, were asked to recall and describe their planning for each week of the school year, beginning with the week before the students arrived. The teachers reported the focus of their weekly planning and the thoughts and events that influenced their plans. Plan books, class schedules, and other documents aided the teachers in reconstructing their plans (Clark & Elmore, 1979, p. 4).

The first weeks of school referred to in this study included the week immediately preceding the actual beginning of school and the four subsequent weeks. The researchers found a pattern of planning that was common to all of the teachers and labeled each phase or period of planning to include (1) the "Get Ready" phase, (2) the "Get Set" phase, and (3) the "Go" phase.

Teacher planning in the "Get Ready" phase took place primarily during the week before the students arrived. During this phase the teachers were concerned about the organization of the classroom

setting to facilitate a smooth and enjoyable operation of the first days of school for students. The physical arrangement of the classroom environment, reviewing files and organizing academic materials, and issue of student motivation appeared to concern all of the teachers during this planning phase (Clark & Elmore, 1979, p. 5-7). The following phase labeled as the "Get Set" phase focused on the teacher planning for the school year which took place during the first and second weeks of school when the students were in school. During this phase student pretesting, and the classroom behavior structure emerged as the major focus of concern for the five teachers during this phase. The pretesting of students in reading and mathematics was the major activity occurring during Phase II. All of the teachers used formal and informal measures of pretesting as a form of diagnosis to help them decide which students should work with which levels of the curriculum (Clark & Elmore, 1979, p. 8).

Also included in this phase, teachers planned for training their students to work within the behavior structure of the classroom. The teachers were concerned that their students understand the rules and procedures necessary to operate successfully in all of the different settings and activities likely to occur (Clark & Elmore, 1979, p. 10).

The third phase of teacher planning began with the second full week of school and continued for at least two more weeks. A major concern of this phase concentrated on establishing a routine or workable daily and weekly schedule. By the beginning of October, the

teachers interviewed had established a workable daily and weekly routine, assigned students to groups for those parts of the curriculum in which they used grouping, and began to talk about and think of their classes as collective rather than aggregations of individuals (Clark & Elmore, 1979, p. 13).

The researchers concluded that, by the beginning of October for the teachers studied, the "important business" of getting the school year off to a good start had concluded and the planning and teaching tasks for the remainder of the school year could proceed within the framework established during the first weeks of school (Clark & Elmore, 1979, p. 13).

In summary, the studies presented on teacher thinking, specifically in the area of teaching planning, suggest several findings. A group of studies found that teachers tended to follow a model of planning unlike the model proposed by the rational planning theorists. That is, rather than beginning with purposes and objectives in their planning of instructional experiences for students, teachers tended to begin with the context of teaching, next considered learning experiences likely to interest and motivate students, and only then considered the purposes of their teaching (Zahorik, 1970; Taylor, 1970; Zahorik, 1975; Morine, 1976; Yinger, 1978). In fact, the specification of objectives was not particularly an important planning concern for any of the teachers studied (Zahorik, 1970; Taylor, 1970; Zahorik, 1975; Joyce & Harootunian, 1966; Peterson, Marx, & Clark, 1978; Morine, 1976; Morine-Dershimer, 1979; Yinger, 1978). Further, Yinger (1978) and Morine's (1976) work indicates that, when planning,

teachers were more concerned about content and activities than about objectives and alternatives.

Clark and Elmore (1979) concluded that the first weeks of school were an important time of planning for the three teachers they studied. The planning decisions identified by the researchers provided the teachers with a framework for planning and teaching tasks for the remainder of the school year. Establishing a routine or workable daily and weekly schedule was of importance during this planning phase. A similar finding was supported in Yinger's (1978) work. In addition, Yinger's (1978) observational study revealed that many of the activities were well routinized by the middle of the school year.

Interactive Decision Making

The purpose of this section of the review of the literature is to present the studies that investigated the decisions teachers make during the act of teaching. Interactive decision making is the term used to refer to the decisions made during the act of teaching.

The studies in this group depend on the teacher's self report of the decisions made. The method of obtaining self report data is some variation of a procedure in which a videotape of the teacher's teaching performance is replayed to stimulate recall of the teaching situation (Clark & Yinger, 1979, p. 24).

Peterson and Clark (1978) investigated interactive decision making as a part of a larger study of teacher effectiveness (see Clark, Snow, & Shavelson, 1976). Twelve experienced teachers taught a social studies lesson to three different classes of eight

randomly assigned junior high students. Each class was taught the social studies lesson over three 50-minute sessions on a given day. At the beginning of each teaching day, teachers were given 90 minutes to plan the day's teaching. Following the planning phase, the teachers then conducted the class sessions, which were videotaped. At the end of the day, students completed several test measures while the teachers were interviewed using a "stimulated recall" technique (Peterson & Clark, 1978, p. 556).

Interactive decision making was explored by showing four brief (two-to-three minute) videotaped segments from the class sessions in order to stimulate recall of what the teacher was thinking about while teaching. After viewing each segment, the teacher responded to a structured interview involving a sequence of four questions:

1. What were you doing in this segment and why?
2. What were you noticing about the students? How were the students responding?
3. Were you thinking of any alternative actions or strategies at that time?
4. Did any student reactions cause you to act differently than you had planned? (Peterson & Clark, 1978, p. 559)

The major findings of this study included (1) teachers considered alternative strategies only when the instructional process was judged to be going poorly, (2) teachers used student participation and involvement as their primary cue to judge how well the instructional process was going, and (3) it was found that teachers rarely changed their strategy from what they had planned, even when instruction was going poorly. It was concluded that the interactive decision making of these teachers was more "a process of fine tuning

and adapting to aspects of the situation that were unpredictable in principal, such as, specific student responses" (Clark & Yinger, 1979, p. 248).

Morine and Vallance (1975) also used the method of stimulated recall in their study of teacher and pupil perceptions of classroom interactions. This part of the study was based on the researchers' belief that:

> teaching behavior is based, at least in part, upon conscious decisions that teachers make as they work with pupils, and, that these decisions are based upon the types of information that teachers collect during classroom interaction including their perceptions of students and their judgements of what teaching moves are appropriate or inappropriate in specific situations. (Morine & Vallance, 1975, p. 3)

Forty second- and fifth-grade teachers were asked to identify decisions they had made while viewing a videotape of a reading lesson they had taught earlier. The lessons were planned for twenty minutes but were videotaped up to thirty minutes if they continued that long.

The questions during the interview focused on the teachers' thinking as they decided what to do next at various points in the lesson. The teachers were instructed to stop the tape whenever they reached a point where they were consciously saying to themselves, "Let's see, I think I'd better do <u>this</u> now," or, "I guess I'll try doing this" (Morine & Vallance, 1975, p. 49). The interviewer also stopped the tape at various points, and the teacher was asked the following questions:

a. What were you thinking at that point?

b. What did you notice that made you sort of stop and think? (If necessary, add, was there anything pupils were doing that made you sort of stop and think?)

c. What did you decide to do?

d. Was there anything else you thought of doing at that point, but decided against?

e. What was it? (Morine & Vallance, 1975, p. 50).

At the end of the viewing session, the interviewer summarized the session by asking if, from the decisions the teacher had made during the session, could the teacher specify which two or three decisions were particularly important for the success of the lesson and why (Morine & Vallance, 1975, p. 50).

Three major types of decisions were identified. These included (1) interchanges, which were the decisions relating to instantaneous verbal interaction, (2) planned activities, which were decisions directly related to preactive decisions, and (3) unplanned activities, which were decisions to include an activity not originally part of the lesson (Morine & Vallance, 1975, p. 89-90). In general, the researchers found that nearly all of the decisions could be categorized as either interchanges or planned decisions (approximately 48 percent in each category, Morine & Vallance, 1975, p. 94).

A general pattern that emerged across all teachers indicated that teachers focused more on instructional process than on students' characteristics or behavior when commenting on the focus of their decisions. However, when the teachers were asked to comment on the considerations and bases for the teachers' decisions, the teachers then talked in terms of their major focus as dealing with the

characteristics of students. Morine and Vallance also found that few alternatives to their decisions were mentioned by the teachers and that references to cognitive aspects of the lesson were more frequent than references to affective aspects (Morine & Vallance, 1975, p. 93).

Morine-Dershimer (1979) investigated the relationship between teacher plan and classroom reality in individual lessons. The discrepancy between these two entities turned out to be an important factor in the information processing and decision making of the South Bay teachers (Morine-Dershimer, 1979, p. 1).

In this study, a case study approach of three teachers' reading lessons were reported. The category system used to code stimulated recall protocols was a refined version of a system Morine-Dershimer and her colleague Vallance developed in an earlier study of teacher decision-making (Morine & Vallance, 1975). This system included four major types of categories:

1. Type of Decision Point (pupil-related decision, plan-related decision, supplementary decision, explanation of routine procedures, or description of specific events).

2. Instructional Concerns (pupil learning, pupil attitudes, pupil behaviors, lesson content-information, lesson content-skill or process, typical procedures, modification of procedures, commercially produced instructional materials, teacher-produced instructional materials, plan-related pacing, or pupil-related pacing).

3. Sources of Information (observation of pupils' verbal behavior, observation of pupils' nonverbal behavior, teacher expectation, teacher recall of prior knowledge, or teacher records).

4. Teacher Awareness (principles of instruction identified, teacher feelings expressed, or alternative procedures identified). (Morine-Dershimer, 1979, p. 2)

In addition, at any one decision point, teachers were encouraged to mention instructional concerns, sources of information, or types of awareness. For each of these sub-categories, a measure indicating the percentage of these decision points was developed.

The case studies indicated that when teachers perceived little or no discrepancy between their plan and classroom reality, the teachers processed information derived largely from preformed images of the lesson and the pupils, and matters were handled by established routines. If the teacher perceived a minor discrepancy between his/her plan and classroom reality, the teacher processed information derived largely from pupils' behavior exhibited during the lesson, but observation of pupils was focused by the plan the teacher had in mind. "In flight" decisions (i.e., on-the-spot or context specific decisions) were made in this situation (Morine-Dershimer, 1979, p. 25).

However, in the case when the teacher perceived a more serious discrepancy between his/her plan and the reality of classroom life, the teacher processed more varied information about pupils. Observation in this situation was not clearly focused by the teacher plan, and took on some qualities of a search strategy. Decisions in this situation were postponed, and the teacher shifted from discussing decisions being made to providing descriptions of the lesson events (Morine-Dershimer, 1979, p. 26).

Morine-Dershimer (1979) concluded that the amount of perceived discrepancy between the teacher's plan and the realities of classroom life bears a relationship to not only the way teachers process

information in these situations but also to the type of decision made during the interactive phase of teaching (Morine-Dershimer, 1979, p. 27).

Marland's (1977) study of interactive decision making as reported by Clark and Yinger (1978) investigated the interactive thoughts of volunteer teachers during the interactive phase. There were six teachers, two each at the first-, third-, and sixth-grade levels in two schools. Each teacher participated in two stimulated recall sessions using videotapes of lessons in language arts and mathematics for teachers from the first and third grades and two lessons in language arts for teachers from the sixth grade.

Marland's analysis of the transcripts of the stimulated recall interviews was extremely thorough. He used two category systems, one being a system he developed himself. This system was based on what he called "thought units." Teacher statements were judged to fit into one of eleven categories: perceptions, interpretation, prospective tactical deliberation, retrospective tactical deliberation, reflection, anticipation, information--pupil, information--other, goal statement, fantasy, and feeling (Clark & Yinger, 1979, p. 249).

His second system of analysis did not involve categorizing every sentence or thought unit in the transcripts. For this part of the analysis, Marland examined the transcripts for what he called instances of psychologically meaningful events. These categories of analysis included: decisions, forfeit decisions, deliberate acts, impulsive acts, cognitive linking, field detachment, externality, internality, principles, beliefs, rules, case histories, and examples

of accurate or inaccurate recall by teachers (Clark & Yinger, 1979, p. 250). He summarized the results of the analysis in terms of the content of teachers' interactive thoughts, the functions of teachers' interactive thoughts, and individual differences in teachers' interactive thoughts.

Content of Interactive Thoughts

The teachers studied by Marland reported thinking about topics and events in the present, past, and future. Present events included student behavior, teachers' interpretations of students' behavior, and the teachers' own affective states. Teachers' thoughts about the past included reflections on past events concerned with a lesson and retrieval from memory of factual information thought to be useful in preparing for the lesson. This information included the personal information about particular students' curriculum content, principles of teaching, and beliefs about children. Topics of teachers' thoughts about the future included tactics to be used next, predictions or visualizations of directions the lesson might take, expectations for students' behavior and learning objectives (Clark & Yinger, 1979, p. 250).

Marland identified four functions of teachers' interactive thoughts which he believed accounted for the majority of cases. These functions include: correcting or adjusting the lesson when it is not going smoothly; dealing with parts of the lesson that are unpredictable in principle (for example, how to prompt a student who gives a partial answer); regulating one's own behavior by reference

to certain principles of teaching; and adapting instruction to individual students. Absent from the teachers' interview protocols were four other possible functions of teachers' interactive thoughts: self monitoring, verifying interpretation of students' behavior, considering alternative teaching tactics, and optimizing instruction. Teachers in this study were found to rarely give any consideration to their own teaching style, its effectiveness, or its impact on students. Instead, they tended to operate on the basis of hunches and intuition about the cognitive and affective states of students. They did not consider first impressions as hypotheses to be tested by further observations or direct questions. Teachers did think about tactical moves to be made in the lesson but usually did not consider alternatives. Finally, the teachers did not tend to think about improving an instructional situation unless it was going poorly.

In the final category of results, Marland found an interesting relationship between an individual difference measure and teachers' self reports of their interactive thoughts. This finding developed when one teacher, who was characterized as having an abstract belief system, was considered more open to making adjustments in expectations held for students then the remaining five teachers, all of whom were characterized as having concrete belief systems. There did not appear to be any other relationships between an individual difference measure and teachers' self reports of their interactive thoughts.

In summary, the studies on interactive decision-making suggest several findings. Peterson and Clark (1978) found that teachers considered alternative strategies only when the instructional process

was going poorly, a finding consistent with the work of Morine and Vallance (1975), Morine-Dershimer (1967), and Marland (1977). In addition, Peterson and Clark (1978) found that teachers rarely changed their strategy from what they had planned, even when instruction was going poorly.

Teachers in the Peterson and Clark (1978) study used student participation and involvement as their primary cue to judge how well the instructional process was going. Teachers in the Morine and Vallance (1975) study focused more on the instructional process than on student behavior when commenting on the focus of their decisions. However, when the teachers were asked to comment on considerations and bases for teachers' decisions, the teachers then talked in terms of their major focus as dealing with the characteristics of students.

Three major types of decisions were identified during the interactive phase of teaching in the Morine and Vallance (1975) study. These included decisions labeled as (1) interchanges, (2) planned activities, and (3) unplanned activities. The researchers found nearly all the decisions made by teachers could be categorized as either interchange (decisions relating to instantaneous verbal interaction) or planned decisions (decisions directly related to preactive decisions).

Morine-Dershimer (1979) found the discrepancy between teacher plan and classroom reality as an important factor in the information processing and decision making of the South Bay teachers. If teachers perceived little discrepancy or no discrepancy between their plan and classroom reality, teachers processed information derived largely from pre-formed images of the lesson and pupils, and matters

were handled by established classroom routines. If a minor discrepancy was noted, the teacher processed information based on pupil behavior exhibited during the lesson, and "in flight" decisions were made in the situation. If a major discrepancy was perceived by the teacher, information was processed from varied information about pupils, and decisions were postponed. Further, teachers in this situation shifted from discussing decisions to providing descriptions of the lesson events.

Marland (1977) summarized the results of his interactive decision making study in terms of the content of teachers' interactive thoughts, the functions of teachers' interactive thoughts, and individual differences in teachers' interactive thoughts. Teachers studied by Marland reported thinking about topics and events in the present, past, and future. However, the teachers in this study were found to rarely give any consideration to their own teaching style, its effectiveness, or its impact on students. Instead, they tended to operate on the basis of hunches and intuition about the cognitive and affective states of students.

Evaluative Decision Making

Shavelson (1976) characterizes teaching as consisting of three phases. These phases include the preactive or planning phase, interactive or teaching phase, and the postactive or evaluative phase. The evaluative phase of teaching involves the teacher "collecting and using information about the correspondence between the actual outcome of a teaching method and the intended outcome (the teacher's objective or goal) for judging the worth of prior decisions" (Shavelson,

1976, p. 401). This information is then used in making current and future decisions.

A review of the literature on teacher decision making did not provide a body of literature on evaluative decision making. Shavelson (1976) claims this area proves to be most problematic in the model of decision making (Shavelson, 1976, p. 401). Perhaps the lack of conceptualization of the notions of evaluation in the decision-making model in part explains the reason for the lack of research on evaluative decision making.

Summary of Chapter II

The purpose of this chapter was to present the current body of literature on teacher decision making. Since it has only been within the last five years that research on teaching has focused on questions concerning the mental life of teachers, only a limited number of studies were presented.

The decision model proposed by Shavelson (1976) is presented in order to provide an understanding of the application of the statistical models of decision theory to phases of teaching. The decision model assumes teachers' decisions are intended to optimize student outcomes (Shavelson, 1976, p. 392). In addition to his outline of the decision making teachers ought to follow during the preactive, interactive, and evaluative phases of teaching, studies on the decision model are presented.

Several studies on teacher thinking, specifically in the area of teacher planning, are presented in order to provide insights into the decision making of teachers during the preactive setting. Studies

that investigate the decisions teachers make during the act of teaching, or the interactive phase, were presented to provide insight into the decision making of teachers during teaching. No studies in the area of evaluative decision making were found.

CHAPTER III

DESIGN AND PROCEDURES

Introduction

The purpose of this study was to provide an understanding of teacher decision making as it shaped the course of reading instruction in four classrooms. Using the theory of participant observation and fieldwork techniques, data were collected on the four teachers studied in order to identify and classify the decisions these teachers made which appeared to shape the course of reading instruction in their classrooms. As well, the data were collected in the actual classroom settings in order to describe how the decisions teachers made were reflected in the course of practice in their classrooms.

Since teacher decision making is not independent of the content in which it occurs, Section I of this chapter contains brief descriptions of the teachers studied and their classrooms. In Section II of this chapter, the method of data collection and analysis procedures used will be presented. The method of classification of the teachers' decisions and practices will also be included in this section. The final section of this chapter contains a summary of the chapter.

Section I

Description of the Teachers Studied and their Classrooms

Introduction

The teachers studied were chosen from among the twenty-three classroom teachers who volunteered to be observed as a part of the on-going study of Teachers Conceptions of Reading at Michigan State University (see Appendix A).

For the purpose of this study, which focused on teacher decision making as it shaped the course of reading instruction, four classroom teachers were selected on the basis of the following criteria.

1. All were observed by this researcher as a part of the Conceptions of Reading study;
2. Each teacher established reading groups in his/her classroom;
3. The teachers were solely responsible for the instruction planned and presented in their reading classrooms; and
4. Each used materials that allowed for teacher decision making to occur. (This criterion eliminated "script" type materials as exemplified by the Distar program.)

Once a teacher had volunteered to participate in the Conceptions of Reading study, a general procedure was followed in order to seek university and school district permission. First, in order for the research team to collaborate with teachers in a school district, the program of research had to be approved at the university level through the Human Subjects Committee. Following the Human Subject Committee's

approval of the research, superintendents of each teacher's school district were contacted in order to secure the school district's permission to conduct collaborative research. Once permission had been granted through the superintendents, the principal of each teacher was contacted and, upon their approval, the teachers were notified of their acceptance. A packet of materials describing the program of research, the superintendent and principal permission forms, and teacher release forms were provided for the permanent files for each school district (see Appendix B).

The Participants and Their Environmental Settings

To protect the identity of the teachers studied, the names of the teachers, their school buildings, and their school districts have been changed. However, the data presented under the fictionalized names are factual.

Mrs. Perry. Teacher One was a thirty-six year old married, white female. She began teaching in a small rural community twenty miles from a large midwestern city. In her thirteen years in this school district, she had always held a second grade teaching position in one of the three elementary schools in the district.

She became a teacher in the district as a result of a teacher shortage in the community. Having newly moved from another midwestern state with her husband who had come to Michigan for a job, she found herself with a Bachelor of Science degree in psychology and a valued candidate for a teaching position. Her participation in the

Conceptions of Reading project was based on her reading belief system and the fact that her school represented a school typical of a low socioeconomic school setting (see Appendix C).

The twenty-four students comprising Mrs. Perry's second grade class were drawn from a community comprised of approximately 3,500 predominately white, low-to-middle income level working families. While farming was once the major occupation in the rural community, at the time of the study most of the families received their income through employment in a large car factory twenty miles from the community.

For this researcher, collaborating with Mrs. Perry provided an experience in a school setting not known to the researcher before this time. In general, teachers in the school district were highly respected by members of the community and their own children served as the "good models" in school. It was not uncommon for a parent-teacher conference to occur in the local grocery store, nor was it uncommon for the high school band to be heard playing through the community in practice for the latest parade.

Most members of the community had rather strong feelings about the reasons for the "moral decay" in today's society. It was easy to learn what was going on in the community from overhearing conversations with the lunchroom personnel, the secretary, and the bus driver. The janitor policed the bathrooms and patrolled the hallways when students were going to lunch.

A rigid atmosphere of orderliness and righteousness seemed to prevail. There was no morning recess for the children, since the teachers and students in self-contained classrooms were to remain

working on the basics of reading, writing, and math. According to the principal, that's why the teachers and students came to school. Gym, art, and music existed in the program but were not considered to be an integral part of going to school. In order to get to the art room, one had to go through various parts of the building and walk a distance outside of the building to get to the portable classroom housing the art room. It was only within this room that student's artwork was displayed. While observing in other schools, assemblies, special programs, and library periods often interrupted an observation. The observations of Mrs. Perry's classroom were never interrupted by these activities.

The school where Mrs. Perry's classroom was located was built in 1912. Several additions have been made to the original building. The building housed thirty-one full time teachers and 850 students ranging from grades kindergarten through four. In addition, a full time music, gym, art, speech, and two reading specialists serviced the students. The reading specialists were funded by state and federal funds. Their consultant work with teachers was minimal, and the majority of their day was spent working with small groups of children on reading skills. The teacher stated that the consultants were "helpful," but that they provided "insights into kids" that Mrs. Perry felt were not always accurate.

The teacher reported that she experienced very little contact with the principal and/or assistant principal. She felt she was not under any principal and/or school district constraints when determining her programs, activites, or testing procedures. With the exception of the fourth grade Michigan Assessment Test, there was

no district-wide and/or individual school-wide testing in reading. The district, however, had adopted a reading basal text series for district wide use.

Mrs. Perry's classroom was a self-contained unit housing a student coat area, sink, and drinking fountain. Blackboards extended across one wall in the front of the room, while bulletin boards extended across the back of the room. Windows comprised one-half of the outside wall, and the ledge below the windows served as a home for numerous plants, two hampsters, and a bowl of guppies. A parakeet was housed in a cage among a series of hanging plants suspended from the ceiling on teacher-made macrame' plant hangers.

The twenty-eight desks were grouped in various combinations of two, fours, and sixes. Groups of chairs surrounded the writing, art, and listening centers. The four shelf bookcase, in the back of the room, held an assortment of paperback books, hard cover books, magazines, and newspapers.

The teacher's desk was pushed off to one side of the room. The focal point of the room was the reading table located in the front of the room. The rectangular shaped table was able to accommodate nine children, and the table was located near the blackboard which the teacher used frequently during her reading group instruction time. It was within this physical arrangement that Mrs. Perry and the twenty-four second grade students (ten boys and fourteen girls) went about the business of teaching and learning.

Miss Delta. Teacher Two was a twenty-three year old single white female. Miss Delta received her Bachelor of Arts degree from

Michigan State University in elementary education in 1975. At the time of the study, she was pursuing a Master of Arts degree in reading instruction at Michigan State University. As a part of the larger study of the Conceptions of Reading, Miss Delta was selected as a linear skills candidate (see Appendix A).

The fall of 1977 marked the beginning of her third year of teaching. In her first two years of teaching experience, she taught in a team teaching situation with two experienced teachers in an open classroom setting. Kindergarten and first grade students comprised the student body of the classroom at that time.

The classroom observed in this study was in a school new to the teacher and, although she had regularly scheduled an aide and a parent volunteer to be present in the classroom, this was her first teaching experience in a self-contained classroom. Her class was composed of seventeen first grade students (seven girls and ten boys) and seven second grade students (three girls and four boys). All white and heterogeneously grouped with respect to ability, the students ranged in age from five and one-half years old to eight and one-half years old.

The first/second grade classroom observed in the study was located in one of the two smallest schools in a midwestern school district which serves 6,000 students. The community is comprised of approximately 5,000 predominately white, low-to-middle level income working families. The majority of families received their income fifteen miles away through employment in a large car factory in a midwestern city.

The school in which Miss Delta's classroom was located was built twenty-two years ago. It housed nine full time classroom teachers for the 243 pupils ranging from grades kindergarten through five. A part time music, gym, speech, and reading consultant serviced the students. The teacher reported that the reading consultant was available "for children with special learning and reading problems." She continued, however, to state that she rarely sought out the advice or help of the consultant in testing or planning classroom activities for the children in her room.

The teacher reported she was free to select her own materials from a variety of materials housed in the school. As well, she was not under any principal or school board constraints in determining programs, activities, and informal testing procedures for the children in her classroom. The principal's only intervention was to have all of the second graders in her room (as well as the other second graders in the building) take a standardized test. The principal told the teacher the purpose of the testing was "to find areas of competencies, not solely reading." The teacher offered the comment, "the principal decided this was a good idea."

The classroom was a self-contained unit housing its own bathroom, sink, drinking fountain, and student coat area. Blackboards extended across one wall in the front of the room, and a smaller section of blackboard and a bulletin board, sink, and cupboard and bathroom stretched across the back wall of the room. Windows comprised one wall of the room, and the remaining wall was devoted to book shelves above the students' coat area.

The twenty-four student desks were grouped in sixes serving as work areas for the students. An additional four desks were grouped together to form the listening center area. Four desks also comprised the science center/quiet work area. Two individual table desks made up an area for the math materials.

A nine-foot by twelve-foot carpeted area in the front of the room served as a meeting place for the teacher and students. Next to this area was one large bookcase which served to house individual dishpans for each student's materials. Four additional smaller bookcases housed books for the children to read; two art easels held examples of well-known artists' works; two large barrels served as tables for games; three crates were used for plants and little student desks; and a comfortable, saggy reading chair sat in the reading corner.

Mrs. Bailey. Teacher Three, Mrs. Bailey, was a thirty-seven year old married, white female. Mrs. Bailey was in her third year of teaching while under study. However, she had been an aide in several classrooms in the school district and spent thirteen years as a substitute teacher in the community's schools before assuming the position she held when she became a participant in the Conceptions of Reading research project. She had received her Bachelor of Arts degree from a small midwestern college. Her participation in the Conceptions of Reading project was based in her inferred reading belief system and the fact that she was a teacher in a high socio-economic school setting (see Appendix C).

The twenty-two students which comprised the student population of Mrs. Bailey's classroom were drawn from a community that surrounded a large midwestern state university. The community, considered by many as the original community, remains stable and slow paced in spite of the mixture of students, professors, faculty, and professionals that comprise the neighborhood. Nestled in the middle of the community is the school building which the principal and teacher state has a high degree of parent and community involvement.

Mrs. Bailey was a first grade teacher at the time of the study. She was highly thought of as a competent teacher by her colleagues and by the parents in the community. One was struck by a sense of orderliness, purpose, activity, and contentment on the part of the children and teacher as one entered room 12.

Mrs. Bailey was extremely enthusiastic about her participation in the Conceptions of Reading research project. She felt very strongly that her collaboration in the project was an important step in helping to understand the profession to which she is strongly committed. In fact, she had such a busy meeting schedule with school personnel and parents for whom she was responsible that when it became necessary to schedule an appointment for an interview with this researcher, she scheduled the appointment for 3:30 on a Friday afternoon. Feeling she might want to get home early on the last afternoon of the week, it was suggested that the appointment be scheduled for the following week. Assuring the researcher that "Friday was just like any other day," the interview was held and lasted until 5:30 p.m.

Mrs. Bailey's classroom was located in a building built in the early 1900's. Additions over the years to the original building blend in well with the original style. The building houses twenty-two full time teachers for approximately 500 students ranging from grades kindergarten through four. In addition, a full time music, gym, art, speech, and reading specialist serviced the students.

The teacher reported that she experienced an excellent professional relationship with her building principal. Unique to this school was the dual position held by the building principal, who also served as the building's reading consultant. At the end of the previous school year, the principal asked Mrs. Bailey if she would be willing to pilot a new handwriting program. She reviewed the program and instituted the program in her classroom this year. Not only was Mrs. Bailey cooperative, but the principal valued her critical appraisal of materials and situations. He often asked for her insights on matters before making a decision. As well, the teacher reported she often talked with him because she needed a "sounding board" when faced with a difficult decision. The teacher reported she was not under any principal and/or school district constraints in determining programs, activities, or testing procedures.

Mrs. Bailey's first grade class was comprised of twenty-two students, of which twelve were boys and ten were girls. The classroom was a self-contained unit, with an adjoining glassed-in room that served as a storage/art/science activity room. The bathrooms and a drinking fountain were also housed in the area.

Blackboards extended across the front of the room, while the bulletin boards and built-in cupboards covered the side wall of the classroom. Windows extended the full length of the outside wall. Activity centers were in various places around the room. The window wall housed the library center, a game center, a handwriting center, a science center, and a math center. A listening center was stationed in the back of the room. A desk placed on the carpeted meeting area served as a writing center. Another desk located in the front of the room was a math game area.

Large tables were grouped together in the center of the room which served as "desk" areas for the children. Adjacent to the desk area was the focal point ot the room--the "reading circle" area. The round reading table, a movable blackboard, a card chart, and a book-shelf filled with the teacher's reading materials comprised the area where the majority of reading instruction occurred.

Mrs. Donlan. Teacher Four was a twenty-six year old married, white female. Mrs. Donlan received her Bachelor of Science degree in 1973 from Michigan State University in elementary education. In 1977 she completed her Master of Arts degree from Michigan State University in reading instruction. As a participant in the larger study of Conceptions of Reading, Mrs. Donlan was selected as a skills/integrated whole candidate for the research project (see Appendix A).

Mrs. Donlan was an energetic teacher and popular with her colleagues, with the students in her classroom, as well as with the students from other classrooms. At the time of the study, Mrs. Donlan was beginning her sixth year of teaching in a suburban midwestern

school district near a large state university. It was her second year in the particular school building located in a community comprised of families from various socioeconomic (lower to upper middle) situations, and various differing cultural backgrounds.

The school served 310 students in grades kindergarten through five. A staff of eleven full time teachers had available to them the services of a full time reading consultant, counselor, gym and music teacher, psychologist, resource teacher, librarian, and Title I reading teacher. The teacher reported the reading consultant was available but that she did not consult this person often. The teacher felt the reading consultant should be important, but remarked "this area needs strengthening" in her particular building.

The teacher reported she was free to select her own materials from a variety of materials housed in the school. As well, she was not under any principal or school board constraints in determining programs, activities, and informal testing procedures for the children in her classroom. However, she was required to administer a district-wide criterion referenced reading test. The teacher felt the test "didn't tell her anything." She believed her testing procedures were more thorough and yielded the information she needed to know to plan for each student's reading program.

Seven of the classrooms in the school building where Mrs. Donlan taught were self-contained units. Mrs. Donlan's classroom was located in an "open quad" comprised of four classrooms. Unique in this case was that Mrs. Donlan's overall management and conceptual decisions were shared by the three other teachers in the open quad. The four teachers, while maintaining separate classrooms and separate

decision making, believed that by working together they were able to teach most effectively by sharing teaching responsibilities. They believed they could better serve the "needs and interests of all students" by collectively planning activities. As a group, they carefully planned a strategy involving work centers and team teaching.

Mrs. Donlan's class was composed of twenty-two second and third grade students. Eleven students were second graders. Seven of these students were boys and four were girls. Eleven children were third graders. Four of the third graders were boys, and seven were girls. Two children were black and one was Oriental. The group of six and one-half to eight and one-half year old children were assigned to the class as a result of parents requesting placement in an open area classroom. Mrs. Donlan teamed with another teacher who also had a second/third grade combination room. One of the teachers in the quad arrangement was a male fourth grade teacher, while the fifth grade teacher was a female.

The carpeted open quad containing the classrooms was arranged around the focal area of the working-learning centers. The large area for centers housed a reading center, math center, social studies center, science center, handwriting center, publishing center, and a calendar-activity center. Folding walls served to shield each center from one another. Each center had a table and chairs so work could be completed at the center. Four brightly painted utility wire spools were in the middle of the center and served as work tables.

One wall in the center area served as a material storage area for the four classrooms. It was filled with books, kits, filmstrips, tapes, and games. A piano painted red, white, and blue sat near this area. On the other side of the center area was an old red bathtub with a pillow in it, two large sofas, and an old chair--all serving as a quiet area for reading. A large cupboard held dishpans containing student materials.

Within Mrs. Donlan's classroom area, the student desks were grouped in fours and sixes. A bright green utility wire spool served as a reading table in the "front" of the room. The reading table was kidney-bean shaped and was also located at the "front" of the room.

The teacher's desk was shoved in a corner, and a student quiet time desk was located near it. One wall was covered with cupboards, a sink, drinking fountain, and an area for student materials. Two listening centers, a science center, a reading center, and a time out center were arranged on the periphery of the room.

Section II

Method

Introduction and Background on the Method

This study was designed to investigate teacher decision making as it shaped the course of reading instruction in four teachers' classrooms. The ethnographic method of participant observation was selected. It was through this method that the researcher was able to talk directly with teachers and study their classroom situations,

thereby serving to promote an "understanding about the realities of learning and teaching reading" (Singer & Ruddell, 1976, p. 7).

Borrowing Harry Wolcott's (1977) definition of ethnography as "literally a picture of the way of life of some group of people," the initial concern of the study was with the "way of life" in the four classrooms with particular emphasis on the reading period. By focusing on teacher thinking and decision making, the study was concerned with exploring that which constituted "reading instruction" (1) for the teacher and (2) for the teacher and students as they collectively made sense of their world in the classroom.

Using the theory of participant observation and the fieldwork techniques of the participant observer, data were collected in each of the four classrooms. McCall and Simmons (1977) describe participant observation as a characteristic blend or combination of methods and techniques that are used in studying certain types of subject matter, i.e., social communities like hospitals, primative societies, informal groups. Rather than being a single method, participant observation is characteristic of a style of research making use of a number of methods and techniques including, "observation, informant interviewing, document analysis, respondent interviewing, and participation with self analysis" (McCall & Simmons, 1977, p. 5). techniques are typically and to some degree necessarily involved in a field study of any complex social organization, and the techniques are viewed as "especially important for obtaining a particular type of information" (McCall & Simmons, 1977, p. 5).

In much the same way as the lone anthropologist living among an isolated people, this researcher found her work:

> involving some amount of genuinely social interaction in the field with the subjects of the study, some direct observation of relevant events, some formal and a great deal of informal interviewing, some systematic counting, some collection of documents and artifacts, and open-endedness in the directions the study takes (McCall & Simmons, 1977, p. 1).

In summary, participant observation is not a single method but a type of research enterprise, a style of several methods toward a particular end, the "end" being analytical description of the complex social organization under study. The basic concepts underlying analytical description will be discussed by the writer in the next section of the chapter under the heading of data analysis. For the purposes of this portion of the chapter on methodology, the data collection procedures used in the study will be outlined.

Data Collection Procedures

> In participant observation studies, data collection is not a distinct phase in the research process but, rather, is one analytically distinguishable aspect of a multiplex process. Design, analysis, and write-ups are also being carried out simultaneously with data collection and all four aspects continually influence and impinge upon one another (McCall & Simmons, 1977, p. 61).

In order to answer the research questions in this study, data were collected using a blend of research techniques (McCall & Simmons, 1977, p. 61). The techniques used in the study include participant observation, informant interviewing, and audio-taped recordings of reading group sessions.

Participant observation. Zelditch (1977) describes this phase as one in which the field worker directly observes and also participates in the sense that (s)he has durable social relations in the complex social organization being studied. (S)he may or may not play an active part in events, or (s)he may interview participants in events which may be considered part of the process of observation (McCall & Simmons, 1977, p. 9).

For each of the teachers studied, this researcher was a participant observer in their classrooms; that is, the researcher directly observed the activities of the teacher and students in the classroom. The researcher participated in the sense that the children were told by the teachers studied that the researcher was there taking notes in order to write a story about their classroom life. Active participation in the events in the classroom on the part of the researcher included helping children with snowsuits and boots at recess time, putting chairs on table tops at the end of the school day, and listening to teachers at break times as they talked about problems they were experiencing.

This researcher did not actively participate in the classroom during an instructional segment. During that time, this researcher was recording the activities that were occurring in the classroom. However, it was not at all uncommon for children to come to me for clarification of assignment directions or help on a problem. Students soon came to understand that the teacher would have to handle these problems.

The data collected during classroom observations were in the form of field notes and audio-taped recordings of the teachers' and students' participation during the reading period. Field notes were a paper and pencil record containing the "activities, sights, sounds, smells, and events" (Schatzman & Strauss, 1973, p. 52) occurring in a classroom on the particular day of the observation. As well, the field notes contained a log of the "relatively casual, informal continuous interviews" (McCall & Simmons, 1977, p. 8). Upon returning to the university from a classroom observation, the field notes were typed by the secretarial staff. Due to time limitations, rarely were the field notes elaborated upon by the researcher at this time. However, instead of only taking "very brief--merely words, phrases, possibly a drawing" (Schatzman & Strauss, 1973, p. 95), notes taken for this study were detailed records of a teacher's classroom practice.

In addition, during each cycle of data collection, a cassette tape recorder was used to record reading group sessions in each of the classrooms studied. Audio-taped recordings of the group sessions were collected in the attempt to "glean" the obvious, as well as the not so obvious, relationships and activities occurring within the group setting. Once the tapes had been transcribed and typed by the secretarial staff, the tapes were catalogued and filed as a part of the permanent data for the Conceptions of Reading project. Retrieval of the tapes during analysis for use in conjunction with the typed transcription provided a further source of data on the activities, tones, and impressions of the classrooms studied.

Interviews. Two methods of interviewing were employed in the study which included an informal interview and a formal interview.

Informal interviews consisted of questions developed by the researcher which were designed to specifically probe a teacher as to the "why and hows" behind some observable activity.

These interviews generally did not last more than ten or fifteen minutes and occurred during a teacher's scheduled break time, out on the playground, or at the end of the school day. These data were collected generally on a daily basis or at least twice during the observational cycles.

Formal interviews varied from the informal interviews in several ways. First, they were structured in format and typically took two hours to complete. The interviews were audio-tape recorded and later transcribed for analysis. Secondly, these interviews were designed to probe the teachers' thinking and decision-making concerning general issues about reading instruction. These data were collected four times a year for the teachers studied (see Appendix D).

Cycles of data collection. The data were collected four times during the school year for each of the teachers studied. The time periods of data collection for this study were based on the work of Yinger (1978). In his research on teacher planning, Yinger (1978) isolated four critical times during the school year which the teacher he studied identified as important periods of time for teacher planning.

Data were collected in a cycle format. The first cycle of data collection occurred in the first month of school. Generally, this

cycle began in the second week of school in September and continued through the first week in October. The data collected in the second cycle occurred before Thanksgiving and concluded early in December. The third cycle of data collection began in the middle of February and continued through the middle of March. The final cycle of data collection coincided with the end of the school year and occurred in the month of May and early June.

Within each of the cycles, the classrooms studied were observed from three to five half days and one full day. Interim visits of a half day were scheduled in between the cycles. The interview materials were collected before, during, and after school within each cycle.

Data Analysis Procedures

The participant observer gathers data by participating in the daily life of the group or organization he studies (McCall & Simmons, 1969, p. 245). Observational research produces an immense amount of detailed description, and, in the case of this study, teacher interview data, field notes, and transcriptions of audio-taped reading groups produced approximately 1,500 pages of such material.

Integral to the analysis of the data was Denzin's (1970; 1978) principle of triangulation. That is, the collection of observational data was used to validate and corroborate inferences drawn from the interviews. In the same way, the interview data served to substantiate findings inferred from the observational data.

The data were analyzed according to a three-stage process which included (1) the identification of the teachers' categories of

decisions, (2) the identification of the instructional practices of the teachers studied, and (3) the comparison of the categories of decisions identified and the instructional practices identified in order to infer how teacher decision making appeared to shape the course of reading instruction for each of the teachers studied.

Identification of the teacher's categories of decisions. As a first step toward understanding a field of human activity, one must organize the raw observations into a descriptive system. Recalling that participant observation is not a single method but rather a style combining several methods, participant observation strives toward the goal of analytic description of a complex social organization. Analytic description is much more than the simple description of a particular phenomenon typified by the work of a journalist or writer. An analytic description (1) employs the concepts, propositions, and empirical generalization of a body of scientific theory as the basic guides in analysis and reporting; (2) employs thorough and systematic collection, classification, and reporting of facts; and (3) generates new empirical generalizations (and perhaps concepts and propositions as well) based on these data (McCall & Simmons, 1977, p. 3).

In order to understand teacher decision making in this study, the analytic descriptions of each teacher's decision making were developed. To develop an analytic description of each teacher, the data were first organized into a descriptive system consisting of categories. In some cases, one has only to apply categories already set up by previous investigators or by the society itself, and

proceed with the further stages of analysis (McCall & Simmons, 1969, p. 173). In other cases, previously existing categories are clarified and revised by the attempt to apply them to a concrete body of data. In some cases, and in particular in the case of the study described here, the researcher must create his/her own classification category system for the material under study (McCall & Simmons, 1969, p. 173).

The identification of the teachers' categories of decisions were derived from the decision topics a teacher generated during an interview. For example, Teacher Three stated during the fall cycle interview:

> I decided to use the Ginn (textbook) series, because it has a balanced approach between phonetic development and comprehension (COR Interview, 9/19/78).

This statement was judged by this researcher as the teacher's decision concerning the selection of materials. The decisions teachers stated concerning some aspects of their reading instruction were compiled in list form.

The identification of the instructional practices of the teachers studied. In this stage, the observational data (i.e., field notes and transcripts of reading group sessions) were analyzed. The focus of this analysis was to identify the instructional practices of the teachers studied when they were observed teaching reading. Lists of instructional practices were developed for each teacher.

This portion of the analysis was accomplished in three stages. First, the field notes were analyzed by this researcher to identify a practice, that is, some method or technique the teacher employed in his/her program which appeared to provide reading instruction for

students. Second, the field notes and transcripts of audio-taped recordings of reading groups were analyzed to locate further pieces of evidence which indicated the practice was an integral part of the teacher's reading instruction. Finally, the observational data were analyzed to determine if the practice occurred over time or to some degree of regularity in the teacher's instruction. This step eliminated a one-time activity or practice being considered as characteristic of the teacher's instructional practice.

The comparison of the categories of decisions identified and the instructional practices identified. In this stage, the categories of decisions teachers stated they made and the actual instructional practices observed were compared in order to infer how teacher decision making appeared to shape the course of their reading instruction.

The classification system of the teachers' decision making and classroom practices. The categories of teachers' decisions and classroom practices that emerged from the analysis of data were classified according to preactive, interactive, and postactive or evaluative phases of teaching. The terms used in the instructional model of planning describe the particular phases involved in a teacher planning, implementing, and evaluating a lesson (Jackson, 1965; Shavelson, 1976; Yinger, 1978). For the purposes of this study, these terms were used to describe a particular time of the school year.

For example, four major types of decisions were identified as having been made by the teachers within the first month of school.

The first month of school appeared to represent a "preactive" or "planning phase" for each of the teachers studied. Following this phase, evidence from classroom observations revealed that the reading programs of the teachers studied were underway. This phase was characterized by the implementation and the modification of the teachers' preactive or planning phase decisions. This phase typically began late in September and continued well into the spring of the school year. During the last six weeks of school, the teachers studied began to reflect upon the school year. This phase of teaching was described as the postactive or evaluative phase.

Summary of Chapter III

The purpose of this chapter was to present the procedures used in the study of teacher decision making as it shaped the course of reading instruction in four classrooms. Since teacher decision making is not independent of the context in which it occurs, brief descriptions of the teachers studied and their classrooms were presented.

Using the theory of participant observation and fieldwork techniques, data were collected in order to identify the decisions teachers made and in order to describe how the decisions teachers made were reflected in their classroom practices. The data were analyzed according to a three-stage process. This process included (1) the identification of the teachers' categories of decisions, (2) the identification of the instructional practices of the teachers studied, and (3) the comparison of the categories of decisions identified in order to infer how teacher decision making appeared to

shape the course of reading instruction for each of the teachers studied.

The categories of teacher decision making and classroom practices were classified according to preactive, interactive, and evaluative phases of teaching. These terms were used to describe a particular time of the school year.

CHAPTER IV

FINDINGS

Introduction

The purpose of this study was to provide an understanding of teacher decision making as it shaped the course of reading instruction in four classrooms. Through analytic description of the patterns of teacher decision making, it was possible to identify and classify the decisions the four teachers made concerning their reading instruction. Further, through an analysis of the four teachers' decision making and classroom practices, it was possible to describe how teacher decisions were reflected in the course of reading instruction in their classrooms.

The purpose of this chapter is to present the major findings of the study. In the first section of this chapter, a case study for each of the teachers studied will be presented in order to describe each teacher's decision making and classroom practice. Section II will contain a summary of the findings across the four teachers studied. A discussion of the findings follows these sections, and a summary of the chapter is contained in the final section.

Section I - Case Studies

Case Study #1

Introduction

This case study provides a description of a teacher and her second grade class as they went about the business of teaching and learning over the period of a school year. The teacher in this study, Mrs. Perry, is a second grade teacher in a rural community. Her teaching assignment is in a self-contained classroom, and she has twenty-four students in her class.

Preactive or Planning Phase

The preactive or planning phase is characterized as a "reflective, thoughtful time" (Shavelson, 1976, p. 392). The planning phase for this teacher began in August and continued through the first week of school in September. It was during this time that the teacher made a variety of decisions concerning the reading instruction for the students in her class. However, it appeared that the combination of her beliefs about program selection, her beliefs about the teaching of reading, and her goals for the year served as the framework upon which she made decisions concerning her reading instruction. The following excerpts of interview statements illustrate the three components of the framework of thinking which Mrs. Perry operated from in making decisions concerning her reading instruction.

Mrs. Perry began thinking about the school year in August. As Mrs. Perry stated, "I think I probably do a lot of thinking about what's going to happen before the kids get here" (COR Interview

1/12/79). The teacher explained her "planning" began in August. This August planning did not involve handwritten plans but, rather, a time she characterized as thinking about the new school year. She described her August planning in the following interview segment.

> I guess it's partly just mentally just getting myself psyched up to come back. I guess I start thinking about things that I will be teaching. If there are new materials, then of course I try to get hold of those. What changes I anticipate, you know, like this past year we had an assistant principal joining. I don't know that I think in terms of specifics, like with reading stories, specific skills, that kind of thing. I guess what I really reflect back on is what I figure I didn't do so well and is there a better way to do it? Or, if we've been someplace during the summer and I've seen something and how that could be used. Sometimes it's making games and things like that...things that I know will come up. And, when you get right down to about the last week in August, then it's actually planning for what you are going to do that next week...that kind of thing ...how you'll handle those first few days when you're trying to sort everybody out and keep them from swinging from the light fixtures and everything (COR Interview 2/13/79).

Mrs. Perry stated that her program "does not change drastically from year to year" (COR Interview, 1/12/79). Before the school year began, she had knowledge of the materials she would be using and the fact that she would establish reading groups as the setting to accomplish her reading instruction. When asked in January to project her plans for the next year's reading program, she said:

> My program does not change drastically from year to year. I mean the materials are a given and you use what you've got. Um, so sure, I'll be using much the same materials unless we get something brand new all of a sudden. Reading groups I couldn't tell you. I guess I've never had less than four, but I've had as many as six or seven. Uh, for three or four years I was running five; they just split themselves that way. Uh, but now this year it's four and it's working out nicely with four. Um, sometimes it depends (COR Interview, 1/12/79).

During this phase, the teacher defined her belief system of the teaching of reading as a "combination of skills instruction and comprehension instruction" (COR Interview, 9/78). When asked to consider her reading beliefs in terms of goals for the year, the teacher described her goals in terms of skills instruction, comprehension development, and progression through a basal textbook program. She summarized her goals during this phase in the following interview segment.

> Well, to advance them from where they are, for them to make some progress. You know, with the bright kids, you're just not going to have a great problem. For them it's going to be a perfection of their skills. With the middle of the road ones, golly, it will be advancing their word analysis skills, their contextual skills. They seem to need a little bit more so far as comprehension. I do have some word callers. So I think for those kids, I've got to work especially on getting them to get meaning, because it's all well and good to be able to use the skills and to mark the right box, but it's useless if they're not getting any meaning out of it. And for my slower ones, well, we hope they're going to gain a sight vocabulary because they're very weak in that, they know their sounds beautifully, their consonant sounds. But they wouldn't dream of using them. So we have to teach them to use those things; I keep trying to point out the parallels between the...I mean relationships between spelling and reading because kids also don't know that if they could read them on a spelling list, they could read them in a reading book, too. So I'll be working on that, and certainly getting them to advance in the program, as much as possible. Right now they're working on the Laidlaw thing, and so I'd like to get them back to the Houghton-Mifflin. I'd really like to get them at least through Signposts, which is 1-2 or a 2-1, depending on how you look at it. If I could do that with the slow children, I think I'd be doing quite a bit (COR Interview, 9/78).

In summary, the combination of Mrs. Perry's beliefs about the teaching of reading, goals for the year, and program conceptualization appeared to serve as a framework upon which she made decisions concerning the plans for her current program. In the following

section of the case study, the decisions Mrs. Perry made which appeared to shape the course of reading instruction in her classroom are presented.

Decisions Identified During the Preactive Phase

Testing and grouping decisions. In order to get her program started, the teacher began the school year with a testing program. When asked what her testing program consisted of, she replied:

> I used...well, I looked first at what, you know, they had completed last year. Ask the kids what books they had read, this kind of thing. I tested them on the knowledge of the alphabet sounds, on the Dolch list. I did some of the Houghton-Mifflin list itself, I had them try to read a bit, asked them what they thought about their efforts, how they felt about it, was it too hard, was it too easy, this kind of thing (COR Interview, 9/78).

The decision to test students resulted in the determination of a student's instructional level. The teacher then used this information to place the student in a basal textbook at a student's appropriate instructional level. Students were then "grouped" upon the results of the testing program, that is, placement in a basal textbook determined the reading group membership of a student.

The observations of this teacher began September 13, 1978, one week after the start of school. While the teacher stated she had tested students, the teacher was not observed testing students. By the first observation, children had already been placed in their particular basal textbook and were meeting with the teacher in reading groups. Following is a segment taken from the field notes on September 13, 1978, illustrative of the teacher giving basal textbook

assignments to various groups and then inviting a reading group to meet with her.

> 8:57 - "People in Secrets, instead of reading in your books, go pick a book about an animal. When you come, you must tell what you read about and why you liked it."
>
> 8:58 - "People in Rainbows, you finish to the bottom of page 22 and read to the bottom of page 26. That will finish the story about Jeremy."
>
> 9:00 - Class working, teacher is helping girl find a book.
>
> 9:01 - Teacher circulates helping students.
>
> 9:02 - Teacher says, "Zeke and Tad and Jean go to speech."
>
> 9:03 - Class is still reading. Teacher moves helping students.
>
> 9:04 - "If you are reading Rainbows get a chair and come up here." Group meets at front of room. "Was Lucy any better listener today?" S - "Un un." S - "She stayed in library and didn't put her lunch bag away." Teacher - "What about on the playground?" "So Lucy really has a problem with her listening; what can she do to get better?" S - No response. Teacher - "How about pay attention?" S - "yes" (COR Field Notes, 9/13/78).

Materials decisions. The overall decision for the type of basal material to be used by Mrs. Perry was decided by a district-wide committee of teachers in charge of selecting a district-wide reading basal text series. The teacher outlined the procedure for materials selection in the following interview segment. She stated:

> Let's see, there was quite a selection procedure several years ago. We reviewed, there must have been six or eight different reading programs, and we decided at that time what we wanted. And this was fine, we got the readers, the workbooks, the supplementary dittoes that went along with it. We haven't really gotten a whole lot more than that since then, and there have been other things that have come out. They have also up-dated the series somewhat, they split each grade into smaller books. However, there is either no money or no push, I'm not sure which, to at least up-date the program (COR Interview, 9/78).

The materials the teacher used during the time of the study had been used during her previous years of teaching. When asked if the program was consistent with how she liked to teach reading she explained:

> That program, to me, doesn't have enough work on using their skills. The workbooks are very much direction oriented, you know, "find this and put a box around it," which is fine, but the kids can't handle the vocabulary very often. And they're very, most of those kids, are quite unsure of themselves already by second grade. So they're hesitant to use context clues, they're hesitant to try to use their sound clues, and put the two together; they just cringe. So in that respect, I found that I was doing a lot of ditto making last year to kind of give them a little bit of drill on word family sounds, and that kind of thing (COR Interview, 9/78).

Although she stated she would "probably use mostly teacher-made" reading materials, observations revealed that the use of teacher-made dittos, etc. was limited and commercial materials dominated.

The following excerpt taken from field notes illustrates a typical day's use of commercial materials provided by the district.

> 9:10 - Reading group called Secrets (5 children). These children took a book test. H.M. progress unit tests; rest of children are working on reading, reading dittos.
>
> Assignments: (on board)
>
> Secrets - read dog story
> Signposts - choose your own
> Raindows - read 109-115
> Fish - read 66-71 (COR Field Notes, 10/28/78).

While Mrs. Perry used the district-mandated series, she talked about the problems she faced when being asked to use only one series with the students in her class.

> If a kid can't cut the Houghton-Mifflin, or if, like a kid who's been retained, he's been through the Houghton-Mifflin and just, you know, has done a lousy job, then depending on the grade level, you do have some supplementary things.

> But, those are kind of, whatever we're able to get, whenever. We do have a few copies of the Harper Row thing, which is easier, sort of a remedial kind of program. And then last year, because I had 15 out of my 25 kids that were unable to read the primer from Houghton-Mifflin, they did come up with this Laidlaw series for me to use (COR Interview, 9/78).

During this phase, Mrs. Perry did not talk about the use of supplementary materials. The basal textbook and the related activities of the basal textbook (dittoes and workbooks) served as her reading program.

Management decisions. Management decisions during this phase tended to be organizational techniques that would provide for the students an understanding of how the classroom was going to work for the year. Observations occurring in the second week of school, indicated children "knew" they were to enter the room quietly each morning, go directly to store their coats on their individual coat hooks in the room, and then place their lunch money or notes on the teacher's desk before going to their individual desks (COR Field Notes, 9/13/78). Once seated, the children took materials out of their desks and began reading or working on some quiet activities at their seats. Daily assignments were listed on the board, and the children learned they were to come into class and begin reading their day's story silently.

Following the attendance, morning news and "show and tell" were a part of the morning routine. Class rules about hitting, pushing, getting into lines quietly were posted on a bulletin board in front of the room. Bathroom passes were hanging by the door of the schoolroom, and students were allowed to visit the bathroom one at a time (COR Field Notes, 9/20/78).

Influence of general management concerns on the teacher's decisions. Management concerns in general influenced the other group decisions the teacher had made. For example, the nature of "grouping" in Mrs. Perry's classroom came about as the result of trying to manage a program for twenty-five to thirty students. Mrs. Perry stated, "I think that given the fact that you've got twenty-five kids, grouping is a definite convenient way to handle instruction" (COR Interview, 4/23/79).

Even the number of children in a group reflected the management concerns of Mrs. Perry. In telling a story about another teacher who had eleven students in one reading group, Mrs. Perry stated:

> Now, Edith next door has...oh I think she said eleven kids who are reading on one grade level. And I would not attempt to work with eleven kids in one group, because I feel that's an impossible task. I don't know what they're doing and they certainly aren't all paying attention to me. So simply from the fact of numbers I would split that group if I were in her place. So I do make that kind of decision too, you know. If you've got a whole bunch of them reading on the same level, chances are I'm still going to make two groups out of it simply for ease of management on my part (COR Interview, 4/23/79).

Mrs. Perry's decision about the use of materials also reflected her concern for the management of her classroom. While a district-wide decision, she preferred to use a basal series as a matter of convenience.

> A matter of convenience, I think probably you need a basal reader because--well, maybe I'm just not talented enough--but I can't see how, given the length of the school day and number of activities there are to handle and the number of programs the kids are involved in, and the lack of help for record keeping, you can keep track of skills, comprehension, and everything else on a completely individualized program. I think maybe if you had few enough kids, that would work. But, I think as a matter of convenience, you need that basal reader. I do think that sometimes people just out of college

> who have not taught before, have not had a lot of experience teaching, they probably need the organization of a basal reader--just to get started on it. Because otherwise I think you could kind of be lost in the forest for awhile, and kids could get lost, too (COR Interview, 2/13/79).

Interactive Phase

The interactive phase of teaching is defined as the period of time "when the teacher is interacting with students" (Shavelson, 1976, p. 396). For the purposes of this study, the beginning of this phase for Mrs. Perry began in the second week of school. She had established her reading groups and her program of reading instruction was underway. This phase was characterized by the implementation and modifications of the decisions made in the preactive or planning phase. On-the-spot and context specific decisions also surfaced within observations on particular days.

Implementation of preactive decisions: organization of the school day. Implementation of the testing, grouping, materials, and management decisions in Mrs. Perry's class resulted in a consistent routine pattern of organization. The class of twenty-four second grade students (ten boys and fourteen girls) spent their morning working on basal materials and other reading related activities. As well, the teacher spent her mornings working with reading groups and/or individuals on reading. The children knew their morning time was to be spent working quietly and industriously. Mrs. Perry felt her time was to be spent teaching and, in general, leading the class through an instructional program. Over the period of the school year,

the organization of the school day reflected in thirteen out of fourteen observations remained the same. Typically, a day in Mrs. Perry's room followed the general schedule outlined below.

8:30	Bell rings.
8:30 - 8:32	Children enter room, remove coats and store, find their seats.
8:32 - 8:40	Children occupy themselves in some type of activity, i.e., playing with clay, reading a book, drawing, quiet conversation.
8:40 - 8:45	Teacher takes attendance, children continue their activity, sharing time.
8:45 - 9:00	Teacher may review a skill lesson, or handwriting, goes over general directions for the day.
9:00 - 9:15	Teacher circulates around room helping individual students, teacher may work at her desk on papers, children are beginning their work, a hum of children reading orally to themselves can be heard.
9:15 - 11:00	Teacher works with the various reading groups. Students are involved in a variety of reading, math, recreational activities, and reading group instruction.
11:00 - 11:20	Last reading group is generally dismissed and teacher and students go about business of getting materials put away, winding up activities, and in general, getting ready for lunch.
11:20	Lunch and outdoor recess. (The school has a hot lunch program. The majority of children stay for lunch. Since there is no morning recess, a lunch recess time is provided for.)
12:30 - 1:15	Return to room, class leaves for bathroom and drink break. Depending upon the day, this time may be devoted to math, music, or art. Tuesday from 12:35 to 1:00 is music. On Wednesdays from 12:35 to 1:00 is art. Another music period is slotted on Wednesday afternoons from 2:00 to 2:25.
1:15 - 1:30	Recess.

1:30 - 1:45 Return from recess, bathroom break.

1:45 - 2:30 Review math, or have a science or social studies lesson, language arts, films.

2:30 - 3:00 Free time. Story at the end of the day.

3:00 Dismissal (COR Field Notes, 9/78 to 6/79).

Typically, the classroom atmosphere is one of "no-nonsense-you-have-work-to-do." While only a second grade classroom, the students did not have a recess break in the morning. The room as a whole was generally very busy and very quiet. The majority of voice noise emanated from the reading groups as students read orally or as the teacher worked with a reading group on a lesson.

Student morning time was generally characterized by approximately twenty-five minutes participation in a reading group, with the remainder of the morning characterized by students seated at their desks engaged in paper and pencil tasks. During one minute sweeps performed on six individual students in the classroom, a variety of activites were found to be occurring. Following is a segment of data that illustrated the types of activities students spent their time on during the block of the morning reading period throughout the school year.

Sam - working on crossword puzzle, a Secret's ditto.

Jane - working on teacher made spelling ditto.

Gary - working on teacher made spelling ditto rhyming words, put right word in the blank.

Dee - completing ditto on sequencing, drawing a map of her favorite park.

Jan - in Secret's reading group, rather distracted, not reading words in the list with the others skill lesson.

Anne - in Secret's reading group, appears to be actively involved in reading list of words from skill lesson, uses words in sentence clues (COR Field Notes, 2/27/79).

A one minute sweep taken of the same children two hours later reveals a variety of the most common activities observed just before lunch throughout the school year.

Sam - in Secrets I reading group, playing vocabulary game.

Jane - is working on her airplane project for her Rewards story, asks me to cut her airplane wings.

Gary - is Secrets I reading group, playing vocabulary game.

Dee - completing a workbook page, goes to visit another group member to see her airplane.

Jan - is talking to a boy who is cutting out a paper heart, she is laughing and giggling.

Anne - is wandering around the room with an allegator puppet (COR Field Notes, 2/27/29).

Reading groups as a setting for instruction. Within this organization of a typical morning, the reading groups emerged as the setting used by Mrs. Perry for reading instruction. Observations throughout the school year revealed that the teacher spent nearly two full hours in the morning working with various reading groups. Generally, a group session lasted for approximately twenty to thirty minutes a day (COR Field Notes, 9/78 to 6/79).

During fourteen out of fourteen observations, the teacher was observed spending the majority of her morning time engaged in activities with the various reading groups. Mrs. Perry followed the teacher's guide of the basal series very closely. The following segment of field notes illustrates the four components of an

instructional lesson. Group work began with a general questioning segment, followed by oral reading by students, a skill lesson, and directions being given for workbook activities.

General Questioning Segment

T - "Well, how about it, did little Hippo find what he was looking for? Think about the shape of the hippo's hand. I wonder if he would see better if he stretched his neck? How did he get in the lion's cage? Why did the lion leave?"

Oral Reading

9:30	Child begins reading orally	- student provides word for another student. - group helps a student with a word. - "I'll help him with a word." - Teacher says the word alone for a student.
	Another child begins reading orally	- Another student helps the student reading orally read the word Charlie.
	Another child reads orally	- student said stamp-ded. - Teacher says "stamped."

Skill Lesson

9:36 T - "Let's make an m sound. Is your mouth open or closed? How about an s sound, f sound, is your mouth open or closed? Okay, how about a short 'a' sound--is your mouth open or closed? Whenever you open your mouth, it is a vowel sound. How many vowels in many? How many times do you open your mouth? It will tell you how many vowels." (Children are clapping to sounds.) "Syllables are like chunks of words" (reads list of words from guide).

9:40 T - "Do you remember what compound words are? --- that's right."

9:41 Holds up list of words, give sentence and leaves out a word.

9:42 T - "Okay, word means...(reads a sentence and says)... what does suit mean in that sentence?"

Direction/Assignment Giving

9:43 Passes out workbooks.

T - "Look at page 39. What you are going to be using? (Goes through directions.) "This is a page about syllables." (Children "clap out" examples.) "It's like that for the page."

Next page.

9:45 Group dismissed (COR Field Notes, 11/20/78).

Mrs. Perry prepared materials to supplement each skill lesson in the Houghton-Mifflin basal series. During the teacher directed skill lesson of a particular group, the teacher used charts she had prepared to coincide with the material in the textbook. She used these materials as a guide during a skill lesson, and to give students additional practice during the skill lesson.

However, without the structure of the basal text, the teacher was often left unprepared to handle adequately an instructional problem. For example, when a child faced an unknown word during an oral reading segment of a reading group period, the teacher seldom offered a constructive decoding skill to help the child. During almost every observation, the teacher allowed another student to supply the unknown word, or the teacher placed the student in a position of having to "guess" the right word. Following is a segment of an audio-taped transcript of a reading group representative of the observed and recorded practice of the teacher making a child "guess"

the unknown words. The child is reading orally from her basal textbook and runs into difficulty with the word "want."

Student: (reading) Newman, open the door. I want S: won't S: want

Teacher: Which is it? Want or won't? We had want in spelling. How do you spell it? Can you remember how to spell want?

Student: w-h-a-t

Teacher: That's what.

Student: I mean, w-h-n-t

Teacher: w-a-n-t

Student: Yea

Teachers: This isn't w-a-n-t, so it can't be want. It's won't. Yea, I won't

Student: have

Teacher: Do you know where you are now? All right.

Student: I won't have that robber (COR Transcript, 2/27/79).

In another example, a child is reading and is not able to recognize a particular word. The teacher uses her "guessing strategy" as a way to help the child "unlock" the unknown word. In addition, the teacher asks the other children in the group to help the child with the unknown word. The child reads along and becomes stuck on a word. Following is the teacher's strategy to help the child.

> "Which is it, held or hold? How do you know? Help him (to the others in the group). How should he know? (COR Field Notes, 2/19/79).

While the teacher talked of the importance of skills instruction, the instructional segments of her reading groups often left the observer wondering how the teacher accomplished instruction.

Observations in all four cycles revealed the teacher's "teaching" was more in the mode of student recitation and direction following rather than teacher instruction. Following is an excerpt of an audio-taped recording of a vowel lesson illustrating the "recitation" style of teaching very common for this teacher throughout the year.

Teacher: Okay, which vowel do you hear in "tease"?
Student: Long E.
Teacher: Long E. How about in "place"?
Student: Long A.
Teacher: Long A. "Castle"?
Student: Short A.
Teacher: Spinach?
Student: Short I.
Teacher: Twist?
Student: Short I (COR Transcript, 2/27/79).

The following excerpt from an audio-taped recording, again illustrating the "recitation" style of teaching, is a lesson on syllables. The lesson began with:

Teacher: How many syllables in sunflower?
Student: Three
Teacher: Prove it
Student: Sunflower
Teacher: Snowman
Student: Two
Teacher: Carrot
Student: Two
Teacher: Fashionable
Student: Four
Teacher: Four, John, if you count them, its better to be kinda counting as you go along (COR Transcript, 2/27/79).

The final example taken from field notes is a lesson on contractions and an extreme example illustrating the lack of adequate teacher instruction.

Teacher: Okay. Those contractions are the lazy way of saying things. Now, let's look at your workbook pages (COR Field Notes, 2/19/79).

Differences between high and low reading groups. During the many hours spent in Mrs. Perry's classroom observing reading groups in operation, it became apparent that the experience of learning to read is qualitatively different for high and low readers. The implementation of the preactive decisions and the contextual influences posed by the grouping and teacher attitude seemed to explain the differences between the groups.

Mrs. Perry stated she "spent more group time with the slower students" (COR Interview, 1/12/79). In addition to the differences in the time allocated to the high and low groups, there were differences in the types of activities planned and presented to the students in the high and low groups.

The teacher discussed her perception of how the groups were spending their time by stating:

> I think probably with the lower groups I tend to work a little more on the word identification skills, using the sound because I guess I think they've got to say the words before they're going to understand them. With the other group...well, like the top group--the "Wide-Eyed Detectives" group--right now I'm spending more time with them on comprehension because they are good readers...they're fast readers but I guess I'm spending a little more time with them on comprehension than I am on skills right now (COR Interview, 2/13/79).

Observations of the low reading group revealed that students spent their time working on word identification and decoding activities. The development of these skills typically occurred in isolation from whole words and/or whole sentences (see Appendix E). Observations of the high reading group revealed that students spent their time working on extending the meaning of stories, and completing comprehension and vocabulary activities within the context of

sentences (see Appendix F). As the teacher stated, "for bright kids, isolating skills aren't meaningful" (COR Interview, 4/23/79).

Besides the differences in the types of activities planned and presented to high and low groups, Mrs. Perry also perceived a difference in her role and her expectations for the high and low groups. With the low readers, the teacher described her role as directive in nature. She stated:

> I think I have to be quite directive with them. I think I have to be more of a corrective, I guess. More of a person you know, who points out this is where you're wrong. And then you follow up with and this is why. You kind of push, pull, probe, lead, all the way because they have a hard time putting things together and they also sometimes have a hard time spitting out what they do know. So I guess in that respect you're very much involved, very much directing and pushing at the same time (COR Interview, 4/23/79).

With her high readers, Mrs. Perry viewed her role more as a guider and planner.

> Well, I think in terms of reading, if they can read it themselves and understand, then I'm perfectly content to just make assignments, make suggestions, plan some activities for them, that kind of thing. If they've got a specific need, okay, then I am more than willing to go ahead and just provide for that one need (COR Interview, 1/12/79).

The teacher perceived her low students as "frustrating." This frustration stems from the student "not being able to cope with one little skill" (COR Interview, 4/23/79). The high readers, on the other hand, were viewed as having a "natural feel for phonic-type skills" (COR Interview, 2/13/79). High readers, she claimed, "tend to synthesize the phonic skills, the context, the whole thing" (COR Interview, 2/13/79). Low readers were viewed as not being able to synthesize their information well: "They've got parts but they don't put it together well" (COR Interview, 2/13/79).

The teacher also stated that children read because of "what the teacher expects, what the child expects, and what the home expects" (COR Interview, 2/13/79). When asked which group she preferred to work with, she stated, "I think most teachers would like to work with the bright kids only, you know, because they don't give you the problems with learning that the slower ones do (COR Interview, 4/23/79). The "problems" of the low reader were defined by Mrs. Perry as:

> Well, let's see. They don't possess the sight vocabulary, they don't know "the," "is," you know, the little words, those words stop them. They have to come ask for all sorts of help, they're hesitant to come ask for help, but they can't do it. They get no meaning out of reading; it's sheer torture for them to sit down and read. Ones that go to the bathroom an awful lot, because they don't want to read, or they drink an awful lot, or manage to break their pencil leads every ten seconds, or something, so they can go sharpen it again. You know, those things are typical of your poor reader. They simply cannot read, they can't use what skills they have, and they don't really understand once they have read. I guess that's my poor reader (COR Interview, 9/78).

A successful reader was defined by Mrs. Perry as "someone who can read and understand with a minimum of teacher assistance, who enjoys it, you know, who really enjoys it" (COR Interview, 9/78).

The teacher strategy employed with the high readers for this teacher was more of a "conversational type process." "With the low group, it was more of question and answer" type process (COR Interview, 2/13/79).

Modification of preactive decisions during the interactive phase. During this interactive or teaching phase, Mrs. Perry revised her initial decision concerning students' group placements. Realizing that a student was able to "function much more independently than I

realized at first" (COR Interview, 2/13/79), a students' group placement was changed. The teacher explained:

> A lot of times it's what I don't see at first. There are a couple of kids that were on the remedial center's list that have just suddenly picked up and gone. I could feel that they were doing much better. On that basis, I moved them to new groups (COR Interview, 2/13/79).

On-the-spot decisions. One day while observing in Mrs. Perry's classroom, she stated to the students in a reading group, "Okay, we are not going to do the skill lesson" (COR Field Notes, 2/15/79). Later, when questioned about her decision to omit something from her planned lesson, a discussion about on-the-spot decision making evolved.

> If I find that something isn't working; something isn't being learned, then we'll stop there and go back over it again. So there are day-to-day decisions, too (whether we've really covered what we should, whether the kids really understood what they were doing or whether they were a little confused; and then, is that something one of the skills that will be hit later, is it one that is not too crucial, or is it something that maybe I'd better stop and work on for awhile before they go on--and yet not work it to death because there's a point where you can't work (COR Interview, 2/13/79).

Her decision to eliminate some of the skills lessons evolved as a matter of just not having enough group time.

> I could not in any way handle all their skills lessons for any particular group. I just...it drove me wild (COR Interview, 2/13/79).

She also elected to eliminate some of the skills based on her feelings that parts of the basal textbook program seemed "completely pointless" (COR Interview, 2/13/79). She viewed herself "constantly adapting" the program. She stated:

> They may have systematized it for me, but I don't believe they have told me what I think about reading--particularly

> when it comes to the comprehension part. They've got the comprehension thing written out, if you follow them. But then I don't...I just don't read down through where it says, "Teacher says..." and then you wait for thus and so answer and that kind of thing. So I guess the comprehension part doesn't come totally from them. Some of the things they do I find completely pointless--like hearing the number of syllables in the word. Who cares? (COR Interview, 2/13/79).

Postactive or Evaluative Decisions

Judging success of students. The postactive or evaluative phase involves the teacher reflecting upon the school year and "judging the worth of prior decisions" (Shavelson, 1976, p. 401). This phase occurred at the end of the school year for Mrs. Perry. During an informal interview recorded in field notes, the teacher stated she had achieved her goal of "getting all but the Tricky Troll group through the second grade readers" (COR Field Notes, 5/14/79).

While the teacher at one point stated, "I don't think you can just measure their progress by going from one reader to another" (COR Interview, 2/13/79), this appeared to be the measure she used at the end of the school year to evaluate student progress. This evaluation of student progress based on how many readers were completed seems to result from the teacher's feelings about the next year's teacher the student will meet in the coming fall. There is "a lot of difference in what they expect," she stated, and further, "I have to prepare them to go on" (COR Interview, 1/12/79). When I asked her why she continued to teach something she didn't feel was necessary, she stated:

> Because the third grade teachers do teach it. I checked that one out. And they do teach it, and so I know the children will have to have at least exposure to the concept (COR Interview, 4/23/79).

Reasons attributed to success or lack of success. For the students who were successful, the teacher outlined their success in terms of the reading program they had used.

> Now, they started out last fall in the Rainbow book which is the primer in the first grade. And they have just come so far, and they have accomplished so much. It's rewarding, the fact that they have accomplished so much (COR Interview, 4/23/79).

For the children who were not successful and, in particular, the ones the teacher had spent the most time working with over the school year, their lack of progress was blamed on motivation, environmental, and personal problems.

> Right how I am having a hard time thinking about what to do with the low group. I have tried and I have tried, and you know we have limited materials and Joany herself has decided that she can do a little reading, and on a given day she'll try. Goerge has learning disability problems. Mary Ann, I don't know. I don't know. I finally got her mother to get her some glasses, but it seems no matter how low a goal I set, she manages to fail it. So I don't know. Maybe there (at home) are other problems there that there's nothing I can do about. Children like Joany and Mary Ann, there are emotional problems someday. George, you know, the children that you mainstream (COR Interview, 4/23/79).

Summary of Case Study #1

The following figure (Figure 2) summarizes Mrs. Perry's decision making and classroom practices. It appeared that the decisions Mrs. Perry made concerning her reading instruction evolved around the basal textbook series she used in her reading program. The preactive or planning decisions were based on a mental framework involving the basal textbook series. Her testing, grouping, and management decisions all focused on getting students placed into the basal series. The implementation of these decisions in her practice

PREACTIVE, PLANNING PHASE	INTERACTIVE PHASE	POSTACTIVE OR EVALUATIVE PHASE
August, 1978 to September 13, 1978	September 13, 1978 to May 30, 1979	May 30 to June 10, 1979
Phase characterized by planning & decision making. Framework for decision-making 1. knew program, wanted group instruction 2. reading program does not change drastically from year to year 3. defined belief system as a combination of skills & comprehension instruction 4. expressed goals in terms of skill instruction, comprehension development, and progression through basal textbook series Decision categories 1. Testing & grouping decisions - results of informal testing (not observed in practice) determined instructional reading level for students - based on this level, students placed in appropriate level basal textbook which determined reading group membership of a student 2. Materials decisions - materials used in her previous years of teaching; basal series had been selected by a district-wide committee - basal textbook materials dominated 3. Management decisions - organization techniques designed to provide students with understanding of how the classroom was going to work for the school year - management concerns influenced other decisions a. used grouping for convenience, ease of management b. used basal for convenience, organization	Phase characterized by implementation & modification of preactive decisions. Implementation of preactive decisions Implementation of testing, grouping, materials, & management decisions resulted in: 1. consistent pattern of organization of the school day 2. reading groups emerged as setting for reading instruction 3. differences between high and low reading groups a. Time allocation low's more teacher time; high's less teacher time b. Activities activities for lows on word recognition, decoding skills in isolation of words & sentences; activities for high's on extending story meaning & comprehension within context of sentences c. Teacher role, expectations low's--director, corrector; give the teacher lots of learning problems; high's--guider, planner; work independently, enjoy reading Modification of preactive decisions 1. Initial grouping decisions revised; students who suddenly picked up On-the-spot decisions 1. reading plans altered if problems developed 2. skills lessons eliminated due to lack of group time & lessons seemed pointless to the teacher	Phase characterized by evaluation of student performance & activity usage based on preactive decisions. Judged success of students based on: 1. progression through basal materials 2. what next year's teacher expects students to have mastered Success of readers attributed to: 1. program students used Non-success of readers attributed to: 1. limited materials 2. learning disabilities 3. glasses (lack of) 4. home problems 5. emotional problems 6. mainstreaming

Figure 2: Summary of Mrs. Perry's Decision Making and Classroom Practices

resulted in the basal series providing the structure and the flow of activities in her reading program. The evaluation of student progress in reading was based on students' progression through the basal materials.

Case Study #2

Introduction

Miss Delta is a first/second grade classroom teacher. The twenty-three students in her classroom are derived from a community comprised of approximately 5,000 predominately white, low-to-middle income level working families. At the time of the study, Miss Delta was beginning her third year of teaching. Further, this was her first teaching experience in a self-contained room.

Preactive or Planning Phase

The preactive or planning phase is characterized as a "reflective, thoughtful time" (Shavelson, 1976, p. 392). The planning phase for this teacher occurred within the first four weeks of school. It was during this time that the teacher made a variety of decisions concerning the reading instruction for the students in her class. However, it appeared that the combination of her beliefs about program selection, her beliefs about the teaching of reading, and her goals for the year served as the framework upon which she made decisions concerning her reading instruction. The following excerpts of interview statements illustrate the three components of the framework of thinking Miss Delta operated from in making decisions concerning her reading instruction.

Miss Delta began thinking about her reading program in the spring of the previous school year. She stated in an interview that she knew that her present teaching placement was going to be in a new school and at a grade level she had not previously taught. Therefore, she took a graduate level course in the spring of 1977 to prepare her for her fall 1977 teaching assignment (COR Field Notes, 9/26/77).

In the fall, Miss Delta stated a global plan for the school year in that she would be "testing for four weeks and planned the following thirty-four weeks as a combination of skills instruction and recreational reading" (COR Field Notes, 9/26/77). The "plan" was consistent with a skills management program that she had been trained to use in the spring graduate course. She believed the use of the program would serve as a good method of "organization," and she felt she would "know exactly where they (students) were and what they could and could not do" (COR Field Notes, 9/14/77).

Miss Delta defined her belief system regarding the teaching of reading as a combination of skill development and comprehension development. Her major emphasis, however, was in the area of skill development. She believed "the core (of reading instruction) is still the skills--the rest is used for application" (COR Interview, 6/9/78). Miss Delta's goals for the school year were to "develop skills" and provide activities for students "to apply what they had learned" (COR Interview, 6/9/78).

In summary, the combination of Miss Delta's beliefs about program selection, her beliefs about the teaching of reading, and her goals for the year appeared to serve as the framework upon which

she made the decisions concerning the plans for her current program. In the following section of the case study, the decisions Miss Delta made which appeared to shape the course of reading instruction in her classroom are presented.

Decisions Identified During the Preactive Phase

Testing and Grouping Decisions. In order to get her program underway, Miss Delta began the school year with a four week testing program designed "to determine specific skill strengths and weaknesses and a skill instructional level" (COR Field Notes, 9/12/77). She was observed ten out of ten observations in the fall cycle administering the SRI placement tests and/or pretests to individual students in her classroom. As she explained to one student before a testing session, "I am going to give you some tests and these will help me to know what we need to work on this year" (COR Field Notes, 9/14/77).

The seven second graders were placed in basal textbooks within the first week of school (COR Field Notes, 9/12/77). The teacher stated she was eager to have them placed in basal materials as "she wanted some independent workers" in the classroom (COR Field Notes, 9/12/77). She based their placement on the results of the Slosson vocabulary test and graded oral reading paragraphs. The results of these tests indicated an instructional level for each student. The teacher used this information to place students in a basal textbook corresponding to the appropriate instructional level. She also stated she "knew they were readers last year" and used the materials

following the progression of a basal textbook series that were familiar to the students (COR Field Notes, 9/12/77).

Three of the second graders were placed in different textbooks so that they were not a part of a basal reading group. One child was placed in Rewards, the second in Signposts, and the third in Secrets (COR Field Notes, 9/12/77). The remaining four second graders were placed in the Houghton-Mifflin primer, Tigers. Their placement was based on the results of the Slosson vocabulary test, graded oral reading paragraphs, and their last year's reading progress. In addition to their basal textbook placement, these students would be grouped for skills instruction following the completion of the SRI placement tests.

The seventeen first graders' placement in skills groups as well as basal textbook groups was determined by the combination of the SRI placement tests, SRI pretests, and the results of their Metropolitan Readiness test which had been administered at the end of their kindergarten year. If the Metropolitan test score was below 'C," which means low, a student was placed into the Scott-Foresmen textbook, Look and Listen (a readiness-pre-reading book). Students were placed in Houghton-Mifflin's Getting Reading to Read Group II if their Metropolitan scores were 'B' (average), if their seatwork was well done, and if they knew their alphabet. For those first graders who were "basically kids ready to read and scored 'A' on the Metropolitan," they were placed in Houghton-Mifflin's Getting Ready to Read Group I" (COR Field Notes, 10/4/77).

During ten out of ten observations in the fall cycle, the teacher was testing students, the first grade students were working on dittoes

in folders, and the second grade students were working in their basal textbooks and their individual folders of dittoes (COR Field Notes, 9/12/77 to 10/4/77). An aide who had been in the classroom since the first week of school worked with the second grade students on their basal textbook assignments (COR Field Notes, 9/20/77).

By September 26, 1977, almost four weeks from the start of school, the first grade students were placed in basal textbooks (COR Field Notes, 9/26/77). The aide worked with these three groups, reading instructions verbatim from the teacher's guide (COR Field Notes, 9/26/77). The teacher told me in an informal interview that the aide's major responsibility this year was going to be "working" with the basal reading groups while she worked with the skills groups. The aide was untrained (COR Field Notes, 9/26/77).

Materials decisions. The decisions concerning the materials the teacher used were influenced by her belief of the teaching of reading and the availability of materials. She used the Systematic Reading Instruction program in addition to basal text program because she felt the "basals were not complete." She explained that she never felt as though she was providing enough skill instruction when she used only the basal textbook series (COR Field Notes, 9/12/77). She chose the Houghton-Mifflin textbooks for three second graders because "they used Houghton-Mifflin last year, and I am comfortable with the skill development" (COR Field Notes, 9/12/77). The four remaining second graders were placed in the Houghton-Mifflin primer book, Tigers. The placement of these students in Tigers was determined by the availability of materials. She stated, "they cannot read it

(Tigers), but they have to be in Tigers because they went through the other series last year" (COR Field Notes, 9/26/77).

The teacher selected the Scott-Foresman primer materials for a low group of first graders because "they (the materials) were here and (the materials) go at a slower pace" (COR Field Notes, 9/14/77). For the average and high groups of beginning first graders, the teacher selected the Houghton-Mifflin book, Getting Ready to Read. She preferred the Houghton-Mifflin series based on its organization and the fact that it is a more challenging series (COR Field Notes, 9/26/77).

During this phase, Miss Delta talked about the addition of numerous supplementary materials she planned to incorporate into her program over the course of the school year. She felt once the skills program and basal programs were underway, the centers, library work, and special activities would be planned and used in the program at a later time (COR Field Notes, 9/26/77).

Management decisions. Management decisions during this phase were of two kinds. One group of decisions concerned the immediate organizational techniques she employed while she became oriented to her new teaching assignment. The second group of management decisions were designed to provide the students with an understanding of how the classroom would generally work for the school year.

The group of decisions concerning the organizational technique she employed while she became oriented to her new teaching assignment involved the placement of students in materials designed to keep them busy while she was testing students. For example, she used the Alpha

Time program, typically a program used in the kindergarten, for all of the students in her room. While she stated she used the program for "reinforcement" of letter recognition skills and "was not doing all of the activities," it appeared from observations that the program served to provide a structure for group work, as well as providing practice sheets for students to work on independently at their seats (COR Field Notes, 9/16/77). It is interesting to note that, previous to Miss Delta's current teaching assignment, she had been a kindergarten teacher for three years. The use of a kindergarten material with the students, regardless of ability levels, caused the researcher to speculate that she used the materials because of her familiarity with them and because they provided stability in a new teaching assignment. Alpha Time disappeared for all students once she had completed her skills placement testing and basal textbook placements (COR Field Notes, 11/29/77).

The teacher also had placed a group of "high" ability level first grade students who she claimed were "basically kids ready to read" into the book, Getting Ready to Read. This book is intended for students in the kindergarten or low first grade students. She said she placed them in the book "to reinforce beginning sounds" and to "learn how the Houghton-Mifflin routine works" (COR Field Notes, 9/26/77). Again, it appears she placed them in the materials for ease of management on her part. The book was familiar to her, and students could work independently. It also gave her time to gain familiarity with the appropriate level materials for these students.

By October 4, 1977, students were observed working in the appropriate level materials and the materials they had been using were abandoned.

Management decisions that tended to be organizational techniques that would provide an understanding of how the classroom was going to work for the year were revealed during observations during this phase. By the second week of school, observations revealed that children knew to come in the room in the morning and hang up their coats on the coat hooks in the room. They also knew they were allowed to circulate around the room and talk to their friends, look at books, or check on the plants in the room to see if they needed water. Since their materials were stored in two places, students were observed traveling from their desks, one place of materials storage, to a shelf arrangement holding additional student materials in individual dishpans (COR Field Notes, 9/12/77).

The children engaged in conversation with their friends or with the teacher until the teacher had determined that everyone was in attendance. Then she proceeded to invite the students to a carpeted area in front of the room for "morning group" (COR Field Notes, 9/20/77). Attendance, lunch count, general school announcements, show and tell, and assignment giving, comprised approximately fifteen minutes of the daily morning group session (COR Field Notes, 9/20/77).

Classroom jobs had been established and would continue throughout the year. These jobs included a "Buffer, a Sheriff, a Private Eye Detective and a Cleanup Inspector, A Green Thumb person, and a Munchkin (this is the person you go to if you feel sad)." The class

rules, established by the "classroom government with a little guidance from the teacher," were recorded on a chart near the front of the room (COR Field Notes, 9/20/77).

The bathroom facility was housed in the classroom. A "stop and go" sign on the door of the bathroom was the signal whether the bathroom was available or not. Students did not have to gain teacher approval before advancing to the bathroom (COR Field Notes, 9/12/77).

Influence of general management concerns on the teacher's decisions. For this teacher, it appeared that her choice of materials for student use in the first month of school was based on her need to have students busy while she was testing students. When she finally made the decisions to place students in the appropriate level materials, she used materials the students were familiar with which meant the teacher would spend less time teaching the "routine" of a particular series. In addition, it is inferred by this researcher that students were "grouped" on various skill deficiencies based on the teacher's need to manage a class of students efficiently.

It could also be inferred from the teachers' decision that students should store their basal textbooks in a bookshelf near the reading table that her underlying concern was one of management. The seventeen first graders and four low second graders were required to keep their basal textbooks in the bookshelf near the reading table. The teacher claimed the books became "lost" too easily if they were kept in student's desks (COR Field Notes, 9/26/77). Looking for a "lost" book requires time and is disruptive in a classroom situation. As well, the aide worked with these basal broups. It is possible that

the teacher made the storage decision based on her concern about the aide's management of the groups.

Interactive Phase

The interactive phase of teaching is defined as the period of time "when the teacher is interacting with students" (Shavelson, 1976, p. 396). For Miss Delta, this phase began in October, four weeks after the beginning of school in September. By this time, she had established her skill groups and her basal reading groups, and her program of reading instruction was underway. This phase was characterized by the implementation of the decisions made in the planning stage. A record of the modification of these decisions and/or on-the-spot decision making is not complete. In part, this is due to the fact that for this teacher, the data were collected during the 1977-78 research year. The collection procedures and recording procedures were not as refined and complete as in the 1978-79 research year.

Implementation of preactive decisions: organization of the school day. Implementation of the testing grouping, materials, and management decisions in Miss Delta's classroom resulted in a consistent, routine pattern of organization. The routine of this classroom generally followed the pattern described below:

8:55 - 9:00	Students enter.
9:02 - 9:20	Morning group--entire class meets on the carpeting in the morning for casual conversation, attendance, and complete lunch money business. The teacher explains the directions for each one of the morning seatwork dittoes. She points out the spelling words located on blackboard for the three high second graders. Teacher passes out the individual work folders and children return to their seats. The aide begins to circulate

around the room to help the students. The mother volunteer arrives to help in the classroom during the morning reading period.

9:25 - 10:20 Teacher calls a small group to the reading table. She will call skill groups, individuals/or basal groups to the reading table during this period of time. Aide, mother, or volunteer works with small groups/or individual students.

10:20 - 10:40 Children go outside for recess.

10:40 - 10:50 Children return to room, remove warm outer clothing, go to seats for "snack time."

10:50 - 11:30 Teacher begins working with individuals/or small groups of students. The remaining children eat their snacks and continue with their morning seatwork assignments. The aide leaves to help in another classroom. Mother volunteer continues to work with individuals/or small groups of students.

11:30 - 11:45 Children begin to clear up materials and put their completed folder work in the teacher's correction box. The teacher and the students meet back at the carpeting in the front of the room for songs, story telling, or casual conversation.

11:55 Children get ready for lunch.

12:00 - 1:00 Lunch--six or seven children walk home while the remaining children eat lunch family style in the cafetorium.

The afternoon schedule varied with the day of the week. Following is a sample of the typical afternoon schedule.

1:00 - 2:00 This time is generally devoted to a science or social studies lesson. Tuesday afternoon from 1:30-2:00 the children have gym, and on Tuesday from 2:30-3:00 the children have music. Friday afternoon from 2:30-3:00 the children have music.

2:00 - 2:20 Recess.

2:30 - 3:00 The activities vary from day to day, but usually one of the following activities: free time to play games, art projects, creative writing, language experience story, or story time fills this last half hour slot each day.

3:00 Room clean-up.

3:15 Dismissal (COR Field Notes, 11/29/77 to 4/26/78).

Typically, the classroom atmosphere was characterized by students working productively at their desks and the teacher and aide involved in group work. The room as a whole was generally very busy. Due to the number of groups moving about, and the mobility of individual students, the room tended to be noisy, and during four out of seven observations the teacher stopped working with a group of students to ask the class to work quietly (COR Field Notes, 11/29/77, 3/6/78, 3/9/78, 4/26/78).

The use of materials, based on the criteria for selecting materials employed in the fall, remained constant once the program became established in October. The teacher reported additions to her program in a taped interview in June, stating that during "winter term from January to March--I did more of the creative dramatics and creative writing, and I would do that at least once, sometimes twice." She was not observed doing these activities with the children and commented to the observer, "you weren't here then much at all."

When the teacher was questioned as to why she implemented these activities, she responded by stating:

> I guess for a change in the curriculum. It gets a little bit tedious day after day doing the skills and the independent folder work, and, during the winter time that is such a long stretch if the children don't have some kind of break in the routine, so I would plan some interesting things. And it seemed to work. It really kept them up all winter long (COR Interview, 6/78).

The testing administered in the early fall determined skills or basal groups. Student membership in the skills groups in the second,

third, and fourth cycles changed depending on the skill(s) students were required to master. The basal groups remained consistent. As a group finished a text, they began the next text in the series. The teacher was not observed during the second, third, or fourth cycles administering graded oral reading paragraphs or vocabulary lists (her original criteria for forming the basal group) as a means for monitoring the placement of the students in the basal texts.

Typically, the morning reading period for the second, third, and fourth cycles followed a routine pattern of organization (COR Field Notes, 11/29/77 to 4/26/78). The following outline describes this pattern.

9:00 - 9:20	General Class Meeting--The entire class meets at 9:00 on the carpet in front of the room. The purpose of this meeting is to take care of general business (e.g., lunch count, attendance, socialization).
	Direction Giving--Following the general class meeting, the teacher gave students copies of the "morning seatwork" and explained how these sheets were to be completed. She would then pass out a folder to each student, and, upon receiving a folder, each student would return to his/her seat and begin working.
9:20 - 10:20	Teacher meets with skills groups. Aide meets with basal groups.

While the teacher was observed meeting with groups of students, the students at their seats were observed working on a variety of activities. The nine average first graders generally worked on three to four ditto sheets developed by the teacher for the purpose of providing students with additional practice on a particular skill that had been introduced by the teacher during the previous day's skill lesson. In addition, these students completed workbook pages and

their boardwork assignment. Boardwork usually consisted of handwriting and spelling activities based on lists of sight words taken from the Systematic Reading Instruction teacher's manual. These nine students were not observed during the second, third, or fourth cycles reading a basal text assignment silently at their seats.

The eight low first graders worked on skill dittoes and boardwork. These students were not observed during the second, third, or fourth cycles reading a basal text assignment silently at their seats.

The average (three students) and high (three students) second graders worked on skill dittoes, workbook pages, and the commercial skill dittoes that coincided with the basal series. These students also completed boardwork and spelling words. These students spent a part of each morning reading silently from their basal texts.

10:20 - 10:50	Combination recess and snack break.
10:50 - 11:30	Students continue working on their seatwork. Teacher continued to meet with individuals and/or skills groups.
11:30	Clean up.

Students placed their completed morning work in their folders and put their folders in the teacher's correction box. The students and the teacher then met at the carpet for fifteen minutes of songs and socialization before lunch.

Reading groups as a setting for instruction. Within this organization of a typical morning, the skill groups and basal reading groups emerged as the setting used by Miss Delta for reading instruction. Miss Delta stated early in the fall that she would be responsible for the instruction in the skills groups and that, while she did

all of the planning for the basal groups, she would "share" the instruction of the basal groups with the aide (COR Field Notes, 9/20/77).

During four out of five observations in the second cycle, four out of five observation in the third cycle, and the five observations in the fourth cycle, the teacher was observed working with skill groups while the rest of the class worked at their seats on morning seatwork.

The aide spent two hours in the classroom in the morning. She circulated around the room helping students with their morning work and met with basal groups. When meeting with the basal groups, the aide listened to oral reading and asked comprehension questions as specified in the teacher's guide. She met with the low and average first graders and the average second graders.

A parent volunteer spent one morning a week in the classroom. She completed skill post-testing, and met with the three high second grade students. During this time, the aide listened to the students read orally and asked comprehension questions as specified in the teacher's guide.

The following figure (Figure 3) illustrates the teacher's routine of working with various skill groups and the type of activities that were completed during these sessions.

Differences between high and low reading groups. During the many hours spent in Miss Delta's classroom observing skill groups and basal reading groups, it became apparent that the experience of learning to read is qualitatively different for high and low readers.

Time of day	Activity Description		Number of Minutes
9:15-9:35	Group meeting-children and teacher meet to discuss general business. Teacher passes out folders containing morning seatwork. Children return to seats.		20 minutes
9:35-9:58	Skill group 5 children	Lesson on consonant blends, beginning sounds.	23 minutes
9:59-10:06	Skill group 3 children	Lesson on ending sounds word families	7 minutes
10:06-10:10	Teacher circulates around room to help children at their seats.		4 minutes
10:11-10:20	Skill group 2 children	Lesson on sight words	9 minutes
10:20-10:40	RECESS		20 minutes
10:40-10:50	Snack time		10 minutes
10:51-11:14	Skill group 4 children	Lesson on beginning sounds, sight word review	23 minutes
11:16-11:26	Skill group 3 children	Lesson letter recognition	10 minutes
11:26-11:45	Clean up-meet back in group on carpet to sing songs, talk, prepare for lunch.		20 minutes

(COR Field Notes, 2/9/78)

Figure 3: Miss Delta: Time Allocation and Activity Description of Skill Groups

The implementation of the preactive decisions and the contextual influence posed by the grouping seemed to explain the differences between high and low groups.

It became apparent during the second cycle of observation and was documented during the third and fourth cycles, as well, that the teacher devoted the majority of her time to teaching specific skills to the low and average readers. The three high second grade readers spent little and/or no time in an instructional situation with the teacher. The teacher stated the high readers "did not need her, and would make it on their own" (COR Field Notes, 11/29/77).

Following is a figure (Figure 4) summarizing the typical allotment of time devoted to readers of differing ability levels.

During the minutes listed in Figure 4, the low and average students worked on skill development activities with the teacher. In addition, the times listed in Figure 4 have taken into acccount the amount of time the aide spent reading orally with the low and average students. The twelve minutes the teacher spent with the high students involved the teacher and students together reading the directions for workbook pages (COR Field Notes, 3/6/78).

The teacher stated in an audio-taped interview in June that:

> ...at the end of the school year, I hit skill instruction with the lower children, and I did more creative writing, just reading activities with the children who were reading. About April, my highest groups were doing more actual reading than skill instruction, and I hit my lower groups with the same things that I did with those kids at the beginning of the school year. I hit them very hard with skill instruction" (COR Interview, 6/4/78).

Observation Day	Low Students	Average Students	High Students
I	35 (minutes)	22	0
II	20	40	0
III	35	26	9 = time with aide; one student read orally
IV	60	43	2
V	75	0	12*
Total Minutes	225	131	23

(COR Field Notes, 11/29/77, 1/12/78, 2/7/78, 3/6/78, 3/9/78)

Figure 4: Miss Delta: Time Allocation to High and Low Reading Groups

The following excerpt taken from an audio tape recording of a skill lesson exemplifies the nature of a skill lesson for the low students.

-- Okay, I would like to show you something this morning. I have written the letters a, t. When you see a, t together you are going to say at. Can you say at?

-- At.

-- Now I want you to get your mouth ready to make the sound that Mr. B makes. Ryan, do you know what sound Mr. B makes? What word can B make when you put it with at? This is the word bat. Can you say bat?

-- Bat.

-- Bat, Nicki, what is this word?

-- Bat.

-- Okay, if we typed the letters a and t which say at, and now this time we are going to get our mouth ready to make the sound that C makes. What is that word?

-- Cat.

-- Right. Okay, now this time the sound that f makes, what would this be?

-- Fat (COR Transcript, 4/26/78).

While the teacher spent the majority of her instructional time teaching specific skills, the students in the low and average group were rarely, if ever, observed reading stories from their basal textbooks or trade books. The basal materials for these students were not available to them upon completion of their reading group and, as a result, they were most often observed spending their morning seatwork time on skill practice sheets.

The high students who spent little or no instructional time with the teacher were observed spending most of their seatwork time reading

basal text stories, trade books, or working on large amounts of reading related seatwork activities designed to keep them working independently.

In addition to the different activities provided for the high and low readers, the differences of teacher role and expectations for the high and low groups also became apparent through the analysis of the data. The teacher's role at the end of the first cycle was primarily that of a diagnostician. During the second, third, and fourth cycles, the teacher role could be summarized as "skills instructor." She stated at the end of the second cycle that she worked primarily with skill groups as she feels SRI is "important for skill development" (COR Field Notes, 9/14/77). However, observations revealed that the teacher as skill instructor applied only to the low readers in the classroom. Observations did not provide evidence that this role applied to the high readers. Miss Delta spent little or no instructional time with these students because she felt they "did not need her and expected that they would make it on their own" (COR Field Notes, 11/29/77).

Modification of preactive decisions. From analysis of the data, it could not be determined by the researcher if preactive decisions had been modified.

On-the-spot decisions. From the analysis of the data, it could not be determined by the researcher if on-the-spot decisions had been made.

Postactive or Evaluative Decisions

Judging success of students. The postactive or evaluative phase involves the teacher reflecting upon the school year and "judging the worth of prior decisions" (Shavelson, 1976, p. 401). Evidence for this phase occurred at the end of the school year for Miss Delta. During an interview, the teacher stated the school year "went well," and, she was "happy with the outcome" (COR Interview, 6/4/78). She felt the use of the skills program helped her achieve her goal of providing the students with a "good background" in reading skills. No mention was made of the basal materials she used in her program in terms of helping her achieve her goals for the year or judging student progress.

Reasons attributed to success or lack of success. Miss Delta did not discuss the reading progress of her students other than to say that she "was disappointed that her low students did not show the progress she expected after working so hard with them all year" (COR Interview, 6/4/78). No mention was made of the specific reasons that she attributed to the success or lack of success for her students' progress. However, it is inferred by this researcher that students' success or non-success was attributed to the skills program.

Summary of Case Study #2

The following figure (Figure 5) summarizes Miss Delta's decision-making and classroom practices. It appeared that the decisions Miss Delta made concerning her reading instruction evolved around the skills management system she used in her reading program. The

PREACTIVE, PLANNING PHASE	INTERACTIVE PHASE	POSTACTIVE OR EVALUATIVE PHASE
September 7 to October 4, 1977	October 4, 1977 to May 30, 1978	May 30 to June 10, 1978
Phase characterized by planning & decision making. Framework for decision-making 1. knew program, wanted group skill instruction 2. new program based on skill hierarchy 3. defined her belief system of teaching of reading as a combination of skill development & comprehension; major emphasis on skill development 4. expressed goals in terms of development of skills Decision categories 1. Testing & grouping decisions - results of skills testing indicated student skill strengths & weaknesses & a skill instructional level; students placed in skill groups based on this level - results of informal tests determined instructional reading level; students placed in basals based on this level 2. Materials decisions - new materials; chose skills management program because basal was not complete enough - basal materials provided stories; used basal materials based on availability - supplementary materials would be implemented once skills program & basal programs were underway	Phase characterized by implementation & modification of preactive decisions. Implementation of preactive decisions Implementation of testing, grouping, materials, & management decisions resulted in: 1. consistent pattern of organization of the school day 2. skill groups emerged as setting for instruction 3. differences between high and low reading groups a. Time allocation low's more teacher time; high's little or no teacher time b. Activities low's--word recognition, decoding skills in isolation of words & sentences; high's --basal materials, skill materials c. Teacher role, expectations low's--teacher as skill instructor, need skills background to read; high's--do not need the teacher, will do fine on their own Modification of preactive decisions - analysis of data did not reveal modifications of preactive decisions On-the-spot decisions - analysis of data did not reveal on-the-spot decision-making	Phase characterized by evaluation of student performance & activity usage based on preactive decisions. Judged success of students based on: 1. skills program provided students with a good background in reading skills Success of readers attributed to: 1. skills program Non-success of readers attributed to: 1. inferred by the researcher that the skills program was not adequate for these students

Figure 5: Summary of Miss Delta's Decision Making and Classroom Practices

Figure 5 (cont'd.)

PREACTIVE, PLANNING PHASE	INTERACTIVE PHASE	POSTACTIVE OR EVALUATIVE PHASE
September 7 to October 4, 1977	October 4, 1977 to May 30, 1978	May 30 to June 10, 1978
3. Management decisions - immediate organizational techniques teacher employed while she became oriented to her new teaching assignment - organization techniques designed to provide students with understanding of how the classroom was going to work for the school year - management concerns influenced other decisions a. materials chosen for ease of management b. grouping for ease of management c. storage of materials for ease of management		

preactive or planning decisions were based on a mental framework involving the skills management system. Her testing, grouping, and management decisions all focused on getting students placed in skill groups. The implementation of these decisions in her practice resulted in the skills program providing the structure and the flow of activities in her reading program. The evaluation of student progress in reading was based on students' progressing through the skills program.

Case Study #3

Introduction

Mrs. Bailey is a first grade classroom teacher. The school where she is a teacher is located in a community that surrounds a large midwestern state university. The twenty-two students in her self-contained classroom are children of professors, faculty, and professionals that comprise the community. The school is considered a "neighborhood" school with a large degree of parent and community involvement in its operation and programming.

Preactive or Planning Phase

The preactive or planning phase is characterized as a "reflective, thoughtful time" (Shavelson, 1976, p. 392). The preactive or planning phase for this teacher occurred within the first two weeks of school. It was during this time that the teacher made a variety of decisions concerning the reading instruction for the students in her class. However, it appeared that the combination of her beliefs about program selection, beliefs about the teaching of reading, and

her goals for the year served as the framework upon which she made decisions concerning her reading instruction. The following excerpts of interview statements illustrates the three components of the framework of thinking Mrs. Bailey operated from in making decisions concerning her reading instruction.

Mrs. Bailey began the school year with a mental plan of how she wanted to conduct her reading instruction. However, as Mrs. Bailey stated:

> I can't plan anything until I know the kids and I've never been fortunate enough to know what students I am going to have until like the day before school. But I do know that I am going to do group instruction and I know the materials (COR Interview, 3/2/79).

Based on the notion that Mrs. Bailey "pretty much knows what she wants to do with reading instruction for the school year and the tasks of reading she must do," planning for the "first month, or the first two or three weeks is almost a day-to-day basis" (COR Interview, 1/20/79).

Mrs. Bailey defined her reading program as "rather structured" and further stated that she used the same reading program for the last three years. When asked why she decided on the program, she stated:

> The reason I decided on this series that I am using is because the first room I was in, the first school I was in, that was the series that was assigned for me to use. Each teacher, chose a company and that was how the initial decision was made. Those were the materials that were available for me to use. But I'd had enough experience through substitute teaching and four years as a teacher's aide working with other reading series that once I got into it I really liked this one, and I've made comparisons back and forth since then and I've stuck with the one that I ended up with that first time (COR Interview, 9/16/78).

During this phase, the teacher defined her belief system about the teaching of reading as a "combination of a phonetic approach and reading for meaning, comprehension" (COR Interview, 9/16/78). However, this belief system was also influenced by the sensitivity she gained as a parent of a struggling reader. The following interview segment describes a further addition to her belief system.

> I think, to be very honest, I think the thing that was the most influential in my concept of the teaching of reading was the experiences I had with my own children. I have two children. One had a very positive primary experience and has always had very successful school experience, always read above grade level, positive self image, everything. The other child had a disastrous primary reading experience. A lot of pressure at the wrong time. Poor instruction, and it took us until she was at eighth grade to get the personality settled down. The feeling of not confident, the feeling of I can't do it. I think, my attitudes about teaching at this age level come a lot from the experiences I had as a parent and seeing how this age level can influence children more than just in the school hours (COR Interview, 9/16/78).

When asked to discuss her goals for the year, she stated:

> That the children enjoy reading and feel comfortable with it and that they can read with good comprehension at their level, that they feel successful and have a very positive attitude toward the entire concept of reading whether it's for reading to follow directions or reading pleasure or reading for assignments. That they feel that it's a very positive thing, not a frightening thing (COR Interview, 9/16/78).

In summary, the combination of Mrs. Bailey's beliefs about the teaching of reading, goals for the year, and program conceptualization appeared to serve as a framework upon which she made decisions concerning the plans for her current program. In the following section of the case study, the decisions Mrs. Bailey made which appeared to shape the course of reading instruction in her classroom are presented.

Decisions Identified During the Preactive Phase

Testing and grouping decisions. In order to get her program underway, Mrs. Bailey began the school year with a testing program. Working with each child individually, she administered a letter recognition test, a picture-sequence test, the Slosson vocabulary list, and had students read from the primer book Sun Up (COR Field Notes, 9/12/78). From the results of these tests, the teacher determined an instructional reading level for each student. The teacher used this information to place a student in the appropriate level basal textbook. Students were then "grouped" upon the results of the testing program; that is, placement in a particular basal textbook determined the reading group membership of a student.

By the second week of school, the teacher had completed her testing, established her reading groups, and was observed meeting with groups for reading instruction (COR Field Notes, 9/19/78). Four groups were formed from the testing, and the group name reflected the name of the basal text being used by the group. The following is a segment of field notes indicating the group name and the assignment for the particular groups.

Sun Up

Read pages 1-4
Ditto on beginning sounds

A Happy Morning

Read pages 2-5
Letter identification ditto

Readiness

Dittoes in folder (letter-sound association dittoes Ss, Bb)

Together We Go

Read pages 8-11 (COR Field Notes, 9/19/78).

Materials decisions. While Mrs. Bailey had used the materials that she had used for previous years' programs, she indicated that she preferred the program because it provided "a balance, an equal emphasis on phonics and comprehension" (COR Interview, 9/78). In addition to her basal materials, the teacher supplemented her reading program with a variety of other materials. She described these materials in the following segment of an interview.

> Okay, I use, I could go on and on and on. I use the basal reading series. I use phonics books. I use listening tapes for auditory things. I have the Patrol Talking Picture Dictionary Kit in my room. Now I have the Learning with Laughter Film Strip Series. I use the LEAR Language Development Kit. Talking Alphabet. A combination of all kinds of materials. But the basic materials are the basals (COR Interview, 9/16/78).

When she was asked how she decided on these materials, she replied, "I look for the thing (material) that meets the need I have the most" (COR Interview). In addition to these materials, Mrs. Bailey had established activity centers within her room. A listening center, a library center, a game center, a handwriting center, a science center, and a math center were designed to provide activities for the children when they had completed their work. Mrs. Bailey stated the purpose of the centers during an interview. "Centers are used for extension and enrichment--not for teaching--I do that" (COR Field Notes, 9/21/78).

Management decisions. Management decisions during this phase tended to be organizational techniques that would provide the students with an understanding of how the classroom was going to work for the school year. The following segment of a recorded reading group is an example of an organizational technique. In the segment, the teacher is telling the students what they are expected to "do" when they have been called to meet with their reading group.

> -- Boys and girls, while you're waiting for me to come to reading circle...you have to sometimes be quiet, because maybe one of the reasons it's taking me a minute to get here is I'm giving some help to people getting started at board work. We talked last week about this being a big group, didn't we?
>
> -- "Yah, yes."
>
> -- And didn't I ask your help? When coming to circle, you've got to help yourselves get seated around the table. You're big enough; you don't need to have the teacher to find a place for you. If you work together, you can do it. Will you try tomorrow morning better?
>
> -- "Yah, yah..." (COR Transcript, 9/25/78).

Another reading group, upon coming to "reading circle," was commended for "knowing" how to come to the reading circle.

> -- Oh, you're all ready to begin! How very nice! And your books are all open to the next story in our book (COR Transcript, 9/25/78).

Additional examples of teacher statements made in the early weeks of school served to remind the students how the classroom was going to work. These included statements like:

> Mrs. Bailey would really appreciate it if you could get here on time (COR Field Notes, 9/15/78); This is milk money, we don't put it in the envelope for lunch money (COR Field Notes, 9/15/78); and, When you reading group is called, you have to stop and come right then (COR Field Notes, 9/15/78).

By the second week of school, observations indicated the children knew they were to hang up their coats in their assigned lockers before coming into the room. Once in the room, lunch boxes were to be stored in the box under the empty desk near the front of the room. Envelopes containing lunch money were to be tacked on the bulletin board near the front door of the classroom. Once these tasks had been completed, the students sat down at their desks, and, without removing materials from their desks, visited with one another until the teacher positioned herself in the front of the class, said "good morning," and began to take attendance (COR Field Notes, 9/12, 15, 19, 25/78). Following attendance, general announcements, and "show and tell," the teacher reviewed the assignments for the day for each group. This segment of the morning ends when the teacher says, "Okay, let's get to work" (COR Field Notes, 9/12/78).

The rules for the classroom were posted on a bulletin board near the front door of the room. They reminded the children to "work quietly," "no running or pushing," and "to listen while others are speaking" (COR Field Notes, 9/12/78). As well, the bathroom procedures had been established. The bathroom for the students' use was located in an adjoining room, and only "one person at a time" was allowed to occupy the bathroom (COR Field Notes, 9/12/78).

Influence of general management concerns on the teacher's decisions. Management concerns in general influenced the teacher's decision to select a basal program and group students for instruction. She stated that the basal program "provides organization." In

particular, she cited the teacher's guide as being an important agent in keeping her organized. She stated:

> I love the teacher's guide. It's easy to use, it's organized, it has really good suggestions in it for the teacher. In fact, I think the teacher's guide is very influential in helping me to direct where I am going. A good teacher's guide is very important (COR Interview, 3/2/79).

Grouping students for instruction became a method for Mrs. Bailey to manage the students at this age level. She stated she grouped students because "the students at this level are not ready to work independently and need the structure of groups" (COR Interview, 9/78).

Interactive Phase

The interactive phase of teaching is defined as the period of time "when the teacher is interacting with students" (Shavelson, 1976, p. 396). For the purposes of this study, the beginning of this stage for Mrs. Bailey began in the second week of school. She had completed her testing, and her program of reading instruction was underway. This phase was characterized by the implementation and modification of the decisions made in the planning stage. On-the-spot and context specific decisions also surfaced within observations on particular days.

Implementation of preactive decisions: organization of the school day. Implementation of the testing, grouping, materials, and management decisions in Mrs. Bailey's classroom resulted in a consistent routine pattern of organization. Generally, the students spent the first hour of the morning working on basal materials and

other reading related materials. During this time, the teacher called students to join her at the reading circle for reading group instruction. Following recess, a language arts activity, library, special classes, or an assembly may have occupied the rest of the morning. Over the course of the school year, the organization of the school day, reflected in the eighteen observations, tended to remain the same. Following is an outline of the daily schedule.

9:10	Bell rings.
9:10 - 9:15	Children enter room. They have stored their coats, boots, etc. in lockers outside of the classroom. The children upon entering the room find their seats and sit down. The children engaged in quiet morning hellos or share a story with the teacher. On Friday, the children deposit their lunch money for the following week in an envelope by the door. The children generally never take out materials to begin working at this time. They wait until after attendance and assignment time.
9:20 - 9:25	The teacher begins her "good morning" to the students and takes attendance. Lunch money collection, special announcements, and show and tell also occur during this time.
9:25 - 9:30	The teacher introduces board work, handwriting, and explains the reading assignment to each reading group. The assignments are listed on the board.
9:30 - 10:25	The teacher works with various reading groups. (This is altered on days when assemblies come first.)
10:25	Clean up and prepare for recess.
10:25 - 10:40	Recess.
10:40 - 11:30	LEIR (Language arts program).
11:55 - 12:55	Lunch
1:00 - 2:00	Math

2:00 - 2:15 Recess.

2:15 - 3:00 Science, social studies activities.

3:00 - 3:15 Clean up, notes passed out.

3:15 Dismissal.

The weekly schedule was also punctuated by other scheduled activities. The teacher listed those for the researcher, and they are as follows:

Weekly Reader - Used once a week--various times.

USSR - Uninterrupted sustained silent reading. "I work to get this time to 30 minutes by end of year. No talking! Everyone reads, including me. A book or magazine of your choice." Friday, 11:15-11:45.

Recess -	A.M.	10:25-10:40
	P.M.	2:00-2:15
Library -	Friday	10:45-11:15
Music -	Friday	2:35-3:05
Gym -	Tuesday & Thursday	11:05-11:30
	Friday	1:15-1:40

Art - Every other week on Tuesday, 1:00-2:00 (COR Field Notes, 9/78 to 5/79).

The classroom atmosphere generally impressed the observer as being of a busy, active teaching and learning environment. At the same time, however, it was a relaxing environment with children and teacher alike feeling free to stop the workings of school for a moment in order to exchange a personal story or laugh. Part of this perhaps came from the teacher's overall belief about what she hoped to accomplish in reading this year. She stated:

> I hope to accomplish...that the children enjoy reading and feel comfortable with it and that they can read with good comprehension at their level, that they feel successful and have a very positive attitude toward the entire concept of reading whether it's for reading to follow directions or reading pleasure or reading for assignments. That they feel that it's a very positive thing, not a frightening thing (COR Interview, 9/78).

During the morning reading period, the students were involved in a variety of activities. The following segment of field notes illustrates the types of activities students generally spent their time working on during the "reading period" over the course of the school year.

> 9:41 Jay is still at listening center putting things away--returns to seat and gets out primer--begins reading to self.
>
> 9:42 Lynn is at reading lab.
>
> 9:43 Jeff is on the carpet playing a game.
>
> 9:44 John in reading group--has workbook open to page--listens to teacher's directions relative to that page--raises hand when teacher asks question.
>
> 9:45 Tom also on the workbook page in reading group--follows teacher's directions and marks responses in the page.
>
> 9:46 Kathy has finished story, walks around room. Returns to seat, digs around in her desk for pencil--begins to do ditto.
>
> 9:47 Mary is walking around room with ditto in her hand--takes it to teacher--returns to desk--continues to read primer to herself.
>
> 9:48 Todd--at reading lab (COR Field Notes, 2/26/79).

Reading groups as a setting for instruction. Within the organization of a typical morning, the reading groups emerged as the setting used by Mrs. Bailey for reading instruction. Using the basal

textbook as the basis for her instruction during the reading group period, Mrs. Bailey planned the activities for these groups based on the progression of stories and activities found in the teacher's guide. She discussed her planning procedures for the teaching of reading groups by stating:

> Reading plans are done ahead pretty much for the entire book. Lesson plans for each book are kept on a ditto master. So when I begin a group reading in a basal, I pull out this basic guide that I have made myself and that runs on a day to day basis (COR Interview, 3/2/79).

Further, this concept of planning enabled the teacher to feel well organized and well planned. As she stated:

> I feel like when I walk in in the morning everything is well organized, and it's just a matter of here we go! (COR Interview, 3/2/79).

However, in general, the eighteen observations of the teacher working with reading groups indicated that only the oral reading and general comprehension questioning components of the basal series was included. The greatest amount of the reading group time was devoted to the teacher giving directions for a ditto page, workbook page, or a phonics book page. The following samples of field notes illustrates the oral reading, general questioning, and direction giving sections typical of a reading group session.

9:52 Sun Up group, 5-6 students. Teacher helps another child--still waiting for group members to arrive for group.

9:55 Can anyone read the title? Children begin reading. Teacher asks how did the turtle hide? Did Sandy go in his shell? Why would he hide from the turtle? What do you think what might be the reason? Do you think he is playing a game?

10:00 "Okay, close your books." Teacher passes out dittoes. Okay, we have three words: hid, sun, and in.

10:01 Which word rhymes with gun--with did--which word would go in the blank? Okay, read the sentences and the word choices and decide which one makes sense in the blank. For example, cats like to sleep in the _____ (sun). Okay, how many have to do board work? Okay, take your dittoes and go back to your seats and get to work.

10:03 Group dismissed (COR Field Notes, 11/29/80).

The following example is longer but also typifies the reliance on the use of materials to provide instruction:

9:50 Okay, I would like to see Together We Go; bring everything with you.

9:51 What is this word--sad, dog, cat, under, rock--puts on board.

9:52 Okay, I am going to ask you some questions about these words--which one rhymes with bad, sock, bat? What one begins like the word rat? Which one begins like work do? Which one begins like word say? Which is the opposite of happy? Okay, those are new words.

9:53 Okay, when you read, you should try to remember what you read. Why did the man send the donkey away? What animals joined him? Why was the cat without a home? Did the cats master tell him to leave? What were the animals going to do in Brennan?

9:55 I'd like to do a page in your workbook together. If you look at page 59, you've got three words with the same end sound. They all have nd sound. What about the word mop? Pond? Sand? Sled?

9:58 In the middle of the page, we are listening for nt ending words. What about plant? Belt? Do you hear an lt there?

9:59 Sun and Shadows (9), I would like you to join this group with your B books and pencil. We are going to do page 15 together.

10:03 Okay, I want you to think about vowel sounds, and we are going to look at this page. I am going to say the picture, and if you hear a short a and make short mark above it--put a on the line under the picture--can, gum, short e--bell, map, jet, bed, i sound like in pin-wig, bat, bib, short o--cot, sock, top, pen, short u--cup, bus, pig, sun.

10:08 Next page. All are short sound. You have to write the vowel you hear--rug, tub, belt, cut.

10:09 Let's read them and learn as we go along. The teacher reads right answers and says, "you may fix it if it is wrong."

10:10 Next picture is drum, rat, brush, socks. Teacher tells answer.

10:11 Next picture, hen, truck, cuff--a sleeve on a shirt, flag. Tells answers--fix it if you got it wrong.

10:13 cub, bug, rug, dot, duck--"Let's learn by hearing the answer."

10:15 Group ends. Teacher reminds the students to "finish your board work"--teacher is correcting dittoes at the reading table.

Clean up (COR Field Notes, 2/13/79).

Differences between high and low reading groups. During the observations in Mrs. Bailey's classroom during reading groups time, it became apparent that the experience of learning to read is qualitatively different for high and low readers. The implementation of the preactive decisions, contextual influences posed by the grouping, and teacher attitudes seemed to explain the differences between the groups.

Mrs. Bailey stated she believed she should spend "equal amounts of time with the low, middle, and high reading groups." However, she "knew" she spent "more time with low and average groups" (COR Interview, 3/2/79). In addition to the difference in the time allocated

to the high and low groups, there were differences in the types of activities planned and presented to students in the high and low reading groups.

The teacher discussed her perception of how the groups were spending their time by stating:

> With the upper groups, I began to do more of going over materials. Okay, like the stories they have read--it becomes more discussion and building on comprehension and inferencing skills and things like that. Also I do a lot of work with scanning...like if I want them to recall details, finding the place in the story, that kind of work. We don't do much rereading of the story. Periodically I ask them, I tell them I want to hear them read, make sure that they're not having any problems. I do...when they read orally, it's more a building on voice inflection and making it sound more interesting. But with the lower group, we read every day...reread the story that they've read and some work on comprehension, but mostly just the word identification skills...decoding skills (COR Interview, 1/20/79).

Observations of the low reading groups revealed that the students spent their time working on word identification and decoding activities. The development of these skills typically occurred in isolation from whole words and/or whole sentences (see Appendix F). Observations of the high group revealed that the students spent more time on activities designed to extend the meaning of a story. Further, the comprehension, vocabulary, and decoding skills instruction for the high readers was typically developed within the context of sentences (see Appendix G).

It is interesting to note, however, that while a program of skill development was emphasized for low readers, Mrs. Bailey was not concerned about her high readers who had poor phonics skills. She stated:

> I think Julie is a good example of that. There is not too much sense in taking her back and struggling her through beginning blending consonant sounds when she took a jump like she did in reading. Brad is another case. He doesn't seem to have the skills but he seems to be reading fine without it. Joe is scoring low in vowel sounds on his testing, but the kid's reading on a fifth grade level so I don't worry about the phonics (COR Interview, 3/2/79).

While different activities comprised the reading program of the high and low readers, Mrs. Bailey also perceived a difference in her role and in her expectations for the high and low groups. In terms of her perceptions of role variations, the teacher outlined the differences in the following interview segment.

> Okay, with the upper group it's more relaxed in terms of I don't feel like I have to keep pulling them to keep their minds on it...keep their minds on the books, so I'm more relaxed. It's more of a discussion exchange type thing between the upper group and myself. I'm more a part of their learning, a kind of working together to help them learn. With the lowest group I'm more of a leader, a puller --let's pay attention, a director; I don't know, I'll bet if you even looked at my body I'd even be stiffer, more rigid with that group. Because if I let down or relax at all, then they relax and their attention span goes down. They need to feel me as a real strong figure (COR Interview, 1/20/79).

Mrs. Bailey also stated that as a teacher you expect different performance from high students than low students.

> You meet group expectations. With the high students, I expect them to work more independently and their assignments will require them to work more on their own. With the low students, they need more adult contact. They are not being challenged as much as if they knew how to read (COR Interview, 9/16/78).

Modification of preactive decisions during the interactive phase. During this interactive or teaching phase, Mrs. Bailey revised her initial decisions concerning several students' group placements. The

change in one student's group placement evolved as the teacher observed the student "getting her work done very fast." Mrs. Bailey explained:

> Like in the case of Joany, it's very difficult to decide whether you are pushing them too fast--but this morning she was bored. There's a fine line between it's too hard or it's too easy. Anyway, I talked to her about it, and I showed her that I felt that she was getting her work done very fast and the reason she was getting it done quickly was because it wasn't challenging to her. I said this book may be more difficult for you. You may enjoy it, you may not. Reading's not fun if it's too hard. And I asked her if she wanted to try it. I could tell by her reaction that she felt good about trying it, and so I changed her group (COR Interview, 9/16/78).

The group placement of another student was also changed. However, the change for this student evolved as the parent of the child questioned her child's placement in a particular book. The parent claimed the child was reading all kinds of books at home, and the book the child was using in school appeared to be "too easy." The teacher checked the placement and reported that she was "shocked" and didn't realize how well the child was reading. The teacher explained the student was shy and encountered problems during testing situations. The student was initially placed in the low group and, with the corrected placement, spent the rest of the year in the high group (COR Field Notes, 1/24/78).

In addition, the decision to place the low readers in a particular book "was speeded up." The teacher reported she placed the students in a book earlier than she had planned as they needed "a boost in self concept" (COR Field Notes, 10/24/78).

On-the-spot decisions. While Mrs. Bailey made the global decisions concerning grouping, materials, and so on, categories of on-the-spot decisions emerged from the data. For Mrs. Bailey, deciding when to meet with particular reading groups was determined on a daily basis and depended on the context of the situation. As Mrs. Bailey explained:

> I never know which group I am going to call first. I never have in mind--all right, first, I usually know which group I am going to start with, but, from there on, the rest of the morning is played by ear. I key into, I watch the room and when the majority of the kids in that group have got their work finished then I call them to circle. I never know where I'm going after that first group. I never know how long I am going to keep them. I know what I intend to do, or would like to do when they come but some days they can come and I can get through all those lesson plans I have on my mind and some days I won't get through one thing because they are not attending and it's not worth keeping them, so I let them go (COR Interview, 3/2/79).

The teacher also indicated that, while she made reading plans for the entire book, the daily implementation of these plans were often altered.

> I make up the plans for a whole book on a ditto sheet. And then there is place to put the dates and so I can just date each one as I go along, and then I just scribble all over them because I always have to change things depending on the children or the group. Some children can read a story a day and progress quite fast through a text and then you'll get another group going through that same book and you'll need to spend maybe a day with a story and then two days on the skills or something like that, so I have to alter that (COR Interview, 3/2/79).

Postactive or Evaluative Decisions

Judging success of students. The postactive or evaluative phase involved the teacher reflecting upon the school year and "judging the worth of prior decisions" (Shavelson, 1976, p. 401). This phase

occurred at the end of the school year for Mrs. Bailey. Mrs. Bailey believed that the best way to judge the success of her students in reading was according to the criteria she outlined in the following statement.

> That they love to read. That they love to be read to. That when they're work is finished and they have a choice of things to do on their own, art center, listening center, activity center, that at least once in a while they choose to read (COR Interview, 5/30/79).

In addition, the progression through materials was "another way of determining success" (COR Interview, 3/2/79). A student's performance on skill work was also cited as a measure of judging student progress.

Reasons attributed to success or lack of success. For the children who were successful readers, the teacher attributed their success to "learning from the program, and learning by themselves" (COR Interview, 5/30/79). For the children who were not successful readers, the teacher stated she found them "frustrating to work with" and that they had attention problems and other non-reading types of learning problems. Mrs. Bailey stated:

> You saw me trying to keep them bodily still. You saw me standing behind their chairs to keep them from wiggling to keep them able to attend. You were there one day when I had to lose my temper with them. Two of the boys are also learning disabled children, so I'm working through non-reading type learning problems. I'm working through perceptual problems and auditory problems and things that are not necessarily reading related (COR Interview, 5/30/79).

Summary of Case Study #3

The following figure (Figure 6) summarizes Mrs. Bailey's decision making and classroom practices. It appeared that the

PREACTIVE, PLANNING PHASE	INTERACTIVE PHASE	POSTACTIVE OR EVALUATIVE PHASE
September 2 to September 16, 1977	September 16, 1977 to May 30, 1978	May 30 to June 10, 1978
Phase characterized by planning & decision making. Framework for decision-making 1. knew materials, wanted group instruction 2. defined program as structured 3. defined belief system of the teaching of reading as a combination of phonics, reading for meaning, comprehension; concern for student self concept in reading 4. expressed goals for the year; students enjoy reading, feel comfortable with reading Decision categories 1. Testing and grouping decisions - results of informal tests determined instructional reading level for students - based on instructional reading level, students were assigned basal textbook, basal textbook determined reading group membership of students 2. Materials decisions - materials used in her previous year's of teaching - used an assortment of materials to meet student needs - centers in room for extensive activities 3. Management decisions - organizational techniques designed to provide students with understanding of how the classroom was going to work for the school year - management concerns influenced other decisions a. use of basal for organization & direction for program management b. grouping of students as a method to manage students at this age	Phase characterized by implementation & modification of preactive decisions. Implementation of preactive decisions Implementation of testing, grouping, materials, & management decisions resulted in: 1. consistent pattern of organization of the school day 2. reading groups as the setting for reading instruction 3. differences between high groups & low groups a. Time allocation low's more teacher time; high's less teacher time b. Activities low's activities on word recognition, decoding skills, in isolation of words, sentences; high's activities on extending story meaning, comprehension within context of sentences c. Teacher role, expectations low's--teacher a leader, puller, director; tense situation; low's need more help, not challenged because they can't read; high's --teacher more part of their learning, discussion leader; relaxed situation; expected high's to work independently & do more work Modification of preactive decisions 1. Initial grouping decision was revised; material too easy for several students, another group needed a boost in self concept On-the-spot decisions 1. group meeting times determined on daily basis, depending on contextual factors 2. reading plans altered if problems developed in the lesson	Phase characterized by evaluation of student performance & activity usage based on preactive decisions. Judged success of students based on: 1. goals for the year; enjoy reading 2. progression through materials Success of readers attributed to: 1. program 2. learning by themselves Non-success of readers attributed to: 1. attention problems 2. learning disabilities, perceptual, auditory problems

Figure 6: Summary of Mrs. Bailey's Decision Making and Classroom Practices

decisions Mrs. Bailey made concerning her reading instruction evolved around the materials she used in her reading program. The preactive or planning decisions were based on a mental framework involving materials and a positive student self-concept in reading. Her testing, grouping, and management decisions all focused on getting students placed into various materials. The implementation of these decisions in her practice resulted in the basal textbook series and other materials providing the structure and the flow of activities in her reading program. The evaluation of student progress in reading was based on students' progress through the basal textbook series, students' progression through other materials, and the students' enjoyment of reading.

Case Study #4

Introduction

Mrs. Donlan is a second/third grade classroom teacher. The class of twenty-two students is housed in a school building located in a community comprised of families from various socioeconomic (lower to upper middle) situations, and from various cultural backgrounds. The classroom is unique as it is located in a large open room and is one of four classrooms in the area.

Preactive or Planning Phase

The preactive or planning phase is characterized as a "reflective, thoughtful time (Shavelson, 1976, p. 392). The planning phase for this teacher began in August and continued through the third week of school. It was during this time that the teacher made a

variety of decisions concerning the reading instruction for the students in her class. However, it appeared that the combination of her beliefs about teaching in general, her beliefs about the teaching of reading, and her goals for the year served as a framework upon which she made decisions concerning her reading instruction. The following narrative and excerpts of interview statements illustrates the components of this framework of thinking.

While the research was designed to study the life of one classroom, in this case, the overall plan for the school year was shared by the three other teachers in the unique arrangement of four classrooms. Integral to this plan was a strategy involving student work centers and a method of team teaching in reading. While each teacher maintained autonomy of her class, students from the four classrooms shared the work centers designed to give students the opportunity to apply their reading skills in other content areas. The materials in the various work centers focused on some aspect of content (i.e., social studies, science, writing, etc.), and the materials were geared to different reading levels. For example, a student could go to a work center on animals and find materials on the topic to fit his/her particular reading level. Materials were available ranging from pre-reading instructional levels through sixth grade instructional levels (COR Field Notes, 9/19/77).

The four teachers elected to work together "because they all felt a need to share responsibilities in order to teach most effectively" (COR Informal Interview, 8/16/77). During the summer of 1976, the four teachers spent the entire summer working on a daily

basis organizing their rooms, building spool tables and other furniture, and producing materials to be used in the coming school year (COR Informal Interview, 8/16/77). During an on-site visit in August of 1977, Mrs. Donlan was observed preparing for her second year as a teacher in the open quad area. During this visit, Mrs. Donlan and her three team members were involved in preparing materials, arranging furniture, and making displays for their bulletin board areas. This team effort continued through the school year. The four teachers met "once a week during the school year" to discuss problems, to remind one another to set up a center, or to plan social events for their team" (COR Field Notes, 9/19/77). In addition to their weekly meetings, the teachers met once a month to share what they were doing and to plan for the next month's centers (COR Field Notes, 9/19/77).

During this phase, the teacher defined her belief system regarding the teaching of reading as an integrated method of instruction. She stated that while she "believes in a skills hierarchy," she felt it was "necessary to apply reading skills to materials in other content areas" (COR Field Notes, 9/13/77). Her goals, as she stated, were "very basic--teaching kids to become proficient readers and to enjoy reading" (COR Interview, 6/9/78). She continued to say the activities for the year "were all aimed at building these (goals) and giving children a better feeling about themselves" (COR Interview, 6/9/78).

In summary, the combination of Mrs. Donlan's beliefs about teaching in general, her beliefs about the teaching of reading, and

her goals for the year appeared to serve as a framework upon which she made decisions concerning her reading instruction.

Decisions Identified During the Preactive Phase

Testing and grouping decisions. In order to get her program started, the teacher began the school year with a program of testing. The teacher administered the Systematic Reading Instruction placement test, a teacher-made informal reading inventory, the Botel list of sight words, and the Systematic Reading Instruction pretests.

On September 13, 1977, several children in the classroom were observed passing out test booklets to students in the room. When one child asked why the children were going to take another test, the teacher responded, "This test will tell me which cluster of skills you will be in." During the testing session, a child experienced difficulty with a part of the test. The teacher responded, "Now I know what I can teach you this year."

She administered a teacher-made informal reading inventory on September 15, 1977. She stated that the test is a "relaxed situation" and she likes "to look at several indicators before making a decision as to reading groups." She feels "one test is not enough, and likes to hear the child read orally in a relaxed situation also" (COR Field Notes, 9/13/77).

The teacher stated, "instruction is based on the level of ability and readiness appropriate for each student" (COR Field Notes, 9/28/77). While the testing served as a basis for determining skill and/or basal reading groups, the testing further yielded "a list of skill

problem areas" the teacher used in making assignments on a child's contract for "activities that will provide further practice in problem areas" (COR Field Notes, 9/28/77).

Materials decisions. The teacher selected her materials based on her beliefs about the teaching of reading, availability of materials, and "student instructional level and interest level" (COR Field Notes, 9/28/77). The teacher selected the Systematic Reading Instruction Program, by Gerald Duffy and George Sherman as she felt it was closely aligned to her belief of teaching reading skills. She felt the program would give her "good organization and direction for teaching specific reading skills" (COR Field Notes, 9/13/77). Further, she decided to implement the skills program in conjunction with a basal program because "the basal wasn't reaching all the skills" (COR Field Notes, 9/13/77). She explained, "Some (children) were not ready (for skills as presented in the basal) while others had already had them" (COR Field Notes, 9/13/77). She stated, "it is a much better approach to combine SRI skills and a basal program" (COR Field Notes, 9/13/77).

Mrs. Donlan selected the Harcourt Brace textbook series for use with her basal reading groups. In addition to the fact that the materials were available, she stated, "I like the way they deal with comprehension. The tests get into inferencing and higher level skills. The stories are interesting, and I like the progression of skills" (COR Field Notes, 12/6/77). Consistent with the teacher's belief that "it is necessary to apply reading skills to materials in

other areas," the idea of individual student contracts and work centers were developed (COR Field Notes, 12/6/77).

The four teachers in the open quad participated in planning for the activities and materials to be used in the math, reading, science, social studies, publishing, and handwriting work centers. Since the materials in each center were on various grade levels, each of the four teachers took a specific grade level and planned the activities and materials for a particular center.

Each student received a "contract" at the beginning of each week. The teacher individually assigned activities for each child. The assignment of activities was based on the skill(s) a student required further practice with, the interests of the student, and the ability level of the student. The following activities appeared on a contract.

Reading

Reading Assignment	Skill Sheets
Try This	Spelling
Try This Too	Journal
Now Try This	Bookmark Library
Ditto Pages	Other

Listening Activities (Tapes & Records)

Wollensack	Joe Magic
Creative Arts Tapes	Charger
Imperial Reading Tapes	Story and Tape
Learning with Laughter	Other
Peanut Butter Boy	

Reading Kits

One to One, Jr.	SRA
Random House	Durrell-Murphy Phonics Practice
LOGOS	Other

Centers

Math	Social Studies
Reading	Publishing
Science	Handwriting

(COR Field Notes, 9/21/77).

Management decisions. Management decisions during this phase tended to be organizational techniques that would provide students with an understanding of how the classroom was going to work for the year and, unique to this teacher, provided students with an understanding of the importance of student participation in the management of the room. In addition, the management of the room was contingent upon the organization necessary to maintain the operation of four classrooms of students and teachers working collectively.

During the second observation of this teacher in the first cycle of observations, the assignment on the board listed four reading groups and center assignments. When the teacher was asked how she had already established reading groups when she was still being observed testing her students (presumably for grouping purposes), she stated the four reading groups, at this point, were "just a management system" (COR Field Notes, 9/15/77). She continued, the groups were established so the students could get "practice on how the centers are going to work once we really begin the program" (COR Field Notes, 9/15/77).

The teacher stated at the end of the first observation cycle that "management" is crucial to any good program. The teacher stated that it was of equal importance to her that "the children as well should be part of the classroom management and decision making" (COR Field

Notes, 9/19/77). Further, she stated, "children are important and capable of being involved and making a contribution" (COR Field Notes, 9/19/77). The students were responsible for deciding on a list of classroom rules. The teacher was often observed calling for a "vote." For example, the students decided through a "vote" if the room was too noisy and if an activity should be continued or discontinued (COR Field Notes, 9/21/77).

The teacher stated she encouraged "the students to help make decisions," as she viewed students as "capable decision makers." She added, "students respond better if they feel they have made up the rule instead of having the teacher making and enforcing all decisions" (COR Field Notes, 9/19/77).

Observations by the third week of school indicated the students knew how the classroom was going to work for the rest of the school year. Mrs. Donlan's allocation of time to various activities was contingent upon the organization necessary to maintain the operation of the four classrooms of teachers and students working collectively. In order for the four teachers and students to work together, it was necessary to schedule reading group times and other activity periods for the same time each day across the four classrooms.

Influence of general management concerns on the teacher's decisions. The teacher stated "management" was crucial to any good program (COR Field Notes, 9/15/77). It is inferred by the researcher that the teaming arrangement, the grouping, and materials decisions were influenced by the teacher's overall concern for a well-managed classroom.

Interactive Phase

The interactive phase of teaching is defined as the period of time "when the teacher is interacting with students" (Shavelson, 1976, p. 396). For the purpose of this study, the beginning of this phase for Mrs. Donlan began in the third week of school. She had established her reading groups, and her program of reading instruction was underway. This phase was characterized by the implementation of the decisions made during the planning stage. A record of the modification of these decisions and/or on-the-spot decision making are not complete. In part, this is due to the fact that the data collected on this teacher occurred during the 1977-78 research year. The collection procedures and recording procedures were not as refined and complete as in the 1978-79 research year.

Implementation of preactive decisions: organization of the school day. Implementation of the testing, grouping, materials, and management decisions in Mrs. Donlan's class resulted in a consistent routine pattern of organization. The following is an outline of the daily pattern of organization taken from the field notes in the first cycle of observations.

9:15 Children enter (coats are hung in lockers in the hall). Teacher and student(s) are involved in casual morning conversation. Teacher takes attendance, children put their lunch money in an envelope tacked on a bulletin board.

9:20 Class meeting - all children gather around the teacher at the front of the room (sitting). The teacher discusses the day's schedule; may or may not have papers or contracts to return.

9:25 Student activities - throughout the day, a variety of activities are occuring within the classroom area and the center area. Students meet with the

teacher for their appointed reading group time. Reading groups meet with the teacher under study and her teaming partner according to the following schedule:

Mondays and Thursdays

11:30	Much Majesty (4^1)
1:00	Sun and Shadows (Primer)
	Together We Go (Primer)
1:20	Going Places (2^2)
	World of Surprises (2^2)
1:40	Widening Circles (3^1)
	Ring Around the World (3^1)

Tuesdays, Wednesdays, Fridays

9:20	Sun and Shadows (Primer)
	Together We Go (Primer)
9:40	Going Places (2^2)
	World of Surprises (2^2)
10:00	Widening Circles (3^1)
	Ring Around the World (3^1)
1:00	Much Majesty (4^1)

The first list of groups met with the teacher under study. The second list of reading groups met with Mrs. Donlan's teaming partner. While students were meeting with a teacher in a reading group situation, the rest of the members of the classroom were involved in a variety of activities listed on their individual contracts. The assignments listed on the contract were to be completed in a week. There was also a choice of activities for the student who finished his/her contract assignments. These activities included: writing in (your) journal, reading silently, drawing, going to the art center, going to the fun listening center, doing a crossword puzzle, or playing a reading game.

On Monday, Wednesday, and Friday, the students were in gym from 10:30-11:00. On Thursday, music was from 9:55-10:30, and the students had recess at 10:30-10:45 each morning.

10:45	This period of time was generally devoted to a language arts lesson or individual SRI skill lessons.
11:30 - 12:00	Children worked on math lessons.
12:00	Lunch

The afternoon activities varied. Usually the first half hour was devoted to instruction with a reading group while the students at their seats finished their contract work. On some afternoons, the class went to the library, or they worked on SRI skill lessons or language arts. Two days a week, they had a social studies lesson. Friday afternoons were devoted to student craft-making sessions. The children chose a craft they wished to learn how to complete.

While the teacher was working with a reading group one morning, the remaining children in the classroom were observed working on a variety of activities. Following is a description of these activities taken from field notes.

> Some (children) are reading to one another, some working on workbook pages together; a group is working at the listening center. One child is reading a book, another is writing a book report; one child is working on a self correcting skill sheet activity page. Several students are working on ditto sheets, kit cards, story work sheet, filmstrip records and tapes, and book series (COR Field Notes, 9/21/77).

However, toward the end of the second cycle of observations, the teacher reported she had reviewed a new program and was planning on adding a whole language approach to her program soon. She stated:

> I selected the Language Experience In Reading program by Roach Van Allen because I like the approach--the whole language approach. It provides opportunities to talk about stories, reading, writing, and art projects (COR Field Notes, 12/6/77).

The addition of the LEIR program was observed in operation by February. However, only the third grade students in the classroom were involved in the program. When the teacher was questioned as to why only the third grade students were participating in the program, she stated:

> This year's second graders will be able to have LEIR next year as they stay with the same teacher. But I wanted the third graders to be exposed to LEIR before they go on to a new teacher in the fourth grade (COR Field Notes, 2/9/78).

Evaluation of student progress for this teacher continued throughout the school year. As a student finished an assigned textbook, Mrs. Donlan individually administered the Botel Reading Inventory and required that the student read orally from the next level basal text before placing a student in that textbook. The teacher recorded all oral reading errors on a typed copy of the story the student read. The student was then required to close his/her book while the teacher asked comprehension questions concerning the passage the student had just completed reading orally (COR Field Notes, 12/6/77). In addition to the basal testing, the teacher continued the SRI pretests and posttests throughout the school year.

Reading groups as a setting for instruction. Within the organization of Mrs. Donlan's typical day, the reading group emerged as one of the settings used by Mrs. Donlan for reading instruction. As she stated:

> The reading groups are necessary for me to check on application of those skills I am teaching in the skills hierarchy, and reading groups are important as a means for teaching and testing comprehension (COR Interview, 6/9/78).

The reading groups for this teacher appeared to serve as focal point for reading instruction in the midst of her eclectic teaching approach. Reading was integrated throughout the day as part of all subject areas. In addition to reading groups and skills groups, other activities were planned with reading as the focus of the activity. For example, the teacher outlined the many components of her reading program in the following description of activities.

> Learning centers provided extra practice and reinforcement in both word attack and comprehension skills, and through the centers, we can provide activities for every learning style. There are tapes, worksheets, games, and independent self-checking activities. Social studies and science activities are graded so children are <u>not</u> frustrated--otherwise it defeats your whole purpose.
>
> Through the language arts programs, children are given opportunity to express creativity as well as practice their own writing as well as stories written by classmates.
>
> Listening is an important skill in reading, and we work on that in language arts. Children need to tune in sounds and hear the differences.
>
> LIER ties all of that together which includes skill instruction, all of language arts, creative activities, and comprehension (COR Interview, 6/9/78).

Mrs. Donlan was observed during the first, second, and third cycles for a total of seventeen observations. During eight of the seventeen observations, Mrs. Donlan was observed working with basal reading groups. During the fourth cycle of observations, a student teacher had taken over with the instruction occurring in the basal groups. Data were not collected during the student teacher's interaction with the basal reading groups. Mrs. Donlan, however,

continued to work with individuals and skill groups, and data were collected on these activities.

Differences between high and low reading groups. During the eight observations of Mrs. Donlan working with basal groups, it became apparent that the experience of learning to read for high and low readers was very similar in several ways. First, the time allocated to high and low reading groups was generally equal due to the demands of scheduling four classrooms of students for daily reading instruction. Materials were in abundance for all students, and they all had the opportunity to use these materials and to participate in various activities. Because of the kind of planning and provisions made for students of various ability levels, the teacher often began the morning with a comment such as, "To start with today, everyone is going to do one of two activities" (COR Field Notes, 2/21/78).

Finally, the teacher employed an instructional strategy which tended to make all groups look very much alike regardless of ability level. The following description outlines the four basic components which comprised a reading group session.

For all groups, the teacher began each session by asking literal comprehension questions that she read from the teacher's guide. As a result of this segment, the teacher and children began a conversation about the story. Within this conversation period, the teacher would create questions which were designed to gain students' opinions on the various issues raised in the stories. This segment also included questions which encouraged students to relate their own

"real-life" experiences to the happenings in the stories. Following this segment, the teacher and students worked on a particular skill lesson as a part of a unit lesson found in the teacher's guide for the story. The final segment of the reading group session was devoted to the teacher and students playing a word recognition-word meaning game. The groups ended with the teacher writing assignments on the student's contracts. The following diagram illustrates this pattern.

literal comprehension	story conversation 1. opinion question 2. relating real-life experiences	skill lesson	word recognition word meaning game	assignment giving

The following are brief segments taken from field notes which illustrate this general format in both the high and low groups. An example of the format during a group session with low readers is outlined below.

Sun and Shadows (Primer)

Introduction

T - "Keep your books closed as let's see what you remember about this story."

Literal Comprehension Questions

T - "What did the rabbit do in the moonlight?" (A student responds and a discussion about the question follows.)

T - "What were the ducks doing in the moonlight?" (Again a student responds and a discussion follows the question which leads into the next segment illustrating the opinion questioning and real-life application component.)

Story Conversation

T - "What else do you think the rabbit and the ducks could be doing in the moonlight?"

T - "Why do the docks go up and down in the water?"

T - "Have you ever seen the ducks at MSU? Have you ever fed them?"

Skill Lesson

T - "Listen while I read the poem on page fifteen (Moonshadows), and we will talk about what a poem is."

Word Recognition/Word Meaning Game

T - "Before you go back to your seats, I have some words for you." Teacher holds up a list of words from the story and begins questioning, "who can remember this word," "how would we sound it out," "sound it out by going one syllable to the next," and "can you think of another word that means the same as mad" (COR Field Notes, 9/23/77).

The following segment of field notes illustrates the format used during a high reading group session.

Much Majesty (first book of fourth grade level)

Introduction

T - "Let's read Trades (poem) silently and then I am going to ask you some questions."

Literal Comprehension Questions

T - "What are some of the trades the author is talking about?" "What is a trade?"

Story Conversation

A discussion of occupations grows out of the questioning. Then the teacher begins with the opinion and real life segment of the group.

T - "What would you say is the occupation of the person who wrote the poem?"

T - "Do you think he likes his work? How can you tell?"

Skill Lesson

A skill lesson on "words that describe" follows the discussion of the poem.

Word Recognition/Word Meaning Game

T - "Let's look at this list of words from the story and see if you can tell me which ones are describing words" (COR Field Notes, 12/8/77).

Round-robin oral reading was rarely a part of any reading group session. As the teacher stated:

> The purpose of oral reading is to see if they are applying skills and using expression. There is value in silent reading--oral reading is boring (COR Field Notes, 9/21/77).

Modifications of preactive decisions during the interactive phase. From the analysis of the data, it could not be determined by the researcher if preactive decisions had been modified.

On-the-spot decisions. From analysis of the data, it could not be determined by the researcher if on-the-spot decisions had been made.

Postactive or Evaluative Decisions

Judging success of students. The postactive or evaluative phase involves the teacher reflecting upon the school year and "judging the worth of prior decisions" (Shavelson, 1976, p. 401). During an interview in April of the school year, the teacher viewed a successful reader as capable of working on grade level or above his/her present grade level. In addition, she judged student progress in terms of the goals she had stated at the beginning of the year.

> It's more of a matter that they have gotten decoding skills so that they can read and comprehend, make inferences, and judgements. It is really important for someone to pursue reading on their own and really enjoy it (COR Interview, 4/25/78).

Mrs. Donlan evaluated the activities of her reading program by stating:

> Different activities effect different students. Some are successful in basal groups. Some really love those things which others would say that is not their favorite. But every child loves SRI because I do it one-to-one, and it also has instant feedback. We all really enjoy LEIR because of the creative activities (COR Interview, 6/9/78).

When asked to specify which activity was not successful, she replied:

> Can't pinpoint--they never complained. I always hit some of the kids, and I consider that a success. Also, I have been teaching for several years, and I can judge my style as well as what is appropriate for the kids I work with (COR Interview, 6/9/78).

Reasons attributed to success or lack of success. It is inferred by the researcher that the teacher attributed the success of readers to her ability to judge her teaching style as well as to judging what method and/or materials were appropriate for the students she worked with in reading. Further, it appeared that the teacher attributed the non-success of readers to the types of activities they were given to complete.

Summary of Case Study #4

The following figure (Figure 7) summarizes Mrs. Donlan's decision making and classroom practices. It appeared that the decisions Mrs. Donlan made concerning her reading instruction evolved around the structure imposed by the teaming situation and the

PREACTIVE, PLANNING PHASE	INTERACTIVE PHASE	POSTACTIVE OR EVALUATIVE PHASE
August 1 to September 21, 1977	September 21, 1977 to May 26, 1978	May 26 to June 10, 1978
Phase characterized by planning & decision making. Framework for decision-making 1. structure of program shared by four teachers 2. knew program, wanted group instruction 3. defined belief system as an integrated method of instruction; believes in skill instruction, & it's necessary to apply reading skills in other content areas 4. expressed goals as very basic--teach students to become proficient readers & enjoy reading Decision categories 1. Testing and grouping decisions - results of "several indicators" served as a basis for determining skill &/or basal reading groups - information for individual contract assignments - on-going evaluation of student progress 2. Materials decisions - materials used in previous years of teaching; combination of skills management program & basal program - equal emphasis between skills & basal programs; use of individual contracts - vast assortment of materials available for student use	Phase characterized by implementation & modification of preactive decisions. Implementation of preactive decisions Implementation of testing, grouping, materials, & management decisions resulted in: 1. consistent pattern of organization of the school day 2. reading groups emerged as one setting for reading instruction 3. differences between high & low reading groups a. Time allocation equal to all groups b. Activities - on-going evaluation of all students' progress - materials in abundance for all students as well as the opportunity for student participation in activities - employed same instructional strategy to high and low groups c. Teacher role, expectations active role in students' learning, equal expectations for all to become proficient readers Modification of preactive decisions - analysis of the data did not reveal modifications of preactive decisions On-the-spot decisions - analysis of the data did not reveal on-the-spot decision-making	Phase characterized by evaluation of student performance & activity usage based on pre-active decisions. Judged success of students based on: 1. in terms of goals stated at beginning of the year; students viewed successful if enjoyed reading Success of readers attributed to: 1. being able to judge her style as well as what is appropriate for student learning Non-success of readers attributed to: 1. different activities effect different students; some are more successful in one kind of activity versus another

Figure 7: Summary of Mrs. Donlan's Decision Making and Classroom Practices

Figure 7 (cont'd.)

PREACTIVE, PLANNING PHASE	INTERACTIVE PHASE	POSTACTIVE OR EVALUATIVE PHASE
August 1 to September 21, 1977	September 21, 1977 to May 26, 1978	May 26 to June 10, 1978
3. Management decisions - organizational techniques that provided students with understanding of how classroom was going to work for the school year - students as active participants in classroom management - room management contingent upon organization required to maintain the operation of four classrooms - influence of management decisions on other decisions - teaming, grouping, materials used all influenced by the concern for a well managed program		

materials she used in her reading instruction. The preactive or planning decisions were based on a mental framework involving an integrated method of instruction. Her testing, grouping, and management decisions all focused on getting students placed into materials within the structure of the teaming situation. The implementation of these decisions in her practice resulted in the basal series, other materials, and the teaming situation providing the structure of her reading program. However, the teacher development of activities and the guidance of the flow of activities in her reading program appeared to be based on her ability to judge her teaching style as well as her ability to determine what she felt was appropriate for student learning. The evaluation of student progress was based on her goal to get students to enjoy reading, and on her ability to decide which activities produced successful readers.

Section II - Summary of Findings Across the Four Teachers Studied

While the description of the four teachers studied and the case studies present a picture of the uniqueness of each classroom, a striking similarity was found in the decision making which appeared to shape the course of reading instruction in the four teachers' classrooms. The purpose of this section of Chapter IV is to present (1) a brief synopsis of how each teacher with her class collectively made sense of life in general and reading instruction in particular, and (2) a description of the similarities and contrasts discovered in the way the teachers went about their decision making and classroom practices.

Synopsis of Each Classroom

Mrs. Perry, like the other members of the small rural community in which she taught, believed that going to school for teachers and students was serious and important business. Mrs. Perry and the community members believed that the place called school was designed for teaching and learning. This meant that school was not the place where students were to be entertained by assemblies, movies, or provided a play period like morning recess.

Mrs. Perry was very business-like in her approach to her students, and as a result, little personal contact on matters concerning the personal lives of the teacher and/or the students was ever exchanged. Students filed into the room in the morning and began their seatwork without the typical visiting exchange between teacher and students often observed in other classrooms. Going to school for both the teacher and the students in this classroom appeared to be solely a matter of completing a designated amount of paperwork before the end of the school day.

Miss Delta was a second/third grade teacher teaching in a self-contained classroom for the first time. He class was comprised of seventeen first grade students and seven second grade students. The classroom was located in a small school district fifteen miles from a large midwestern city where the production of automobiles was a major source of employment for the members of the small community.

Miss Delta was a spirited and enthusiastic teacher. She was interested and concerned in both the personal and academic lives of her students. She appeared to be well-liked by her students and

worked very hard to provide students with the feeling that as individuals they were important members in the class. Miss Delta planned activities with her students' interests in mind and participated in their game playing during recess periods. At one point, she even instituted a jogging program for herself and the students in her class based on her belief that it was important for a teacher to know students in a non-academic setting.

As a teacher beginning her third year, she often sought the advice of other teachers, her principal, and this researcher. She was open to suggestions concerning students' progress, management, and instructional techniques. Miss Delta was often observed implementing the suggestions she had been given. The general atmosphere of the classroom seemed to be one of teacher-student productivity within a friendly, warm environment.

Mrs. Bailey was a first grade teacher. While like Miss Delta, this was her third year of teaching, Mrs. Bailey had been an aide in her present school district for thirteen years prior to becoming a full-time teacher. She was also unique due to her experiences as a mother of a struggling reader. At the top of her priority list as a teacher was her determined effort to provide successful experiences for every student to insure in some way that every child felt good about himself or herself and the experience of going to school.

The twenty-two students comprising Mrs. Bailey's classroom were drawn from a community that surrounded a large midwestern state university. The parents of the students maintained a high degree of

involvement in school activities. Mrs. Bailey was an enthusiastic teacher. The atmosphere of her classroom was relaxed although she maintained a high degree of orderliness, purposefulness, and activity. Contentment on both the part of the teacher and students appeared to prevail within the productive atmosphere.

Mrs. Donlan's class was composed of twenty-two second and third grade students. Unique in this teacher's situation was that her classroom was located in a large open area where she shared classroom facilities and an instructional program with three other teachers. The four teachers believed that their cooperative teaching arrangement was good for students as the students had a chance to work with more than one teacher, and the teachers felt that they could best serve the needs and interests of all students by collectively planning activities.

Mrs. Donlan was an energetic teacher, popular with her colleagues, with the students in her classroom, and with the students from other classrooms. Her openness and willingness to have students actively participate with her in aspects of her management decision making created for the students a sense that their teacher was fair as well as making the students feel important in terms of their contributions to the operation of the classroom. In addition, Mrs. Donlan conveyed the sense that she really cared about her students both personally and academically.

By the spring of the school year, this researcher was struck by the fact that she had never heard a teacher raise his and/or her voice above a normal speaking level and/or she had never observed

any major disturbance problem between the four teachers and the 120 students. While the management could account in part for the smooth operation of the room, it appeared that more could be attributed to the fact that the four teachers and the students simply enjoyed coming to school each day. While an atmosphere of productivity, the personal exchanges between teachers and students created a sense that they were relaxed, contented, and enjoyed what they were doing. Interestingly, Mrs. Donlan reported that the absenteeism rates among the four teachers and their students were considerably lower than that of the self-contained classrooms in the building.

Overview of the Decision Findings

It was clear that the four teachers studied do make decisions. Further, it was possible to identify the decisions they made and report their decision making and classroom practices during the preactive, interactive, and evaluative phases of teaching. The first month of school appeared to represent a preactive or planning phase for each of the teachers studied. During this phase, it appeared that, based on a mental framework consisting of beliefs and goals, the teachers made decisions concerning their reading instruction.

Following this phase, evidence from classroom observations revealed that the reading programs of the teachers studied were underway. This phase was characterized by the implementation and modification of the decisions made during the preactive or planning

phase. This phase typically began late in September and continued into the spring of the year. During approximately the last six weeks of the school year, the teachers began to reflect upon their performance and student performance. This phase of teaching is described as a postactive or evaluative phase.

In this study, the teacher decisions which appeared to shape the course of their reading instruction occurred in the first month of school or within the preactive or planning phase. These decisions were then reflected in the course of classroom practices for the teachers studied. This phase, labelled as the interactive or instructing phase, reflected the implementation and modification of the decisions made within the first month of school. A category of on-the-spot decision making also surfaced within this phase for some of the teachers studied. In the final phase of the school year, teachers tended to evaluate their performance, student performance, and activity selection based on the decisions they had made within the first month of school.

In addition, analysis of the data provided illustrations that could be characterized as the role of the teacher during each phase. It appeared that the teacher role during the preactive phase could be viewed as, "teacher as thinker, planner, and decision maker." Evidence from the analysis of the data during the interactive phase indicated the teacher role could be summarized as, "teacher as technician." In the final phase, evidence supported the, "teacher as evaluator" role.

The following figure (Figure 8) illustrates the overview of findings discussed in this section.

Findings of the Study

In the following section, the decisions identified and classified according to the preactive, interactive, and postactive or evaluative phases of teaching are presented.

Teachers' Frameworks for Decision Making

The preactive or planning phase is characterized as a "reflective, thoughtful time." (Shavelson, 1976, p. 392). The planning phase for the teachers studied occurred within the period of time from early August to the first week in October. It was during this time that the teachers made a variety of decisions concerning the reading instruction for their students. However, it appeared that for all of the teacher studied, the decisions they made concerning their reading instruction was based on a mental framework or "image" of the form teachers wanted their reading instruction to take.

For the teachers studied, it appeared that the combination of their beliefs about program selection, their beliefs about the teaching of reading, and their goals for the year served as the framework upon which teachers made decisions concerning their reading instruction.

Beliefs about program selection. The teachers during this phase reflected upon previous reading programs when planning a

Preactive, Planning Phase	Interactive Phase	Postactive or Evaluative Phase
September - October	October - May	May - June
"Teacher as thinker, planner, and decision maker." Decision Categories: 1. Testing Decisions 2. Grouping Decisions 3. Materials Decisions 4. Management Decisions	"Teacher as technician." Phase Characterized by: 1. Implementation of Preactive Phase decisions 2. Modification of Preactive Phase decisions	"Teacher as evaluator." Phase Characterized by: 1. Evaluation of student performance and activity usage based on Preactive Phase decisions.

Figure 8: Overview of the Decision Findings

program for the current school year. Generally, the reading programs remained the same from year to year for each of the teachers studied. "My program doesn't change drastically from year to year," stated one teacher. "In fact," stated another, "my program has stayed basically the same through the years." One teacher provided a nice contrast by stating, "We, a group of teachers in the building, were really bored--everything was too much the same. We needed to pick out new materials for this year's program--we sorta' needed a shot in the arm."

In the case of Mrs. Donlan working in the open-quad with three other teachers, her program was embedded within the larger structure designed by the four teachers which enabled them to "teach most effectively." However, her reading program was also a program she had used in the previous year of teaching.

Beliefs about the teaching of reading. Teachers defined their beliefs about the teaching of reading in terms of the development of decoding skills and comprehension instruction. One teacher expressed her major emphasis on skill development. Another teacher added a concern for the development of positive student self concepts along with her belief of the combination of skill and comprehension instruction. Another teacher, Mrs. Donlan, defined her belief system as an integrated method of instruction. She believed in an emphasis on skill instruction but felt it was necessary to provide students with opportunities to apply the reading skills in other content areas.

Goals for the year. Goals expressed during this phase were generally vague in nature. Teachers made statements like, "My goal is to get children reading," or, "I want them to be able to read by the end of the school year." "Getting children to learn reading as an enjoyable and pleasurable activity" was also expressed, For one teacher, "to advance them from where they are, for them to make progress" was her goal. Only in the case of the two teachers using the skills management program were specific instructional goals or teaching objectives mentioned in this phase.

Summary of teachers' frameworks for decision making. In summary, the combination of the teachers' beliefs about program selection, beliefs about the teaching of reading, and goals for the year appeared to serve as a framework upon which teachers made decisions concerning their reading instruction. In the following section of the findings of the study, the decisions teachers made which appeared to shape the course of their reading instruction are presented.

Decisions Identified and Classified as Preactive Decisions

Evidence from the data revealed that four major groups of decisions were identified during this planning phase of all of the teachers studied. Testing decisions, grouping decisions, materials decisions, and management decisions formed the major groups of decisions identified from the data.

Testing decisions. All four of the teachers made the decision to test students early in the school year. While the tests used

varied from teacher to teacher, generally testing consisted of an evaluation of sight words, oral reading, and general reading skill abilities. In the study, one teacher completed her testing of students within the first week of school in September. Another teacher was "still testing" in the first week of October. Generally, however, by the third week of school, the teachers' testing procedures were completed and formal reading programs were observed in operation.

For three of the teachers, further "testing" or formal monitoring of student progress beyond this initial testing, was not evident. Mrs. Donlan, however, employed an "on-going" evaluation of her students' progress. Prior to placing a student in a "new" textbook in the progression of the series, she administered several tests. These tests consisted of an evaluation of sight words, oral reading, and general reading skills abilities.

For the two teachers using the skills management program as a portion of their reading instruction, observations revealed these teachers pre-testing and post-testing students on specific skills that had been a part of their instruction.

Grouping decisions. The category of grouping decisions stems from the decisions teachers made as a result of the information the tests yielded. All four teachers used the results of tests to make a general statement about a student's instructional reading level. Considering this level, the teachers then selected a basal textbook that was appropriate for the student's demonstrated instructional level. Membership in a particular group evolved as a result of the basal text a student was placed in.

Two of the four teachers studied formed skill groups in addition to their basal groups. The evidence from their test results indicated specific reading skill strengths and weaknesses of students. Membership in a particular skill group evolved from the skill deficiencies the teacher identified from testing. The teachers stated that the children in the skills group "needed" to be taught these specific skills during the school year.

Materials decisions. Decisions made concerning the materials selected for the reading program tended to be "old" decisions. That is, each of the four teachers studied were experienced teachers and used textbook materials they had used in their previous years of teaching. Only in the case of one of the teachers using the skills management program was the decision to use the materials a "new" decision. "A good teacher's guide" was reported by all teachers as the single most important factor they considered when making the decision about which textbook series to use.

The two teachers using a skills management system in addition to their basal program stated that the decision to use the material was based on a feeling that basal series were "not complete enough" as far as skill development was concerned. One teacher stated that the program provided "good organization and direction for teaching specific reading skills."

Within this category of materials decisions, the teachers also made decisions about a variety of supplementary materials. While the basal programs served as the core of their reading programs,

they selected supplementary materials at this point to incorporate into the program later in the school year. Observations revealed, however, that only Mrs. Donlan incorporated supplementary materials for the purpose of instruction. For the three other teachers, supplementary materials were added to their programs for the purpose of providing students with independent activities to complete once they had finished their basal and/or skill work.

Management decisions. Management decisions during this phase surfaced as organizational techniques designed to "get the routine" of the classroom established. "Seating arrangements," "social rules of the classroom," "knowing where to put your lunch money and find supplies," and knowing "how the centers work" were expressed by the teachers studied as being important factors of organizational knowledge for students. In general, the organizational techniques described by teachers and observed in their practice were designed for students to understand how the classroom was going to work for the school year.

Management decisions, however, tended to be pervasive in all of the decision categories. For example, in order for a teacher to test a small group of children or individuals, the teacher had to make decisions concerning the management of the rest of the class and/or for the management of the small groups or individuals once their testing sessions had ended.

Management concerns also influenced grouping decisions. The very nature of "grouping" comes about from the four teachers' desire

to manage a program for twenty-five to thirty students. As one teacher stated, "I think that given the fact that you've got twenty-five kids, grouping is a definite convenient way to handle instruction." The number of children in a group was also a concern for the teachers. One stated, "If you've got a whole bunch of students reading on the same level, chances are I'm still going to make two groups out of it simply for ease of management on my part."

Materials decisions as well were influenced by the teachers' general concern for the management of her classroom. All four teachers used a basal textbook program as the core of their reading programs. One teacher said she used a basal reader as a matter of convenience. She also stated that the basal served as a means of "organization." For another, basals gave her a sense of "direction" and "structure."

Summary of preactive phase. In summary, the four major categories of decisions described in the preactive or planning phase are testing decisions, grouping decisions, materials decisions, and management decisions. Based on the analysis of data, it was possible to characterize the teacher role during this phase as "teacher as thinker, planner, and decision maker."

Interactive Phase

The interactive phase of teaching is defined as the period of time "when the teacher is interacting with students" (Shavelson, 1976, p. 396). For three of the teachers studied, this phase began by the third week of school in September and continued well into

the spring of the school year. For the remaining teacher studied, this phase did not begin until the fifth week of school in the early part of October. The phase for this teacher, like the other teachers studied, continued well into the spring of the school year.

Analysis of the data collected during this phase did not reveal any new categories of teacher decisions. Rather, this phase was characterized by the implementation and modification of the decisions teachers made in the preactive or planning phase.

Implementation of the preactive decisions. Implementation of the preactive decisions resulted in the establishment of a consistent, routine pattern of daily organization across the four teachers observed. Generally, the morning was comprised of a series of events. The headings "Morning Business," "Assignment Giving," "Reading Groups," "Recess," and "Reading and Other Subjects" summarize the major events of the morning (see Figure 9).

Reading groups as the setting for instruction. Within the organization of a typical morning, the reading groups emerged as the setting used by three of the teachers for reading instruction. One teacher used the skill group setting exclusively for reading instruction, and placed an untrained aide in charge of meeting with her basal reading groups.

The three teachers and the aide relied exclusively on the teacher's guide of the basal series to direct the flow of activities during reading group sessions. As one teacher stated, "Reading plans

Time	Event Classification
9:00 - 9:15*	Morning Business -- attendance -- lunch money -- library notices -- show and tell
9:20 - 9:30	Transition -- teacher circulating, helping students begin assignments -- teacher "fixing" and locating materials for students -- "getting organized for reading groups"
9:30 - 10:30	Reading Groups -- teacher meets with 3-4 reading groups -- students not in reading were observed involved in a variety of activities
10:30 - 10:45	Recess
10:55 - 12:00	Reading and Other Subjects -- reading groups may continue -- language arts (whole class lesson) -- art, music, gym, library, assemblies may occur during this time
12:00	Lunch

*The times listed represent actual time allotments but not necessarily the actual time the event began or ended.

Figure 9: Typical Morning Organization

for the Teachers Studied

are done pretty much for the entire book. I keep them on a master plan and changes depend on the children--if something is too hard we might need another day, but usually we just move along with the book."

Suggestions found in the teacher's guide established the events that comprised the format or structure of a reading group session. However, for two of the teachers studied (and the aide), there appeared to be little evidence indicating that instruction occurred during the group sessions. Teachers appeared to simply "pilot" students through a progression of materials, and "instruction" came in the form of the teachers reading the directions for a workbook page or ditto sheet. Only in the case of Mrs. Donlan were instances of actual "teaching recorded. This teacher occasionally provided instruction which included introducing a skill or concept to be taught, actually directing the students' learning of the skill or concept, and then assigning workbook pages or dittoes as a means for independent practice of the particular skill or concept. Further examples of this kind were noted across all reading groups.

Differences between high and low reading groups. During the time spent in the classrooms observing reading groups in session, it became apparent that the experience of learning to read is qualitatively different for high and low readers. The implementation of the preactive decisions, contextual influences posed by the grouping, and factors of teacher role and teacher expectations seemed to explain the differences between the high and low groups.

Time allocations. Three of the four teachers stated they spent more time in group situations with their low readers. Only in the case of Mrs. Donlan was the allocation of time for group work generally equal. Observations substantiated these findings. However, closer examination of the data revealed "more time" did not necessarily mean more instructional time was devoted to the low students. Management problems associated with low readers often prolonged a reading group session.

Activities. In the cases of three of the teachers studied, students in their low groups were observed spending the majority of their "seatwork time" completing workbook pages, dittoes, and boardwork assignments. The activities designed for these students focused on alphabet letters, word recognition, and vowel rules. In addition, this skill work tended to be introduced and practiced in isolation from the context of sentences, paragraphs, or stories. Students in the high group in these classrooms were observed spending the majority of their "seatwork time" reading and working on skills within the context of sentences, paragraphs, and whole stories. Better readers spent more time than low readers working in extra activity centers, going to the library, and playing reading and math related games.

In the case of the fourth teacher studied, Mrs. Donlan, the students in the low groups were provided with materials as well as the opportunity for participation in the same kinds of activities that students in the high group were experiencing. The students in the low group spent time completing workbook pages and ditto sheets focusing

on word recognition and decoding skills. However, additional activities were provided for these students to enable them to apply these skills in content materials within the context of sentences, paragraphs, and whole stories. Regardless of ability level, all students in the class spent time working in activity centers, going to the library, reading, and playing reading and math related games.

Teacher roles and teacher expectations. In addition to the general differences in the types of activities provided for high and low readers, it appeared that three of the teachers studied perceived a difference in their roles and expectations for their high and low readers. These teachers tended to view their role with low students as being "directive" and "corrective" in nature. The teachers felt that the low students needed to see them as "strong figures," "pulling and prodding" students along in their learning. The teachers perceived the group settings with these low students as "very structured," and "not relaxing." In addition, low students were expected to "need help" and have "lots of learning problems."

Two of the teachers perceived their role with the high students as a "guide" or "discussion leader." These teachers felt they were "more a part of the students' learning," although one teacher felt the high students in her room "did not need her, and they would do fine on their own." These teachers perceived the group settings as "relaxing" and evolving around a discussion-conversation type format. In addition, high students were expected to work independently and enjoy reading.

In the case of Mrs. Donlan, virtually no difference was found in her perceived role and/or expectations for students in high and low reading groups. She characterized herself as taking an "active role" in all students' learning with the expectation that all students would become "proficient readers."

Following is a figure (Figure 10) summarizing the differences found between time allocation, activities, teacher role, and expectations for groups of high and low readers for three of the teachers studied.

Modification of preactive decisions during the interactive phase. In general, the only preactive decision teachers tended to modify in this phase was the initial grouping decision they had made for several students. Two teachers were observed changing students' group placements because the materials assigned for a particular group's work appeared "too hard or too easy" for these students. Statements like, "he really caught on" or "the student's self concept needed a boost" were also expressed as reasons to alter the preactive grouping decisions.

On-the-spot decision making. On-the-spot decision making occurred for two teachers when something in a lesson appeared to be a problem for students. The teachers then altered their day's plan by spending a longer time than anticipated on the particular problem area or continued dealing with the problem area the following day.

In another example of on-the-spot decision making, one of the teachers decided "to skip" a particular skill lesson for students.

HIGH READING GROUP	LOW READING GROUP
I. Time Allocation Less group time with teacher. More instructional time. II. Activities A. "Seatwork Time" 1. Reading 2. Completing workbook pages 3. Dittoes 4. Boardwork Assignments 5. Extra reading-related assignments B. Activities Focus on Extending Meaning of Reading, Comprehension Instruction within the Context of Sentences, Paragraphs, and Whole Stories C. Skill Development and Comprehension Instruction within the Context of Sentences, Paragraphs, and Whole Stories D. Better Readers Spent More Time than Low Readers Working in Extra Activity Centers, Going to the Library, and Playing Reading and Math Games III. Teacher Role and Teacher Expectations A. Teacher Role "Guider, Planner, "Discussion Leader," Relaxed Setting B. Expect Highs to Work Independently, Enjoy Reading	I. Time Allocation More group time with teacher, less instructional time (management problems) II. Activities A. "Seatwork Time" 1. Completing workbook pages 2. Dittoes 3. Boardwork assignments B. Activities Focus on Alphabet Letters, Word Recognition, and Vowel Rules C. Skills Introduced and Practiced in Isolation from the Context of Sentences, Paragraphs, or Stories III. Teacher Role and Teacher Expectations A. Teacher Role "Directive, Corrective," Non-Relaxing Setting B. Expect Lows have Learning Problems

Figure 10: Differences Between High and Low Reading Groups for Three of the Teachers Studied

She made the decision to eliminate the skill because she deemed the skill "pointless," as she felt she didn't have enough time to cover the materials she considered more important.

One of the teachers made on-the-spot decisions concerning group meeting times. While she always "knew" which group she would call first for a reading group session, the order of the following groups depended on several factors. Depending on which group had completed most of their assigned seatwork and which group had "all of their group members present in the room" were factors which determined the next group to be called by the teacher.

Summary of the interactive phase. In summary, the interactive or instructing phase was characterized by the implementation and modification of the decisions teachers made in the preactive or planning phase. Implementation of the testing, grouping, materials, and management decisions resulted in a routine pattern of organization of the school day. Reading groups emerged as the setting teachers used for teaching instruction. Further, differences between the time allocated for high and low groups, the activities planned and presented for students in high and low groups, and the differences in teacher roles and expectations emerged from the data and were reported in this section.

Modification of preactive decisions came in the form of the teachers revising their initial decision concerning a student's group placement. When presented with new information concerning a student's progress, the teachers were willing to change a student's group placement.

On-the-spot decision making evolved if students expressed difficulty with a particular lesson. This typically resulted in the extension of the time spent on a lesson. Eliminating particular skills lessons and determining group meeting times were also categorized as on-the-spot decision making.

The combination of the routineness of the classrooms and the fact that most of the teachers appeared to "pilot" students through materials led to the portrayal of the "teacher as technician" in this phase. One teacher's statement seemd to aptly summarize the tone of this phase. She stated, "I feel like when I walk into the classroom in the morning, everything is well organized and it's just a matter of here we go!"

Postactive or Evaluative Phase

The postactive or evaluative phase involved the teacher reflecting upon the school year and "judging the worth of prior decisions" (Shavelson, 1976, p. 401). This phase occurred at the end of the school year for the teachers studied. The phase was characterized by the evaluation of student progress and activity usage based on the decisions made in the preactive phase.

Judging success of students. The four teachers judged the success of their students in reading according to their students' progress through basal and/or skills materials. In addition to this criteria, two teachers further judged the success of their students in terms of their goal to get students to enjoy reading.

Reasons for successful readers. If students were successful readers, their success was attributed to the reading program. In addition, one teacher stated, not only did the reading program contribute to the success of readers, but that these students' ability to learn by themselves was also a key factor. One teacher, however, Mrs. Donlan, attributed the success of her readers to her ability to judge her teaching style and know what was appropriate for students.

Reasons for non-successful readers. For the students who did not succeed in reading, two of the teachers attributed their lack of success to: attention problems, learning disabilities, perceptual and auditory problems, limited materials, the program, home problems, emotional problems, and mainstreaming. The other two teachers believed deficiencies in the programs used with these students was a reason for their lack of success.

Summary of the postactive or evaluative phase. In summary, the postactive or evaluative phase was characterized by the evaluation of student progress and activity usage based on the decisions made in the preactive or planning phase. Teachers judged the success of their readers according to the students' progression through materials, and according to the goals stated by the teacher in the preactive phase.

The reading program and teacher performance were cited as reasons contributing to the success of readers. Factors such as learning disability problems, home problems, low motivation, limited materials, and mainstreaming were expressed by the teachers as reasons

contributing to low levels of performance. The teacher role for this phase could be characterized as "teacher as evaluator."

Summary of Chapter IV

The purpose of this chapter was to present the major findings of the study. In the first section of this chapter, a case study for each of the teachers studied was presented in order to describe each teacher's decision making and classroom practices. Section Two of this chapter contained a summary of the findings across the four teachers studied.

The findings indicated that the four teachers studied do make decisions concerning their reading instruction. It appeared that the decisions teachers made were based on a mental framework or "image" consisting of their beliefs about program selection, their beliefs about the teaching of reading, and their goals for the year. Teachers made four kinds of decisions within the first month of school. These included testing, grouping, materials, and management decisions.

These decisions were reflected in the classroom practices of the teachers studied during the interactive or instructing phase. This phase was characterized by the implementation and modification of the decisions the teachers made within the first month of school. Generally, this phase began by the third week of school and continued well into the spring of the school year.

Implementation of the testing, grouping, materials, and management decisions resulted in a routine pattern of organization of the

school day. Reading groups emerged as the setting teachers used for reading instruction. Differences between the time allocated for high and low reading groups, the activities planned and presented to high and low reading groups, and the differences in teacher roles and expectations for high and low readers also became apparent from the analysis of the data.

Modification of the preactive decisions occurred when the teachers revised their initial decisions concerning a student's group placement. When presented with new information concerning a student's performance, the teachers were willing to change a student's group placement.

On-the-spot decision making evolved if students expressed difficulty with a particular lesson. This typically resulted in the extension of the time spent on a lesson. Eliminating particular skills lessons and determining group meeting times were also categorized as on-the-spot decision making.

During approximately the last six weeks of school, teachers began to reflect upon or evaluate their students' progress and activity usage based on the decisions made in the preactive or planning phase. Teachers judged the success of their readers according to the students' progression through materials, and according to the goals stated by the teacher in the preactive phase.

Several reasons were found to contribute to the success or non-success of readers. Factors such as learning disability problems, home problems, low motivation, limited materials, and

mainstreaming were expressed by the teachers as reasons contributing to low levels of performance.

In addition, analysis of the data provided illustrations that could be characterized as the role of the teacher during each phase. It appeared that the teacher role during the preactive or planning phase in the first month of school could be viewed as, "teacher as thinker, planner, and decision maker."

The interactive phase typically began in the third week of school and continued well into the spring of the year. The combination of the routineness of the classroom practices and the fact that most of the teachers appeared to "pilot" students through materials led to the portrayal of the "teacher as technician" in this phase.

The postactive or evaluative phase occurred during the last six weeks of school. It was during this time that teachers evaluated student progress and activity usage based on the decisions made in the preactive or planning phase. The teacher role for this phase could be characterized as "teacher as evaluator."

In short, the major decisions teachers made concerning their reading instruction occurred within the first month of school. For the remainder of the school year, these decisions served as the basis for the organization of the teachers' reading programs. Further, these decisions served as the basis for the modification and on-the-spot decisions teachers made. Finally, the decisions made early in the school year served as the criterion for teacher evaluation of student performance in reading.

While the findings of the study suggest the four teachers made similar decisions, the case of Mrs. Donlan provided an interesting contrast to the other teachers studied. In summary, her beliefs about the teaching of reading, her program selection, and her testing, grouping, materials, and management decisions all revealed the way she went about the formulation and implementation of the same categories of decisions made by the other teachers.

CHAPTER V

SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS, AND IMPLICATIONS

Introduction

The purpose of this chapter is to present a summary of the study, the conclusions that were drawn from the findings, and the implications for practice and research.

Summary of the Study

Based on the premise that aspects of the teacher's mental life and decision making are significant variables influencing instructional effectiveness (Shulman, 1975; Shulman & Elstein, 1975; Clark & Yinger, 1978), this study was designed to provide an understanding of teacher decision making as it shaped the course of reading instruction in four classrooms. Specifically, through analytical description (McCall & Simmons, 1969) of the patterns of teacher decision making, the study proposed to identify and classify the decisions four teachers made and describe how these decisions were reflected in the course of reading instruction in their classrooms.

The four teachers selected for this study were chosen from among the twenty-three classroom teachers studied as a part of the ongoing study of Teacher Conceptions of Reading at Michigan State University. They were first, second, or third grade classroom

teachers, were solely responsible for the reading instruction in the classrooms, and used materials that allowed for teacher decision making to occur.

Using the fieldwork methods of the participant observer, data were collected four times during the school year in both the 1977-78 and 1978-79 research year. The first cycle of data were collected in September; the second in November-December; the third in February; and the final cycle in May. Classrooms were observed for three to five half days and one full day per cycle. Classroom observations were recorded in field notes, and audio recordings of reading groups were made. Interview materials were collected before and after school during each cycle. Informal interviews were recorded in field notes, and audio recordings were made of formal interviews. The data were analyzed according to a three-stage qualitative process.

The findings of the study indicated that the major decisions teachers made concerning their reading instruction occurred within the first month of school. These early decisions served as the basis for the organization of the teachers' reading programs for the remainder of the year. Further, these decisions served as the basis for both the modification of decisions and the on-the-spot decisions teachers made. Finally, the decisions made early in the school year served as the criterion for teacher evaluation of student performance in reading.

Conclusions

In this section, the major conclusions of the study are presented. From the findings of the study, conclusions were drawn about

teacher decision making as it related to the realities of classroom life and the nature of teacher decision making.

Teacher Decision Making as it Related to the Realities of Classroom Life

It appeared from the findings that the decision making required to maintain the flow of classroom life took precedence over instructional decision making. That is, the four teachers studied appeared to abdicate their instructional decision making to the publishers of commercial materials in order to accommodate their primary concern for establishing a well-routinized, well-managed classroom.

Rather than the decision categories reflecting the concern for instructional planning, the underlying purpose of the teachers' testing, grouping, materials, and management decisions was the facilitation of effective classroom management. Even in the case of Mrs. Donlan, who provided an interesting and provocative contrast in terms of the differences in the ways she perceived her decision making and implemented her decisions, the underlying purpose of her decisions, like the other teachers studied, still concerned the facilitation of effective classroom management. In the following examples, the teachers' concern for management is illustrated.

Prior to the beginning of the school year, each of the four teachers knew the content and the organization of their reading programs. Students came to school in the fall and were placed into the program rather than having the program developed around student instructional strengths and weaknesses. All four teachers used the results of testing procedures to determine a student's placement

for reading groups. Mrs. Donlan used several indicators, unlike the other three teachers, to determine a student's placement in a skill and/or basal group. However, the point is that even though Mrs. Donlan's testing seemed more complete than the other three teachers, the end result was the same. That is, while the testing revealed individual strengths and weaknesses, these cues were not taken into consideration in the planning for a student's instruction. Rather the test results simply served to provide the teacher with information which was translated into a gross measure of a student's instructional reading level. This level was then matched with the appropriate level basal textbook that coincided the the teacher's pre-selected reading program. Thus, it appeared that teachers were more concerned with solving a management problem through the use of the basal series rather than being concerned about the instruction and/or its relevance for student learning.

Further, while Mrs. Donlan was the only teacher observed repeating these initial testing procedures on an on-going basis to monitor student performance, it became evident that student performance was defined in terms of a student's progression to the next basal textbook in the series. In short, her broader use of testing still did not indicate to her the need to establish instructional objectives for a student, but she was more certain her placement decision was appropriate.

This notion of testing as a means of textbook placement versus determining specific instructional objectives for students is cause for speculation on how differently these classrooms may have looked

if instruction had been designed for students based on their instructional strengths and weaknesses. Since the use of textbooks as the basis for reading encourages teachers to group for reading, there is every possibility that if programs were designed around particular strengths and weaknesses, a low student might not look so "low" as portrayed when the gross measure of instructional level is compiled. Or, for that matter, the high student may no longer look so high and, therefore, not be left on his/her own as highs were not perceived by the teachers to require as much teacher time or structured group settings.

Another example of the teachers' concern for management became evident in the analysis of the teachers' goals for the year. Long-term goals for students were not expressed in terms of what teachers expected students to learn by the end of the school year, but rather reflected the teachers' concern for well-managed classrooms by providing students with a series of activities to complete.

Three of the teachers studied viewed their role in terms of their goals for the year as "suppliers" of activities and "managers" responsible for creating an atmosphere to enable students to enjoy reading. Even in the case of Mrs. Donlan, who was the only teacher who expressed her goals for the year in terms of her personal involvement as a teacher <u>teaching</u> students to become proficient readers, defined her role as a teacher in terms of being able to judge what activities were appropriate for students.

Further, while it appeared that differences between high and low reading groups would suggest teachers were making instructional

decisions based on content, the analysis of the data indicated the differences found between the groups could be attributed to the teachers' perceived role and expectations for students of differing ability levels. For three of the teachers, low students were expected to have learning problems and need lots of structure while the high students were expected to need a challenging program and to work independently. In the case of Mrs. Donlan, who perceived her role as active in all students' learning regardless of ability, she still used grouping procedures to manage students. Therefore, the method of grouping high and low students for all of the teachers studied was not intended to provide a setting for individual instruction based on individual differences of the students but for the ease of managing a classroom of twenty-five to thirty students.

While management concerns tended to be of primary importance for the teachers studied, the importance assigned to materials in the management of their reading programs also became evident. Materials emerged as the medium which provided the structure and organization for the flow of activities which were needed to achieve optimal classroom management.

Each teacher relied exclusively on the teacher's guide to direct the flow of activities during reading group sessions, and little attention was focused on the actual content of the lessons. In fact, the selection of textbooks was based on the quality of the teacher's guide versus the content of the lessons. Not only did a good teacher's guide provide the teachers with structure and organization

during reading lessons, it provided the overall framework needed to keep their classrooms well managed. Further, teachers' reliance on materials to direct the flow of activities leads one to conclude that well-managed activities were of greater importance than the quality of teacher-student interactions during instructional lessons.

Instruction for the purposes of this study referred to the various activities and procedures designed to increase a student's ability to read which occurred under the direction of the teacher. It was assumed by this researcher that activities in general were intended to provide students with the opportunity to practice a newly acquired skill. Further, it was assumed by this researcher that a teacher actually involved in teaching or providing instruction for students would (1) have a good notion of what he or she wanted to teach and why, (2) be able to establish for students a purpose for learning a particular skill or concept, (3) demonstrate his/her personal knowledge about the skill or concept he or she was trying to teach, (4) develop the lesson in logical, sequential steps, and (5) collect information from students about their knowledge and understanding of the new skill or concept and then, and only then, provide activities for students to practice their new found skill or concept.

Alarmingly, only in the case of Mrs. Donlan was there some evidence of instruction, as outlined above, occurring within the reading groups. For the three other teachers, instruction most often came in the form of the teacher simply reading directions from a workbook page or a ditto sheet. Students in these classrooms were

typically observed participating with the teacher in a recitation style format of "instruction." This style of instruction required students to recite answers for questions the teacher asked concerning a particular skill or concept. However, the teachers were seldom (if at all) observed providing direct instruction for the skill or concept they were questioning students about. While Mrs. Donlan's instruction showed variation from the other teachers studied, she was like the other teachers in that she still relied extensively on materials to direct the smooth flow of activities during reading group sessions.

These findings cause this researcher to speculate about the reasons why teachers apparently allow management concerns to dominate their decision making and instruction to the point that teacher decision making and instruction are abdicated to the publishers of commercial materials. It appears that instruction for the teachers studied could best be described as good classroom management through a process of keeping students busy with a variety of activities. Is this perhaps due to the fact that reading educators focus on the reading process in their methods courses to the exclusion of preparing teachers to think of the reading process in a combination with the realities of classroom life that will effect how their theoretical training is implemented in the classroom? Or perhaps the cause of these findings of the study are rooted in the role perpetuated by "the teacher next door," principals, and parents who have defined a good teacher in terms of an organized, well-managed, smoothly running classroom? Have teachers, in the attempt to fit this role model of

a good teacher, sought out materials as the means to provide the structure for their classrooms in order to obtain the image of purposeful, productive "learning" as their teaching ideal? Have teachers been pushed to be "accountable" to the point that they rely on publishers to make their decisions and to instruct for them because they have lost confidence in their ability to make decisions or provide instruction for students? Or, is it simply a matter that instruction is a technical process, and we can hardly expect more than what the findings suggest?

From this researcher's perspective, the question at this point becomes, how does one go about making changes if this is, in fact, an accurate picture of the world of teaching? Asking that materials be abolished and/or changed, or that reading groups be disbanded seems to be an extreme and unjust remedy. Materials were designed to serve a purpose in the instructional process just as grouping serves as an important solution to management problems. Perhaps the answer lies in a teacher training process in which instruction for pre-service and in-service students is provided in terms of the management responsibilities connected with teaching. Or perhaps the answers lie in the education of parents, principals, and other administrators to view the process of teaching beyond the notion of a smoothly operating, well-managed classroom.

The Nature of Decision Making

The findings in this study suggest that a model of teacher decision making should be based on the realities of classroom life.

Observations in this study revealed that teacher decision making is not independent of the context in which it occurs. The press of classroom management, teacher-student interactions, teacher role and expectations, and heavy reliance on materials resulted in teachers eliminating the selection of alternatives based on learner's states of nature. Consequently, to assume that there is a linear relationship between deliberate, conscious teacher decision making and classroom practice appears to be overly simplistic. In view of the contextual factors that interact with teacher decision making, perhaps the rational model of decision making is virtually impossible for classroom teachers to operationalize.

In summary, the conclusions of the study suggest the need for conceptualization of a model of teacher decision making based on the realities of classroom life. Such a model would have greater potential for helping us understand how teachers truly make decisions.

Implications of the Study

The study has implications for teacher educators as well as suggesting avenues for further research.

In the area of research, the study provides the basis for continued research in the attempt to more fully understand teacher decision making in general and teacher decision making in reading classrooms in particular. Only the beginnings of the understanding of teacher decision making have unfolded in this study. Through the investigation of further cases, researchers will build toward a more thorough understanding and ultimately a knowledge base concerning

teacher decision making in classrooms. Further, the development of a model based on the realities of classroom life will provide avenues for research.

In the area of teacher education, the study provides insights into the realities of classroom life based on the case studies of four teachers. It is through coming to understand what really goes on in classrooms that has significance for the development and the teaching of reading education courses. The concern for management on the part of the classroom teachers studied suggests the need for reading educators to develop reading courses which take into account the management concerns prevalent in the real world of classrooms. Further, the alternative strategies or methods of reading instruction presented in reading courses could best be introduced to teachers within the framework of the management conditions which are required to carry them out in classrooms.

Conclusion

In the introduction of the book Life in Classrooms, Jackson (1968) makes the claim that we hardly know what goes on in the classrooms. Research located within the context of classrooms makes it possible for us to understand the complexities of teacher decision making, the contextual influences as they interact with teacher decision making, and the consequences of teacher decision making on student learning. Coming to understand what it means for teachers and students to collectively share a life in reading classrooms holds the promise that research one day may truly influence the teaching of reading in classrooms.

APPENDICES

APPENDIX A

Conceptions of Reading Project Description

APPENDIX A

Conceptions of Reading Project Description*

As part of their teaching preparation, elementary teachers are typically schooled in some theory or model of reading instruction. This study began with the assumption that there is a direct relationship between such theory and practice. Three years of classroom research, however, has shown that it is not that simple. Teachers do have beliefs and conceptions about reading, but these conceptions are not applied as envisioned in reading methods courses.

To study teachers' conceptions and their impact on practice, the researchers did observation, interviewing, and audiotaping in 23 classrooms. The classrooms represented all levels of grade, ability, and socioeconomic status.

Reading Conceptions

For the most part, teachers' reading conceptions could be characterized in two ways: some were content-centered (emphasizing skills, decoding, and direct instruction), while others were more pupil-centered (emphasizing student attitudes, comprehension, and independent, "open" reading situations).

General Conceptions

More important that a teacher's reading conceptions were his or her beliefs and conceptions about teaching in general. In their

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*Reprinted with permission from the "Subject Matter" brochure of the Institute for Research on Teaching at Michigan State University, 1980.

reading instruction, as in their teaching of other subjects, these teachers were first concerned about building a cohesive social unit, creating a comfortable learning environment, and maintaining a smooth flow of classroom activity; implementing a particular conception of reading was secondary to these concerns.

Contextual Effects

Researchers consistently found that teachers' conceptions of reading were influenced by the content in which they taught, with grade level, ability level, and students' socioeconomic status all affecting beliefs and practices. Teachers of older and higher-ability students tended to favor the pupil-centered approaches, while teachers of younger and lower-ability students believed in a more structured approach to reading. Other contextual effects are being documented in a current study of three teachers whose mandated reading programs have changed since they participated in the 1978-79 study.

Implications

Teachers reported that their reading instruction was seldom influenced by the reading methods courses they took. Rather, they said that conceptions and practices developed from experience. The researchers hypothesize that this may be caused by methods instruction that focuses on reading theory to the exclusion of the realities of both teacher expectancies and classroom demands. They conclude that teacher education should be more sensitive to these realities faced by teachers during reading instruction; reading educators should

recognize that the theories they present in methods classes must be filtered through more general conceptions and expectancies before they can be applied in real classrooms.

Data analysis and write-up continue.

APPENDIX B

Human Subject/Copyright Release Form

and School District Materials

APPENDIX B

Human Subject/Copyright Release Form and School District Materials

TEACHERS' CONCEPTIONS OF READING PROJECT

HUMAN SUBJECT/COPYRIGHT RELEASE

I understand that the Institue for Research on Teaching is required by law to protect my privacy by keeping confidential all personal information. My name will not be part of permanent IRT records. Instead, a number will be used for identification.

I, the undersigned do hereby give permission to the Institute for Research on Teaching:

(1) To record on audiotape or in written form my responses to questionnaire items and interview questions which tap how I make decisions on issues concerning reading and reading instruction in particular and teaching in general--subject to the provision that these data will remain strictly confidential.

(2) To analyze the data obtained from the above recordings and publish the results--subject to the provision that I shall remain anonymous in name.

*(3) To publish/duplicate/analyze the products of these analyses--subject to the provision that I shall remain anonymous in name.

_____ _____

Signature Date

*Please strike out this section if you do not wish to give this level of release.

MICHIGAN STATE UNIVERSITY

INSTITUTE FOR RESEARCH ON TEACHING
COLLEGE OF EDUCATION · ERICKSON HALL

EAST LANSING · MICHIGAN · 48824

Example of the letter sent to teachers verifying their participation and thanking them for their participation:

Thank you for volunteering to work with the Conceptions of Reading Project for the 1979-80 school year. I have contacted your superintendent (or his representative) and your principal. They have approved your participation in the study and are looking forward to our collaborative research efforts.

Your observer will begin observations in your classroom the week of September 10 through the week of September 17. The observer will record the events, activities, and dialogue occurring in your classroom in the form of field notes. One day during the cycle your reading groups will be audio taped and the observer will "track" the activities of the six children randomly selected for pupil reading pattern information. As well, during this first cycle, the observer will administer several measures to record pupil reading pattern information on six children randomly selected from your classroom. We have been given clearance from the university and your school district to work with children. Once school begins we will select six students from your classroom and provide the university/school district approved parent permission notes to send home. Each cycle will conclude with an interview.

Enclosed please find a human subject/copyright release. We have provided a stamped self-addressed envelope and would appreciate your signing the form and returning it to us by mail.

We appreciate your support and cooperation. If you have any questions or concerns, please call Gerald Duffy or Sandra Buike at 353-9760.

Sincerely,

Gerald G. Duffy, Professor
College of Education
Director, Conceptions of Reading Project
Institute for Research on Teaching

Sandra Buike
Research Intern, IRT
Project Manager

GGD/SB:bw

Enclosures

MICHIGAN STATE UNIVERSITY

INSTITUTE FOR RESEARCH ON TEACHING
COLLEGE OF EDUCATION · ERICKSON HALL

EAST LANSING · MICHIGAN · 48824

Example of the letter sent to principals describing the project and thanking them for their support:

Thank you for supporting the Conceptions of Reading research project's collaboration with one of the teachers in your building. As you may already know, as a result of a grant from the National Institute of Education, Michigan State University established the Institute for Research on Teaching (IRT) in April, 1976. The purpose of the IRT is to design and implement programs of research on teaching with a special emphasis on elementary level teaching in the basic skill areas of Reading and Math. Since its inception, the IRT has initiated several research studies, many of which involve teacher collaborators from the school districts in the mid-Michigan areas (see enclosed materials on the IRT).

Teachers' conceptions of reading have been studied for more than two years. To date, the data from our observations indicate how teachers' conceptions influence instructional practice. Last year, we expanded the study to include an investigation of the influence of teachers' conceptions on specific aspects of pupil reading growth. With the permission you have granted us as per our phone conversations, we will again this year randomly select six children from the teacher's classroom and administer the pupil reading pattern measures. Enclosed please find a copy of the parental consent form and the materials we plan to use. These materials are the same ones used during the 1978-79 pilot testing year. If you have any questions or concerns, please contact us.

We appreciate your support and cooperation as we study the process of teaching reading, keeping in mind our ultimate goal of the improvement of the teaching of reading. If you have any questions or concerns, please feel free to call Gerald Duffy or Sandra Buike at 355-9760.

Sincerely,

Gerald G. Duffy, Professor
College of Education
Director, Conceptions of Reading Project
Institute for Research on Teaching

Sandra Buike
Research Intern, IRT
Project Manager

GGD/SB:bw

Enclosures

MICHIGAN STATE UNIVERSITY

INSTITUTE FOR RESEARCH ON TEACHING
COLLEGE OF EDUCATION · ERICKSON HALL

EAST LANSING · MICHIGAN · 48824

Example of the letter sent to superintendents describing

the project and thanking them for their support:

Thank you for supporting the Conceptions of Reading research project's collaboration with one of the teachers in your district. As you may already know, as a result of a grant from the National Institute of Education, Michigan State University established the Institute for Research on Teaching (IRT) in April, 1976. The purpose of the IRT is to design and implement programs of research on teaching with a special emphasis on elementary level teaching in the basic skill areas of Reading and Math. Since its inception, the IRT has initiated several research studies, many of which involve teacher collaborators from the school districts in the mid-Michigan areas (see enclosed materials on the IRT).

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We appreciate your support and cooperation as we study the process of teaching reading, keeping in mind our ultimate goal of the improvement of the teaching of reading. If you have any questions or concerns, please feel free to call Gerald Duffy or Sandra Buike at 353-9760.

Sincerely,

Gerald G. Duffy, Professor
College of Education
Director, Conceptions of Reading Project
Institute for Research on Teaching

Sandra Buike
Research Intern, IRT
Project Manager

GGD/SB:bw

Enclosures

APPENDIX C

Interview Schedules

APPENDIX C

Interview Schedules

Conceptions of Reading
Fall 1978
Interview Schedule

Teacher Information

1. How long have you been teaching in elementary school?

2. Have you taught at other schools? If so, how many? Where?

3. How long have you been teaching at this grade level?

4. Have you taught at other grade levels at this school or at other schools? How long at each grade level?

5. In terms of teaching reading, which grade level do you most prefer? Why?

Teacher Information on Present Reading Program (Criteria for material and program selection)

1. How/what would you define your present reading program?

2. How did you come to decide on this particular reading program for your class? (Probe for sources, e.g., individual decision, other teacher recommendations, principal, curricular mandate, etc.)

3. Does your school have mandates concerning materials and the reading program you are to use in class? (If yes, probe for degree and type of mandated program and materials.)

   a. Do you feel these mandates satsify your notions about how reading should be taught and the materials to be used? (If yes, elaborate. If no, what do you feel needs to be added or changed to complete the program?)

4. What kind of reading materials will you be using mostly in class this year? (Probe for type, e.g., teacher/commercial made, and the nature--skills, etc.--of materials.)

5. How did you come to decide on the materials you will be using for reading? (Probe for sources using criteria of evaluating/ selecting.)

6. What kind of reading activities will you be using mostly this year? (Probe for games, reading centers, projects, etc.)

7. What three most important things are you going to try to accomplish in reading this year?

8. What things are you going to do to accomplish these three things?

9. When school closes in June, do you hope to have a wider or a narrower span between the best reader in your class and the poorest? How will you accomplish your goal?

Teacher Philosophy of Reading

1. What things were most crucial in your reading education that influenced your beliefs about the teaching of reading? (Probe for courses, instructors, books, other teachers, teaching experiences.)

2. In reviewing the development of your notions about reading do you think your ideas have changed from the time you were a student to the present day? (If yes,) can you give specific times and experiences that produced these changes?

3. Can you briefly typify your beliefs about reading? (Probe for dimensions 4, 5, 6, 7, 8; activities/time, abilities/time, instructional role, word recognition, comprehension.)

Teacher Beliefs about Readers (Judging pupil success)

1. Could you define for me what you call a good or a successful reader? What do you look for as signs of a good reader?

2. Similarly, how would you define a poor reader, and what signs do you look for as signs of a poor reader?

3. What signs do you look for as indicants of reading improvement in a reader?

4. How do you think kids really learn to read? (Probe for strategies kids use.)

5. Do you feel it is important to remediate poor readers? Do you think there are things you can do to improve poor readers? (If no, why not?) (If yes, what kinds of things would you do to remediate them?)

6. Do you think "high ability" and "low ability" students should be taught the same in reading class?

7. If you had only the best readers in your reading class, how would you work with them?

Secure a list of all students; place their names on note cards.

Teacher Beliefs about Grouping (Criteria for grouping)

1. Will you be grouping students in your reading program? (If no, see 5.)

2. If so, on what criteria will you use to group your kids for the reading period? (Probe for sources of information, e.g., other teachers' information, what s/he heard about students, teacher testing, other testing, interacting with students, etc.)

3. Could you please group the children now according to the way you'll be grouping your kids? Please categorize them in groups and call them what you'll be calling them during reading.

4. Could you arrange these groups from highest to lowest in terms of their reading abilities?

5. Individualized instruction (no grouping)--For our purposes, it is necessary to keep tabs on pupil reading activity during the reading period. Do you think you can arrange your kids from the highest to lowest on your own reading criteria, in this class? Could you now divide them into five groups from highest to lowest groups on these criteria?

Interview

11-27-78

1. Since we last talked, have you done any kind of further testing?
2. Has your group changed in any way?
3. Have you selected new materials? Why?
4. How do you feel you spend the majority of your time with the varying groups in your room? Types of activities.
5. How do you perceive the time you spend with students of varying ability levels?
6. Do you feel you have a strategy you use to help a child attack unknown words? If so, what is it?
7. How do you define reading comprehension? Do you have a strategy you use to help a child gain meaning from printed material?
8. How do you define your belief system of the teaching of reading?
9. How do you perceive your role as an instructor?
10. What are your teaching goals for the rest of the year?

CONCEPTIONS OF READING

Interview Schedule

Third Cycle - February, 1979

I. Teacher Background

You are probing here to gain insight into the commonalities and differences between the teacher's elementary school instruction in reading and the instruction she is providing for her pupils. Sample questions include:

1. When you were in elementary school, was your family in the high, middle or low SES group in your school?

2. When you were in the primary grades, were you in the high, middle or low reading group?

3. Were the friends you played with during your primary grade years in the high, middle or low SES group of your community?

4. Can you remember how your teachers taught you to read? Describe the materials, procedures, activities, etc. (Probe in terms of our dimensions.)

II. Genesis and Development of Conceptions

You are probing here to determine how the teacher's practices (and, by inference, her conception) has been modified over time. For each question, ask what the teacher did in her first year of teaching and what she did during her second to fifth year of teaching.

1. What reading growth evaluation techniques did you use? How did you decide on these techniques? If different, ask why?

2. Upon what basis did you form reading groups? Why upon this basis? If different, ask why?

3. What materials did you use? Probe for any other kinds. Why these materials? If different, ask why?

4. What types of reading activities were included in your reading program? Rank them in order of importance. If different, ask why?

5. Rank the amount of time you spent with high, medium, and low ability children from most time to least time. What made you decide on this time allotment? If different, ask why?

6. If a student came to an unknown word, what clues did you provide to help him/her recognize it? Why these clues? If different, ask why?

7. If a student could not answer a comprehension question, how did you help him/her answer it? Why these clues? If different, ask why?

8. What skills did you emphasize most? Why those? If different, ask why?

9. How much oral reading was done in your reading classes? Why? If different, ask why?

10. How much silent reading was done in your reading classes? Why? If different, ask why?

11. How was seatwork used in your classroom during reading? What was its nature? What made you decide on this type of seatwork? If different, ask why?

12. Did you read to your class? Why or why not? If different, ask why?

III. Principles Describing the Teacher's Conception

You are probing here to obtain a list of principles or propositions or hypotheses which the teacher espouses or accepts as true and which she says she uses in making decisions for and about the reading period.

1. Reading conceptions. To probe for a reading conception, give the teacher the Prop Sort she completed and take her through it orally. Have her select those propositions she most strongly agrees with and to alter any of those principles to make them agreeable to her. Also look for hints and clues to other principles not included in the Prop Sort.

2. Other conceptions. Probe relative to other conceptions which your observations have led you to suspect are influencing the teacher's instructional practice. Try to identify the principles which describe these non-reading conceptions.

IV. Instructional Decisions Observed

You are probing here to (1) confirm that what you have, during observations, assumed to be decisions were decisions in actuality and to (2) determine the teacher's rationale for making these decisions. The rationale, of course, should reveal the principles upon which the decisions are based and, hopefully,

will help us determine the degree to which decision making matches conception.

A. Long-range or permanent decisions

Here you probe regarding unspontaneous decisions (the teacher seems to have made them some time in the past and operates in them without conscious thought). Questions might include:

1. I have observed that you almost always... When did you decide to do it that way?

2. What conditions caused you to originally make that decision? (Probe for genesis.)

3. What is your rationale for doing it this way rather than some other way? (Probe for underlying principle reflecting a conception.)

B. Decisions which seem to be context-specific

Here you probe regarding decisions which the teacher seems to consistently make with only certain groups or certain kids or under certain circumstances: the decision is not universal to the situation. Question might include:

1. I have observed that when you do with _____ seems to be different than what you do with the rest of the class. When did you decide to do it this way?

2. What conditions caused you to originally decide to do it this way? (Probe for genesis.)

3. What is your rationale for doing it this way with _____ and a different way with _____? (Probe for principles associated with a conception.)

C. "On-the-Spot" decisions

Here you probe regarding decisions you have observed the teacher make at particular times and which seem spontaneous. Questions might include:

1. On _(date)_, I noted that you... Why did you do that?

2. When was the first time you can remember doing that and what caused you to try it? (Probe for genesis.)

3. What is your rationale for having done what you did? (Probe for principles associated with a conception.)

Morning Interview Schedule

4th Cycle
Conceptions of Reading
May 4, 1979

Note: Be sure to audio tape this interview.

The questions we're going to ask involve some issues that have been difficult for us to get at in the past. We would like for you to think very carefully about the following questions and answer them as accurately as you can.

1. Do you think there are days you enjoy teaching more than others? Why?

2. Regardless of days, are there reading groups you would rather work with? Why?

3. If you (as a child) could have had the experiences of any of your groups, which reading group experience would you choose? Why?

4. What experiences in your teaching of reading do you find most rewarding? Most frustrating? Most challenging? Why?

5. What reading groups do you find most rewarding? Why? Most frustrating? Why? Most challenging? Why?

6. Do you think there is one of your reading groups you are most effective with? Why? (What does she do differently to cause this learning?) What factors should I attend to in order to observe this?

CONCEPTIONS OF READING

4th Cycle Interview Schedule

May 4, 1979

Procedures

The purpose of this interview is to confirm our previous findings regarding teacher thought which appears to guide and govern decisions. To achieve this goal, use the attached format to probe each teacher first for the important conditions (however many she offers) influencing the decisions she makes for each dimension when she considers her poorest readers. When all eight dimensions have been completed, for the class as a whole, create in the teacher a new "mind-set" which focuses on a different SES school setting and ask the same questions. Repeat the procedure again for each of the following: the best reading group, a similar SES but a different grade level (first or fourth) and for her current class when she thinks of it as a whole. To obtain the cleanest data, carefully provide the "advanced organizer" or "mind-set" which the teacher is to focus on prior to her responses in each of the five context-specific criteria.

In the interest of conserving time, do not try to either write down the teacher's responses yourself or to have the teacher write them down. Just be sure your tape recorder is running! We must have a typed transcript anyway so...

Also, I would suggest that you schedule two hours for this interview and do your best to complete it in that time. Once the scheduled time is up, however, conclude the interview as soon as possible whether you're done or not, and we will just have to settle for the

data we have. I feel we need to do this out of consideration for the teacher and her time as well as out of consideration for you and your time.

REMEMBER, keep reminding these people (and yourself!) that we are asking them about their thoughts/beliefs, NOT what they actually do.

PART I

Now I want you to think only about your bottom reading group--about the slowest readers you have in your class. Now, which of your kids would that be? (Let teacher identify pupils.)

Dimension #1

Thinking only of the kids in your bottom reading group, what do you believe are the best ways to judge the success of these pupils? What should you look for to tell if the slow kids are becoming better readers?

Dimension #2

Still thinking of the bottom group, what do you believe to be the most important characteristic to be considered when choosing materials for reading instruction for these kids? What should you look for in choosing reading material for the bottom reading group?

Dimension #3

Considering only the bottom kids, what do you believe to be the most important criteria to use in forming a bottom reading group? How should you decide whether a kid belongs in the bottom group?

Dimension #4

In terms of the slow group, what reading activities do you believe should be given the most instructional time? What do you believe your slow kids should spend most of their reading time on?

Dimension #5

Considering just the slow kids, how much instructional time from you do you believe these kids need? How much of your time should the slow kids receive as compared to other kids in your class?

Dimension #6

Thinking only of the bottom group, what types of clues do you believe these kids should be given when they meet words they don't know in their reading? What do you think you should tell your slow kids when they don't know a word?

Dimension #7

Still thinking of your slow kids, what emphasis do you believe should be placed on comprehension with these kids? What type of comprehension should be emphasized?

Dimension #8

For the slow kids, what instructional role do you believe you should assume when teaching reading? In what way should you intervene with your slow reading group during reading instruction time?

PART II

Now I want you to imagine that you are teaching the same grade level but in a different school. In this different school, the kids are _____, the homes are _____, the major type of occupation

is _____ (fill in descriptions which create a contrasting SES from the school the teacher currently teaches in.)

Ask the same eight questions but insert into each question the reminder about the difference in schools.

Dimension #1--Judging pupil success in reading
Dimension #2--Criteria for selecting instructional materials in reading
Dimension #3--Criteria used to form reading groups
Dimension #4--Which reading activities will be allocated the most instructional time?
Dimension #5--Which reading group will receive most of your instructional time?
Dimension #6--Favored word recognition prompts
Dimension #7--Relative emphasis on comprehension
Dimension #8--Favored instructional role

PART III

Now I want you to think only about your top reading group in the class you have now--about the best readers you have in your class. Let's see, which of your kids would that be? (Let teacher identify pupils.)

Dimension #1

Thinking only of the kids in the top reading group, what do you believe are the best ways to judge the success of these pupils? What should you look for to tell if these kids are becoming better readers?

Dimension #2

Still thinking of the top group, what do you believe to be the most important characteristics to be considered when choosing materials for reading instruction for these kids? What should you look for in choosing reading material for the top kids?

Dimension #3

Considering only the top kids, what do you believe to be the most important criteria to use in forming a top reading group? How should you decide whether a kid belongs in the top group?

Dimension #4

In terms of the top group, what reading activities do you believe should be given the most instructional time? What do you believe your top kids should spend most of their reading time on?

Dimension #5

Considering just the top kids, how much instructional time from you do you believe these kids need? How much of your time should the top kids receive as compared to other kids in your class?

Dimension #6

Thinking only of the top group, what types of clues do you believe these kids should be given when they meet words they don't know in their reading? What do you think you should tell your top kids when they don't know a word?

Dimension #7

Still thinking of your top group, what emphasis do you believe should be placed on comprehension with these kids? What type of comprehension should be emphasized with them?

Dimension #8

For the top group, what instructional role do you believe you should assume when teaching reading? In what way should you intervene with your top reading group during reading instruction time?

PART IV

Now I want you to imagine that you are teaching in this same building where you are currently teaching with the same kinds of kids that are here now. However, rather than teaching a _____ grade, you are teaching a _____ grade.

Ask the same eight questions but insert into each question the reminder about the change in grade level.

Dimension #1--Judging pupil success in reading
Dimension #2--Criteria for selecting instructional materials in reading
Dimension #3--Criteria used to form reading groups
Dimension #4--Which reading activities will be allocated the most instructional time?
Dimension #5--Which reading group will receive most of your instructional time?
Dimension #6--Favored word recognition prompts
Dimension #7--Relative emphasis on comprehension
Dimension #8--Favored instructional role

PART V

Thank about your current class as a whole, including all your kids and all your reading groups.

Dimension #1

What do you believe are the best ways to judge your pupils' success in reading? Or, what should you look for to tell when a kid's getting better in reading?

Dimension #2

Considering the class as a whole, what do you believe to be the most important characteristics to be considered when choosing material for reading instruction? Or, what should you look for in choosing reading material for the class as a whole?

Dimension #3

Still thinking about your whole class, what do you believe to be the most important criteria to use in forming reading groups? Or, how should you decide what group a kid should belong to?

Dimension #4

In terms of the class as a whole, what reading activities do you believe should be given the most instructional time? Or, what do you believe your kids should spend most of their reading time on?

Dimension #5

Considering all the kids in your class, which ones do you believe should receive the most instructional time from you? Or, which kids should you spend the most time with?

Dimension #6

Thinking of the class as a whole, what types of clues do you believe kids should be given when they meet words they don't know in their reading? Or, what do you think you should tell your kids to do when they don't know a word?

Dimension #7

Still thinking of your class as a whole, what emphasis do you believe should be placed on comprehension in reading? Or, what type of comprehension should be emphasized?

Dimension #8

For the class as a whole, what instructional role do you believe you should assume when teaching reading? Or, in what way should you intervene with your kids during reading instruction time?

APPENDICES D AND E

Transcripts of Mrs. Perry's High and Low Reading Groups

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Following are excerpts from the audio-taped recordings of reading groups. The first example illustrates the type of oral reading and word identification drill characteristic of instruction in the low group. The second example illustrates the comprehension-language development typical of the instruction for those in the high group.

Low Group

Oral Reading

T: Well, Oliver, go ahead and read.

S: At five o'clock his mother came home from the city...

T: How do you suppose his mother felt then?

S: Mad

T: Okay.

S: He wasn't suppose to dress it up.

T: That's right, but that's what he did, isn't it. Okay.

S: One night Bobo was playing with the dog. "Roll over," he said. But the dog would not roll over. It ran across the floor after a ball. Then round and round it went with the ball. In its mouth. Bobo was not far behind it... Get up from the floor and put the light, put out the light. I like that one. You should have been in bed long ago.

T: Uhn-uhn.

S: ...Now Bobo also.

T: All ways.

S: Always tried to do as he was told. So the he picked up the light and put it outside. The next morning his mother asked where is the light. I can't find it. "You told me to put it out," answered Bobo. So I did.

T: Uhn, uhn. Oh, boy.

S: After time

T: Another time

S: Another time, Bobo's mother called him in from the yard. "Take this wash to Mrs. Hopkins," she said. She lives in city on (children, green)

T: Uhn, uhn. Grove.

S: Grove Street. Bobo liked to drive to the city...

S: Teacher, when we're done after these, what book are we goin' in?

T: Probably into Tricky Trolls.

S: Ooooh!

Skill Lesson

T: Okay, now let's see what we can do with words today.

S: Cr-r

S: cry

S; country

T: There.

S: turn

T: Uh, uh

S: scared S: street S: skip S: skate

S: behind S: birthday S: be S: between S: better

S: father S: family

T: Uh, uh

S: met, mat

S: round

S: beaver

S: sm-all

S: hippo

S: across

S: I haven't even had a chance. ate, also

T: Hey, you two, wake up.

S: pock ed

S: pocket

T; Okay!

High Group

The following excerpt is taken from an audio-taped recording of a high reading group. The example illustrates vocabulary development in context, development of types, and a glimpse of the kind of "seatwork" activity they are required to complete.

T: There's only one

S: The trail was makred carefully by signs.

T: Alright. Okay, now then. We'll do a little bit about real and make believe. Except your book calls real true to life and make believe they call fanciful. Paul is interested in horses. There is a stable in his neighborhood. The man who owns the stable

gave Paul a job brushing the horses. The story tells how much Paul learned about horses. Working at the stable. Would that be an idea for a true to life story? Or a fanciful story?

S: True to life.

T: True to life, it could happen. Okay. Andy made a snowman. He gave the snowman a happy face. Soon the snow began to fall; the snowman began to cry as he began to melt. Andy felt sad so he took the snowman into the house and put him in the refrigerator. Would that be true to life or would that be fanciful?

S: Fanciful.

T: How do you know?

S: Because you don't--because snowmen don't cry--and they don't go in refrigerators.

T: Okay. What about the most of you read the boy and the whistle. Would that be true to life or was that fanciful?

S: True

T: Why do you say so?

S: Because it--when it was winter than it could have been summer already in one minute.

T: Well, I guess that's possible, it wouldn't be thaw that fast. Is there anything else that makes you think that story might have been fanciful?

S: Because when

T: Alright, sounds don't freeze do they?

APPENDICES F AND G

Transcripts of Mrs. Bailey's High and Low Reading Groups

APPENDICES F AND G

Transcripts of Mrs. Bailey's High and Low Reading Groups

The following excerpts of audio-taped recordings of reading group activities illustrate the difference in the instruction provided for the low and high groups. The following excerpt of a low reading group illustrates the management problems often associated with the low group as well as the emphasis the teacher placed on word identification and decoding skill development for these readers.

T: I would like to see the people that read in Happy Morning. All you need to bring today is your reading books. Jim and Bill and Tom and Bob, bring your reading books.

S: Why is there a tape recorder here?

T: We are tape recording you, Chris.

S: I'm nervous.

S: I'm sitting here because I'm nearer to the microphone cause it is pointing that way.

S: So

S: Sit here and you'll be close to it, too.

S: If I thought that I could, I would.

S: Don't do it. She would get mad at you.

S: It is on right now, it is.

S: Do you know what? We'll hear ourselves if we talk on it.

T: Open your books to the story about Melvin. Bill, you can't read without your reading book.

S: Are we going to hear ourselves on the radio?

T: No, Tom, we're just not going to pay any attention to that. Bill, I don't have your reading book. Did you look in your cubby again? Bob, see if you have two books?

T: Do you have two?

S: No, I had two yesterday and then I gave them to someone.

S: We're close to the end of the book.

T: Yes, you are. This is the last story in your book.

S: She is right, she is, oh, man.

T: You're going to have to look on with Bob today until we find your book. You didn't take it home with you, did you?

T: We are on with this story not that one. We're on Melvin.

S: We are almost done.

T: Melvin is the last story.

S: Are we on the last one, Mrs. _____?

S: I thought that we were on this one. I mean this one.

T: You should have read that one, you should have read the good lunch. Did you read it?...

T: Melvin's friends can talk, would you please turn the page now, and I want, how many of you have read the story? None of you had a chance to read yet? Let's have Tom begin reading for us on this page. You have no new words in this story, so you should be able to do it without practice.

S: I couldn't read this story because it was too late.

S: I can't start this one word.

T: The first word is the word <u>it</u>.

S: It was morning. The sun was in the...

T: It is a good morning for doing something, you can stop there. What is it a good morning to do? Hop and what else?

S: jump

T: Ed, will you read for me?

S: Hop hop hop...

T: He is going to talk to the rabbit isn't he? Is it a small rabbit that he is talking to?

S: No, kind of big. Kind of big and kind of small.

T: It is Bill's turn.

S: The rabbit said it is not a good morning for rabbits. The rabbit did not look happy. The rabbit had lost two little rabbits on the hill.

T: Why is he unhappy, Bill? Why is the rabbit unhappy?

S: Because he lost two rabbits?

T: He lost two rabbits. Where did he lose them, Katie?

S: On the hill.

S: On the hill he has lost them.

T: And he is not feeling too good about that. Jack is going to read for us now.

S: On the next page?

T: No, right here. You don't have to turn, right there.

S: The rabbit said it is not a good morning for rabbits. They already read that.

T: Let's move down here.

T: Melvin was a good little kid so Melvin went to look for the little rabbit. He is going to help a friend out. Melvin is, how is he going to help?

S: He is going to try and find them.

T: He is going to try and find them. Now as the story goes on, he finds some other friends that are unhappy because they lose things; this is a story about getting lost. And Melvin is such a good kid that he is going to help each one of his friends try to look for the things that they have lost.

S: They lost a big turtle or something.

T: Well, I think that you'll find out as you continue the story. I'm going to let you continue to read this at your desk by yourself, you did a good job at circle today. Thank you for coming, and do you need any help? Do you understand? Do you still have one at home? Yeah, you can bring that back, Chris, you are finished with that. You are going to be in a new book when we get done with this one....

High Group

The following excerpt of audio-taped recording of the high group illustrates vocabulary and comprehension development within the context of sentences. The example also illustrates the discussion tone of the group whereby student opinions are encouraged and they relate a real life experience to the happenings in the story. This example ends with the teacher assigning "teaching" tasks to individual students.

Oral Reading

T: Read this page silently to yourself, so I can ask you some questions. Is everyone finished with that page?

S: "Yes, yah..."

T: ...Were we right? Was it a different insect?

S: "Yes, yah..."

T: ...What kind of an insect is it?

S: A bee

T: Can you find a sentence that tells me what size the bee was? What size it is?

S: Big, big

T: Find the sentance and read it to me that tells you that was a big bee. Emily.

S: A big bee was in the grass.

T: Who can find the sentence that tells me that Jeff did not stay still, that he moved? This time he moved, didn't he? Ted?...

T: Okay. Is there another sentence on that page that tells that Kevin did not stay still? Ellen, did you find another one?

S: Kevin jumped and ran away.

T: Okay. After he ran away, he did something else. What did he do?

S: hid.

T: He hid, didn't he, Ed? Why do you suppose he ran this time when he didn't run when the grasshopper jumped up?

S: Because the grasshopper wouldn't hurt him, and the bee would.

T: Pretty good thought. Does anybody have a different thought?

S: Well, he might be scared of it.

T: Okay.

S: But I wouldn't run. Once a friend at my school, we were on the monkey bars at my school, and a bee came down.

T: How many of you have ever had a bee fly near you, and you felt a little bit afraid? Jeremy, did that happen to you?

S: I already got stung. I got stung in the foot by, I was barefooted and was walking in the grass and hornets stung me on the foot. You know what cured it? Baking soda.

T: Do you think Kevin was maybe worried about getting stung from the bee?

S: Yeah.

T: So he ran away very fast. Um, did you get your ditto finished today with the 'n' sound on it? Do you need some help, Ellen? Kay, could you give Ellen some help when we go back to our seats? When you go back to your seats, with her 'n' ditto, the beginning 'n' sound...

T: Ed, did you have trouble with your sheet?

S: Sort of, but I got through it.

T: But you got through it. Will, how about Ed? Could you give Ted and Alice a little bit of help with their ditto?

S: Yeah, sure.

T: I'd appreciate that. Okay, thank you for reading today.

A final example of skill instruction occurring within the context of sentences or paragraphs for the high students is illustrated in the following excerpt of an audio-taped recording of a high group.

What we've done is, we've really changed that word, made a new word that we will use in a different way by adding an s to it. We call that a suffix. We've added something onto the root word. Remember we talked about the roots of the tree? The root holds the tree up, and we can take a word and we can make it longer by putting letters on the front.

Or on the back.

Or on the back of it. Okay. In the little paragraph that's there that begins with Stan, I would like to have you read that to yourselves right now and put a line under every word you can see that has the word play in it. Even if it has an s added to it. We're looking for the word play. Okay. There's the word look, looked (COR Transcript, 1/20/79).

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